AGENDA
Council Meeting

Monday October 18, 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 November 15, 2021
Livestream

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

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

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

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Acknowledgement of Country 5
2. Traditional Language Statement 5
3. Opening Statement 5
4. Moment of Silent Reflection 5
5. Attendance and Apologies 5
6. Suspension of Standing Orders 5
7. Community Recognition 5
8. Public Question Time 5
9. Resumption of Standing Orders 5
10. Cr David Fagg Report 5
11. Declarations of Conflict of Interest 5
12. Confirmation of Previous Minutes 5
13. Annual Report 2020/2021 5
    13.1. Annual Report 5
14. Integrated Strategic Planning 149
    14.1. DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2021- 2025 FOR ENDORSEMENT 149
    14.2. City of Greater Bendigo 10 year Financial Plan 194
    14.3. Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025 234
    14.4. Climate Change and Environment Strategy 276
15. Petitions and Joint Letters 353
16. Presentation and Managing Growth 353
    16.1. 153 McNiffs Road, Redesdale 3444 - Use and Development of Land for a Dwelling, Outbuilding (Shed) and Ancillary Buildings and Works 353
    16.2. 15 Panorama Road, Lockwood South 3551 - 2 Lot Subdivision of Land (Dwelling Excision) 370
    16.3. Planning Scheme Amendment C241 - Former Golden Square Primary School at 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square 381
17. Wellbeing and Fairness 509
    17.1. Draft Malone Park Master Plan 509
18. Strengthening the Economy 538
    18.1. Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment 538
    18.2. Bendigo Airport Lease of Lot L3 565
19. Environmental Sustainability 567
20. Embracing Our Culture and Heritage 567
    20.1. Bendigo Historical Society Relocation 567
21. Lead and Govern For All 572
    21.1. Mayoral Term Length 572

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

21.2. Council Meeting date to elect Mayor and Deputy Mayor and December 2021 573
22. Urgent Business 575
23. Notices of Motion 575
24. Councillors' Reports 575
25. Mayor's Report 575
26. Chief Executive Officer's Report 575
27. Confidential (Section 66) Reports 575
27.1. Confidential Report pursuant to Section 66(2)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider a report relating to personal information 575

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2. TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE STATEMENT

3. OPENING STATEMENT

4. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

5. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

6. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

7. COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

9. RESUMPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

That Standing Orders be resumed.

10. CR DAVID FAGG REPORT

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.

12. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

13. ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

13.1. Annual Report

Author	Aleisha Verwoert-North, Manager Communications; Nathan Morsillo, Manager Financial Strategy and Michael Smyth, Manager Business Transformation

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Responsible Director	Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

The purpose of this report is for Council to receive the City of Greater Bendigo 2020/2021 Annual Report.

Summary

This Annual Report provides an overview of the functions, achievements and performance of the City of Greater Bendigo with our community, the Government and other key stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the City of Greater Bendigo 2020/2021 Annual Report.

Policy Context

Preparation of an Annual Report is a requirement of the Victorian Local Government Act 2020.

Sections 98, 99 and 100 of the Act state that a Council must prepare an annual report for each financial year that includes:

- Report of Operations of the Council
- Audited Financial Statement
- Audited Performance Statement.

These three documents and the relevant audit opinions have been combined in the City of Greater Bendigo Annual Report for 2020/2021.

Background Information

All Victorian Councils are required to report under the Victorian Government's mandatory system of performance reporting.

Report

The system prescribes performance information to be included in the Annual Report including:

The Report of Operations;

- A statement of progress in relation to major initiatives;
- A description of Council's operations;
- Results against prescribed Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) service performance indicators;
- Results of the LGPRF Governance and Management Checklist;
- A review of performance against the Council Annual Plan actions;
- Services funded in the budget and members / sectors of the community who receive these services;

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Major capital expenditure, changes and achievements;
- Results against the City of Greater Bendigo Strategic Indicators; and
- Other material relevant to Council activities and community interest.

Audited Financial Statements

- This statement is determined by Local Government Victoria format requirements.
- The statements have been audited by the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO).

The Audited Performance Statement:

- A description of the municipal district;
- Results against LGPRF prescribed service performance outcome indicators and measures;
- Results against LGPRF prescribed financial performance indicators and measures;
- An explanation of any material variations between results;
- Results against LGPRF prescribed sustainable capacity indicators and measures.

The Annual Report describes the City's operations throughout the year and highlights achievements. It reports to the Victorian Government, Greater Bendigo residents and the wider community for actions throughout the year on strategic objectives that were set down in the Council Plan for the year, as well as the prescribed information listed above.

To meet legislative requirements, a draft Annual Report, including audited financial statements and reports against LGPRF indicators and outcomes, must be supplied to the Minister for Local Government within four months of the end of the financial year. This year, as with last year, Councils have been given a further two months to complete the Annual Report, which is due to be submitted to the Local Government Minister by 30 November 2021.

Consultation/Communication

External Consultation:

Residents will be informed by public notice of the Annual Report's preparation and availability for inspection, subject to COVID-19 restrictions in place. Copies of the Annual Report will be available via the City's website and in hard copy (by post) upon request.

Internal Consultation:

Regular data collection, as part of Council Plan quarterly reporting and the LGPRF reporting requirements have provided the core content.

The Audit & Risk Committee, at the September 2021 meeting reviewed the draft Financial Statements and the draft Performance Statement for the 2020/2021 financial year prior to in-principle approval by the Victorian Auditor General.

Both the Performance Statement and the Financial Statements have been certified by the Principal Accounting Officer, Chief Executive Officer and two Councillors. These statements were presented to and endorsed by Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 20

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

September 2021. At the time of drafting this briefing, signed opinions had not been received from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, but are expected shortly.

Resource Implications

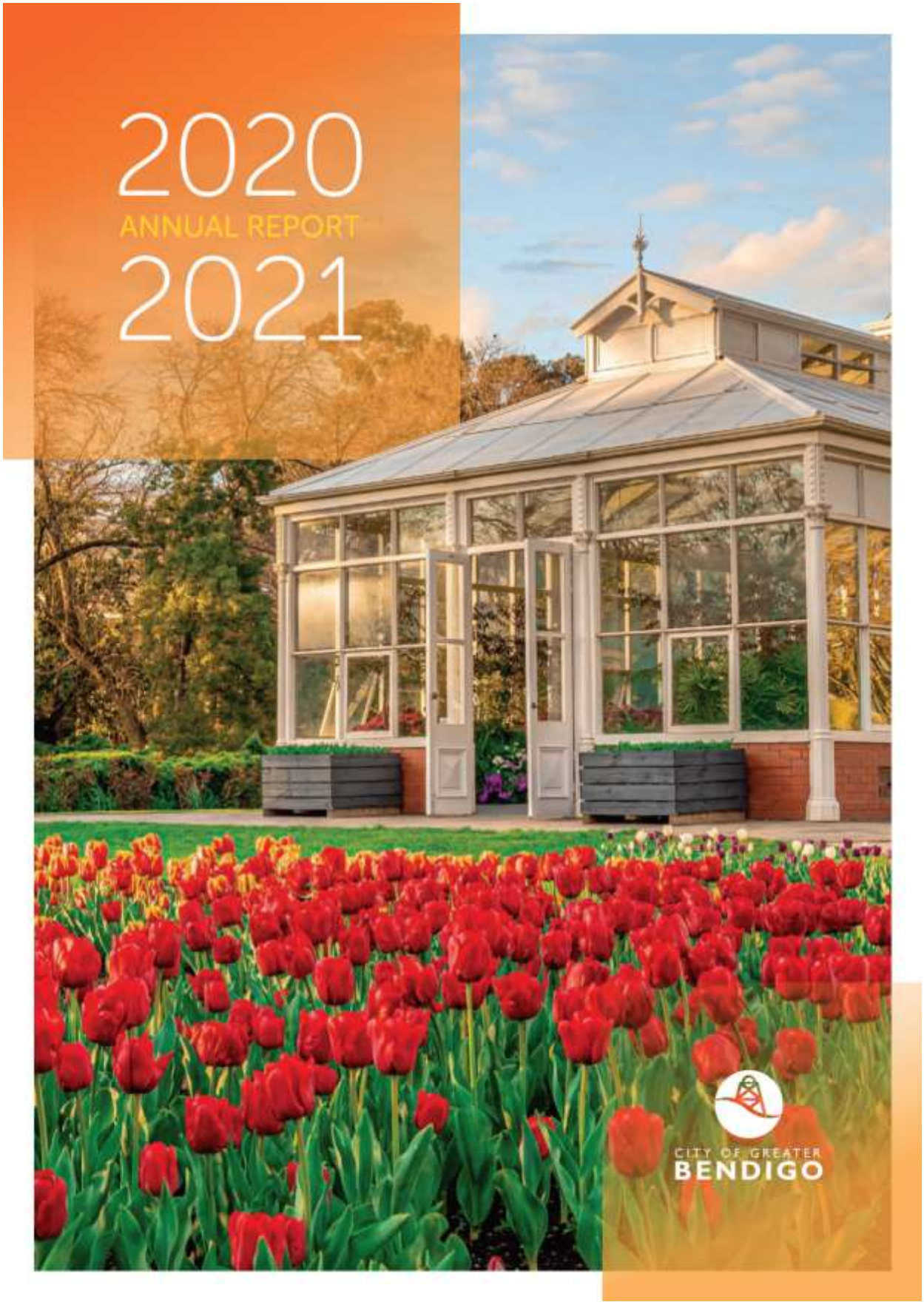
Printing and design of the Annual Report and relevant advertising are provided for in the 2020/2021 Council budget.

Attachments

City of Greater Bendigo 2020/2021 Annual Report

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - Annual Report



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021







Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021





CONTENTS

Introduction 4
Greater Bendigo profile 4
Snapshot of Council 5
Demographic profile 6

The year in review 7
Highlights of the year 8
Challenges and future outlook 16
Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer 17
Engaging with our community 18
Financial summary 19
Description of operations 22

Our Council 24
Current councillors 24
Retiring councillors 25

Our people 26
Organisation structure 27
City staff 28
Equal employment opportunity 30
Other staff matters 32

Our performance 33
Planning and accountability framework 33
Council Plan 34
Performance 34
Goal 1: Lead and govern for all 35
Goal 2: Wellbeing and fairness 39
Goal 3: Strengthening the economy 46
Goal 4: Presentation and managing growth 48
Goal 5: Environmental sustainability 52
Goal 6: Embracing our culture and heritage 54

Governance, management and other information 56
Governance 56
Management 60
Governance and management checklist 61
Statutory information 64
Glossary 68

Financial and Performance Statements 2020/2021 70

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

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

We acknowledge and extend our appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People, the Traditional Owners of the land.

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

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



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



WELCOME TO THE REPORT OF OPERATIONS FOR 2020/2021

Council is committed to transparent reporting and accountability to the community and the Report of Operations for 2020/2021 is the primary means of advising the City of Greater Bendigo community about Council's operations and performance during the financial year.

GREATER BENDIGO PROFILE

The City of Greater Bendigo is in the centre of Victoria, covering almost 3,000 square kilometres.

Greater Bendigo is a vibrant, creative, and culturally enriched major regional centre for northern Victoria and southern NSW and has the third largest urban area in Victoria.

It also includes productive agricultural areas and many small towns and villages such as Heathcote, Axedale, Huntly, Marong, Elmore, Goornong, Kamarooka, Lockwood, Neilborough, Sebastian, Woodvale, Raywood, Mia Mia and Redesdale, which are renowned for their strong sense of community and lifestyle.

The local population is continuing to grow and is becoming increasingly culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse. Council is committed to Greater Bendigo being a community that understands and respects cultural and religious differences, supports multiculturalism and actively promotes cultural inclusion.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



SNAPSHOT OF COUNCIL

The City of Greater Bendigo (the City) has nine councillors across three wards.

Lockwood Ward

Localities include: Big Hill, Golden Gully, Golden Square, Harcourt North, Kangaroo Flat, Leichardt, Lockwood, Lockwood South, Maiden Gully, Mandurang, Mandurang South, Marong, Myers Flat, Quarry Hill, Ravenswood, Sailors Gully, Sedgwick, Shelbourne, Spring Gully, West Bendigo, Wilsons Hill.

Whipstick Ward

Localities include: Ascot, Avonmore, Bagshot, Bagshot North, Barnadown, Bendigo, California Gully, Drummartin, Eaglehawk, Eaglehawk North, East Bendigo, Elmore, Epsom, Fosterville, Goornong, Hunter, Huntly, Huntly North, Ironbark, Jackass Flat, Kamarooka, Long Gully, Neilborough, North Bendigo, Raywood, Sebastian, Wellsford, Whipstick, White Hills, Woodvale.

Eppalock Ward

Localities include: Argyle, Axe Creek, Axedale, Bendigo, Costerfield, Derrinal, East Bendigo, Emu Creek, Eppalock, Flora Hill, Heathcote, Junortoun, Kennington, Kimbolton, Knowsley, Ladys Pass, Longlea, Lyal, Mia Mia, Mount Camel, Myrtle Creek, Redcastle, Redesdale, Strathdale, Strathfieldsaye, Toolleen.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- Greater Bendigo has an estimated population of 119,980 people
- More than 23.9% of the population are aged 60 years and over
- The median age is 39
- 8% of the population were born overseas, compared to the Victorian average of 28%
- The Greater Bendigo SEIFA score of 981 (index of inequalities) is lower than the Victorian average of 1,010
- 27% of households rent their home
- 85% of residents live in urban Bendigo
- 16% of people have a Bachelor degree or higher
- 41.9% of people have no formal qualifications
- 26% of people live on their own
- 41% of the labour force work part time
- 2% of people take public transport to work
- 23.1% of residents volunteer
- 21% of households are considered to be low income
- 1.7% of the population are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**Data sourced from profile.id, which compiles and presents data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016 Census)*



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

14,800 tonnes of organic waste from residential properties



68 new citizens welcomed at a Citizenship Ceremony

59,000 spring bulbs planted including tulips



865,614 visits to the City's website



3,250 people accessing youth development programs



10,764 vaccines administered at public, school and staff sessions



38,467 library members



290,292 early education childcare hours

50,919 total number of customer requests to the City

26 sporting events



44 funded school crossing supervisors



99 business development events delivered

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

July

- A proposal for a six-storey hotel development in Hargreaves Mall was approved by the Council, with 110 hotel rooms and associated restaurant, café and social function facilities planned
- The City's Bendigo Invention + Innovation Festival revealed 'Optimism through innovation' as the theme for its five-week virtual event and launched a Voices of Optimism webinar series
- City announced construction date for a new dog park in Heathcote
- Stage 2 of the Golden Square Heritage Study began, and the community was asked to give feedback on what heritage places should be protected and enhanced for future generations
- Twenty-one local organisations took up the City's temporary COVID-19 Community Grants Program to support essential relief and recovery-based activities within the community during the pandemic
- Local businesses were urged to take advantage of free government services to help communicate with refugees and non-English speakers





August

- The Strathdale Park Play Space won the Parks and Leisure Australia VIC/TAS Play Space award for excellence for a play space over $500,000
- Council adopted a new Economic Development Strategy, 'A Stronger Greater Bendigo 2030', to shape an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous community where all people can thrive
- A selection of central Victorian musicians performed via Instagram for an online music festival, Isol-Aid, as part of continued online support from Bendigo Venues and Events for artists.
- Bendigo Visitor Centre, operated by the City, won a Travellers' Choice award from TripAdvisor, which placed it in the top rated 10 per cent of attractions worldwide
- Council adopted the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme Amendment C222 to introduce a Huntly Development Contributions Plan (DCP) overlay, the first of its kind in the municipality, to provide timely delivery of essential infrastructure
- The City hosted a free webinar for potential Council candidates, focusing on the experience of a Councillor
- A draft concept plan to redevelop the former Municipal Baths was unveiled for community feedback, including a terraced amphitheatre, two shelters and lawn areas
- Council adopted a suite of new governance documents as required under the new Local Government Act 2020 which received Royal assent in March 2020. The new documents are:
  - Public Transparency Policy
  - New Governance Rules covering the conduct of meetings
  - Election Period Policy covering decision-making during election periods
  - Council Expenses and Councillor Support Policy
  - Audit and Risk Charter
  - Updated delegations
  - Integration of new provisions for Delegated Committees

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



September

- Marong Township Plan was adopted to establish a planning framework for the township's future growth and development
- The City fast-tracked support measures and infrastructure needs for hospitality businesses wishing to expand their outdoor dining footprint
- A spring tourism campaign called Bloom was launched and featured an impressive display of 50,000 tulips in Rosalind Park, curator talks, live music and exhibitions
- A new Reconciliation Plan for 2021-2025 was released to advance reconciliation and support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- The City released its Affordable Housing Action Plan for public comment, which outlined its strategy to help deliver more affordable housing to the community
- A music video was written, produced and performed by the City's Intercultural Ambassadors as a love song to the Bendigo community to show they cared
- The bid to make the Central Victorian Goldfields a UNESCO World Heritage site received a further boost from a world heritage expert, who declared the site as a significant example from the 19th century's gold rush

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



October

- The newly constructed Heathcote Dog Park was opened to the public with a 1.8 metre fence and a large concrete trough to provide water and water play options
- 70 state-of-the-art Pay by Plate smart meters were installed in the city centre to make it easier to use with card or coin payment options
- Council elections were held and five new Councillors were elected and four Councillors were returned
- The Bendigo Gastronomy region won its first-ever food industry award, taking out the Outstanding Region category in *delicious.* magazine's Harvey Norman Produce Awards 2020



10

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

November

- *Pinpi: Contemporary Indigenous Fashion* opened at Bendigo Art Gallery and was the first major exhibition to celebrate garments and textiles from First Nations designers and artists
- The City announced $40,000 in Business Revival Grants to support small to medium-sized businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic
- The Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme was released for public comment as part of a formal review of the entire scheme to bring it in line with Council's strategic direction
- The City became the first Local Government in Australia to be accredited as a Welcoming City by the Welcoming Cities Network
- The new Council was declared for 2020-2024. Cr Dr Jennifer Alden was elected Mayor and Cr Andrea Metcalf became Deputy Mayor for the first year of the Council term
- For the third year in a row, Bendigo's historic Rosalind Park retained its prestigious Green Flag award, recognising it as one of the best green spaces in Australia
- The Dragon City Sounds online concert starring Baker Boy, Dallas Woods and Aswang took place as part of Bendigo Venues and Events' online series to support artists

December

- The City and Bendigo Telco promoted the benefits of central Bendigo's super-fast 100 gigabit broadband network
- The Truck Wise program completed its final stage with a groundbreaking virtual realty experience to build greater awareness among 16 to 18 year olds about interactions between cars and trucks
- Work began to replace the existing synthetic soccer pitch and shelter at Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve with a new FIFA Quality Certified Pitch
- The community provided feedback on the development of a draft masterplan for Malone Park in Marong
- The City in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria announced plans for new female-friendly and accessible facilities at Strathfieldsaye Sports Centre community hub







Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

January

- The 2021 City of Greater Bendigo Citizen of the Year was Cathie Steele and the Young Citizen of the Year was Ma Aye Paw. Both were recognised for their leadership and work supporting the Greater Bendigo community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic
- The City's Customer Service Centres at Hopetoun Street, Bendigo and High Street, Heathcote reopened in January after being closed for most of 2020
- A concept plan for a new shade structure in Hargreaves Mall was released. This structure will provide year-round weather protection and enable a range of events such as markets, fun days and live music performances
- The City appointed 18 Youth Councillors for the 2021/2022 Youth Council term to represent the voices of young people who live, work and study in Greater Bendigo
- A new community website, Connect Greater Bendigo, was launched to help residents find, join, and connect with local events, clubs, groups and organisations
- The City's Creative Recovery Fund led to over 14 new creative projects with more planned to support artists and creatives impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- The organics fortnightly collection was extended to include the townships of Heathcote, Axedale, Goornong and Elmore

February

- The Queen Elizabeth Oval car park was announced as the new location for two new electric vehicle charging stations to promote electric vehicle economic and tourism opportunities. They will be part of the Charging the Regions initiative
- The future-focused Imagine Greater Bendigo project began, and residents were given the opportunity to help shape the city and region's future. The feedback received was to help Council prepare a new community vision and Council Plan, 10-year Financial Plan, and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- The community provided feedback on the temporary outdoor dining initiative to explore new opportunities and its overall impact on the region
- Bendigo was named as one of Australia's top 10 most welcoming towns by Booking.com
- The new Kangaroo Flat Library in Lockwood Road was opened
- The first concert with an audience since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic took place at the Bendigo Chamber Music Festival
- Council adopted a new Councillor Code of Conduct as part of the phasing in of the new Local Government Act 2020





Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Installation view **Mary Quant: Fashion Revolutionary** 2021. Courtesy of Bendigo Art Gallery

March

- *Mary Quant: Fashion Revolutionary* opened at Bendigo Art Gallery and a series of themed public art activations in the city centre and Heathcote were also unveiled to celebrate the iconic designer and the sixties era
- A World Games Day with the City's Intercultural Ambassadors was held to celebrate Harmony Week
- Mayor Cr Dr Jennifer Alden officially launched the Bendigo and Region Gastronomy Guide to showcase the region's culture and traditions around food and drink as Australia's first and only UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy
- A vibrant and colourful installation, *Butterfly Kisses*, was opened in Rosalind Park's Conservatory
- The City's new publication *Wildlife-friendly Gardens* was released to help residents design and plant gardens that will benefit local wildlife by providing food and shelter
- The community was invited to participate in a waste and resource recovery survey as part of new work to transition to a circular economy

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021





April

- A new initiative to support Aboriginal businesses and economic development across central Victoria began. Funded by Regional Development Victoria, the initiative responds to significant gaps in engaging with Aboriginal businesses
- The first of three Planning Scheme Amendments to implement the review of the Planning Scheme was adopted to bring it in line with Council's strategic direction
- Bendigo and Heathcote were shortlisted in finalist categories in the Top Tourism Town Awards. Bendigo was shortlisted in the regional town category and Heathcote in the small regional town category
- Council approved a planning application for a second major hotel development in the city centre. The proposed six-storey residential hotel features 105 hotel rooms, a multi-purpose function room, restaurant and car parking for 80 cars
- The community and visitors enjoyed an alternative Easter program called Eggs-plore, a family fun-packed program

May

- Considerable numbers attended the Bendigo Writers Festival's four-day event with 6,000 tickets sold and 100 writers taking part
- Mayor Cr Dr Jennifer Alden attended the Healthy Heart of Victoria launch of a new boardwalk and path upgrades at Kangaroo Flat's Gateway Park
- The expanded outdoor dining trial was extended until April 30, 2022. The initiative continued to support businesses that expanded their outdoor dining offer along footpaths, into car parks and in Bull Street in the city centre
- A new program began to plant 3,000 trees each year as part of Greening Greater Bendigo to increase tree cover in urban areas
- Talented young artists were recognised in the 2021 RAW Arts Awards
- A community vision to create a bright and happy future for Greater Bendigo was written as part of stage 2 of Imagine Greater Bendigo. Sixty-five residents were selected specially to form a community vision and represent the views of the community
- The City was one of 46 Victorian Councils to sign on to VECO, the Victorian Energy Collaboration, which is the largest-ever emissions reduction project undertaken by Local Government in Australia. By joining the project, the City's electricity will be powered with 100 per cent renewables, including community buildings, libraries and streetlights

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

June

- *Awaken, Bendigo brought to light* began in Rosalind Park as part of a new winter campaign, *IGNITE*. More than 60,000 people visited the event during winter and enjoyed a unique experience and local hospitality
- Mayor Cr Dr Jennifer Alden and Chief Executive Officer Craig Niemann travelled to Canberra on an advocacy visit to raise awareness about future projects and opportunities for collaboration with the Australian Government
- Council approved a Revenue and Rating Plan, a new requirement under the Local Government Act 2020, which outlines how revenue is calculated and collected. The Revenue and Rating Plan takes a four-year approach to explain how Council calculated revenue needed to fund its activities
- The Finding Flood Solutions project began to guide decisions about infrastructure development to reduce the potential impact of flooding in central Bendigo and the community was invited to take part in the project
- The City completes the Working for Victoria program, which provided jobs and income for 115 unemployed local people for six months during the pandemic
- The community was asked to comment on a draft Reducing Harm from Gambling Policy, which aims to minimise harm through supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction
- A new International Relations Policy 2021 was adopted to provide greater clarity and guide international efforts
- 2021/2022 Budget was adopted and included a $2M COVID-19 support package for business and the community and a new allocation of $729,000 for business support grants
- The design of the popular Strathdale Park Play Space in Crook Street was recognised through a Regional Achievement Award from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) Victoria/Tasmania chapter

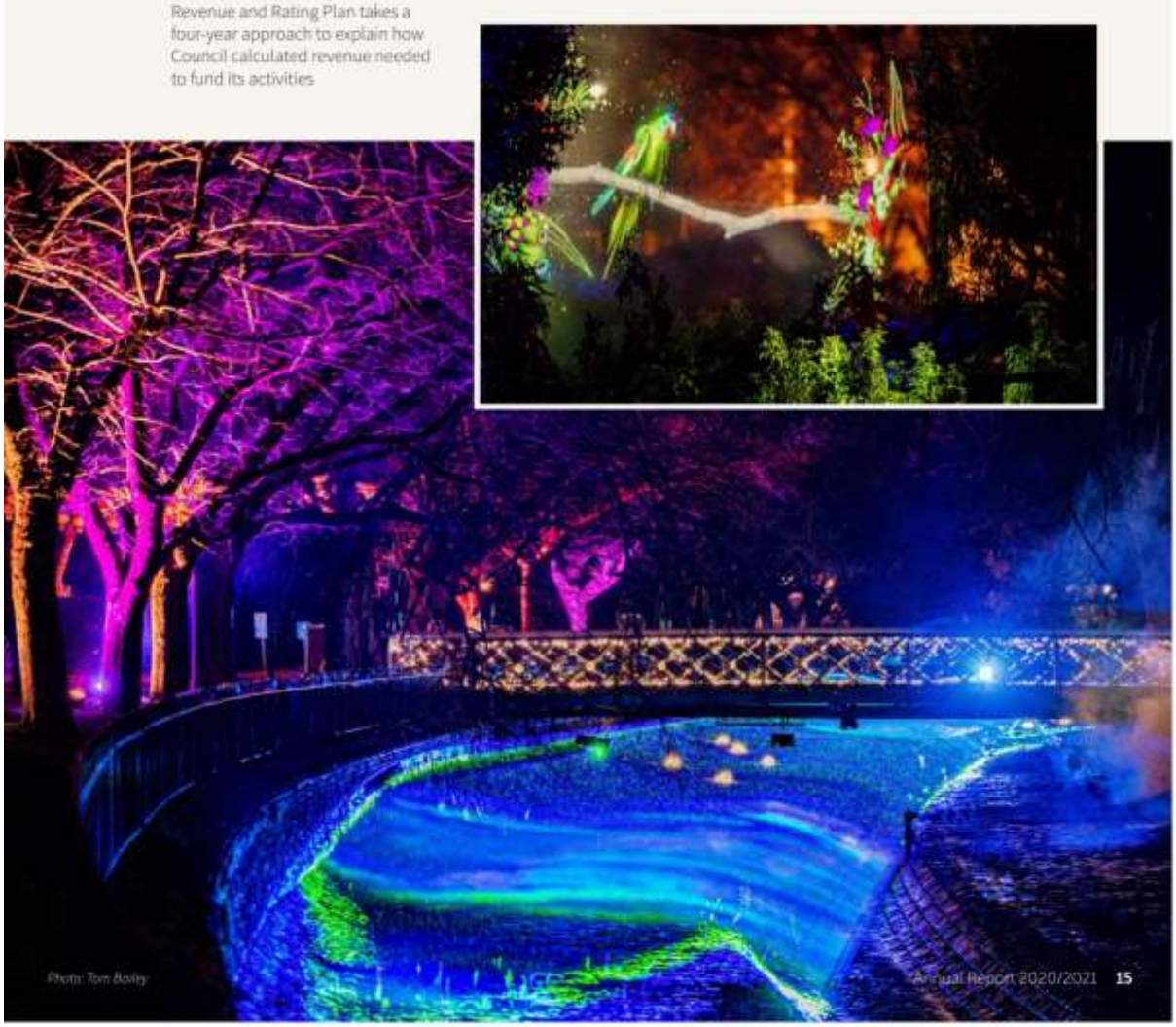


Photo: Tom Bailey

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

Challenges and opportunities

- Ensuring the Greater Bendigo community, businesses and broader economy recovers from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic
- Climate change is a significant threat to Greater Bendigo and the City is committed to driving net zero carbon emissions for Greater Bendigo by 2036
- Building our resilience in emergency planning
- Maintaining and planning new infrastructure in urban and rural communities in line with the demands of a growing population
- Continuing to provide high quality and affordable services for Greater Bendigo's growing community
- Investigating solutions for waste and resource recovery, including the development of a regional facility and developing a circular economy for the region
- Transforming our organisation in line with the *Our Future Workplace Strategy* and enhancing customer experiences as we transition towards the Bendigo GovHub
- Supporting tourism events and campaigns to draw more visitors from elsewhere to visit and stay longer and boost the local economy

The future

- Delivering on the Council Plan, Financial Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and Asset Plan over the next four years
- Delivering a new Climate Change and Environment Strategy
- Developing a master plan and completing planning studies for a new Regional Employment Precinct in south Marong and continue advocating for State Government support
- Planning for a population of 200,000 by 2050
- Maximising the benefits of significant developments in the city centre
- Securing funding to expand the Bendigo Airport terminal building and business park
- Supporting business' digital capacity, collaboration and improvements with new business grants valued at $729,000
- Developing a circular economy and implementing new initiatives to reduce carbon emissions collectively as a community with the Bendigo Climate Collaboration
- Balancing the demand for new infrastructure while maintaining or upgrading existing assets
- Implementing a range of key strategies, including the Economic Development Strategy, the Reconciliation Plan, the International Relations Policy and the Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity Strategy
- Capitalising on Greater Bendigo's designation as a City and region of Gastronomy and member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As we prepare this message Greater Bendigo, like the rest of the world, continues to be challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tail of the pandemic is proving to be long and in this financial year the City's operations were impacted by three separate lockdowns and many changes in restrictions.

Despite this, Council and the organisation adapted and continued to find creative ways to engage with and support our community, as well as keep up the day-to-day delivery of valued services.

In 2020, a number of initiatives went online including the Bendigo Invention and Innovation Festival, which was a free event running over five weeks that saw people log on from around the world to learn about optimism through innovation.

Our Bendigo Venues and Events staff promoted local musicians as part of the Isol-Aid Instagram music festival and staged online concert *Dragon City Sounds* featuring indigenous hip hop artist Baker Boy. The extraordinarily successful *What I did last week* online art exhibition produced five volumes of books capturing works submitted by residents who made art throughout 2020.

To support businesses to recover, the City supported the fast expansion of outdoor dining for hospitality traders and offered $40,000 in Business Revival Grants to help small-to-medium-sized businesses.

The City was again successful in winning a number of awards, including state and national awards for the design of the Strathdale Park play space, Rosalind Park received its third-straight Green Flag Award, the Bendigo Visitor Centre was in the top rated 10 per cent of attractions worldwide and we were the first Local Government in Australia to be accredited as a Welcoming City.

Strategic work continued and was released for public comment or endorsed by Council, including the formal review of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme, International Relations Policy and Affordable Housing Action Plan, and three separate planning applications for hotel developments in the city centre were supported.

It was also a Council election year, which saw the City present a number of opportunities to help potential candidates understand the role of a Councillor. In October elections were held and four Councillors were returned, and five new faces are now sitting around the Council table.

The new Council was sworn-in in November and Cr Andrea Metcalf was elected Deputy Mayor.

Council and staff got to work consulting the community as part of the Imagine Greater Bendigo project, with all feedback received to inform the development of a Community Vision, Council Plan, Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, 10-year Financial Plan and eventually an Asset Plan. Importantly, the impacts of climate change must be factored into these plans and a new Climate Change and Environment Strategy is also being prepared.

The Imagine project included a community panel held in May where participants presented Council with the new Community Vision – *Greater Bendigo celebrates our diverse community. We are welcoming, sustainable, and prosperous. Walking hand-in-hand with the traditional custodians of this land. Building on our rich heritage for a bright and happy future.*

Council also adopted the 2021/2022 Budget, which included a $2M COVID-19 support package for business and the community that featured a new allocation of $729,000 for business support grants, waiving or freezing a range of fees and charges representing a saving of $576,000 to businesses and residents, investing $420,000 in event attraction and promotion, and extending the Financial Hardship Policy, valued at $265,000, to allow ratepayers to defer rate payments without accruing interest.

The organisation said farewell to Director Presentation and Assets Debbie Wood and welcomed a new Director, Brian Westley. The City also farewelled Director Strategy and Growth Bernie O'Sullivan and will welcome a new Director in the new financial year.

Although we have found ourselves online more than face-to-face over the past 12 months, overall, it was still largely business as usual for the City and together we acknowledge the great way Council and staff have worked together during this time.

We are proud of the achievements highlighted in this report and thank Councillors past and present and staff for all their wonderful efforts. We hope you enjoy reading the Annual Report.

Mayor Cr Dr Jennifer Alden
Chief Executive Officer Craig Niemann



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

The City of Greater Bendigo is implementing its new Engagement Policy as part of its commitment to meaningful engagement with the community. Continuous community engagement allows the City and Council to keep the community informed on issues that affect them and seek input into decisions about the way the City delivers its many services. It improves the quality of Council decisions and helps community members understand the numerous factors that Council must consider.

In 2020/2021, the City and Council continued their work to undertake comprehensive community engagement throughout the year but were limited with in-person interactions as a result of the pandemic. There were three Victorian lockdowns and restrictions, which did limit in-person public engagements.

Engagement was delivered in many different forms. A lot of engagement was carried out online, via social media, interactive website sessions and via surveys. Microsoft Teams video conferencing meetings were arranged where appropriate. During times when engagement was permitted, face-to-face engagement took place. As in previous years, the City consulted on a large variety of projects, including building projects, strategic plans, and changes to service provision.

The City also introduced Let's Talk Greater Bendigo in February 2021, a digital platform to present important draft projects and strategies seeking community engagement. Nineteen projects asking for community feedback have taken place during this financial year on Let's Talk. City staff also consulted on 19 other engagements (this excludes Councillor ward engagements, see Governance page 56).





Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The City continues to experience a more challenging fiscal environment, in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on households and businesses in our community. The City remains in a sustainable financial position, the result of financial discipline over previous years. For the City to remain sustainable and our services to remain affordable for the community, this disciplined approach must continue over years to come. The City has drafted a 10-year Financial Plan in line with the new Local Government Act, which outlines how Council will responsibly manage community funds and ensure it is financially sustainable.

A summary of financial performance is outlined below. Further details can be seen in the Financial and Performance Statements at the end of this report.

Operating position

The City's operating result for 2020/2021 was a surplus of $11.8M. It should be noted that the City's headline surplus is reported in line with the Australian Accounting Standards and includes many non-cash items including $12.5M in "income" for assets brought to account upon the finalisation of subdivisions by developers.

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on revenue and expenses in the year, with significant shutdowns to services. However, many units with reduced revenue also experienced reduced outgoings. The City recast an original budget developed in January 2020 through to a revised July 2020 adopted version. From the original base budget, there was $4.69M in reduced user fees and charges revenue. After that, revenue for fees and charges were lower than this revised budget by another $3.2M. However, during the financial year, expenditure overall was also lower than originally expected – as recreation, pools and other services could not be opened. Within the overall financials, there was also additional COVID-related grants revenue received from State and Federal governments. This included a $4.6M Working for Victoria Grant from the State Government for additional employee costs, which was spent during the year.

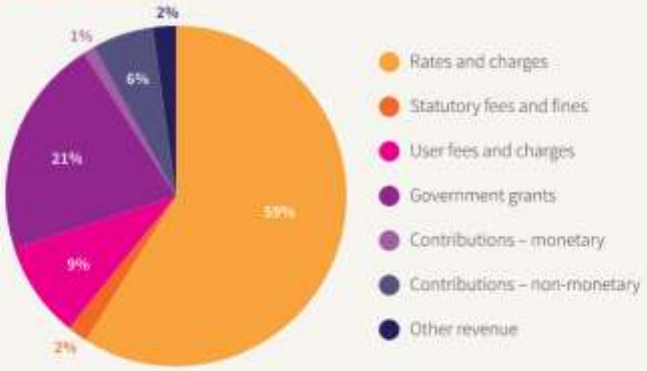
Income

The City receives income from a wide range of sources, including rates, user fees, fines, grants, contributions and other income. Total income for 2020/2021 was $213.5M, which was in line with the revised budget.

Although user fees received were significantly less than budgeted due to service shutdowns, this was offset by grants. The main City income source was rates and charges, which represented 59 per cent of the City's income in 2020/2021.

Since the pandemic, the City has been focused on identifying a range of initiatives to support our community and businesses that are impacted by COVID-19, including easing the financial strain by enabling deferral of a range of payments and charges. The City introduced specific hardship measures to support community members, including the ability for those experiencing financial hardship to defer payments. Several fees, charges and rates did not increase from the previous year's rate. The user fees and charges for the coming year were originally budgeted to increase by $4.3M, however, the continued lockdowns are likely to impact on this estimate. Whilst some of these impacts are forecast into 2021/2022, and some fees will be waived, it is hoped that overall income for events and other areas will rise in 2021/2022.

Source of income



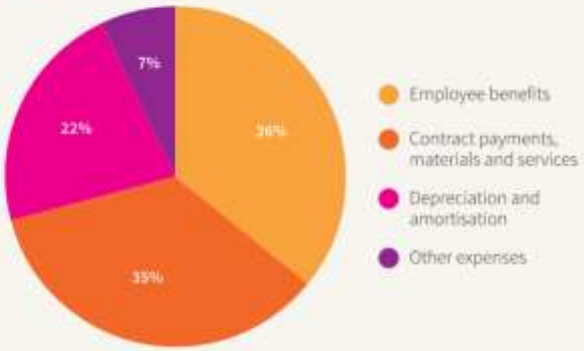
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Expenses

The City's total operational expenditure including depreciation for 2020/2021 was $202M. Expenditure delivers services which benefit the community. Total operational expenditure has increased slightly from the prior year, reflecting increased expenditure on salaries, materials, contracts and services.

Some expenditure has been reduced during the financial year alongside reduced revenues where certain services closed due to the pandemic (including the Bendigo Easter Fair, Bendigo Art Gallery and Bendigo Venues and Events). The State Government committed funding of $4.6M for the Working for Victoria initiative, which provided 115 unemployed people with jobs for a six-month period. These funds increased the allocation of grants income and increased employee costs for the year.

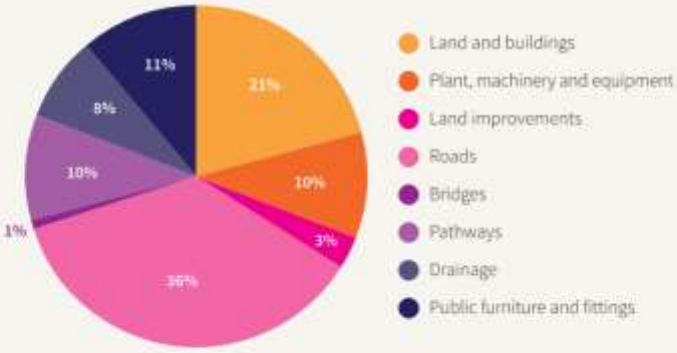
Categories of expenditure



Capital works expenditure

The City delivered $40.7M of capital works throughout the financial year, with the most significant areas of capital investment on buildings and roads. Some minor delays were experienced during the year due to the impact of the pandemic, although it was less than in other City services. There are a number of projects that have expenditure planned for 2021/2022, including Kennington Recreation Reserve and the Bendigo Botanic Gardens. More details on significant capital projects delivered during the year are included within the Description of Operations on page 22.

Capital works by type



Capital works expenditure



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Financial sustainability

In 2020/2021, the City's Budget was based on a 2 per cent rate increase in line with the State Government's Fair Go Rates System. Like previous years, Council did not seek a variation to the rate cap and looked to absorb increasing costs and significantly lower forecast revenue within current allocations. The drive to find efficiencies within operations remains ongoing to ensure there are no significant impacts on service delivery.

Providing services to those in the community most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring long term community sustainability, whilst delivering a capital works program to support recovery, were all part of the City's approach 2020/2021.

The City extended its hardship measures and support initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. These included the ability for those experiencing financial hardship to defer payments until June 30, and some targeted business and community grant programs.

Reduced revenue and increasing other costs also mean that it is vital that efforts continue to identify efficiencies and alternative funding opportunities to reduce the City's reliance on rate revenue. The City relies on support from State and Federal governments to deliver key infrastructure projects and provide support for other important programs. A significant level of advocacy and detail went into each grant application, which resulted in Council successfully receiving $45.1M in grant funding during the 2020/2021 financial year.

Key sustainability indicators

Indicator	Result	Risk rating[1]
Net result (%)	5.5%	LOW
Adjusted underlying result (%)	(6.84)%	HIGH
Liquidity (ratio)	1.60	LOW
Internal financing (%)	38%	LOW
Indebtedness (%)	29%	LOW
Capital replacement (ratio)	1.00	MEDIUM
Renewal gap (ratio)	0.68	MEDIUM

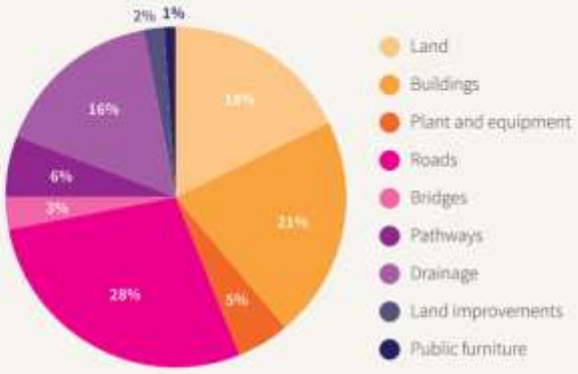
1. Rating per VAGO's risk matrix

Further details and analysis of the City's financial position and forecasts can be found in the City's 10-year Financial Plan, available to view on the City's website.

Asset renewal

The City continues to prioritise the presentation and renewal of infrastructure and other assets (refer also to Goal 4 in the Community Plan). Assets support the delivery of services needed by the community. Council invested $26.8M in renewal works during the 2020/2021 year. The continued investment supports maintenance of $1.7B in assets.

Council assets by type



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS

The City is responsible for delivering 69 important services in our community, including waste collections, street cleaning, road maintenance, environmental health, statutory planning, tourism and visitor services, maintenance of our award-winning parks, gardens and recreation facilities, early years services, home support, our prestigious Bendigo Art Gallery, Ulumbarra and The Capital theatres and much more. This broad range of community services and important infrastructure continue to support the wellbeing and needs of our community.

While the COVID-19 pandemic impacted some services and functions during State Government restrictions (such as the temporary closure of Bendigo Venue & Events and Bendigo Art Gallery during lockdowns), the City's essential services continued to operate throughout, and the City provided additional services in the community in response to the pandemic. Essential services include collecting waste, fixing roads and footpaths, mowing ovals and parks and gardens, providing immunisation, maternal and child health, childcare, and aged care, as well as planning services, offering community and business grants, rehoming animals, overseeing building projects and delivering customer service. Around 400 staff continued to work from home to support the delivery of important services to the community during State Governemnt restrictions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to cause significant disruption to the Greater Bendigo economy and place financial strain on many households and businesses. Councillors have given priority to projects and services named in the Community Plan that support residents to live healthy, active and connected lives, while protecting and enhancing our built and natural heritage and reducing our impact on the environment. The 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 Budget were significantly redrafted to boost the level of financial support available to the community.

The City provided hardship measures to support the community. Deferral on rates payments was extended to June 30, 2021, there was a freeze of fees and charges on a variety of facilities and services, and staffing and financial assistance was provided to Bendigo Foodshare.

As part of the measures in this 2020/2021 financial year, businesses experiencing hardship could defer rates payments to June 30, 2021, without incurring interest or late penalties. A full waiver of various fees under the Local Law such as A-frame, outdoor dining, and goods for display permit fees were put in place for impacted businesses. A 50 per cent reduction on food, health and accommodation registration fees was also introduced towards the start of the financial year. A new outdoor dining initiative was fast-tracked to allow hospitality businesses to extend their footprint outdoors to accommodate patrons in a COVID-safe way. With State funding, the City coordinated new infrastructure for outdoor settings.

Towards the end of the financial year, Council announced a comprehensive $2M pandemic response package in the 2021/2022 Budget to provide continued support and help the region. It included $729,000 for new business improvement grants and $265,000 for additional event attraction to boost the visitor economy, deferral of rates with no interest for those experiencing hardship valued at $275,000, and around 400 fees and charges were waived, reduced or frozen for a year.

Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategies to further improve services and facilities are described in our Community Plan 2017-2021. Please refer to the section on Performance on page 33 for more information on the services we provide.

Council also had a wide range of responsibilities under State and Federal government legislation.

Economic factors

Council delivered its fifth Budget under the 'Fair Go rates' system with a state-wide rate cap of 2 per cent for the 2020/2021 year. The City elected not to apply for an exemption to this cap. While the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be a major disruptor, Councillors were guided by the principles of supporting those experiencing financial hardship, economic and social support and relief, long term community sustainability, operational efficiency, and delivery of capital projects.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Major capital works

During the 2020/2021 financial year, $40.7M in major capital works and funding included:

Stage two of the Bendigo Town Hall renewal – $3m

A program of conservation works has taken place at Bendigo Town Hall, one of Greater Bendigo's most famous heritage assets. Stage two involved an overall façade restoration, including significant roof, window and door repairs, painting, repairs to the external façade, covering roof repairs and painting the exterior

New shelter and soccer pitch renewal at Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve – $650,000

- FIFA Quality Certified synthetic pitch
- New player shelters and weather-protected spectator areas to attract significant competitions and cater for mass participation in the future

Street light program – $380,000

- The City undertook a large-scale changeover of old sodium light fittings to energy efficient LED fittings across the municipality, with 360 lights replaced over this multi-year program to improve energy usage and reduce light pollution

Essential infrastructure

- $11.4M on roads
- $510,000 on bridges
- $1.5M on drainage works
- $3.5M in footpaths and shared paths
- Funding for City of Gastronomy initiatives
- Extension of organics collection service to rural towns
- Increased tree planting program across Greater Bendigo

The City also commenced multi-million dollar construction projects at Kennington Recreation Reserve Harry Trott Pavilion and the Bendigo Botanic Gardens Central Hub.

Major changes

- Five new Councillors were elected, and four existing Councillors were returned in the Council elections in October 2020. Mayor Cr Dr Jennifer Alden was elected Mayor and Cr Andrea Metcalf was elected Deputy Mayor. (See page 57)
- Director Presentation and Assets Debbie Wood left the City in October 2020 and Brian Westley was appointed to the role in November 2020. Director Strategy and Growth Bernie O'Sullivan left the organisation in March 2021. Director Corporate Performance Andrew Cooney has been the Acting Director Strategy and Growth since May. Manager GovHub and Our Future Workplace Jenn Spelling covered his substantive role, serving as the Acting Director Corporate Performance
- Council adopted a Development Contributions Plan (DCP) in Huntly to support the fair funding and delivery of infrastructure and facilities for a growing residential community in a timely manner. A DCP specifies the type of infrastructure to be provided, project costs and apportionment, and allows the City to collect development contribution levies
- The City's Customer Service Centres introduced new processes in January 2021 to keep the community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only EFTPOS and cheques are accepted for invoice payments at the reception centres, cash is no longer accepted at the centres in Bendigo and Heathcote. Residents are now able to pre-arrange appointments with specialist staff members, which provides an enhanced level of service
- A $4.63M Victorian Government grant under the Working For Victoria (WFV) initiative provided funding to employ local unemployed people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The WFV grant was used to create 115 positions for six months

Major achievements

A Stronger Greater Bendigo 2030 economic development strategy was adopted in August 2020 to target better and more sustainable businesses and jobs, improved health and wellbeing, strengthened skills and education levels, and actions to improve the environment and tackle climate change.

The City is one of 46 leading councils purchasing 100 per cent renewable energy through a collective Power Purchase Agreement (Victorian Energy Collaboration) starting in July 2021. This will help to reduce Council's greenhouse gas emissions and is a major step towards our target of net zero emissions by 2036. It is the largest-ever emissions reduction project undertaken by Local Governments in Australia. All of the City's buildings, libraries and streetlights will be powered with 100 per cent renewable energy.

The City is the first Local Government in Australia to be accredited as a Welcoming City by the Welcoming Cities Network. The City is recognised for its commitment to cultural diversity, Aboriginal reconciliation and social cohesion.

The City developed and implemented its successful Love Your Local campaign to drive social and economic recovery and build on efforts to encourage people to shop locally where possible to support our local businesses.

A second Reconciliation Plan has been adopted to drive meaningful change and foster a community that recognises and respects Aboriginal people and cultures, supports the self-determination of our Traditional Owners to care for and heal Country and people, and helps build a strong and vibrant culture that celebrates the Aboriginal community of Greater Bendigo.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

OUR COUNCIL

Greater Bendigo is divided into three wards, each with rural areas, small towns and parts of urban Bendigo. Each ward is represented by three Councillors. They have the responsibility for setting the strategic direction for the municipality, policy development, identifying service standards and monitoring performance across the organisation.



CURRENT COUNCILLORS

Eppalock Ward



Cr Matthew Evans

T 4408 6694 M 0437 867 028
E m.evans@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 24, 2020*



Cr Margaret O'Rourke

T 4408 6692 M 0429 061 096
E m.orourke@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 22, 2016 (Mayor 2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020)*



Cr Greg Penna

T 4408 6690 M 0429 721 958
E g.penna@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 24, 2020*

Lockwood Ward



Mayor Cr Dr Jennifer Alden

T 4408 6695 M 0499 005 735
E j.alden@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 22, 2016 (Mayor 2020/2021, Deputy Mayor 2017/2018)*



Cr Rod Fyffe OAM

T 4408 6688 M 0419 874 015
E r.fyffe@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *first elected 1996 (Mayor 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2010/2011, 2015/2016, Deputy Mayor 2016/2017, 2018/2019)*



Cr Vaughan Williams

T 4408 6696 M 0437 858 776
E v.williams@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 24, 2020*

Whipstick Ward



Deputy Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf

T 4408 6697 M 0499 009 096
E a.metcalf@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 22, 2016 (Deputy Mayor 2020/2021)*



Cr David Fagg

T 4408 6698 M 0437 892 918
E d.fagg@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 24, 2020*



Cr Julie Sloan

T 4408 6689 M 0437 862 975
E j.sloan@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Date elected: *October 24, 2020*

Councillor emails, like other correspondence, are the property of the City and may be referred to a staff member for action.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

RETIRING COUNCILLORS



Cr George Flack
Eppalock Ward
Date elected: October 22, 2016



Cr Susie Hawke
Eppalock Ward
Date elected: October 11, 2019



Cr Matt Emond
Lockwood Ward
Dated elected: October 22, 2016
(Deputy Mayor 2019/2020)



Cr James Williams
Whipstick Ward
Date elected: October 27, 2012



Cr Malcolm Pethybridge
Whipstick Ward
Date elected: October 23, 2018



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

OUR PEOPLE

Council appoints a Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for the day-to-day management of operations in accordance with the strategic directions of the Community Plan. The CEO and four directors make up the Executive Management Team.





Craig Niemann,
Chief Executive Officer

Areas of responsibility:

- Operational matters for the organisation
- Communications



Vicky Mason,
Director Health and Wellbeing

Areas of responsibility:

- Home support (aged and disability)
- Children and families
- Community engagement and development, including rural development
- Youth development
- Cultural development, including community events and celebrations
- Recreation planning and development
- Increasing and improving the access and availability of active and passive open space
- Environmental health, parking and animal services



Brian Westly,
Director Presentation and Assets
(from November 2020)



Debbie Wood,
Director Presentation and Assets
(until October 2020)

Areas of responsibility:

- Roads, footpaths and drainage
- Urban and landscape design
- Parks and gardens
- Waste management
- Community buildings and facilities maintenance



Bernie O'Sullivan,
Director Strategy and Growth
(until March 2021)

Areas of responsibility:

- Business services
- Economic development
- Strategic planning
- Statutory planning
- Tourism and visitor services
- Arts and cultural activities
- Bendigo Airport and Bendigo Livestock Exchange



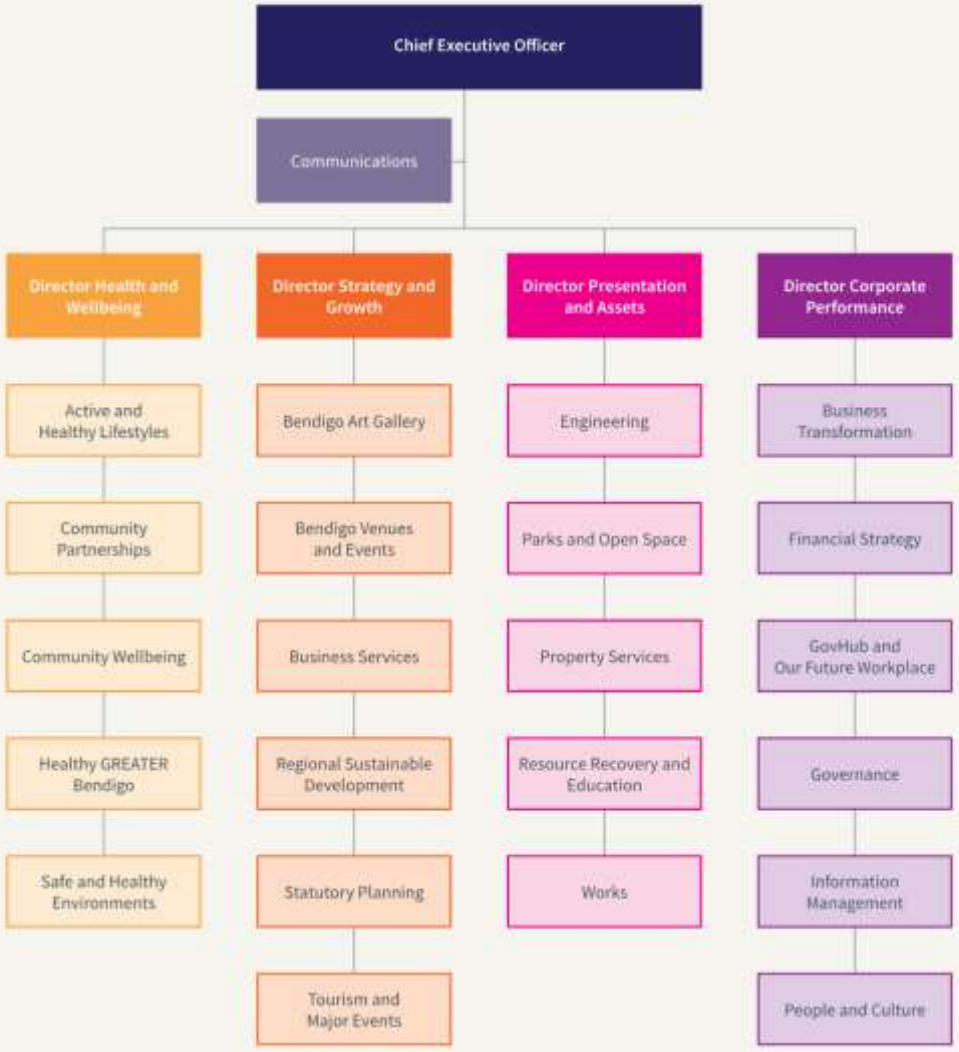
Andrew Cooney,
Director Corporate Performance

Areas of responsibility:

- Finance and Budget
- Business transformation
- Rates and valuations
- Customer service
- Human resources
- Governance
- Information technology
- Future workplace

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

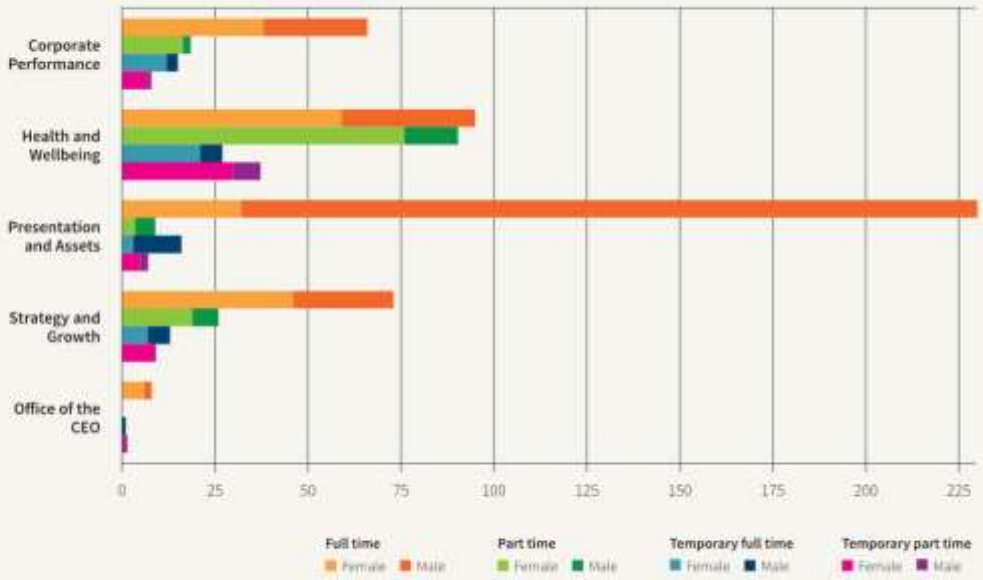


Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

CITY STAFF

A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff by organisational structure and employment type.

	Corporate Performance	Health and Wellbeing	Presentation and Assets	Strategy and Growth	Office of the CEO	Total
Full time						
Female	38.00	59.00	32.00	46.00	6.00	181.00
Male	28.00	36.00	198.00	27.00	2.00	291.00
Part time						
Female	16.37	75.86	3.49	18.92	0.00	114.64
Male	2.10	14.50	5.48	7.05	0.00	29.13
Temporary – full time						
Female	12.00	21.00	3.00	7.00	0.00	43.00
Male	3.00	6.00	13.00	6.00	1.00	29.00
Temporary – part time						
Female	6.97	29.78	4.78	8.71	0.60	50.84
Male	0.95	7.45	2.27	0.40	0.80	11.87
Casual						
Female	0.0009	0.5300	0.0001	0.0048	0.0000	0.5358
Male	0.0001	0.0014	0.0002	0.0024	0.0000	0.0041
Total	**107.39**	**250.12**	**262.02**	**121.09**	**10.40**	**751.02**

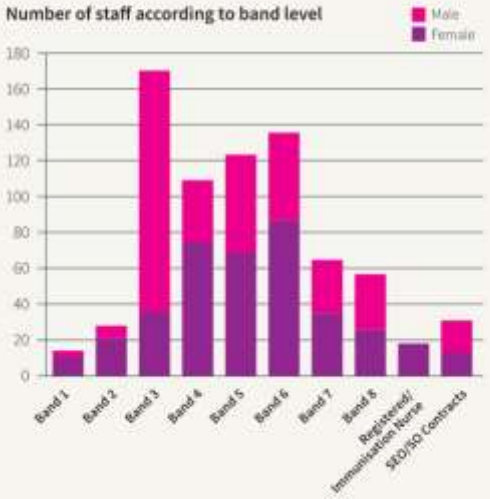


Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

OUR PEOPLE

A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff categorised by employment classification below.

	Female	Male	Total
Band 1	10.80	3.33	14.13
Band 2	21.20	6.82	28.02
Band 3	35.84	134.26	170.10
Band 4	74.30	34.75	109.05
Band 5	68.72	54.63	123.35
Band 6	86.76	48.80	135.56
Band 7	35.15	29.61	64.76
Band 8	26.04	30.80	56.84
MCH / Immunisation Nurse	18.21	0.0001	18.21
SEO/SO contracts	13.00	18.00	31.00
Total	**390.02**	**361.00**	**751.02**





Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Respecting each other at work

The City is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing a safe and supportive work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying and where all individuals treat each other with respect.

The City has several policies and processes that outline the expected standards of behaviour and why these standards are important. Employees and people managers continue to receive training on values and behaviours, the Code of Conduct and acceptable workplace behaviour, including what to do if unacceptable behaviour occurs.

The City also has a network of trained Contact Officers in place who are available to provide employees with information and impartial support regarding concerns about inappropriate workplace behaviour and equal opportunity.

The City provides confidential and appropriate support and assistance to employees who have experienced family violence through the Employee Assistance Program and leave provisions in the Enterprise Agreement. Promotion of the support and resources available to employees experiencing family violence is via an information brochure and the intranet. Several Contact Officers have also attended targeted training to be able to provide a higher level of appropriate support and/or referral for employees.

Organisation culture

The organisation values our diverse and skilled workforce and is committed to maintaining an inclusive and collaborative workplace culture.

The City does this by:

- Implementing the Reconciliation Action Plan, Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan and All Ages All Abilities Plan that include actions to support reconciliation, cultural diversity and inclusion
- Reducing barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
- Maintaining a safe and inclusive working environment through the delivery of all staff training and targeted Working Safely training sessions
- Ensuring that recruitment processes adhere to equal employment opportunity requirements
- Attracting and retaining talented people with a broad range of skills and experiences
- Providing targeted employment opportunities through our traineeship and apprenticeship program
- Building a flexible organisation by providing opportunities for work arrangements that accommodate different career and life stages (including flexible and part time work, job share arrangements, remote working and transition to retirement options)
- Supporting employees' cultural obligations through the inclusion of employment provisions within our Enterprise Agreement
- Creating an equitable environment for employees and their people managers to encourage open, two-way communication about responsibilities, performance, feedback and career planning



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Employee engagement surveys were conducted in August 2020 and March 2021.

The Standard Engagement Statements that employees were asked to rate were:

Expectations – I know what is expected of me at work

Recognition – I receive recognition for doing good work

Communication – I am happy with the communication from the Executive team

Team – My team is committed to doing quality work

Future – I am happy about my future at this organisation

Safety – I work in a safe environment

Resources – I have the tools and resources to do my job

The City's results in all of the standard areas were higher than the Local Government benchmark:

Survey areas	The City August 20	The City March 21	Benchmark March 21
Expectations	84.8%	83.3%	77.1%
Recognition	72.5%	72.5%	68.5%
Communication	69.5%	68.5%	62.0%
Team	87.8%	88.0%	84.2%
Future	73.0%	68.8%	68.2%
Safety	84.8%	83.8%	78.4%
Resources	75.5%	74.8%	70.2%
Overall	**78.3%**	**77.0%**	**72.7%**

The highest satisfaction level for respondents is in the **Team** area with **Safety** and **Expectations** also scoring highly.

Custom Engagement Statements were also included:

People Manager – I am happy with the communication from my people manager

Flexible Work – I am supported to take up flexible work options

Opportunities – In the last year, I have had opportunities to learn and develop

Opinion – At work, my opinions seem to count

Valued – My people manager, or someone at work, seem to value me as a person

The results indicate an increase in the satisfaction of respondents in all areas

Survey areas	August 20	March 21
People Manager	67.0%	74.0%
Flexible Work	73.3%	77.8%
Opportunities	69.8%	73.3%
Opinion	66.8%	70.3%
Valued	73.8%	80.0%
Overall	**70.0%**	**75.0%**

The results indicate an increase in the satisfaction of respondents in all areas when surveyed again in March 2021. This was a very positive result given the challenging year.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

OTHER STAFF MATTERS

Professional development

The City has a comprehensive learning and development program with four focus areas: All staff training, corporate systems and processes, professional development and working safely. The program is developed in alignment with legislative requirements, strategic priorities, and in response to needs identified through performance and development plans. The program is delivered via e-learning, online training and in-person sessions.

Fifty training sessions were held in 2020/2021 with 1,011 employees attending. There were 7,105 e-learning enrolments (cumulative) with 5,615 courses completed (cumulative).

The City also offers study support for employees undertaking further education to enhance their skills and effectiveness in their current role or in preparation for future career opportunities with the City. In the past year, 11 employees had approved study support applications.

Years of Service

In March 2021, 78 employees were recognised for reaching significant service milestones with the City.

Years of Service	Number of employees
10	31
15	24
20	5
25	7
30	6
35	4
40	1

OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Working together to be the best we can for our community

1. We have a clear vision and understand our purpose
2. We encourage each other to be the best we can
3. We listen and think things through
4. We work together to make a difference in our community

---

1. We talk to each other and share information and knowledge
2. We nurture ideas, creativity and innovation
3. We use feedback to improve our performance
4. We work together to continuously improve what we do

---

1. We plan and deliver quality programs, projects and services
2. We help each other to make informed decisions and take action
3. We make the best use of our resources
4. We work together as a team

---

1. We support each other
2. We recognise contribution, performance and achievement
3. We take responsibility for our actions
4. We work together to create a safe and healthy workplace

---

1. We get to know our customers and understand their needs
2. We do what we say we will do
3. We follow our policies and procedures
4. We work together to provide great service

---

1. We are friendly, professional and treat each other with courtesy
2. We recognise and value diverse backgrounds and perspectives
3. We gain the trust of others by acting fairly and with integrity
4. We work together to create and maintain a positive culture



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

OUR PERFORMANCE

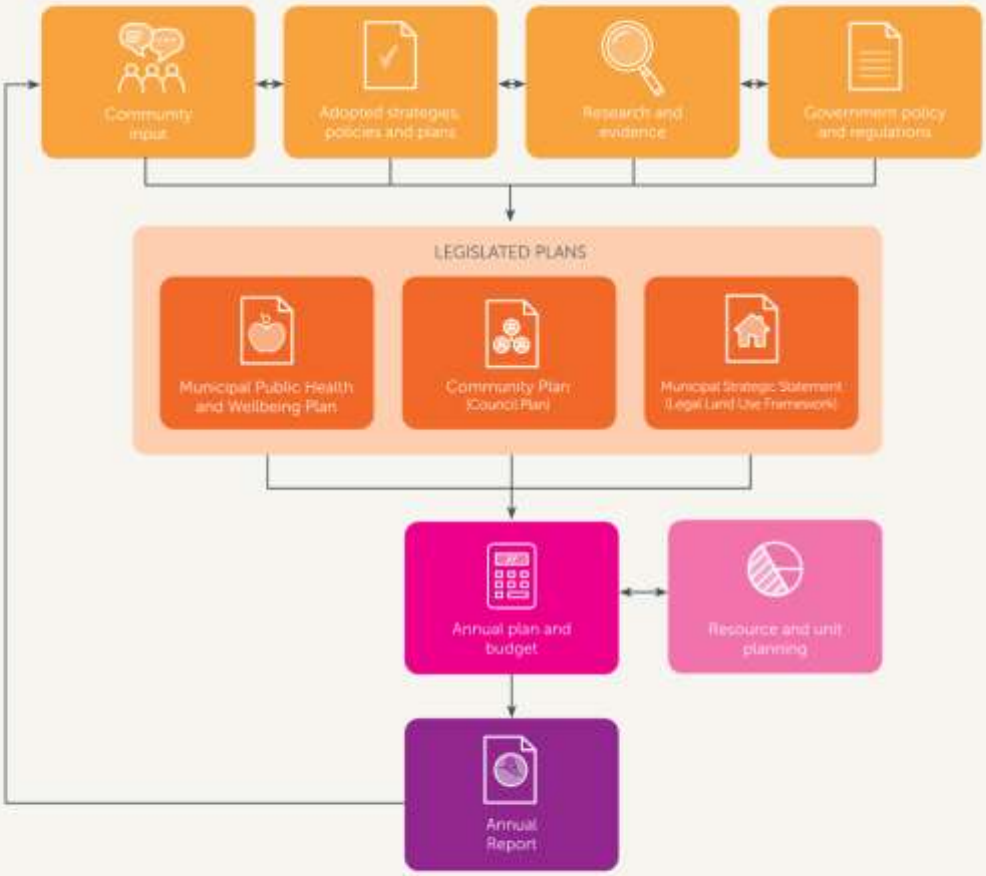
PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The Planning and Accountability Framework is found in Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act). The Act requires councils to prepare the following planning and reporting documents:

- A Council Plan within six months after each general election or by June 30, whichever is later
- A strategic resource plan for a period of at least four years and include this in the Council Plan
- A budget for each financial year
- An annual report in respect of each financial year

The following diagram shows the relationships between the key planning and reporting documents that make up the planning and accountability framework for the City. It also shows that there are opportunities for community and stakeholder input and feedback at each stage of the planning and reporting cycle.

Integrated Corporate Planning Framework



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

COUNCIL PLAN

The Community Plan 2017-2021 includes six goals to guide Council's decisions and actions over a four year period and help achieve its vision for Greater Bendigo to be the world's most liveable community. Each goal has a series of objectives and strategies for achieving these in the four-year period. The strategies have actions that reflect budget allocations and new initiatives for the 2020/2021 year.

PERFORMANCE

Council's performance for the 2020/2021 year has been reported according to each theme in the Community Plan. Performance has been measured as follows:

- The updated report for the City of Greater Bendigo Liveability Indicators (2016). The Liveability Indicators are also used as the Strategic Indicators.
- Progress in relation to major initiatives identified in the Budget
- Results against the actions in the Community Plan 2017-2021
- Services funded in the budget and persons or sections of the community who benefit from these services
- Results against the prescribed service performance indicators and measures (Local Government Performance Reporting Framework-LGPRF)

The following are the six goals and objectives as detailed in the Community Plan.

Goal 1: Lead and govern for all	1.1 Engage with all communities 1.2 Explain the reason for its decisions 1.3 Be innovative and financially responsible 1.4 Be accountable and efficient in its use of the community's money 1.5 Take a leadership role in regional planning, advocacy and work in partnership with regional councils
Goal 2: Wellbeing and fairness	2.1 Create a much healthier Greater Bendigo 2.2 Promote positive wellbeing across the Greater Bendigo community 2.3 Promote community connection 2.4 Support participation and development for residents of all ages and abilities 2.5 Create safe and resilient communities
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 3.3 Ensure Greater Bendigo is a welcoming place for new businesses and industries, and supports creativity and innovation and visitor attraction
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 to connect the health of the natural environment to the health and prosperity of our community 5.2 Demonstrate leadership in sustaining the rich biological diversity of the Greater Bendigo region that sustains healthy ecosystems
Goal 6: Embracing culture and heritage	6.1 Celebrate our unique heritage 6.2 Build pride in and shared responsibility for our public spaces 6.3 Offer and support a diverse range of events that attract and connect people 6.4 Embrace diversity 6.5 Advance reconciliation

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOAL 1 – LEAD AND GOVERN FOR ALL

1.1 Engage with all communities

1.2 Explain the reason for its decisions

1.3 Be innovative and financially responsible

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

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

Community Plan 2020/2021 actions

The following statement reviews Council's performance against its 2020/2021 actions from the Community Plan.

Actions	Status	Progress comments
Major initiatives		
1. Develop a new lens for the Budget to support deliverability, equity and long-term financial planning.	In progress	• Proposed Budget and Revenue & Rating Plan adopted • Deliberative engagement sessions (community) completed • Initial 'settings' discussion with Council on the 10-year Financial Plan • Review of Council Plan Priorities in progress against 10-year Financial Plan
2. Progress the GovHub project and liaise with project managers of the Bendigo Kangan Institute redevelopment and new Bendigo Law Courts projects to ensure the northern end of the city centre remains as accessible as possible during construction of these projects.	In progress	A formal structure for developers to work with the City to facilitate construction site set up has been established. Developers from all sites have provided unsolicited positive feedback on the smooth and collaborative process.
3. Advocate for priority issues that impact on the region including: • Long term solution for Bendigo's rising groundwater • Funding for further expansion of the Bendigo Airport • Funding for world heritage listing • Transport links for Bendigo including improved connections to the Bendigo metro rail network • Recycling and resource recovery	Completed	The City of Greater Bendigo investment prospectus has been updated. The Mayor and CEO attended the National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra in June and used this opportunity to promote the booklet. They also met with the Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management, the Hon. Trevor Evans, and provided an update on the work the City has done over recent years and what we are doing with our Circular Economy tender process. Assistant Minister Evans indicated he was interested in understanding more on our procurement plans. Met with Melanie Hotton who was appointed Director Loddon Mallee, Regional Roads Victoria. Discussion included Bendigo's growth and strategic work, industrial land and Marong Transport Link. Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan announced that contracts had been awarded to deliver three new train stations at Goornong, Huntly and Raywood and upgrade of the Bendigo Echuca line. State Government has allocated $49.6M.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Actions	Status	Progress comments
Initiatives		
4. Implementation of the Organisation Strategy including: • IT system enhancements and process improvements which support using less paper • Increased mobility for staff to work in the field and remotely	In progress	As a result of COVID-19 there was an increase in digitised forms and electronic communications and a decrease in the use of paper and printing. The Oslympics challenges each business unit to deliver the 'quick wins' of the of the Org Strategy and plan out the longer term deliverables.
5. Implement the revised Community Engagement Policy and undertake a review of the community engagement framework, guidelines and toolkit.	In progress	The Engagement Policy has been implemented. The review of the engagement guidelines and toolkit is on hold pending recruitment of a Community Engagement Officer. It is anticipated that this work will commence later in 2021.
6. Progress the Bendigo GovHub project and identify further benefits from the development.	In progress	Bendigo GovHub is now at 90 per cent detailed design. 100 per cent design scheduled for completion in October 2021. Future benefits being identified via Organisation Strategy and financial savings.

Services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020/2021 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Office of the CEO and Communications	The Office of the CEO and Communications provides strategic leadership to the organisation, implementation of Council decisions including the Community Plan and other key strategic directions. It provides representation and advocacy on key issues of importance to Greater Bendigo and the region. Communications ensures the community is well informed of City news and information is distributed using various communications channels available. It also promotes the City's services and events to the community.	(1,578) (1,715) **137**
Corporate Performance	The Corporate Performance Directorate leads, enables and strengthens our organisation to ensure it has the resources and capability to deliver on the Community Plan. The Directorate does this through developing our people and culture, systems and processes, good governance practices and financial stewardship to ensure the delivery of high-quality services and programs. The Directorate leads innovation and business transformation to ensure we are ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future in partnership with our community.	(368) (382) **14**
Our Future Workplace	The Our Future Workplace unit leads the implementation of our Organisation Strategy, which maximise the benefits from new ways of working. The changes include the physical relocation to the Bendigo GovHub.	(761) (1,339) **578**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Business Transformation	The Business Transformation unit supports the organisation to continuously review and improve its service and program delivery. Operations are continually transformed and renewed, using the opportunities provided by technology, to deliver services that are customer focused. Customer service needs are met effectively and efficiently, including providing multiple options for customers to access council services.	(2,464) (2,611) **147**
Financial Strategy	The Financial Strategy unit is responsible for Finance operations, Rates, Project Management Framework and Strategic Asset Management. The unit provides long-term financial planning to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of Council's operations and delivers the annual budget, financial, and asset reporting programs.	(22,396) (25,349) **(2,953)**
Governance	The Governance unit is responsible for providing advice and support to the Councillors and organisation to aid decision making and ensure that the Council is compliant with legislative responsibilities and good governance practices. The unit also supports effective risk management; legal advice; and ensures procurement is undertaken in a considered and responsible way to deliver on Council's and the community's objectives. In 2020/2021 this includes $0.5M related to Council elections that the Council pays to the VEC.	(4,791) (4,586) **(205)**
Information Management	The Information Management unit provides efficient and effective corporate systems and infrastructure to enable the functions of Council to be delivered at a high level of service in a cost-effective way.	(4,116) (4,569) **453**
People and Culture	The People and Culture unit supports the organisation to recruit, develop and retain the people and skills required to deliver the best services we can for the community. The unit works across the organisation to embed our preferred culture and values to ensure our workplaces are safe and inclusive.	(3,490) (3,641) **151**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Performance indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of material variations.

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Governance					
Transparency *Council decisions made at meetings closed to the public* [Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council, or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors closed to the public / Number of Council resolutions made at ordinary or special meetings of Council or at meetings of a special committee consisting only of Councillors] x100	5.69%	8.29%	7.03%	15.25%	During lockdown, meetings were held virtually where the public gallery was closed. Where restriction permitted small numbers within the gallery, this was enabled.
Consultation and engagement *Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement* Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement	56	56	54	55	
Attendance *Councillor attendance at Council meetings* [The sum of the number of Councillors who attended each ordinary and special Council meeting / (Number of ordinary and special Council meetings) × (Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election)] x100	93.16%	91.45%	90.60%	96.30%	
Service cost *Cost of elected representation* [Direct cost of the governance service / Number of Councillors elected at the last Council general election]	$54,562	$60,204	$56,620	$61,424	
Satisfaction *Satisfaction with Council decisions* [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the performance of Council in making decisions in the interest of the community]	54	57	53	54	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOAL 2 – WELLBEING AND FAIRNESS

2.1 Create a much healthier Greater Bendigo

2.2 Promote positive wellbeing across the Greater Bendigo community

2.3 Promote community connection

2.4 Support participation and development for residents of all ages and abilities

2.5 Create safe and resilient communities

Community Plan 2020/2021 actions

The following statement reviews Council's performance against its 2020/2021 actions from the Community Plan.

Actions	Status	Progress comments
Major initiatives		
7. Deliver a range of facility improvements to support active and healthy lifestyles including: • Kennington Recreation Reserve Pavilion upgrade • Kangaroo Flat Bowls Club synthetic green and lighting • Pool improvements at Marong, Bendigo and Brennan Park • Amenities upgrade to Strathfieldsaye Recreation Reserve sports clubrooms in Club Court • Renewal of White Hills Football Ground clubrooms	In progress	Kennington pavilion under construction. Kangaroo Flat Bowls Club green complete. Marong Pool improvements complete. Brennan Park and Faith Leech pool works complete. Strathfieldsaye Recreation Reserve redevelopment fully designed and tenders for construction being prepared for awarding. White Hills clubrooms complete and further design for netball change rooms underway.
8. Develop a scope and concept plan for the Peter Krenz Leisure Centre redevelopment	In progress	Concept design and business planning development is being finalised with the site constraints. Work to be presented back to the community reference group late 2021.
9. Staged masterplan of the recreational space at Catherine McAuley College with cost estimates	Completed	Complete and presented to Council
Initiatives		
10. Develop and deliver initiatives to provide relief and support to our community to recover from the impact of COVID-19	Completed	The Community Relief & Recovery Committee continues to meet monthly to identify challenges and opportunities to support the community. Council has received a number of grants from the State and Federal governments that are providing assistance. A report is being prepared for Council summarising activities over 2020/2021.
11. Implement priority actions from the Local Food Systems Strategy	In progress	Progressing with a number number of key actions from Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy including work on developing a Local Food Brand, providing more support for community gardens and the development of a regional healthy catering guide. Project proposals developed for a range of further projects to continue implementation. Council report currently being drafted providing a 12-month progress update for Council in July/August 2021.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Actions	Status	Progress comments
12. Implement the Active and Healthy Bendigo Framework	In progress	Significant progress of drafting. Work to progress with newly appointed Planning & Policy Officer resourcing with a key action to commence the engagement process.
13. Support the Healthy Greater Bendigo initiative in partnership with Bendigo Health and Bendigo Community Health	Completed	Work continues with partners to identify opportunities and build sector capacity. The Healthy Greater Bendigo website was launched during this period which provides a range of resources for community partners. The team is supporting the Health and Wellbeing Plan Project Reference Group with training focused on systems thinking and collective impact. A summary of activities is being prepared for sharing with Foundation partners in a meeting in July 2021. This will be shared with Council.
14. Advocate for continued funding of the Healthy Heart program	Completed	Advocacy ongoing. Further funding achieved to June 2022.
15. Continue implementation of the All Ages, All Abilities Action Plan	In progress	Implementation of the plan continues on track and is due for completion later this year.
16. Contribute to the Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity and develop a gender equity action plan aligned with the Gender Equity Strategy	In progress	Work continues around advancing Gender Equity both internally and externally (with the Coalition). An Independent Chair has been appointed for the Coalition. A project brief has been developed to guide work internally and ensure compliance with the Act. A Project Control Group has also been set up to guide this work.
17. Implement priority actions in the Community Volunteering Strategy including establishing the Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group and developing a public education campaign on the benefits of volunteering	Completed	The Greater Bendigo Volunteering Reference Group is established and performing its function of providing advice pertaining to all aspects of volunteering and disseminating information regarding volunteering resources and training. The public education campaign has included the promotion of the City's community Group Reactivation grants supporting the reactivation of volunteers from the impacts of COVID-19.
18. Develop and implement the virtual community hub, Connect Greater Bendigo	Completed	The development of this project is completed. It is now in the ongoing maintenance phase.
19. Develop a Community Hubs Strategy in alignment with the Community Facilities Policy	In progress	Strategy development is in the very early stages. Councillors have endorsed the project brief, project governance structures are in place and community engagement processes have commenced.
20. Undertake a review of the Community Granting Policy	In progress	Review process is underway with significant consultation being undertaken.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020/2021 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Health and Wellbeing Directorate	The Health and Wellbeing Directorate plans and delivers a broad and diverse range of community services and programs aimed at supporting people to live their lives fully and be active, safe, engaged and healthy. The focus of the directorate is on developing policy, plans and programs in partnership with the community, delivering services, and supporting the delivery of community infrastructure projects.	(666) (685) **19**
Active and Healthy Lifestyles	The Active and Healthy Lifestyles unit delivers integrated policy, planning, programs and infrastructure that support the community to make healthier choices the easier choice and works under the framework of the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan.	(9,033) (9,963) **931**
Community Partnerships	The Community Partnerships unit works closely with the community to plan and develop policy and programs that increase community safety, engagement and connection, prevent discrimination and improve access and inclusion for diverse groups across the community. Current target groups include rural residents, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, the Indigenous community, children and youth.	(3,185) (4,666) **1,481**
Community Wellbeing	The Community Wellbeing unit delivers a broad range of services to children and families across the City that aim to promote children's learning and development. It also provides community-based services to frail aged residents to promote independent living and prevent premature admission to long term residential care.	(588) (1,472) **884**
Goldfield Library Services	The Goldfields Library Corporation provides a public library service from six sites throughout the municipality, with branches in Bendigo, Kangaroo Flat, Eaglehawk and Heathcote, along with Library agencies at Axedale and Elmore. The Bendigo Library also includes the Bendigo Regional Archive Centre. This service is delivered under a Funding and Service Agreement in partnership with Loddon, Mount Alexander and Macedon Ranges Shires.	(3,282) (3,373) **91**
Safe and Healthy Environments	The Safe and Healthy Environments unit's purpose is to advocate, enable and mediate with and on behalf of the community to promote and protect health, prevent the spread of infectious disease, ensure safe development and support the protection of our environments, and operate the City's pound and animal shelter services at Bendigo Animal Relief Centre. This is achieved by delivering integrated regulation, policy, planning and programs.	(210) (1,014) **803**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Performance indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of material variations.

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Aquatic Facilities					
Service standard *Health inspections of aquatic facilities* [Number of authorised officer inspections of Council aquatic facilities / Number of Council aquatic facilities]	1.69	1.29	1.36	0.93	Aquatic facilities were closed for six months of the year due to COVID
Utilisation *Utilisation of aquatic facilities* [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	1.60	4.23	4.26	2.92	Reduction in visits as the public were under stay at home orders.
Service cost *Cost of aquatic facilities* [Direct cost of aquatic facilities less income received / Number of visits to aquatic facilities]	New in 2020	New in 2020	$5.57	$7.69	This measure is based on number of visits. There was a major reduction in visitors but contracted costs remained consistent – e.g. contracted management fees.
Animal Management					
Timeliness *Time taken to action animal management requests* [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all animal management requests / Number of animal management requests]	1.34	1.34	1.85	1.02	Reduction in animal management requests due to COVID-19 restrictions.
Service standard *Animals reclaimed* [Number of animals reclaimed / Number of animals collected] x100	49.98%	45.36%	31.83%	42.76%	In 2020/2021, there has been an increase in the number of animals reclaimed. Due to an increase in demand in pet ownership from lockdown.
Animals rehomed [Number of animals rehomed / Number of animals collected] x100	New in 2020	New in 2020	34.93%	33.66%	
Service cost *Cost of animal management service per population* [Direct cost of the animal management service / Population]	New in 2020	New in 2020	$17.80	$16.90	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Health and safety *Animal management prosecutions* [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	New in 2020	New in 2020	100.00%	100.00%	
Food Safety					
Timeliness *Time taken to action food complaints* [Number of days between receipt and first response action for all food complaints / Number of food complaints]	2.01	3.21	3.27	2.40	Less complaints were received due to COVID-19 food premises closure during the pandemic so complaints were able to be processed more quickly.
Service standard *Food safety assessments* [Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that receive an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984 / Number of registered class 1 food premises and class 2 food premises that require an annual food safety assessment in accordance with the Food Act 1984] x100	84.25%	90.52%	81.53%	6.10%	This figure is greatly affected due to COVID-19. Premises received routine inspections rather than assessments to allow for better risk management during the pandemic and due to modified food production by food businesses.
Service cost *Cost of food safety service* [Direct cost of the food safety service / Number of food premises registered or notified in accordance with the Food Act 1984]	$592.91	$418.73	$488.72	$542.48	Reduction in the number of premises operating due to lockdown closures, equates to less registrations but overall costs remained stable.
Health and safety *Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications* [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100	87.12%	80.88%	85.19%	71.23%	Lower quantity of non-compliance notifications year-on-year due to lockdown restrictions on hospitality sector.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Libraries					
Utilisation *Physical library collection usage* [Number of physical library collection item loans / Number of physical library collection items]	6.22	5.65	5.16	5.27	Note: From 2019/2020, this indicator measures the performance of physical library items as a subset of the wider library collection.
Resource standard *Recently purchased library collection* [Number of library collection items purchased in the last 5 years / Number of library collection items] x100	75.40%	72.00%	72.00%	72.00%	
Participation *Active library borrowers in municipality* [Number of active library borrowers in the last three years / The sum of the population for the last three years] x100	14.07%	12.91%	12.47%	10.34%	Decrease in active borrowers due to COVID-19 restrictions forcing libraries to close. In line with non-essential services.
Service cost *Cost of library service per population* [Direct cost of the library service / Population]	New in 2020	New in 2020	$9.42	$25.53	2019/2020 result should have been $25.37 - the member contribution figure was missed. Note: Indicator is replacing previous 'Cost of library service' indicator which measured based on number of visits.
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)					
Service standard *Infant enrolments in the MCH service* [Number of infants enrolled in the MCH service (from birth notifications received) / Number of birth notifications received] x100	101.54%	101.23%	100.93%	100.90%	
Service cost *Cost of the MCH service* [Cost of the MCH service / Hours worked by MCH nurses]	$75.07	$77.50	$77.49	$54.81	Reduction in Maternal and Child Health services. Programs could not operate when there was stay at home orders.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Participation					
Participation in the MCH service [Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	77.85%	78.45%	78.02%	77.34%	
Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children [Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	80.20%	78.47%	82.97%	72.20%	Reduction in Maternal and Child Health services. Programs could not operate when there was stay at home orders.
Satisfaction					
Participation in four-week Key Age and Stage visit [Number of four-week key age and stage visits / Number of birth notifications received] x100	New in 2020	New in 2020	96.76%	98.00%	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

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

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

Community Plan 2020/2021 actions

The following statement reviews Council's performance against its 2020/2021 actions from the Community Plan.

Actions	Status	Progress comments
Major initiatives		
21. Implement priority actions in the Creative Industries Strategy	In progress	Priority strategies have included research into grant opportunities for creatives, the development of a digital strategy review document, recovery funding and projects, delivering a network event for creatives and gastronomy.
22. Further development of the Bendigo Airport Terminal and Business Park, including plans for airport security upgrades	In progress	Federal funding application has been submitted.
23. Advocate for funding for the Chinese precinct and Dragon Museum	In progress	New business case and masterplan is underway.
Initiatives		
24. Develop plans to implement the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy designation	Completed	As part of implementing the UNESCO City of Gastronomy designation, a Council Advisory Committee was established to guide the work of the Creative Cities Officer. A sub-committee has developed a four-year Implementation Framework and Action Plan, endorsed by Council in August 2020, which sets out priorities and actions to achieve in the coming years.
25. Implement priority actions in the Industrial Land Development Strategy	Completed	Priority actions continue to be implemented, including progress of the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct (including site identification, due diligence, business case, and key stakeholder discussions). Priority actions will continue to be implemented for the life of the Strategy.
26. Adopt the reviewed International Relations Policy and develop an International Relations Strategy	Completed	Review of the International Relations Policy is complete and endorsed by Council.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020/2021 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Strategy and Growth Directorate	The Strategy and Growth Directorate incorporates responsibility for Bendigo Art Gallery, Business Services, Bendigo Venues and Events, Regional Sustainable Development, Statutory Planning, and Tourism and Major Events. The overarching role of the Strategy and Growth Directorate is to contribute to the economic, cultural and social prosperity of our region by identifying and supporting investment opportunities, employment generation and the integrated planning for the sustainable growth of our City and region. In doing so, the directorate continues to work towards Greater Bendigo being the world's most liveable community.	(197) (410) **214**
Business Services	The Business Services unit operates the Bendigo Airport and Bendigo Livestock Exchange in line with all regulatory requirements. It also supports other businesses including Bendigo Heritage Attractions, Golden Dragon Museum, Discovery Science and Technology Centre, and the Bendigo Stadium.	(1,189) (1,663) **474**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

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 liveability to our community

Community Plan 2020/2021 actions

The following statement reviews Council's performance against its 2020/2021 actions from the Community Plan.

Actions	Status	Progress comments
Major initiatives		
27. Develop Plan Greater Bendigo 2.0	In progress	Plan Greater Bendigo was adopted on January 24, 2018 and identifies a number of transformational projects to 2050. Given it is a recent document, and its actions are still relevant, it is considered premature to prepare Plan Greater Bendigo 2.0.
28. Deliver major drainage projects including: Kennington Reservoir Wall refurbishment design Stage 2 of Burns Street drainage	Completed	Consultant appointed for investigation of Kennington Reservoir dam wall. Preliminary testing completed. Burns Street drainage completed.
29. Seal local roads and road safety work including: Axedale-Goornong Road reconstruction Belle Vue Road / Sullivan Street construction, various road safety upgrade projects	Completed	Axedale-Goornong Road reconstruction and Belle Vue/ Sullivan Street reconstruction are both completed.
Initiatives		
30. Upgrade of major road street lighting to increase energy efficiency	In progress	Delivery of the Lighting the Regions project elements scheduled for 2020/2021 commenced in June 2021 and is anticipated to be completed by September 2021. Delays were attributable to supplier issues due to significant demand across the 11 participating municipalities. A further 360 LED installations are scheduled to be installed as part of phase 2 of the project between September 2021 and February 2022.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020/2021 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Presentation and Assets Directorate	The Presentation and Assets Directorate provides and maintains high quality assets and services that help make Greater Bendigo a great place to live, while planning and delivering new assets and services to support Bendigo's ongoing growth. Demonstrating and committing to environmentally responsible thinking and practices, and encouraging this throughout the organisation and community, is an important focus for the directorate. Business units include Engineering, Resource Recovery and Education, Works, Parks and Open Space, and Property Services.	(33,784) (33,407) **(377)**
Engineering	The Engineering unit develops and delivers physical infrastructure to support a broad range of services to the community. This includes the development of capital works projects to provide renewal and new assets to meet the expanding population of Bendigo and increasing community expectations. The unit is responsible for strategic planning of infrastructure through asset management and development of strategic plans for asset groups. The unit also provides support services across the organisation in areas of asset management and GIS.	(880) (1,435) **555**
Property Services	The Property Services unit's main purpose is to ensure that community assets (buildings and properties) are developed, upgraded, maintained and utilised to ensure the greatest benefit and lifestyle for members of the community. The team is committed to ensure that council facilities are safe for public use and comply with the relevant codes and standards.	(8,551) (8,311) **(240)**
Regional Sustainable Development	The Regional Sustainable Development unit delivers forward- thinking strategic advice to Council on the long-term planning and development of the City and region through research, community engagement and an ongoing comprehension of wider regional, state and national policies and directions. It provides direction and guidance for Council to plan, make decisions and implement projects. It develops strategies and plans and provides advice and recommendations.	(3,843) (4,664) **822**
Statutory Planning	The Statutory Planning unit facilitates planning and delivery of timely and quality planning decisions and advice, provides a heritage advisory and heritage architecture service, implements planning scheme amendments, and implementation of Marong and Heathcote flood amendments. Many of the services delivered by the Statutory Planning unit are in accordance with State Government legislation and local strategies and policies adopted by Council following intensive community consultation.	(1,721) (1,795) **74**
Works	The Works unit is responsible for the construction of new projects and renewal maintenance of the City's existing civil infrastructure. The team undertake the construction and maintenance of the City's roads, drains and footpaths, and the civil works construction of sporting facilities, car parks and other civil projects. The unit is responsible for the organisation's plant and fleet assets, including purchase, maintenance and disposal. The unit also delivers maintenance works in accordance with the Road Management Plan.	(12,927) (13,060) **133**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Performance indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of material variations.

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Roads					
Satisfaction of use *Sealed local road requests* [Number of sealed local road requests / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100	44.67	46.51	44.12	42.54	
Condition *Sealed local roads maintained to condition standards* [Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100	99.53%	99.47%	99.41%	99.33%	
Service cost *Cost of sealed local road reconstruction* [Direct cost of sealed local road reconstruction / Square metres of sealed local roads reconstructed]	$55.55	$112.11	$173.19	$132.62	Costs vary significantly based on works undertaken in each year. Mapping was also reviewed prior year and costs related to kerb and channel resealing were included, which in some previous periods were not included.
Service cost *Cost of sealed local road resealing* [Direct cost of sealed local road resealing / Square metres of sealed local roads resealed]	$7.23	$7.07	$8.71	$7.17	Prior year had a greater emphasis on local road resealing. Current year in line with historical trend.
Satisfaction *Satisfaction with sealed local roads* [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]	57	60	60	61	
Statutory Planning					
Timeliness *Time taken to decide planning applications* [The median number of days between receipt of a planning application and a decision on the application]	50.50	53.60	52.50	58.00	The increase is due to increased planning permits and amendments received.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Service standard *Planning applications decided within required time frames* [(Number of regular planning application decisions made within 60 days) + (Number of VicSmart planning application decisions made within 10 days) / Number of planning application decisions made] x100	74.17%	71.23%	66.67%	67.78%	
Service cost *Cost of statutory planning service* [Direct cost of the statutory planning service / Number of planning applications received]	$2,660.23	$2,906.32	$3,471.04	$2,190.81	Previously the denominator for this calculation specified 'New Permit Applications' only. This meant it wasn't including amended applications which make up around 25 per cent of our applications.
Decision making *Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT* [Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100	71.43%	58.33%	75.00%	87.50%	The last two years have been consistent with eight planning decisions being disputed in VCAT. This year seven out of eight decisions were upheld. Prior year was six out of eight were upheld. 2018/2019 was an outlier as seven out of 12 decisions were upheld.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

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

5.2 Demonstrate leadership in sustaining the rich biological diversity of the Greater Bendigo region that sustains healthy ecosystems

Community Plan 2020/2021 actions

The following statement reviews Council's performance against its 2020/2021 actions from the Community Plan.

Actions	Status	Progress comments
Major initiatives		
31. Determine a preferred solution for waste and resource recovery including: Establishing a Waste project control group Review guidance provided by State Government for future waste treatment and management	In progress	The first evaluation meeting took place on July 12 to complete the first panel meeting. Two external members assisted to provide feedback – this included CEO of Planet Ark and CEO of Circular Economy Victoria. The Circular Greater Bendigo Project is currently underway and is designed to find alternative solutions to resource recovery to create a circular economy and divert materials from landfill. An expression of interest and closed tender process has been completed.
32. Progress the rehabilitation of landfills at Eaglehawk and Wolstencroft	In progress	Rehabilitation of Eaglehawk has commenced and is due to be completed by December 2021.
Initiatives		
33. Continue to implement the Environment Strategy actions including flagship projects such as: Finalisation of Power to the People Establishing a Bendigo Drawdown Alliance Continuing to deliver the Whole of Council One Planet Report	Completed	Relevant actions from the current Environment Strategy are underway. A new five-year strategy is under development.
34. Implement Greening Greater Bendigo tree planting program	Completed	2,500 trees programmed for winter 2021. 811 planted as of July 5, 2021.

Services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020/2021 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Parks and Open Space	The Parks and Open Space unit is responsible for the management and design of a large portfolio of parks, gardens, reserves, sports fields and areas of open space for the City. The unit has a range of specialised park, design, horticultural and environmental management techniques and practices. The aim of the unit is to effectively and sustainably manage these assets through the efficient use of available resources and the provision of high levels of customer service whilst meeting both Council and stakeholder needs.	(12,431) (12,613) **182**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Resource Recovery and Education	The Resource Recovery and Education unit provides waste management and resource recovery services to efficiently and effectively meet our customers' expectations and in compliance with current legislation. The unit is responsible for street and footpath cleaning, weed management and the cleaning at bus stops, bus shelters and roundabouts. The rehabilitation of landfills to community expectations and EPA standards is also the responsibility of the unit.	(18,619) (18,116) **(502)**

Performance indicators

The following statement provides the results of the prescribed service performance indicators and measures including explanation of material variations.

Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	2019	2020	2021	Material variations
Waste Collection					
Satisfaction					
Kerbside bin collection requests [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling bin collection requests / Number of kerbside bin collection households] x1,000	146.53	171.08	155.65	160.28	
Service standard					
Kerbside collection bins missed [Number of kerbside garbage and recycling collection bins missed / Number of scheduled kerbside garbage and recycling collection bin lifts] x10,000	5.04	1.34	3.68	4.05	
Service cost					
Cost of kerbside garbage bin collection service [Direct cost of the kerbside garbage bin collection service / Number of kerbside garbage collection bins]	$145.35	$140.83	$145.60	$154.42	Changes in recycling markets as some items are no longer accepted in kerbside recycling and are returned to landfill.
Cost of kerbside recyclables collection service [Direct cost of the kerbside recyclables bin collection service / Number of kerbside recyclables collection bins]	$36.53	$57.42	$58.96	$66.46	
Waste diversion					
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill [Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100	46.84%	58.00%	50.80%	50.19%	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOAL 6 – EMBRACING OUR CULTURE AND HERTIAGE

6.1 Celebrate our unique heritage

6.2 Build pride in and shared responsibility for our public spaces

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

6.4 Embrace diversity

6.5 Advance reconciliation

Community Plan 2020/2021 actions

The following statement reviews Council's performance against its 2020/2021 actions from the Community Plan.

Actions	Status	Progress comments
Major initiatives		
35. Renewal of our buildings and heritage assets for the benefit of the community including: Restoration of the Gas Works Purifier Shed Capital Theatre roof, portico ceiling and pavement Continuation of the Bendigo Town Hall external facade restoration	In progress	Gasworks Purifier Shed - remediation works completed by DTF. HV permit and Building Permits received, and contractor procured. Unplanned delay for approval and subsequent ordering and delivery of materials. Anticipate completion late November 2021. Capital Theatre roof - planning undertaking and request for quote underway. Program to be confirmed.
36. Advocate for funding for artefact storage at Nolan Street	In progress	Bendigo Art Gallery Heritage Collections Officer is working with the Community Partnerships team to rehouse the Bendigo Historical Society collection. Currently assessing short term solutions that may involve some work on existing site, medium term that involve relocation and longer term offsite. Funding has been allocated from Gallery Operations budget to establish a Heritage Hub at the Mews. The Heritage Hub will run a practical program of collection management training and conservation training for Bendigo Historical Society and all historical groups to strategically consolidate and care for their collections.
37. Review the masterplan of the Golden Dragon Museum	In progress	Masterplan and Business Case will be completed in first quarter of 2021/2022.
Initiatives		
38. Provide support programs for outdoor performing arts including: Summer in the Parks Program with live local music artists Bendigo Easter Festival with live local music artists Continue to facilitate Bendigo Blues and Roots Festival	In progress	The City continues to provide opportunities through our annual events which include Summer in the Parks and Bendigo Easter Festival. The City is a long-term sponsor of the Bendigo Blues and Roots Music Festival and enjoys a fruitful relationship with the event organisers and associated artists that we have come to know from this event.
39. Completion of detailed design for the redeveloped Old Municipal Baths in Rosalind Park	In progress	Concept plans have been publicly released and detailed design is progressing.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Actions	Status	Progress comments
40. Promote Greater Bendigo as a welcoming city for all by developing a new Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan, including actions to increase access and inclusion for multicultural communities and opportunities for creativity, respect and celebration.	In progress	Evaluation complete. Stakeholder workshop to guide the development of the plan held. Commencing the collation of this information and about to draft the plan. Scheduled for Council Briefing on August 9, 2021.
41. Advance reconciliation by developing a new Reconciliation Plan including actions to increase procurement opportunities, advance place naming and cultural interpretation activities and improve cultural safety in City facilities	Completed	*Barpungu* has been developed, adopted by Council, and activities to meet goals underway (including areas listed above). Aboriginal Place Naming Officer has been employed, a focus on procurement is in progress as well as cultural safety.

Services

The following statement provides information in relation to the services funded in the 2020/2021 Budget and the persons or sections of the community who are provided the service.

Service unit	Description	Net cost Actual (less) Budget (equals) Variance $000
Bendigo Art Gallery	Bendigo Art Gallery develops and delivers exhibitions, public programs and associated events for Bendigo Art Gallery and the Post Office Gallery that are educational and appealing to a diverse range of audiences and add to the attraction of Bendigo as a centre for arts and culture.	(2,486) (2,989) **503**
Bendigo Venues and Events	The Bendigo Venues and Events unit provides quality performing arts programming and activities to the central Victorian region and provides facilities and opportunities for participation in the arts.	(3,389) (2,807) **(582)**
Tourism and Major Events	The Tourism and Major Events unit activates Greater Bendigo and the region to achieve the aims for our community as outlined in the 2017-2021 Community Plan. The unit actively promotes Greater Bendigo as an attractive destination for business, leisure and tourism to domestic and international visitors. Our role is to deliver key initiatives that have a positive economic and social impact for our region that positions Greater Bendigo to be the world's most liveable community.	(3,866) (4,177) **311**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND OTHER INFORMATION

GOVERNANCE

The Greater Bendigo City Council is a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic).

Council has several roles including:

- Considering the diverse needs of the local community in decision-making
- Providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring achievements
- Ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner
- Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments
- Fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life

Council is committed to effective and sustainable forms of democratic and corporate governance as the key to ensuring that Council and its administration meet the community's priorities. The community has many opportunities to provide input into Council's decision-making processes, including community consultation, public forums such as ward meetings and listening posts, and the ability to make submissions on strategies and plans. Council's formal decision-making processes are conducted solely through Council meetings.

The 2020 Act clearly distinguishes between the roles and responsibilities of the Council as elected Councillors and the administrative (Council employees) arm of Local Government. This demarcation of roles is sometimes referred to as the separation of powers. The primary role of Councillors is to focus on policy development and strategic delivery of services in the public interest. The internal day-to-day work of Local Government is carried out by City staff members under the direction of the CEO. This operational work is directed by the decisions of the Council through the Council Plan.

Purposes and functions under new Act

New legislation and regulations governing the operation of Victorian municipalities, including the City of Greater Bendigo, continued to be phased in during 2020-2021, after receiving Royal assent in March 2020.

The Local Government Act 2020 represents the most substantial review of Victorian local government legislation in more than 30 years with a strong focus on a good governance framework for Councils.

The new Act defines the purposes and functions of local government as well as providing the legal framework for establishing and administering Victorian Councils.

The Act also specifies overarching governance principles for Councils including:

- Achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations
- Promoting the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks
- Engaging the municipal community in strategic planning and strategic decision making.
- Ensuring Council's ongoing financial viability
- Ensuring the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information.

This new legislation is being phased in in four key stages. This means that for the period of the phase-in Council's activities will be governed by both the new 2020 Act and parts of the old 1989 Act.

During the year under review, Council dedicated considerable resources to ensure it met its obligations under the new Act to develop and implement a number of key governance documents and activities including:

- Public Transparency Policy
- New Governance Rules covering the conduct of meetings
- Election Period Policy covering decision-making during election periods
- Council Expenses and Councillor Support Policy
- Audit and Risk Charter
- Updated delegations
- Integration of new provisions for Delegated Committees/Community Asset Committees.
- Mandatory candidate training
- New Councillor Code of Conduct
- Community Engagement policy
- Gift policy
- Councillor Induction Training
- Annual budget
- Revenue and Rating Plan

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Council Election 2020

A General Council Election was held on Saturday October 24, 2020 via postal voting with the Victorian Electoral Commission.

Two sitting Councillors retired from office:

- Matt Emond (Lockwood Ward)
- James Williams (Whipstick Ward)

Three sitting Councillors were not returned to office:

- George Flack OAM (Eppalock Ward)
- Susie Hawke (Eppalock Ward)
- Malcolm Pethybridge (Whipstick Ward)

Four sitting Councillors were returned to office:

- Cr Dr Jennifer Alden (Lockwood Ward)
- Cr Rod Fyffe OAM (Lockwood Ward)
- Cr Andrea Metcalf (Whipstick Ward)
- Cr Margaret O'Rourke (Eppalock Ward)

The City welcomed five new Councillors:

- Cr Matthew Evans (Eppalock Ward)
- Cr David Fagg (Whipstick Ward)
- Cr Greg Penna (Eppalock Ward)
- Cr Julie Sloan (Whipstick Ward)
- Cr Vaughan Williams (Lockwood Ward)

Returning and new Councillors were officially installed into office at a ceremony on Tuesday November 10, 2020.

Meetings of Council 2020/2021

Council conducts open public meetings the third week of each month, on a Monday, for the current Council. Members of the community are welcome to attend these meetings and observe from the gallery, subject to COVID restrictions, or via live stream on the Council website or listen via Phoenix FM. Council meetings also provide the opportunity for community members to submit a question to the Council on any matter except for planning matters on the agenda that night.

Council held 11 ordinary Council meetings during the financial year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, with the table below summarising Councillor attendance.

Councillors	2016-2020 Term		2020-2024 Term		Total
	Council Meeting	Special Council Meeting	Council Meeting	Special Council Meeting	
Cr Matt Emond	4				4
Cr George Flack OAM	4				4
Cr Susie Hawke	4				4
Cr Malcom Pethybridge	4				4
Cr James Williams	4				4
Cr Margaret O'Rourke (Mayor until Oct 2020)	4		6		10
Cr Dr Jennifer Alden (Mayor from Nov 2020)	4		7		11
Cr Rod Fyffe OAM	4		7		11
Cr Andrea Metcalf	4		7		11
Cr Matthew Evans			7		7
Cr David Fagg			7		7
Cr Greg Penna			7		7
Cr Julie Sloan			7		7
Cr Vaughan Williams			7		7

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Delegated committees

The Act allows councils to establish one or more delegated committees.

During this period Council supported Bendigo Maubisse Friendship Committee's move to become an incorporated association to continue the work previously undertaken by the committee on behalf of Council. The committee's work involves facilitating volunteer support from the Bendigo community for the Maubisse community in Timor Leste.

Accordingly, Council no longer has any delegated committees.

Councillor Code of Conduct

The Act requires all Victorian municipalities to maintain a Councillor Code of Conduct as part of good governance.

The Act requires Council to develop and maintain an internal resolution procedure for the purposes of addressing an alleged contravention of the Councillor Code of Conduct and for this procedure to be specified in the Code of Conduct.

Following the general election in October 2020, a new code of conduct was developed in accordance with the requirements of the Act and was adopted by Councillors on February 15, 2021.

Conflict of interest

Councillors are elected by the residents and ratepayers to act in the best interests of the community. This is a position of trust that requires Councillors to act in the public interest. When a Council delegates its powers to a Council officer or a committee, the committee or officer also needs to act in the public interest. A conflict of interest occurs when a personal or private interest might compromise a Councillor's, officer's, or committee member's ability to act in the public interest. A conflict of interest exists even if no improper act results from it.

Council has a comprehensive procedure in place to accommodate the disclosure of a conflict of interest. Declaration of a conflict of interest is a standard agenda item for all Council and committee meetings. While the procedures vary depending on the particular role and circumstances, in general they involve disclosing the relevant interests in a specific way and then stepping aside from the relevant decision-making process or from the exercise of the public duty. All disclosed conflicts of interest are recorded. During 2020/2021, seven conflicts of interest were declared at Council meetings.

Councillor allowances

In accordance with section 39 of the new Act, Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duty as a Councillor. The Mayor is also entitled to receive a higher allowance. The State Government sets the upper and lower limits for all allowances paid to Councillors and Mayors. Councils are divided into three categories based on the income and population of each Council. In this instance Greater Bendigo City Council is recognised as a category 3 Council.

The following table contains a summary of the Councillors' full year entitlement, inclusive of 9.5 percent superannuation.

Councillor allowances

Councillors	Allowance $	
	2016-2020 Term	2020-2024 Term
Cr Matt Emond	34,149	0
Cr George Flack OAM[1]	30,734	0
Cr Susie Hawke[2]	25,710	0
Cr Malcom Pethybridge	34,149	0
Cr James Williams	34,149	0
Cr Margaret O'Rourke (Mayor until Oct 2020)	109,077	34,431
Cr Dr Jennifer Alden (Mayor from Nov 2020)	34,149	109,975
Cr Rod Fyffe OAM	34,149	34,431
Cr Andrea Metcalf	34,149	34,431
Cr Matthew Evans	0	34,431
Cr David Fagg	0	34,431
Cr Greg Penna	0	34,431
Cr Julie Sloan	0	34,431
Cr Vaughan Williams	0	34,431

[1] Cr Flack requested his allowance be reduced by 10% as a cost-cutting initiative

[2] Cr Hawke's term commenced 14/10/2019

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Councillor expenses

In accordance with Section 40 of the new Act, Council is required to reimburse a Councillor for expenses incurred whilst performing their duties as a Councillor. Council is also required to adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors. The policy provides guidance for the payment of reimbursements of expenses and the provision of resources, facilities and other support to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to discharge their duties. Council also publishes in its Annual Report the details of the expenses, including reimbursement of expenses for each Councillor and member of a Council committee paid by the Council. The details of the expenses for the 2020/2021 year are set out in the following table.

Councillor expenses

Councillors	TR $	CM $	CC $	IC $	CT $	Total $
Current						
Cr Dr Jennifer Alden Jul 2020 - Jun 2021 (Current Mayor)	3,283	-	-	944	5,469	9,697
Cr Matthew Evans Nov 2020 - Jun 2021	-	-	-	315	1,370	1,685
Cr David Fagg Nov 2020 - Jun 2021	-	-	-	325	1,318	1,643
Cr Rod Fyffe Jul 2020 - Jun 2021	552	568	-	1,449	869	3,439
Cr Andrea Metcalf Jul 2020 - Jun 2021	-	-	-	531	1,469	2,000
Cr Margaret O'Rourke Jul 2020 - Jun 2021	1,183	1,579	-	779	1,453	4,994
Cr Greg Penna Nov 2020 - Jun 2021	7	2,687	-	315	1,412	4,420
Cr Julie Sloan Nov 2020 - Jun 2021	-	842	-	314	1,412	2,569
Cr Vaughan Williams Nov 2020 - Jun 2021	-	-	-	315	1,329	1,643
Former						
Cr Matt Emond Jul 2020 - Oct 2020	-	-	-	426	-	426
Cr George Flack Jul 2020 - Oct 2020	-	-	-	266	-	266
Cr Susie Hawke Jul 2020 - Oct 2020	-	-	-	206	-	206
Cr Malcolm Pethybridge Jul 2020 - Oct 2020	-	-	-	853	-	853
Cr James Williams Jul 2020 - Oct 2020	-	-	-	328	-	328

Legend: **TR** – Travel, **CM** – Car Mileage, **CC** – Child Care, **IC** – Information and Communication expenses, **CT** – Conferences and Training expenses

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

MANAGEMENT

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is a formally appointed advisory committee to Council. The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent assurance and advice to Council in relation to financial management, audit, risk management, internal controls, regulatory compliance and reporting, and council operations. The membership of the Committee during 2020/2021 was:

Independent members

- Mr Warren Pollock (Chair)
- Ms Jovana Obradovic-Tantra
- Mr Shannon Buckley
- Mr Graham Bastian (July 1 to September 30, 2020)
- Mr Stephen Brown (October 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021)

Council members

- Mayor Cr Dr Jennifer Alden
- Cr Margaret O'Rourke
- Cr Andrea Metcalf

Attending Officers

- Mr Craig Niemann Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Andrew Cooney Director, Corporate Performance
- Ms Jessica Clarke-Hong Manager Governance
- Mr Nathan Morsillo Manager Financial Strategy
- Ms Anna Connolly Risk and Assurance Advisor

The Audit and Risk Committee meets as a minimum of four times per year to consider various issues, submissions and reports, and to make recommendations to Council and staff in relation to such matters as:

- Endorsement of Council's three-year internal audit plan
- Reviews the status of the Internal Audit Plan, scopes of upcoming audits and the findings of completed audits
- Endorsement of Council's annual statement of financial accounts and performance reports
- Oversee the implementation of audit recommendations made by the Victorian Auditor General Officer (VAGO) and Victorian Ombudsman
- Review and provide advice on a range of reports of activities across Council
- Endorsement of Council's key policies
- Endorsement of Council's Risk Management Policy and Framework and Strategic Risk Register

During the 2020/2021 year, the Audit and Risk Committee met on four occasions on the following dates:

- September 7, 2020
- December 16, 2020
- February 25, 2021
- May 13, 2021

Agendas and minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meetings are forwarded to all Councillors and Audit and Risk Committee members and attendees. The Chair reports to Council twice yearly, which includes a summary of the activities and achievements of the committee during the year.

Internal audit

AFS and Associates were appointed as the Internal Auditor on July 1, 2019. The internal audit function provides an independent review of the effectiveness and efficiency of selected internal control processes and forms, a key component of the Council's Governance and Risk Management Framework.

External audit

All Local Government entities in Victoria are required to be audited by the Victoria Auditor-General's Office (VAGO). VAGO utilises contractors for audit fieldwork, which for the City is RSD Audit in 2020/2021. The external auditor's primary role is to provide an assurance that the financial statements fairly present the financial performance for the financial year and the financial position at the end of the year.

Risk management

Risks have the potential to impact on the City's ability to meet its objectives. While many risks cannot be eliminated, they can be identified, controlled and managed. The City's Risk Management Policy and Framework continue to be embedded across the City and has improved the City's risk management culture by enhancing reporting as well as integrating risk management considerations into all aspects of the City's operations and decision-making processes.

Fraud

The Fraud and Corruption Policy and Fraud and Corruption Control Plan are in place to ensure that Council employees act with integrity, accountability, impartiality, fairness, equity and consistency, and in the public interest. The Fraud Risk Register is also reviewed regularly, and Fraud and Corruption awareness training has been rolled out to staff to complete via a mandatory e-learning module and face to face training.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

The following are the results in the prescribed form of council's assessment against the prescribed governance and management checklist.

Governance and management items	Assessment	
1 **Community engagement policy** Policy outlining Council's commitment to engaging with the community on matters of public interest	Date of operation of current policy: March 18, 2020	✓
2 **Community engagement guidelines** Guidelines to assist staff to determine when and how to engage with the community	Date of adoption: April 13, 2016	✓
3 **Financial Plan** Plan under section 91 of the Act outlining the financial and non-financial resources required for at least the next 10 financial years	Date of adoption: October 18, 2021	✓
4 **Asset management plans** Plan under section 92 of the Act setting out the asset maintenance and renewal needs for key infrastructure asset classes for at least the next 10 years	Date of operation for all plans: June 28, 2016	✓
5 **Revenue and Rating Plan** Plan under section 93 of the Act setting out the rating structure of Council to levy rates and charges	Date of operation: June 24, 2021	✓
6 **Annual budget** Plan under section 94 of the Act setting out the services to be provided and initiatives to be undertaken during the budget year and the funding and other resources required	Date of adoption: June 24, 2021	✓
7 **Risk policy** Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations	Date of operation: December 11, 2019	✓
8 **Fraud policy** Policy outlining Council's commitment and approach to minimising the risks to Council's operations	Date of operation: December 11, 2019	✓
9 **Municipal emergency management plan** Plan under section 20 of the *Emergency Management Act 1986* for emergency prevention, response and recovery	Date of operation: August 15, 2019	✓
10 **Procurement policy** Policy under section 108 of the Act outlining the principles, processes and procedures that will apply to the purchase of goods and services by the Council	Date of adoption: September 18, 2020	✓
11 **Business continuity plan** Plan setting out the actions that will be taken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster	Date of adoption: March 31, 2020	✓
12 **Disaster recovery plan** Plan setting out the actions that will be undertaken to ensure that key services continue to operate in the event of a disaster	Date of adoption: November 2, 2020	✓

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Governance and management items	Assessment	
13 Risk management framework Framework outlining Council's approach to managing risks to the Council's operations	Date of operation: December 11, 2019	✓
14 Audit and Risk Committee Advisory committee of Council under section 53 of the Local Government Act whose role is to monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures, monitor Council's financial reporting, monitor and provide advice on risk management, and provide oversight on internal and external audit functions	Date of establishment: April 10, 1994	✓
15 Internal audit Independent accounting professionals engaged by the Council to provide analyses and recommendations aimed at improving Council's governance, risk and management controls	Date of engagement of current provider: July 1, 2019	✓
16 Performance reporting framework A set of indicators measuring financial and non-financial performance including the performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the Local Government Act 1989	Date of operation of current framework: July 1, 2014	✓
17 Council Plan reporting Report reviewing the performance of the Council against the Council Plan, including the results in relation to the strategic indicators, for the first six months of the financial year	Reported to Executive Management Team on: November 31, 2020 February 16, 2021 May 18, 2021 August 10, 2021 Tabled at Council on: October 21, 2020 December 14, 2020 March 15, 2021 June 24, 2021	✓
18 Financial reporting Quarterly statements to Council under section 138(1) of the Act 1989 comparing budgeted revenue and expenditure with actual revenue and expenditure	Tabled at Council on: September 7, 2020 December 16, 2020 February 25, 2021 May 13, 2021	✓
19 Risk reporting Six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring and risk minimisation strategies	Reported on: October 21, 2020 and May 13, 2021	✓
20 Performance reporting Six-monthly reports of indicators measuring results against financial and non-financial performance including the performance indicators referred to in section 131 of the Act 1989	Reported on: December 16, 2020 and February 25, 2021	✓
21 Annual report Annual report under sections 131, 132 and 133 of the Act 1989 to the community containing a report of operations and audited financial and performance statements	Date presented: October 21, 2020	✓

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Governance and management items	Assessment	
22 Councillor Code of Conduct Code under section 139 of the Act setting out the standards of conduct to be followed by Councillors and other matterss	Adopted: February 15, 2021	✓
23 Delegations Documents setting out the powers, duties and functions of Council and the Chief Executive Officer that have been delegated to members of staff, in accordance with sections 11 and 47 of the Act	Updated July 19, 2021	✓
24 Meeting procedures Governance Rules under section 60 of the Act governing the conduct of meetings of Council and delegated committees	Governance Rules adopted on: August 19, 2020	✓

I certify that this information presents fairly the status of Council's governance and management arrangements.

Craig Niemann
Chief Executive Officer
Dated: October 12, 2021

Cr Dr Jennifer Alden
Mayor
Dated: October 12, 2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



STATUTORY INFORMATION

Best value

The City applies six Best Value Principles when providing services to the community:

a) All services provided by a Council must meet quality and cost standards

b) All services provided by a Council must be responsive to the needs of the community

c) Each service provided by a Council must be accessible to those members of the community for whom the service is intended

d) A Council must achieve continuous improvement in its provision of services for its community

e) A Council must develop a program of regular consultation with its community in relation to the services it provides

f) A Council must report regularly to its community on its achievements in relation to the Best Value Principles

The City has a range of indicators that monitor performance outcomes. These include the Community Plan actions, Budget actuals and variances and indicators set out in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.

A hierarchy of plans in the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework seeks to ensure that services are responsive to community needs which have been identified through service reviews and a variety of community engagement processes such as community forums, Councillor listening posts, ward tours, surveys, social media and customer requests.

Other actions undertaken this year that support Best Value include:

- Consultation with the community through the development of the Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, Reconciliation Plan, Industrial Land Development Strategy and the Greening Greater Bendigo Strategy
- Implementation of the City's Organisation Strategy and progress towards the GovHub project, which both support improvement in provision of services
- Annual Budget process

Carers recognition

In accordance with the Carers Recognition Act 2012, Council is required to report annually on its care measurement obligations under Clause 11 of that Act. Council has taken all practicable measures to comply with its responsibilities outlined in the Carers Recognition Act 2012. Council has promoted the principles of that Act to people in care relationships who receive Council services, to people in care relationships and to the wider community by:

- Distributing printed material through relevant Council services
- Providing information to organisations represented in Council/community networks

Council has taken all practicable measures to ensure staff, Council agents and volunteers working for Council are informed about the principles and obligations of the Act by including information on the care relationship in:

- Council induction and training programs for staff working in Home Support Services
- Council induction and training programs for staff working in frontline positions with the general community
- Induction and training programs for volunteers working directly with the community

Contracts

During the year Council did not enter into any contracts valued at $150,000 (including GST) or more for services or goods, or $200,000 (including GST) or more for works without engaging in a competitive process or complying with the relevant exemption in the City's Procurement Policy.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Development Contributions Plans

A Development Contributions Plan (DCP) is a mechanism used to fund infrastructure requirements through the application of a levy on development approvals pursuant to Part 3B of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Contributions can be collected either by a cash contribution or works in-kind credit that is applied across relevant developable land to ensure that the required infrastructure is provided to service primarily new growth areas.

A DCP specifies the type of infrastructure to be provided, project costs and apportionment, and allows the City to collect development contribution levies.

The City currently has two DCPs that cover the Huntly Growth Area (residential) and the Marong Business Park (industrial).

The Marong Business Park DCP was approved on August 31, 2017 and is currently inactive. The Marong Business Park is yet to see development progress and is unlikely to see development in the short term.

The Huntly Growth Area DCP was approved on December 7, 2020 and is currently active. The Huntly Growth Area has been under development for approximately nine years, and as a result several projects detailed within the DCP have already been delivered by developers, and as such are not subject to the requirement of the DCP. These prior developments have also resulted in a reduction in forecasted income from the DCP, as approximately 30 per cent of the growth area has already been developed.

The Huntly Growth Area DCP currently has a total value $18.0M that reflects the value of all remaining projects to be delivered under the DCP. The forecasted DCP income for the remaining 70 per cent of development is $13.1M. This results in a funding gap of $4.9M. Most of this funding gap will be recovered from future development south of Wakeman Road (currently zoned Urban Growth Zone).

The Huntly Growth Area has a current DCP levy of $97,701.11 per net developable hectare (July 2021 dollars).

The City is currently preparing new DCPs for the Maiden Gully and Marong growth areas.

Table 1 – Total DCP levies received in 2020/2021

DCP name and year approved	Levies received in 2020/2021 financial year ($)
Huntly Growth Area DCP (Dec 7, 2020)	-
Marong Business Park DCP (Aug 31, 2017)	-
Total	-

Table 2 – DCP land, works, services or facilities accepted as works-in-kind in 2020/2021

DCP name and year approved	Project ID	Project description	Item purpose	Project value ($)
Huntly Growth Area DCP (Dec 7, 2020)	-	-	-	-
Marong Business Park DCP (Aug 31, 2017)	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-

Table 3 – Total DCP contributions received and expended to date

DCP name and year approved	Total levies received ($)	Total levies expended ($)	Total works-in-kind accepted ($)	Total DCP contributions received (levies and works-in-kind) ($)
Huntly Growth Area DCP (Dec 7, 2020)	-	-	-	-
Marong Business Park DCP (Aug 31, 2017)	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-

Table 4 – Land, works, services or facilities delivered in 2020/2021 from DCP levies collected

Project description	Project ID	DCP name and year approved	DCP fund expended ($)	Works-in-kind accepted ($)	Council's contribution ($)	Other contributions ($)	Total project expenditure ($)	Percentage of item delivered
No land, works, services or facilities have been delivered in 2020/2021 as no DCP levies were collected								
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Documents available for public inspection

The Council has recently adopted a Public Transparency Policy in line with the new Act which will make many documents available to the community via our website. In line with the old Act, the following is a list of the prescribed documents that are available for inspection or copies of the documents can be obtained for the purposes of section 222 of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) at 15 Hopetoun Street, Bendigo:

- A document containing details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than 3 days) undertaken in an official capacity by any Councillor or member of Council staff in the previous 12 months, including:
  - the name of the Councillor or member of Council staff; and
  - the dates on which the travel began and ended; and
  - the destination of the travel; and
  - the purpose of the travel; and
  - the total cost to Council of the travel, including accommodation costs
- The agendas for, and minutes of, ordinary and special meetings held in the previous 12 months which are kept under section 93 of the Act, other than those agendas and minutes relating to a part of a meeting which was closed to members of the public;
- A register of delegations including the date on which the last review took place;
- The minutes of meetings of special committees and delegated committees held in the previous 12 months, other than those minutes relating to a part of a meeting that was closed to members of the public;
- A document containing details of all leases involving land which were entered into by the Council as lessor, including the lessee and the terms and the value of the lease;
- A register of authorised officers appointed under that section;
- A list of donations and grants made by the Council in the previous 12 months, including the names of persons who, or bodies which, have received a donation or grant and the amount of each donation or grant.

In accordance with the new Act, council has developed a Transparency Policy which will increase the number of documents available for the public in order to enhance transparency and accountability.

Domestic Animal Management Plan

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2016-2021 (DAMP) was adopted in July 2016. Some of the key fourth year actions of the DAMP 2016-2021 achieved were:

- Patrols and education visits to areas popular for walking and exercising dogs
- Inspections of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dog enclosures
- Inspections of registered domestic animal businesses
- Investigation and resolution of 185 reports of dog attacks and more than 4,000 customer requests
- The City's in-house animal pound and shelter services completed a second year of operation caring for more than 2,400 animals with approximately 800 reclaims and more than 1,000 animals rehomed or transferred to rescue organisations
  - Registration of over 19,000 domestic animals
  - Review of the DAMP 2016-2021 to create a new plan for 2021-2025

Special committees

Special Committee	Councillors	Officers	Other	Purpose
Bendigo Maubisse Friendship Committee	2	1	12	Facilitate volunteer support from the Bendigo community to the community of Maubisse, Timor Leste.

Disability Action Plan

In accordance with the Victorian Disability Amendment Act 2017, Council must report on the implementation of the Disability Action Plan in its annual report. Council has prepared an All Ages All Abilities Action Plan which incorporates the Disability Action Plan and implemented the following actions during the 20/21 period:

- Facilitated and supported the Disability Inclusion Reference Committee
- Successfully delivered the National Disability Insurance Agency-funded *Champions for Change* Inclusive Employment Program, including recruiting two trainees
- Successfully delivered the Vichealth funded *Bondmates* project including Dragon City Sounds concert
- Implemented disability awareness e-learning modules for all staff
- Promote events such as International Day of People with a Disability
- Presented the *Inclusive Towns Project* at the Universal Design Conference

Food Act Ministerial Directions

There were no ministerial directions provided to Council this year.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic), Council is required to publish certain information in its annual report, or separately, concerning its functions and the categories of information that are available.

Council has chosen to publish the information separately. However, it provides the following summary of the application and operation of the Act. Access to documents may be obtained through written request to the Freedom of Information Officer, as detailed in section 17 of the Act.

In summary, the request should:

- be in writing
- identify as clearly as possible which document is being requested
- be accompanied by the appropriate application fee

Requests for access to information under the Act should be lodged on the FOI application form and sent to the Freedom of Information Officer. Requests can also be lodged online or by email. Access charges may apply once documents have been processed and a decision on access is made (e.g. photocopying and search and retrieval charges).

Public Interest Disclosures

In accordance with section 69 of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 a council must include in its annual report information about how to access the procedures established by the Council under Part 9 of that Act. It is also required to provide certain information about the number and types of protected disclosures complaints investigated during the financial year.

Procedures on how to make a disclosure are publicly available on Council's website. During 2020/2021 no disclosures were notified to Council officers appointed to receive disclosures or to IBAC.

Road Management Act Ministerial Direction

In accordance with section 22 of the Road Management Act 2004, a council must publish a copy or summary of any Ministerial direction in its annual report. No such Ministerial Directions were received by the City during the 2020/2021 financial year.

Freedom of Information applications

	Total applications	Granted in full	Granted in part	Denied	Withdrawn or resolved informally	No Document found or does not exist	Transferred	Not yet finalised
2020/2021	38	18	9	1	6	1	1	2
2019/2020	35	3	16	5	9	2	Nil	Nil
2018/2019	24	7	7	2	8	Nil	Nil	Nil
2017/2018	25	12	6	6	Nil	1	Nil	Nil
2016/2017	26	14	7	3	Nil	Nil	2	Nil
2015/2016	16	4	9	3	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2014/2015	35	16	12	3	Nil	4	Nil	Nil
2013/2014	17	6	8	2	Nil	1	Nil	Nil

Further information can be found at www.foi.vic.gov.au and on the City's website: www.bendigo.vic.gov.au

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GLOSSARY

Annual Report	means a report of the Council's operations of the previous financial year and contains a report of operations, audited financial statements and an audited performance statement
Appropriateness	means indicators or measures that provide users with sufficient information to assess the extent to which an entity has achieved a pre-determined target, goal or outcome
Budget	means a plan setting out the services and initiatives to be funded for the financial year and how they will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the Council Plan
Council Plan	means a plan setting out the medium-term strategic objectives, strategies, strategic indicators and resources reflecting vision and aspirations of the community for a four year period
Financial performance indicators	means a prescribed set of indicators and measures that assess the effectiveness of financial management in a council covering operating position, liquidity, obligations, stability and efficiency
Financial statements	means the financial statements and notes prepared in accordance with the Local Government Model Financial Report, Australian Accounting Standards and other applicable standards as they apply to the general purpose financial reports and a statement of capital works and included in the annual report
Financial year	means the period of 12 months ending on June 30 each year
Governance and management checklist	means a prescribed checklist of policies, plans and documents that councils must report the status of in the report of operations, covering engagement, planning, monitoring, reporting and decision making
Indicator	means what will be measured to assess performance
Initiatives	means actions that are one-off in nature and/or lead to improvements in service
Major initiative	means significant initiatives that will directly contribute to the achievement of the council plan during the current year and have a major focus in the budget
Measure	means how an indicator will be measured and takes the form of a computation, typically including a numerator and denominator
Minister	means the Minister for Local Government
Performance statement	means a statement including the results of the prescribed service outcome indicators, financial performance indicators and sustainable capacity indicators for the financial year and included in the annual report
Planning and accountability framework	means the key statutory planning and reporting documents that are required to be prepared by councils to ensure accountability to local communities in the performance of functions and exercise of powers under the Act
Regulations	means the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Relevance	means indicators or measures that have a logical and consistent relationship to an entity's objectives and are linked to the outcomes to be achieved
Report of operations	means a report containing a description of the operations of the Council during the financial year and included in the annual report
Services	means assistance, support, advice and other actions undertaken by a council for the benefit of the local community
Service outcome indicators	means the prescribed service performance indicators to be included in the performance statement which measure whether the stated service objective has been achieved
Service performance indicators	means a prescribed set of indicators measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of Council services covering appropriateness, quality, cost and service outcomes
Strategic objectives	means the outcomes a Council is seeking to achieve over the next four years and included in the Council Plan
Strategic resource plan	means a plan of the financial and non-financial resources for at least the next four years required to achieve the strategic objectives in the Council Plan. It is also referred to as a long term financial plan
Strategies	means high level actions directed at achieving the strategic objectives in the Council Plan
Sustainable capacity indicators	means a prescribed set of indicators measuring whether councils have the capacity to meet the agreed service and infrastructure needs of the local community and absorb foreseeable changes and unexpected shocks into the future covering financial performance, capacity and governance and management

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GREATER BENDIGO CITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

For the year ended 30 June 2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

Certification of the Financial Statements **73**

Financial Statements **76**

Comprehensive Income Statement 76

Balance Sheet 77

Statement of Changes in Equity 78

Statement of Cash Flows 79

Statement of Capital Works 80

Overview **81**

Notes to Financial Statements **83**

Note 1 - Performance against budget 83
- 1.1 Income and expenditure 83
- 1.2 Capital works 85

Note 2 - Analysis of Council results by program 87

Note 3 - Funding for the delivery of our services 89
- 3.1 Rates and charges 89
- 3.2 Statutory fees and fines 89
- 3.3 User fees 89
- 3.4 Funding from other levels of government 90
- 3.5 Contributions 92
- 3.6 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment 92
- 3.7 Other income 92

Note 4 - The cost of delivering services 93
- 4.1 Employee costs 93
- 4.2 Materials and services 93
- 4.3 Depreciation 94
- 4.4 Amortisation - intangible assets 94
- 4.5 Amortisation - right of use assets 94
- 4.6 Finance costs - leases 94
- 4.7 Other expenses 94

Note 5 - Our financial position 95
- 5.1 Financial assets 95
- 5.2 Non-financial assets 97
- 5.3 Payables 97
- 5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities 98
- 5.5 Provisions 98
- 5.6 Financing arrangements 100
- 5.7 Commitments 100
- 5.8 Leases 102

Note 6 - Assets we manage 103
- 6.1 Property, infrastructure plant and equipment 103
- 6.2 Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries 110

Note 7 - People and relationships 111
- 7.1 Council and key management remuneration 111
- 7.2 Related party disclosure 113

Note 8 - Managing uncertainties 114
- 8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities 114
- 8.2 Change in accounting standards 115
- 8.3 Financial instruments 115
- 8.4 Fair value measurement 117
- 8.5 Events occurring after balance date 117

Note 9 - Other matters 118
- 9.1 Reserves 118
- 9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit) 120
- 9.3 Superannuation 120

Note 10 - Change in accounting policy 124

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

Performance Statement **126**

Certification of Performance Statement **134**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Greater Bendigo City Council
2020/2021 Financial Report

Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Nathan Morsillo, FCPA
Principal Accounting Officer
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of the Greater Bendigo City Council for the year ended 30 June 2021 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

Jennifer Alden
Councillor
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

Andrea Metcalf
Councillor
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

Craig Niemann
Chief Executive Officer
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

VAGO
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Greater Bendigo City Council

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of Greater Bendigo City Council (the council) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2021 • comprehensive income statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • statement of cash flows for the year then ended • statement of capital works • notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies • certification of the financial statements. In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the council as at 30 June 2021 and their financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and applicable Australian Accounting Standards.
Basis for Opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. My staff and I are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
Councillors' responsibilities for the financial report	The Councillors of the council are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Local Government Act 1989*, and for such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the Councillors are responsible for assessing the council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

Level 31 / 35 Collins Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
T 03 8601 7000 enquiries@audit.vic.gov.au www.audit.vic.gov.au

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

As required by the *Audit Act 1994,* my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Councillors
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Councillors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the council's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the council to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.



MELBOURNE
27 September 2021

Sanchu Chummar
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Comprehensive Income Statement
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Income			
Rates and charges	3.1	126,357	121,744
Statutory fees and fines	3.2	4,435	5,123
User fees	3.3	20,215	23,277
Grants - operating	3.4	34,135	27,970
Grants - capital	3.4	10,931	8,086
Contributions - monetary	3.5	2,754	3,981
Contributions - non monetary	3.5	12,546	12,097
Interest on investments		350	1,081
Share of net profits of associates	6.2	162	120
Other income	3.7	1,638	2,410
Total income		**213,523**	**205,889**
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	73,014	68,653
Materials and services	4.2	69,935	73,053
Depreciation	4.3	40,582	39,382
Amortisation - intangible assets	4.4	656	634
Amortisation - right of use assets	4.5	2,758	2,264
Bad and doubtful debts		512	749
Borrowing costs		1,820	1,993
Finance costs - leases	4.6	351	409
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	11,161	3,347
Other expenses	4.7	956	3,001
Total expenses		**201,745**	**193,485**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		**11,778**	**12,404**
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	6.1	80,317	(770)
Total comprehensive result		**92,095**	**11,634**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Greater Bendigo City Council
2020/2021 Financial Report

Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	95,075	66,480
Trade and other receivables	5.1	11,410	12,246
Inventories		145	166
Non-current assets classified as held for sale		-	250
Prepayments		1,448	967
Accrued revenue		399	436
Total current assets		**108,477**	**80,545**
Non-current assets			
Trade and other receivables	5.1	31	44
Investments in associates	6.2	3,555	3,393
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	1,691,935	1,616,766
Right-of-use assets	5.8	6,892	9,325
Forestry plantations		105	105
Intangible assets	5.2	2,105	2,210
Total non-current assets		**1,704,623**	**1,631,843**
Total assets		**1,813,100**	**1,712,388**
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.3	12,856	11,369
Trust funds and deposits	5.3	3,284	3,129
Unearned income	5.3	14,474	3,955
Provisions	5.5	18,929	18,090
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	15,599	4,142
Lease liabilities	5.8	2,618	2,625
Total current liabilities		**67,760**	**43,310**
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	5.5	11,482	12,465
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.4	24,961	37,582
Lease liabilities	5.8	4,536	6,765
Total non-current liabilities		**40,979**	**56,812**
Total liabilities		**108,739**	**100,122**
Net assets		**1,704,361**	**1,612,266**
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		774,557	766,929
Reserves	9.1	929,804	845,337
Total Equity		**1,704,361**	**1,612,266**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

2021	Note	Total $'000	Accumulated Surplus $'000	Revaluation Reserve $'000	Other Reserves $'000
Balance at beginning of the financial year		1,612,266	766,929	816,385	28,952
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		11,778	11,778	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	6.1	80,317	-	80,317	-
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	-	(17,118)	-	17,118
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	-	12,968	-	(12,968)
Balance at end of the financial year		**1,704,361**	**774,557**	**896,702**	**33,102**

2020	Total $'000	Accumulated Surplus $'000	Revaluation Reserve $'000	Other Reserves $'000
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,603,992	749,326	817,155	37,511
Impact of change in accounting policy - AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers	(1,753)	(1,753)	-	-
Impact of change in accounting policy - AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities	(1,607)	(1,607)	-	-
Adjusted Opening balance	**1,600,632**	**745,966**	**817,155**	**37,511**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	12,404	12,404	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	(770)	-	(770)	-
Transfers to other reserves	-	(11,566)	-	11,566
Transfers from other reserves	-	20,125	-	(20,125)
Balance at end of the financial year	**1,612,266**	**766,929**	**816,385**	**28,952**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Statement of Cash Flows
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000	2020 Inflows/ (Outflows) $'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		128,561	121,744
Statutory fees and fines		4,545	5,623
User fees		17,217	25,276
Grants - operating		44,653	31,310
Grants - capital		10,930	5,008
Contributions - monetary		2,754	3,981
Interest received		385	1,170
Trust funds and deposits taken		410	(9)
Other receipts		1,673	1,391
Net GST refund/payment		729	454
Employee costs		(72,632)	(66,430)
Materials and services		(70,934)	(79,410)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	9.2	**68,291**	**50,108**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	(40,658)	(51,894)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	3.6	6,859	874
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		**(33,799)**	**(51,020)**
Cash flows from financing activities			
Proceeds from borrowings		3,000	-
Finance costs		(1,820)	(1,969)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(2,913)	(2,609)
Repayment of borrowings		(4,164)	(3,960)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		**(5,897)**	**(8,538)**
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		28,595	(9,450)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		66,480	75,930
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	5.1	**95,075**	**66,480**

The following notes also provide details on the city's cash position

Financing arrangements	5.6
Restrictions on cash assets	5.1

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Statement of Capital Works
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Property			
Land		461	1,183
Buildings		8,256	15,660
Total property		**8,717**	**16,843**
Plant and equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		3,900	3,181
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		157	516
Fountains, statues and monuments		102	237
Total plant and equipment		**4,159**	**3,934**
Infrastructure			
Land improvements		1,195	4,302
Bridges		276	886
Sealed roads		11,601	13,199
Unsealed roads		2,976	3,045
Pathways		4,216	3,335
Drainage		3,196	3,798
Public furniture and fittings		4,322	2,552
Total infrastructure		**27,782**	**31,117**
Total capital works expenditure	6.1	**40,658**	**51,894**
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		13,112	12,203
Asset renewal expenditure		26,768	32,602
Asset expansion expenditure		-	6,679
Asset upgrade expenditure		778	410
Total capital works expenditure		**40,658**	**51,894**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Greater Bendigo City Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 10th September 1993 and is a body corporate. The Council's main office is located at 15 Hopetoun Street, Bendigo, Victoria.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with the Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the Local Government Act 1989, and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014.

Significant accounting policies

(a) Basis of accounting

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.5)
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.5)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to Note 3)
- the determination, in accordance with *AASB 16 Leases*, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value (refer to Note 5.8)
- whether or not *AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors* is applicable
- other areas requiring judgements

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

(b) Impact of Covid-19

On 16 March 2020 a state of emergency was declared in Victoria due to the global pandemic COVID-19 virus, known as coronavirus. A state of disaster was subsequently declared on 2 August 2020. While the impacts of the pandemic have varied through the 2020-21 year, the City has noted the following significant impacts on its financial operations:

COVID-19 impacted revenue and expenses, with significant shut-downs to services across the organisation. However many reduced revenue units also experienced reduced outgoings.

Within the overall financials, there was additional COVID-19 support related grants revenue (and associated capital and operational future commitments) which were received. This included, within the adopted budget, $4.6M for the Working for Victoria program. The majority of this grant for the year was spent during the financial year.

The City recast the original budget developed in February 2020 through to a revised July 2020 adopted version. From the original base budget, there was $4.69M in reduced User Fees & Charges revenue.

Subsequent to that, revenue for fees and charges were lower than this revised budget by an additional $4.5M. However during the financial year, expenditure overall was also lower than expected – as larger decreases in some expenditure e.g. (Bendigo Venues & Events / shows and events) were experienced. Note 1.1 provides some additional details on variances related to COVID-19.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare the City's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* requires explanation of any material variances. The City has adopted a materiality threshold with explanations provided if the operational expense variance is greater than 10% and is greater than $2,500,000 (capital expenditure greater than 10% and $1,000,000). Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014.*

1.1 Income and expenditure

	Budget 2021 $'000	Actual 2021 $'000	Variance 2021 $'000	Variance 2021 %	Ref
Income					
Rates and charges	126,592	126,357	**(235)**	0%	
Statutory fees and fines	4,479	4,435	**(44)**	-1%	
User fees	23,012	20,215	**(2,797)**	-12%	1
Grants - operating	30,646	34,135	**3,489**	11%	2
Grants - capital	7,212	10,931	**3,719**	52%	3
Contributions - monetary	2,945	2,754	**(191)**	-6%	
Contributions - non monetary	15,000	12,546	**(2,454)**	-16%	
Interest on investments	1,174	350	**(824)**	-70%	
Share of net profits of associates	94	162	**68**	72%	
Other income	2,061	1,638	**(423)**	-21%	
Total income	**213,215**	**213,523**	**308**	**0%**	
Expenses					
Employee costs	76,788	73,014	**3,774**	5%	
Materials and services	79,457	69,935	**9,522**	12%	4
Depreciation	40,497	40,582	**(85)**	0%	
Amortisation - intangible assets	634	656	**(22)**	-3%	
Amortisation - right of use assets	-	2,758	**(2,758)**	100%	5
Bad and doubtful debts	268	512	**(244)**	-91%	
Borrowing costs	1,849	1,820	**29**	2%	
Finance costs - leases	-	351	**(351)**	100%	
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	4,857	11,161	**(6,304)**	-130%	6
Other expenses	92	956	**(864)**	-939%	
Total expenses	**204,442**	**201,745**	**2,697**	**1%**	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	**8,773**	**11,778**	**3,005**	**34%**	

*The budget for other income at Interest Revenue has been realligned to be comparable against actual revenue.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1.1 Income and expenditure (cont.)

(i) Explanation or material variations

1. User Fees

The unfavourable result is largely due to COVID-19 restrictions and cancellations in Bendigo Venue & Events ($2.8M) and forced closures in Bendigo & Heathcote Visitors centres ($0.5M). This City also provided significant support through it's financial hardship policy and rental wavers, with reduced rental income in Property Services ($1.0M) and Rate recoupment costs surrended ($0.2m).

2. Grants - Operating

Operating Grants were favourable to budget by $3.49M (11%) predominately due to additional grants received for Community Partnership Programs ($1.4M), Healthy Heart Victoria & Recreation Planning ($0.9M), Outdoor Dining ($0.5M), plus additional funding required due to lockdown restrictions on Support Services ($0.6M).

3. Grants Capital

Addiitional grant funding received in relation to Blackspot projects ($5.2M) offset by Recreation grants not yet utilised ($1.5M).

4. Materials & Services

Materials and services costs were favourable to budget by $9.5M (12%) primarily due to venue closures and the inability to run a series of programs and events due to restrictions in place. Bendigo Venues & Events had reduced expenditure ($2.0M) which directly correlates to a decline in User fees income, the same pertains to Tourism & Major Events ($1.0M). There were also reductions in consultancy fees ($1.0M), utilities ($1.0M), training ($0.5M) & general office expenses ($0.5M). Amotisation of lease liabilities were originally budgeted to Materials and Services but have been split out in accordance with new accounting standards ($2.7M).

5. Amortisation Right of Use Assets

Amotisation of lease liabilities were originally budgeted to Materials and Services but have been split out in accordance with new accounting standards ($2.7M).

6. Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

During the year the former council offices site was sold to the State Govemement. The Land & Buildings had a combined WDV of $7.1M and was sold for $5.5M. There was also a significant increase in write off of WIP balances. This relates to balances that remained in WIP at 30.06.2020 but after being assessed during the 20/21 year was deemed non capital and written off. The total amount written off from the opening WIP balance was $3.25M, some of the larger projects and costs written off from WIP are 19/20 rehab works at the Eaglehawk landfill site ($250k), Garden Gully Pavilion non capital works such as landscaping ($200k) and the pool renewal maintenance works program ($130k).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2021 $'000	Actual 2021 $'000	Variance $'000	Variance %	Ref
Property					
Land	530	461	(69)	-13%	
Buildings	10,148	8,256	(1,892)	-19%	1
Total property	**10,678**	**8,717**	**(1,961)**	**-18%**	
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	4,231	3,900	(331)	-8%	
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	515	157	(358)	-70%	
Fountains, statues and monuments	55	102	47	85%	
Total plant and equipment	**4,801**	**4,159**	**(642)**	**8%**	
Infrastructure					
Land improvements	4,180	1,195	(2,985)	-71%	2
Bridges	510	276	(234)	-46%	
Sealed roads	8,570	11,601	3,031	35%	3
Unsealed roads	2,850	2,976	126	4%	
Pathways	3,450	4,216	766	22%	
Drainage	1,510	3,196	1,686	112%	4
Public furniture and fittings	1,860	4,322	2,462	132%	5
Total infrastructure	**22,930**	**27,782**	**4,852**	**21%**	
Total capital works expenditure	**38,409**	**40,658**	**2,249**	**6%**	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	9,557	13,112	3,555	37%	
Asset renewal expenditure	28,072	26,768	(1,304)	-5%	
Asset upgrade expenditure	780	778	(2)	0%	
Total capital works expenditure	**38,409**	**40,658**	**2,249**	**6%**	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1.2 Capital works (cont.)

(i) Explanation of material variations

1. Buildings

The Bendigo Botanical Gardens Central Hub, Kennington recreation reserve pavillion and the Hargreaves Mall shade structure had a combined annual budget allocation of $4.35M of which on $523k was expended during the 20/21 financial year.Other projects not spent during the year are the White Hills Clubrooms renewal ($250k) and the Strathfieldsaye Community Hub at Club Court ($300k) The remaining budget allocation of all 3 projects will be carried forward for delivery in the 21/22 finanical year. $3.6M worth of the 19/20 budget allocation was carried forward to the 20/21 year for delivery of which $2.5M was delivered during the 20/21 financial year.

2. Land Improvements

A number of significant land improvement projects were not delivered during the 20/21 finanical year. These include the Wolstencroft Reserve Project ($950k), Tom Flood Oval renewal ($650k), and the Eaglehawk Tennis courts renewal ($480k). All these programs will be carried forward for delivery into the 21/22 financail year. The Synthetic pitch renewal project at Epsom Recreation reserve had a saving of $200k compared to budget.

3. Sealed Road

The City received funding for both the Blackspot program and Safe Travel in Local Streets (STILS) road safety programs. These projects were not included in the adopted budget as this funding had not been announced. Some of the significant road safety projects delivered during the year were works on Olympic parade, Maiden Gully ($650k), Bancroft Street, Bendigo ($640k), Nelson & Wood Street, California Gully ($630k), Tannery Lane Roundabout, Strathfieldsaye ($587k) and Storys Road widening project ($582k).

4. Drainage

A large number of civil infrastructure projects have a drainage component involved however the budget is allocated to the major component of the project. The Patas road project had a total project cost of $1.6m however $460k of this related to drainage works, the Averys Road roundabout project expenditure also included $232k worth of drainage works. $368k was also carried forward from the 19/20 financial year for completion of the Burns street drainage project.

5. Public Furniture & Fittings

There was $1.1m worth of carry forward projects from the 19/20 financial year that were delivered in the 20/21 year. Projects included the Weeroona Oval Lighting ($210k)and the Canterbury Park Lighting ($320k). Projects that were budgeted under other asset classes but had a public furniture and fittings component also contributed to the variance. Projects included Ewing Park Oval Development (220k), Wolstencroft reserve Playground Equipment ($155k), Dower Park Netball Courts ($135k), View Street Zebra Crossing ($106k), Bancroft Street Road Sfaety Project ($173k).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 2 Analysis of Council results by program

The City delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

2 (a) Corporate Performance

The Corporate Performance Directorate leads, enables and strengthens the organisation to ensure it has the resources and capability to deliver on the Community Plan. The Directorate does this through developing our people and culture, systems and processes, good governance practices and financial stewardship to ensure the delivery of high quality services and programs. The Directorate leads innovation and business transformation to ensure we are ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future in partnership with our community.

Health and Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing Directorate plans and delivers a broad and diverse range of community services and programs aimed at supporting people to live their lives fully and be active, safe, engaged and healthy. The focus of the Directorate is on developing policy, plans and programs in partnership with the community, delivering services, and supporting the delivery of community infrastructure projects.

Presentation and Assets

The Presentation and Assets Directorate provides and maintains high quality assets and services that help make Greater Bendigo a great place to live, while planning and delivering new assets and services to support Bendigo's ongoing growth. Demonstrating and committing to environmentally responsible thinking and practices and encouraging this throughout the organisation and community is an important focus for the Directorate. Business units include Engineering, Resource Recovery and Education, Works, Parks and Open Space and Property Services.

Strategy and Growth

The Strategy and Growth Directorate incorporates responsibility for Bendigo Art Gallery, Business Services, Bendigo Venues and Events, Regional Sustainable Development, Statutory Planning, and Tourism and Major Events. The overarching role of the Directorate is to contribute to the economic, cultural and social prosperity of our region by identifying and supporting investment opportunities, employment generation and the integrated planning for the sustainable growth of our City and region.

Further details on the services provided by each directorate can be found within the City's annual Budget.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

2 (b) Summary of revenues, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

2021	Income	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income	Total assets
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Corporate Performance *	157,238	18,582	138,656	18,646	131,319
Health and Wellbeing	23,853	41,229	(17,376)	11,806	213,231
Presentation and Assets	23,505	117,118	(93,613)	12,582	1,405,706
Strategy and Growth	8,927	24,816	(15,889)	2,032	62,844
	213,523	**201,745**	**11,778**	**45,066**	**1,813,100**

2020	Income	Expenses	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Grants included in income	Total assets
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Corporate Performance *	152,077	27,392	124,685	14,699	110,278
Health and Wellbeing	20,264	41,101	(20,837)	10,353	207,884
Presentation and Assets	24,266	97,113	(72,847)	9,877	1,332,923
Strategy and Growth	9,281	27,879	(18,598)	1,126	61,303
	205,888	**193,485**	**12,403**	**36,055**	**1,712,388**

* Includes the Office of the CEO for the purpose of this reporting.

Further details relating to individual services, areas, and expenditure to support the Community Plan is best reviewed in the City's budget, published annually. The City's budget can be accessed at www.bendigo.vic.gov.au. A variety of other service details, reporting and ratios are also accessible for all Local Government Entities at knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 3 Funding for the delivery of our services	**2021**	**2020**
3.1 Rates and charges	**$'000**	**$'000**

The City declares rates on the Capital Improved Value (CIV) of all rateable property within the municipal district. The CIV is the value of the land and all its improvements. Valuations are undertaken annually by the Valuer General of Victoria.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2020/21 was $23,877,068,000 (2019/20 $22,598,798,000).

General rates	104,298	100,861
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	1,546	1,209
Garbage charge	11,595	10,854
Recyclable charge	5,078	4,930
Organics charge	3,840	3,702
Interest on rates and charges	-	188
Total rates and charges	**126,357**	**121,744**

The date of the latest general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2020, and the valuation will be first applied in the rating year commencing 01 July 2020. Annual rates and charges are recognised as revenues when the City issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

3.2 Statutory fees and fines

Building and planning	2,498	2,319
Parking	213	466
Regulatory service	283	338
Fines	900	1,184
Other fees and charges	541	816
Total statutory fees and fines	**4,435**	**5,123**

Statutory fees and fines (including parking fees and fines) are recognised as revenue when the service has been provided, the payment is received, or when the penalty has been applied, whichever first occurs.

3.3 User fees

Aged and health services	1	38
Leisure centre and recreation	472	365
Child care / children's programs	3,571	3,350
Parking	2,534	3,185
Saleyard yarding	1,164	1,214
Regulatory service	952	1,224
Ticket income *	1,444	2,991
Sales income	858	613
Waste management services	6,641	7,334
Other fees and charges	2,578	2,963
Total user fees	**20,215**	**23,277**
User fees by timing of revenue recognition		
User fees recognised over time	1,444	2,991
User fees recognised at a point in time	18,771	20,286
Total user fees	**20,215**	**23,277**

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms. * Ticket income consists of ticket sales through Ulumburra Theatre, the Capital Theatre, Bendigo Art Gallery and the Visitor Information Centre.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

3.4 Funding from other levels of government

Grants were received in respect of the following :

Summary of grants	**2021 $'000**	**2020 $'000**
Commonwealth funded grants	24,210	24,444
State funded grants	20,856	11,612
Total grants received	**45,066**	**36,056**
(a) Operating Grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Financial Assistance Grants - Unallocated	13,195	14,056
Financial Assistance Grants - Local Roads	3,544	3,606
Aged Services	4,393	3,627
Health services - immunisation	9	10
Recurrent - State Government		
Aged	46	50
Arts and culture	328	344
Community safety	369	458
Environment	58	64
Family and children	247	121
Health services - immunisation	79	67
Maternal and child health	1,574	1,476
Rural access initiative	723	887
School crossing supervisors	260	278
Youth	46	53
Total recurrent operating grants	**24,871**	**25,097**
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Aged	25	753
Arts & Culture	5	-
Inclusive employment initiative	389	96
Transport	80	50
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Arts and culture	41	205
Business development	598	22
Business Support	555	
Community and strategy planning	171	165
Community Employment Connectors	260	-
Community safety	35	5
Community welfare	-	51
Emergency management	73	77
Environment	61	52
Family and children	259	90
GovHub	1,000	-
Gender equality	-	11
Recreation / healthy communities	952	998
Tourism / events projects	226	70
Transport	-	190
Working for Victoria	4,404	-
Youth	39	38
Other	91	-
Total non-recurrent operating grants	**9,264**	**2,873**
Total operating grants	**34,135**	**27,970**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

3.4 Funding from other levels of government (cont.)

(b) Capital Grants	2021	2020
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government	**$'000**	**$'000**
Roads to recovery	2,246	2,246
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Airport	93	-
Parks and open spaces	231	-
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Airport	94	-
Community safety	-	14
Emergency management	-	203
Family and children	86	350
Footpaths	365	-
Heritage	99	21
Libraries infrastructure	-	400
Local roads and streets	5,491	3,422
Parks and open spaces	352	178
Recreation / healthy communities	1,861	804
TAC towards zero	13	160
Tourism / events	-	70
Waste	-	168
Water management	-	50
Total non-recurrent capital grants	**8,685**	**5,840**
Total capital grants	**10,931**	**8,086**

(c) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner		
Operating		
Balance at start of year	9,430	10,320
Reclassification of unspent grant to unearned income due to change in Accounting Standard	-	(1,753)
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	9,097	9,430
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(9,270)	(8,567)
Balance at year end	**9,257**	**9,430**
Capital		
Balance at start of year	350	1,203
Reclassification of unspent grant to unearned income due to change in Accounting Standard	-	(425)
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	-	-
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(78)	(428)
Balance at year end	**272**	**350**

Grant income is recognised at the point in time when the City satisfies its performance obligations as specified in the underlying agreement.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

3.5 Contributions	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Monetary	2,754	3,981
Non-monetary - developer contributed assets	12,284	10,354
Non-monetary - donated / gifted assets	262	1,743
	12,546	12,097
Total contributions	**15,300**	**16,078**
Contributions of non monetary assets were received in relation to the following asset classes.		
Artworks	262	852
Land	3,834	544
Buildings	183	-
Sealed roads	4,265	4,046
Unsealed roads	48	149
Pathways	1,324	2,678
Drainage	2,358	3,828
Bridges	272	-
Total non-monetary contributions	**12,546**	**12,097**

Monetary and non monetary contributions are recognised as revenue when the City obtains control over the contributed asset.

3.6 Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		
Proceeds of sale	6,859	874
Written down value of assets disposed	(17,770)	(4,221)
Disposal of assets classified as held for sale	(250)	-
Total net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	**(11,161)**	**(3,347)**

The profit or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

3.7 Other income		
Rental income	1,281	1,439
Net increase in market value of forestry plantation	-	22
Net increase in market value of water rights	-	28
Revenue from volunteer services	97	703
Other income	260	218
Total other income	**1,638**	**2,410**

Interest is recognised as it is earned.
Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when the City gains control over the right to receive the income.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 4 The cost of delivering services		
4.1 (a) Employee costs	**2021 $'000**	**2020 $'000**
Wages and salaries	65,676	62,200
WorkCover	856	644
Superannuation	6,256	5,594
Fringe benefits tax	226	215
Total employee costs	**73,014**	**68,653**

The City received $4.4M as part of the working for Victoria program funded by the State Government, of which $3.5M was spent on employing additional staff during the year.

(b) Superannuation

The City made contributions to the following funds:

Defined benefit fund		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	356	378
Employer contributions - other funds	-	-
	356	**378**
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	-	-
Accumulation funds		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	3,114	3,032
Employer contributions - other funds	2,786	2,184
	5,900	**5,216**
Employer contributions payable at reporting date.	257	203

Refer to note 9.3 for further information relating to the City's superannuation obligations.

4.2 Materials and services

Contract payments (by Service Unit)		
Resource Recovery and Education	11,391	10,834
Parks and Open Space	3,920	3,864
Capital Venues and Events	814	2,496
Library Services	3,191	3,123
Active and Healthy Lifestyles	2,276	2,515
Major Projects	487	845
Works	1,234	1,299
Regional Sustainable Development	583	1,148
Tourism and Major Events	535	515
Art Gallery	471	652
Engineering	972	899
Business Services	652	521
Property Services	527	522
Statutory Planning	412	478
Safe and Healthy Environments	488	532
Other contract payments	2,651	2,636
Administration expense	6,061	6,834
Utility expenses	5,303	5,611
Materials, concrete products and hardware	5,966	6,273
Maintenance and consumables	11,337	10,856
Plant and equipment operating expenses	4,879	5,751
Contributions and donations	4,013	3,435
Insurance	1,772	1,414
Total materials and services	**69,935**	**73,053**

* The City has disclosed larger categories of Contract payments by Service Unit.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	2021	2020
4.3 Depreciation	**$'000**	**$'000**
Property	8,546	8,425
Plant and equipment	3,206	3,300
Infrastructure	28,830	27,657
Total depreciation	**40,582**	**39,382**

Refer to note 5.2, 5.8 and 6.1 for a further detailed breakdown of depreciation and amortisation charges and accounting policy.

4.4 Amortisation - Intangible assets		
Landfill airspace	656	634
Total Amortisation - Intangible assets	**656**	**634**
4.5 Amortisation - Right of use assets		
Property	1,617	1,184
Plant and equipment	1,106	1,047
Other	35	33
Total Amortisation - Right of use assets	**2,758**	**2,264**
4.6 Finance Costs - Leases		
Interest - Lease Liabilities	351	409
Total finance costs	**351**	**409**
4.7 Other expenses		
Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	58	50
Auditors' remuneration - internal	34	37
Cost of service for volunteer services	97	703
Discount rate movement of landfill provision	(628)	843
Landfill rehabilitation and aftercare	1,395	1,368
Total other expenses	**956**	**3,001**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 5 Our financial position	**2021**	**2020**
5.1 Financial assets	**$'000**	**$'000**
(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash on hand	24	28
Cash at bank	7,480	9,915
Term deposits	87,571	56,537
Total cash and cash equivalents	**95,075**	**66,480**

The City's cash and cash equivalents are subject to external restrictions that limit amounts available for discretionary use. These include:

- Trust funds and deposits (Note 5.3)	3,284	3,129
Total restricted funds	**3,284**	**3,129**
Total unrestricted cash and cash equivalents	**91,791**	**63,351**

Intended allocations

Although not externally restricted the following amounts have been allocated for specific future purposes by the City:

- Other reserves - excluding unexpended grants and donation reserve	8,572	10,384
- Other reserves - unexpended grants and donations	9,529	9,780
- Other reserves - sale proceeds to contribute to future fit out costs for GovHub site	5,500	-
- Cash held to fund carried forward capital works	11,947	8,921
- Statutory Reserve funds allocated for specific future purposes	9,501	8,788
Total funds subject to intended allocations	**45,049**	**37,873**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5.1 Financial assets (cont.) (b) Trade and other receivables	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Current		
Rates debtors	2,437	4,898
Infringement debtors	4,146	3,891
Provision for doubtful debts - infringements	(1,385)	(963)
GST receivable	959	1,688
Non statutory receivables		
Footpath, kerb and channel debtors	273	273
Loans to community organisations	-	9
Loans for heritage restoration works	2	6
General debtors - grants	2,986	689
General debtors - other	2,123	1,866
Allowance for doubtful debts - general debtors	(131)	(111)
Total current trade and other receivables	**11,410**	**12,246**
Non-current		
Non statutory receivables		
Footpath, kerb and channel debtors	1	1
Loans for heritage restoration works	30	43
Total non-current trade and other receivables	**31**	**44**
Total trade and other receivables	**11,441**	**12,290**

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. A provision for doubtful debts is recognised when there is objective evidence that an impairment has occurred. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

(c) Ageing of Receivables

The ageing of the City's trade and other receivables (excluding statutory receivables) that are not impaired was:		
Current (not yet due)	3,047	99
Past due by up to 30 days	947	861
Past due between 31 and 180 days	838	953
Past due between 181 and 365 days	59	130
Past due by more than 1 year	393	733
Total trade and other receivables	**5,284**	**2,776**

(d) Ageing of individually impaired Receivables

At balance date, other debtors representing financial assets with a nominal value of $1,516,155 (2020: $1,073,420) were impaired. The amount of the provision raised against these debtors was $1,516,155 (2020: $1,073,420). They individually have been impaired as a result of their doubtful collection. Many of the long outstanding past due amounts have been lodged with the City's debt collectors or are on payment arrangements. The largest component of the increase as at 30 June 2021 is in relation to Statutory amounts held by Fines Victoria, predominantly related to parking and animal infringements. The City has no control over collection once information is remitted to Fines Victoria, and the increase in provision is in line with infringement debts >3 years old increasing, and changed Victorian economic conditions.

The ageing of receivables that have been individually determined as impaired at reporting date was:		
Current (not yet due)	-	-
Past due by up to 30 days	-	-
Past due between 31 and 180 days	7	-
Past due between 181 and 365 days	61	-
Past due by more than 1 year	1,448	1,074
Total trade & other receivables	**1,516**	**1,074**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5.2 Non-financial assets

	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Intangible assets		
Landfill air space	1,861	1,966
Water rights	244	244
Total intangible assets	2,105	2,210

	Landfill $'000	Water Rights $'000	Total $'000
Gross carrying amount			
Balance at 1 July 2020	4,539	244	4,783
Other additions	551	-	551
Balance at 1 July 2021	5,090	244	5,334
Accumulated amortisation and impairment			
Balance at 1 July 2020	(2,573)	-	(2,573)
Amortisation expense	(656)	-	(656)
Balance at 1 July 2021	(3,229)	-	(3,229)
Net book value at 30 June 2020	1,966	244	2,210
Net book value at 30 June 2021	**1,861**	**244**	**2,105**

Intangible assets with finite lives are amortised as an expense on a systematic basis over the asset's useful life. Amortisation is generally calculated on a straight line basis, at a rate that allocates the asset value, less any estimated residual value over its estimated useful life. Estimates of the remaining useful lives and amortisation method are reviewed at least annually, and adjustments made where appropriate.

5.3 Payables

(a) Trade and other payables		
Trade payables	7,318	4,050
Sundry creditors	5,212	4,961
Accrued expenses	326	2,358
Total trade and other payables	12,856	11,369
(b) Trust funds and deposits		
Refundable security holding deposits	2,691	2,230
Fire service levy (held for the state revenue office)	421	677
Other	172	222
Total trust funds and deposits	3,284	3,129
(c) Unearned income		
Grants received in advance - operating	4,636	2,056
Grants received in advance - capital	7,934	1,408
Pre sold ticket income	1,904	491
Total unearned income	14,474	3,955

Amounts received as deposits and retention amounts controlled by the City are recognised as trust funds until they are returned, transferred in accordance with the purpose of the receipt, or forfeited. Trust funds that are forfeited, resulting in the City gaining control of the funds, are to be recognised as revenue at the time of forfeit.

Purpose and nature of items

Fire Service Levy - the City is the collection agent for fire services levy on behalf of the State Government. Payments receipted by the City before the end of financial year are held in trust until the payment is made to the State Revenue Office on due dates.

Refundable security holding deposits - deposits are taken by the City as a form of surety in a number of circumstances, including in relation to building works, tender deposits, contract deposits and the use of civic facilities.

Pre sold ticket income - sales for upcoming performances, predominantly at the Capital and Ulumbarra theatres, are held as a deposit and only recognised as income once the performance has occurred.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5.4 Interest-bearing liabilities

	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Current		
Borrowings - secured	15,599	4,142
	15,599	**4,142**
Non-current		
Borrowings - secured	24,961	37,582
	24,961	**37,582**
Total	**40,560**	**41,724**

Borrowings are secured against a charge over the City's rate revenue.

The maturity profile for the City's borrowings is:

Not later than one year	15,599	4,142
Later than one year and not later than five years	19,780	29,470
Later than five years	5,181	8,112
	40,560	**41,724**

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the City has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method.
The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The City determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities at initial recognition. The City has an $11M interest only liability due for repayment in November 2021.

5.5 Provisions

2021	Employee $ '000	Landfill restoration $ '000	Total $ '000
Balance at beginning of the financial year	16,590	13,965	30,555
Additional provisions	7,138	-	7,138
Amounts used	(5,944)	(1,823)	(7,767)
Change in provision estimate	-	1,946	1,946
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(833)	(628)	(1,461)
Balance at the end of the financial	**16,951**	**13,460**	**30,411**

2020			
Balance at beginning of the financial year	15,367	11,689	27,056
Additional provisions	6,277	-	6,277
Amounts used	(5,202)	(248)	(5,450)
Change in provision estimate	-	1,681	1,681
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	148	843	991
Balance at the end of the financial	**16,590**	**13,965**	**30,555**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5.5 Provisions (cont.)

	2021	2020
(a) Employee provisions	**$'000**	**$'000**
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	4,278	4,096
Long service leave	1,773	1,833
Sick leave	17	19
	6,068	**5,948**
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	1,258	1,103
Long service leave	7,660	7,650
Sick leave	189	224
	9,107	**8,977**
Total current employee provisions	**15,175**	**14,925**
Non-current		
Long service leave	1,776	1,665
Total non-current employee provisions	**1,776**	**1,665**
Aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions:		
Current	15,175	14,925
Non-current	1,776	1,665
Total aggregate carrying amount of employee provisions	**16,951**	**16,590**

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual Leave
Liabilities for annual leave expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date is recognised in the provision for employee benefits in respect of employee services up to the reporting date, classified as current liabilities and measured at their nominal values.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave, Sick Leave (contracted employees)
Liability for long service leave (LSL), sick leave for contracted employees and service recognition is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. LSL is measured at present value. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non - current liability.

Effective 6 May 1996, the Sick Leave Gratuity Scheme (former City of Bendigo) arrangements and payments ceased to operate. However a number of staff who are entitled to this scheme remain employed by the City. It shall be adjusted annually within one (1) month of the publication of the Consumer Price Index.

Effective 1 April 1998, the Accumulated Sick Leave Scheme arrangements and payments cease to operate. However a number of staff who are entitled to this scheme remain employed by Greater Bendigo City Council. This balance is adjusted based on the individuals applicable pay rate.

	2021	2020
Key assumptions:		
- discount rate	1.49%	0.87%
- index rate	2.95%	4.25%

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5.5 Provisions (cont.)

	2021	2020
(b) Landfill restoration	**$'000**	**$'000**
Current	3,754	3,165
Non-current	9,706	10,800
	13,460	**13,965**

The City is obligated to restore the active Eaglehawk landfill site and also the closed sites at White Hills and Flora Hill (Wolstencroft site). The forecast life of the site is based on current estimates of remaining capacity and the forecast rate of infill. The provision for landfill restoration has been calculated based on the present value of the expected cost of works to be undertaken. The expected cost of works has been estimated based on current understanding of work required to reinstate the sites to a suitable standard. Accordingly, the estimation of the provision required is dependent on the accuracy of the forecast timing of the work, work required and related costs.

Key assumptions:	2021	2020
- discount rate	1.49%	0.87%
- index rate	2.68%	2.68%

5.6 Financing arrangements

The City has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2021.		
Bank overdraft	3,500	3,500
Credit card facilities	400	400
Interest-bearing liabilities	40,560	41,724
Total facilities	**44,460**	**45,624**
Used facilities	40,623	41,771
Unused facilities	**3,837**	**3,853**

5.7 Commitments

The City has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

2021	Not later than 1 year	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years	Later than 5 years	Total
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Operating					
Aquatic and leisure facilities	1,849	-	-	-	1,849
Building essential services	95	102	204	102	503
Car parking	124	109	-	-	233
Cleaning contracts	837	800	785	396	2,818
Communications	24	24	-	-	48
Community events	369	215	156	119	859
Contract management	390	130	168	-	688
Exhibitions	95	-	-	-	95
Internal audit	42	-	-	-	42
IT / telecommunications	777	462	335	24	1,598
Organics collection	1,226	1,228	2,511	1,284	6,249
Processing organic waste	2,022	2,024	1,500	-	5,546
Recyclable garbage collection	1,564	1,582	3,114	-	6,260
Sanitary services	31	31	62	31	155
Theatre costs	177	-	-	-	177
Transportation of waste from Eaglehawk Landfill	1,543	1,605	-	-	3,148
Waste Disposal	3,800	3,895	3,992	-	11,687
Total	**14,965**	**12,207**	**12,827**	**1,956**	**41,955**
Capital					
Car Parking	239	39	-	-	278
Construction works	11,469	-	-	-	11,469
Garbage Bins	300	300	900	-	1,500
Plant	461	-	-	-	461
Rehabilitation Works	271	3,726	-	-	3,997
Total	**12,740**	**4,065**	**900**	**-**	**17,705**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5.7 Commitments (Cont.)

2020	Not later than 1 year	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years	Later than 5 years	Total
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Operating					
Aquatic and leisure facilities	1,695	807	-	-	2,502
Building essential services	88	55	46	-	189
Car parking	153	176	275	-	604
Cleaning contracts	686	642	1,284	430	3,042
Cleaning public bins	5	-	-	-	5
Communications	79	79	-	-	158
Community events	161	93	31	-	285
Contract management	122	125	108	9	364
Exhibitions	250	-	-	-	250
Internal audit	12	-	-	-	12
IT / telecommunications	97	78	12	-	187
Media campaign	67	-	-	-	67
Organics collection	1,068	1,095	3,451	2,447	8,061
Processing organic waste	833	503	1,583	-	2,919
Recyclable garbage collection	1,380	1,414	4,458	1,561	8,813
Sanitary services	5	-	-	-	5
Security services	2	-	-	-	2
Theatre costs	120	13	-	-	133
Transportation of waste from Eaglehawk Landfill	954	978	1,002	-	2,934
Total	7,777	6,058	12,250	4,447	30,532
Capital					
Car Parking	340	265	265	-	870
Construction works	1,739	-	-	-	1,739
Total	2,079	265	265	-	2,609

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5.8 Leases

At inception of a contract, an assessment is made whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains, a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. To identify whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, it is necessary to assess whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- The customer has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- The customer has the right to direct the use of the asset.

This policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 July 2019.

As a lessee, the City recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any lease incentives received; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred; and
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, an appropriate incremental borrowing rate. Generally, the City uses an appropriate incremental borrowing rate as the discount rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- Fixed payments
- Variable lease payments that depend on an index or a rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date;
- Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee; and
- The exercise price under a purchase option that the City is reasonably certain to exercise, lease payments in an optional renewal period if the City is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option, and penalties for early termination of a lease unless the City is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

When the lease liability is remeasured in this way, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, or is recorded in profit or loss if the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset has been reduced to zero.

Right-of-Use Assets

	Property	Plant & Equipment	Other, etc.	Total
2021	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**	**$'000**
Balance at 1 July 2020	3,674	5,517	134	9,325
Additions	268	-	-	268
Disposls	(28)	-	-	(28)
Amortisation charge	(1,532)	(1,106)	(35)	(2,673)
Balance at 30 June 2021	**2,382**	**4,411**	**99**	**6,892**
2020				
Balance at 1 July 2020	2,628	6,380	167	9,175
Additions	2,230	184	-	2,414
Amortisation charge	(1,184)	(1,047)	(33)	(2,264)
Balance at 30 June 2021	**3,674**	**5,517**	**134**	**9,325**

Lease Liabilities	**2021**	**2020**
Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows	**$'000**	**$'000**
Less than one year	2,872	2,921
One to five years	4,485	6,330
More than five years	371	862
Total undiscounted lease liabilities as at 30 June:	**7,728**	**10,113**
Lease liabilities included in the Balance Sheet at 30 June:		
Current	2,618	2,625
Non-current	4,536	6,765
Total lease liabilities	**7,154**	**9,390**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

Note 6 Assets we manage

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

	At Fair Value 30 June 2020	Additions	Contributions	Revaluation	Depreciation	Disposal	Write-off	Transfers	At Fair Value 30 June 2021
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property	554,592	461	4,017	72,582	(8,546)	(7,143)	(2,158)	20,262	634,067
Plant and equipment	85,018	4,057	262	-	(3,205)	(883)	-	252	85,501
Infrastructure	923,164	-	8,267	7,735	(28,831)	-	(4,333)	34,182	940,184
Work in progress	53,992	36,140	-	-	-	-	(3,253)	(54,696)	32,183
	1,616,766	40,658	12,546	80,317	(40,582)	(8,026)	(9,744)	-	1,691,935

Summary of Work in Progress	Opening WIP	Additions	Write-off	Transfers	Closing WIP
Property	21,081	8,256	(1,444)	(20,264)	7,629
Plant and equipment	344	102	(87)	(252)	107
Infrastructure	32,567	27,782	(1,722)	(34,180)	24,447
Total	53,992	36,140	(3,253)	(54,696)	32,183

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont.)

(a) Property

	Land - specialised	Land - non specialised	Land under roads	Total Land	Heritage buildings	Buildings - specialised	Buildings - non specialised	Total Buildings	Total Property
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At fair value 1 July 2020	234,952	11,868	8,946	255,766	134,459	307,970	7,409	449,838	705,604
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2020	-	-	-	-	(49,700)	(101,152)	(160)	(151,012)	(151,012)
	234,952	11,868	8,946	255,766	84,759	206,818	7,249	298,826	554,592
Movements in fair value									
Additions	42	419	-	461	-	-	-	-	461
Contributions	3,226	-	609	3,835	166	114	-	280	4,115
Disposal	-	(6,935)	-	(6,935)	-	-	(216)	(216)	(7,151)
Write-off	(604)	-	-	(604)	-	(3,573)	-	(3,573)	(4,177)
Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	20,262	-	20,262	20,262
Revaluation	34,089	1,790	2,388	38,267	38,134	(7,106)	2,228	33,256	71,523
	36,753	(4,726)	2,997	35,024	38,300	9,697	2,012	50,009	85,033
Movements in accumulated depreciation									
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	-	-	(2,280)	(6,182)	(84)	(8,546)	(8,546)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8	8
Accumulated depreciation of write-offs	-	-	-	-	-	2,019	-	2,019	2,019
Accumulated depreciation of Contributions	-	-	-	-	(78)	(20)	-	(98)	(98)
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	(4,262)	5,085	236	1,059	1,059
	-	-	-	-	(6,620)	902	160	(5,558)	(5,558)
At fair value 30 June 2021	271,705	7,142	11,943	290,790	172,759	317,667	9,421	499,847	790,637
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2021	-	-	-	-	(56,320)	(100,250)	-	(156,570)	(156,570)
	271,705	7,142	11,943	290,790	116,439	217,417	9,421	343,277	634,067

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont.)
(b) Plant and Equipment

	Plant and equipment	Office equipment, furniture and fittings	Artworks	Fountains, statues and monuments	Total plant and equipment
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At fair value 1 July 2020	30,275	9,998	59,191	11,173	110,637
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2020	(13,814)	(7,692)	-	(4,113)	(25,619)
	16,461	2,306	59,191	7,060	85,018
Movements in fair value					
Additions	3,900	157	-	-	4,057
Contributions	-	-	262	-	262
Transfers	-	-	-	252	252
Disposal	(2,372)	(135)	-	-	(2,507)
	1,528	22	262	252	2,064
Movements in accumulated depreciation					
Depreciation and amortisation	(2,597)	(488)	-	(120)	(3,205)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	1,490	134	-	-	1,624
	(1,107)	(354)	-	(120)	(1,581)
At fair value 30 June 2021	31,803	10,020	59,453	11,425	112,701
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2021	(14,921)	(8,046)	-	(4,233)	(27,200)
	16,882	1,974	59,453	7,192	85,501

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont.)
(c) Infrastructure

	Sealed roads	Unsealed roads	Bridges	Pathways	Drainage	Land improvements	Public furniture and fittings	Landfill	Total Infrastructure
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
At fair value 1 July 2020	678,219	54,073	75,751	144,732	383,930	72,417	39,386	4,807	1,453,315
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2020	(262,109)	(17,647)	(30,779)	(49,655)	(114,366)	(35,223)	(17,368)	(3,004)	(530,151)
	416,110	36,426	44,972	95,077	269,564	37,194	22,018	1,803	923,164
Movements in fair value									
Contributions	4,365	69	680	1,326	2,393	-	-	-	8,833
Write-off	(5,908)	(3,129)	(298)	(530)	(686)	(452)	(1,019)	-	(12,022)
Transfers	14,021	3,190	1,181	4,204	4,137	4,005	3,444	-	34,182
Revaluation	2,433	763	(838)	(882)	1,883	-	-	-	3,359
Impairment losses recognised in operating result	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	14,911	893	725	4,118	7,727	3,553	2,425	-	34,352
Movements in accumulated depreciation									
Depreciation and amortisation	(12,921)	(2,324)	(777)	(3,588)	(3,719)	(2,881)	(2,019)	(602)	(28,831)
Accumulated depreciation of disposals	4,342	1,278	275	381	317	348	748	-	7,689
Accumulated Depreciation of Contributions	(101)	(22)	(408)	-	(35)	-	-	-	(566)
Revaluation	(719)	3,071	1,253	1,994	(1,223)	-	-	-	4,376
	(9,399)	2,003	343	(1,213)	(4,660)	(2,533)	(1,271)	(602)	(17,332)
At fair value 30 June 2021	693,130	54,966	76,476	148,850	391,657	75,970	41,811	4,807	1,487,667
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2021	(271,508)	(15,644)	(30,436)	(50,868)	(119,026)	(37,756)	(18,639)	(3,606)	(547,483)
	421,622	**39,322**	**46,040**	**97,982**	**272,631**	**38,214**	**23,172**	**1,201**	**940,184**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont.)

Acquisition

The purchase method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets, being the fair value of assets provided as consideration at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Where assets are constructed by the City, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with the City's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

	Depreciation Period	Threshold Limit
Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods		$'000
Land and land improvements		
land	n/a	-
buildings	20-150 years	10-20
Plant and equipment		
plant and equipment	2-25 years	2
office equipment, furniture and fittings	2-25 years	2
artwork	n/a	-
fountains, statues and monuments	80-100 years	5
Infrastructure		
sealed roads	2-100 years	5-10
unsealed roads	15-100 years	5-10
pathways	25-50 years	5
bridges	100 years	10
drainage	100-200 years	5-20
public furniture and fittings	15-40 years	2-5
land improvements	20-80 years	5
landfill	6-10 years	-
Intangible assets		
landfill airspace	6-10 years	-

Land under roads

The City recognises land under roads it controls at fair value.

Depreciation and amortisation

Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the City in a manner which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance

Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont.)

Valuation of land and buildings

Valuation of land and buildings were undertaken by a qualified independent valuer James Collins, JLC Valuation and Consulting Member No: 62579. The valuation of land and buildings is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Specialised land is valued at fair value using site values adjusted for englobo (undeveloped and/or unserviced) characteristics, access rights and private interests of other parties and entitlements of infrastructure assets and services. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Any significant movements in the unobservable inputs for land and land under roads will have a significant impact on the fair value of these assets.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

Details of the City's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2021 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level2	Level 3	Date of Valuation
Land	-	7,142	-	Jun-21
Specialised land	-	-	271,705	Jun-21
Land under roads	-	-	11,943	Jun-21
Buildings	-	9,421	-	Jun-21
Buildings - specialised	-	-	217,417	Jun-21
Buildings - heritage	-	-	116,439	Jun-21
Total	-	**16,563**	**617,504**	

Valuation of infrastructure

Valuation of Infrastructure assets and specialised buildings has been determined in accordance with contemporary asset management standards and are independently verified. The valuation process is managed by Mr Ian McLauchlan, Manager Engineering (Certified Practicing Engineer) and Mr Paul Nicholson, Coordinator GIS and Asset Information utilising internal professional engineering and technical resources. The valuation process for sealed roads, unsealed roads, pathways, bridges and drainage is performed annually with a third of each asset class inspected and valued. Valuation of Public furniture and land improvements are completed on a three year cycle having last been valued at 30 June 2018. Due to significant change with the GIS and asset information team and the way asset information is captured, this could not be undertaken for 30 June 2021. The valuation process for the land improvements and public furniture and fittings asset classes has been rescheduled for 31 December 2021.

The date of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

The valuation is at fair value based on replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the City's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2021 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level2	Level 3	Date of Valuation
Sealed roads	-	-	421,622	Jun-21
Unsealed roads	-	-	39,322	Jun-21
Pathways	-	-	97,982	Jun-21
Bridges	-	-	46,040	Jun-21
Drainage	-	-	272,631	Jun-21
Public furniture and fittings	-	-	23,172	Jun-18
Land improvements	-	-	38,214	Jun-18
Landfill	-	-	1,201	N/A
Total	-	-	**940,184**	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment (cont.)

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 10% and 95%. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between $1 and $1,557 per square metre.

Specialised buildings are valued using a depreciated replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis and ranges from $280 to $10,230 per square metre. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 1 years to 100 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the depreciated replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 1 year to 200 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

	2021	2020
Reconciliation of specialised land	**$'000**	**$'000**
Land under roads	11,943	8,946
Land	271,705	234,952
Total specialised land	**283,648**	**243,898**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6.2 Investments in associates, joint arrangements and subsidiaries	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
(a) Investments in associates		
North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation (NCGRLC)	3,555	3,393

North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation (NCGRLC)

Background

The City is a member of the North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation. The City has a 61.05% share of the net assets (61.11% 2020). At 30 June 2021 the City's equity in the corporation was $3,554,173 (30 June 2020 $3,392,290).

Fair value of the City's investment in NCGRLC	**3,555**	**3,393**
The City's share of accumulated surplus/(deficit)		
The City's share of accumulated surplus at start of year	2,509	2,518
Share of equity adjustment	(1)	(2)
Transfers (to) from reserves	90	(7)
The City's share of accumulated surplus at end of year	**2,598**	**2,509**
The City's share of reserves		
The City's share of reserves at start of year	703	699
Share of equity adjustment	(2)	(2)
Transfers (to) from reserves	(91)	6
The City's share of reserves at end of year	**610**	**703**
Movement in carrying value of specific investment		
Carrying value of investment at start of year	3,393	3,273
Share of surplus(deficit) for year	165	124
Share of equity adjustment	(3)	(4)
Carrying value of investment at end of year	**3,555**	**3,393**
The City's share of expenditure commitments		
Operating commitments	314	222
The City's share of expenditure commitments	**314**	**222**

Associates are all entities over which the City has significant influence but not control or joint control. Investments in associates are accounted for using the equity method of accounting, after initially being recognised at cost.

Committees of management

All entities controlled by the City that have material revenues, expenses, assets or liabilities, such as committees of management, have been included in this financial report. Any transactions between these entities and the City have been eliminated in full.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 7 People and relationships

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related Parties

Parent entity
Greater Bendigo City Council is the parent entity.

Subsidiaries and Associates
Interests in associates are detailed in Note 6.2.

(b) Key Management Personnel
Details of persons holding the position of Councillor or other members of key management personnel at any time during the year are:

Councillors	Matt Emond - Deputy Mayor (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020)
	James Williams (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020)
	George Flack (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020)
	Malcolm Pethybridge (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020)
	Susie Hawke (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020)
	Jennifer Alden - Councillor (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020) and Mayor (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	Andrea Metcalf - Councillor (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020) and Deputy Mayor (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	Margaret O'Rourke - Mayor (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020) and Councillor (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	Rod Fyffe - Councillor (01/07/2020 to 24/10/2020) and (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	Gregory Penna (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	Matthew Evans (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	Vaughan Williams (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	Julie Sloan (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
	David Fagg (06/11/2020 to 30/06/2021)
Executive	Chief Executive Officer
	Director - Corporate Performance
	Director - Health and Wellbeing
	Director - Presentation and Assets
	Director - Strategy and Growth

	2021 No.	2020 No.
Total Number of Councillors	14	10
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	5	5
Total Number of Key Management Personnel	19	15

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel	2021 $	2020 $
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term benefits	1,506	1,566
Long-term benefits	29	28
Post employment benefits	142	116
Total	**1,677**	**1,710**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

7.1 Council and key management remuneration (cont.)

The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from the City and any related entities, fall within the following bands:

	2021 No.	2020 No.
$0,000 - $9,999	-	1
$10,000 - $19,999	5	-
$20,000 - $29,999	5	1
$30,000 - $39,999	2	7
$50,000 - $59,999	1	-
$80,000 - $89,999	2	-
$100,000 - $109,999	-	1
$140,000 - $149,999	1	-
$200,000 - $209,999	1	-
$230,000 - $239,999	1	2
$240,000 - $249,999	-	1
$250,000 - $259,999	1	-
$260,000 - $269,999	-	1
$350,000 - $359,999	-	1
$370,000 - $379,999	1	-
	20	**15**

(d) Senior Officer Remuneration

A Senior Officer is an officer of the City, other than Key Management Personnel, who:
a) has management responsibilities and reports directly to the Chief Executive; or
b) whose total annual remuneration exceeds $151,000 (2020: $150,000)

The number of Senior Officers are shown below in their relevant income bands:

Income Range:	2021 No.	2020 No.
< $151,000	16	8
$151,000 - $159,999	6	6
$160,000 - $169,999	3	4
$170,000 - $179,999	5	2
$180,000 - $189,999	-	2
	30	**22**

Total Remuneration for the reporting year for Senior Officers included above, amounted to:	4,107	3,343

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Notes to the Financial Report
For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
7.2 Related party disclosure		
(a) Transactions with related parties		
During the period the City entered into the following transactions with related parties.		
Income		
Financial services provided to NCGRLC	79	78
Hire of Bendigo Town Hall	-	4
Reimbursment for two dishwashers	2	-
Rent and outgoings received from NCGRLC for the Bendigo Library headquarters	42	36
	123	**118**
Expenses		
Contribution to NCGRLC	3,191	3,123
Reimbursement for running the Bendigo Regional Archive Centre (BRAC), paid to NCGRLC	92	92
Grants paid	31	-
Room hire / other expenses, paid to NCGRLC	-	3
	3,314	**3,218**

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

There was no material balances outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties.

(c) Loans to/from related parties

There are no loans in existence at balance date which have been made, guaranteed or secured by the City to a related party.

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the City to a related party are as follows:

The City had an agreement with the North Central Goldfields Regional Library Corporation to provide accounting and financial services to 30 June 2023 for which a fee is paid. The agreement had an option to extend until 30 June 2025. The City also has a 10 year lease agreement for buildings with the Corporation which commenced on 1 July 2015, for which rental is charged.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 8 Managing uncertainties

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

(a) Contingent assets

Construction of infrastructure assets by developers in the course of creating new subdivisions results in the infrastructure assets being vested in the City when the City issues a statement of compliance. These assets are bought to account as revenue and capitalised.
At reporting date, developers had commenced construction of assets that will eventually be transferred to the City contingent upon the City issuing a statement of compliance.

Operating lease receivables

The City has entered into commercial property leases on its investment property, consisting of surplus freehold office complexes. These properties held under operating leases have remaining non-cancellable lease terms of between 1 and 10 years. All leases include a CPI based revision of the rental charge annually.

	2021	2020
	$'000	$'000
Not later than one	1,362	1,385
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,934	2,907
Later than five years	479	477
	3,775	4,769

(b) Contingent liabilities

Superannuation

The City has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Future superannuation contributions

There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2021. The expected contributions to be paid to the defined benefit category of vision super for the year ending 30 June 2022 is $390,000.

Landfill

The City has confirmed the presence of ten past and one current landfill sites that may require some form of rehabilitation or remediation works. The Eaglehawk, White Hills and Wolstencroft sites have had a rehabilitation plan developed. This has allowed the City to include an accurate provision within the financial statements for each of the three sites at the 30 June 2021. The remainder of the former landfill sites that have been identified are considered a low risk and the level of rehabilitation works required, if any , is unknown.

Other matters

In May 2020, Council approved the sale of the Lyttleton Terrace site to Development Victoria for the purpose of the Bendigo GovHub, a new building that will house both Council staff and other government entities as tenants. In future years, this will result in a Right of Use lease asset and corresponding lease liability. As at 30 June 2021, there was no signed rental or tenancy agreements in place.

(c) Guarantees for loans to other entities

The amount disclosed for financial guarantee in this note is the nominal amount of the underlying loan that is guaranteed by the City, not the fair value of the financial guarantee. The City maintains representation on Bendigo Stadium Ltd board and finance committee as part of arrangements related to the loan guarantee provided. In August of 2020 Councillors agreed to support additional guarantee arrangements for refinancing of a loan at Bendigo Stadium Ltd up to the value of $13M.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the balance sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or the City has other reasons to believe that it is probable that the right will be exercised.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities (cont.)

Name of Organisation	Council Guarantee Amount	Current Loan Guarantee Exposure	Financial Institution	Date Approved by Council	Guarantee Expires
Bendigo Stadium Ltd	$13,819,898	$12,602,166	Bendigo Bank	4/05/2016	1/05/2027

8.2 Change in accounting standards

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2021 reporting period. The City assesses the impact of these new standards. As at 30 June 2021 there were no new accounting standards or interpretations issued by the AASB which are applicable for the year ending 30 June 2022 that are expected to materially impact the City.

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The City's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the City. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to the City and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation. Details are reviewed by the City's Audit & Risk Committee.

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of the City's financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The City's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. The City's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes the City to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The City has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the City's investment policy. The City manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the City's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on the City's year end result.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause the City to make a financial loss. The City has exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- The City have a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities the City deals with;
- The City may require collateral where appropriate; and
- The City only invests surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

8.3 Financial instruments (cont.)

The City may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when the City provides a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any provisions for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. The City does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of the City's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks the City:

- Publishes and maintains a ten year longterm financial plan;
- adheres to budget principles which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained;
- have readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- have a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;
- monitor budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- set limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The City's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in Note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in the City's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.4.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, the City believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A parallel shift of +1 % and -1% in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 0.34%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of the City's financial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of the City's operations.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair value hierarchy

The City's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy , the City's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

The City measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 Fair value measurement, aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, the City has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.

In addition, the City determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation

Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. At balance date, the City reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, the City undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 1 to 5 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, the City reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

The state of Victoria was placed into a lockdown due to Covid-19 outbreak on the 21st of August 2021. This has resulted in the closure of a number of facilities and has reduced the level of service delivery during this time. This closure does not alter the information provided within these financial statements and accopanying notes. The City will continue to monitor the non-financial and financial impacts of Covid-19 on its operations.

Note 9 Other matters

9.1 Reserves (a) Asset revaluation reserves	Balance at beginning of reporting period $'000	Increment (decrement) $'000	Balance at end of reporting period $'000
2021			
Property			
Land	170,577	38,267	208,844
Buildings	120,482	34,315	154,797
Plant and equipment	1,541	-	1,541
Library resources	820	-	820
Artwork	48,582	-	48,582
	342,002	**72,582**	**414,584**
Infrastructure			
Roads, bridges and pathways	377,146	7,075	384,221
Drainage	69,649	660	70,309
Public furniture and fittings, statues and monuments	9,399	-	9,399
Land improvements	18,189	-	18,189
	474,383	**7,735**	**482,118**
Total asset revaluation reserves	**816,385**	**80,317**	**896,702**
2020			
Property			
Land	170,577	-	170,577
Buildings	120,482	-	120,482
Plant and equipment	1,541	-	1,541
Library resources	820	-	820
Artwork	47,307	1,275	48,582
	340,727	**1,275**	**342,002**
Infrastructure			
Roads, bridges and pathways	377,463	(317)	377,146
Drainage	71,377	(1,728)	69,649
Public furniture and fittings, statues and monuments	9,399	-	9,399
Land improvements	18,189	-	18,189
	476,428	**(2,045)**	**474,383**
Total asset revaluation reserves	**817,155**	**(770)**	**816,385**

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of the City's assets over time.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

9.1 Reserves (cont.) (b) Other reserves	Balance at beginning of reporting period $'000	Transfer from accumulated surplus $'000	Transfer to accumulated surplus $'000	Balance at end of reporting period $'000
2021				
Open Space	4,713	508	(5)	5,216
Development Contributions	4,075	460	(250)	4,285
Tree Amenity	-	48	-	48
Native Vegetation	-	95	-	95
Waste Management	7,873	363	(2,475)	5,761
Land and Buildings	-	6,387	(730)	5,657
Car Parking	511	-	-	511
Defined Benefits	2,000	-	-	2,000
Unexpended Grants and Donations	9,780	9,257	(9,508)	9,529
Total Other reserves	**28,952**	**17,118**	**(12,968)**	**33,102**
2020				
Open Space	4,223	898	(408)	4,713
Development Contributions	4,278	263	(466)	4,075
Waste Management	8,742	330	(1,199)	7,873
Land and Buildings	177	643	(820)	-
Car Parking	661	-	(150)	511
Defined Benefits	3,000	-	(1,000)	2,000
Long Service Leave	4,096	-	(4,096)	-
Unexpended Grants and Donations	12,334	9,432	(11,986)	9,780
Total Other reserves	**37,511**	**11,566**	**(20,125)**	**28,952**

Open Space - Statutory developer contribution funds to be used for future recreation facility additions or improvements.
Development Contributions - Statutory developer contribution funds for future drainage, road, fencing and tree planting.

Waste Management - This reserve was established to make some provision for a replacement waste treatment facility when the Eaglehawk Landfill is exhausted and to contribute to rehabilitation requirements for closed landfill sites.

Defined Benefits - This reserve is used to assist with the funding of any call that may be made on the City as a result of shortfall in the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund Defined Benefits Plan.

Unexpended Grants and Donations - This reserve is used to set aside grant and donation monies in relation to specific projects received in one financial year that will not be expended until a later financial year. Funds in this account are predominantly not discretionary.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus/(deficit)	**2021 $'000**	**2020 $'000**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	11,778	12,404
Depreciation / amortisation	43,996	42,280
(Profit) / loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	11,161	3,347
Contributions - non monetary assets	(12,546)	(12,097)
Share of net (profits) / losses of associates accounted for using the equity method	(162)	(120)
Gain from water and forestry rights	-	(50)
Borrowing Costs	2,171	2,211
Change in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase) / decrease in trade and other receivables	849	(530)
(Increase) / decrease in other assets	(444)	1,047
(Increase) / decrease in other liabilities	10,679	-
(Increase) / decrease in inventory	21	30
Increase / (decrease) in trade and other payables	1,487	(1,914)
Increase / (decrease) in provisions	(699)	3,500
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	**68,291**	**50,108**

9.3 Superannuation

The City makes the majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Operating Statement when they are made or due.

Accumulation

The Fund's accumulation category, Vision MySuper/Vision Super Saver, receives both employer and employee contributions on a progressive basis. Employer contributions are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings (for the year ended 30 June 2021, this was 9.5% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation).

Defined Benefit

The City does not use defined benefit accounting for its defined benefit obligations under the Fund's Defined Benefit category. This is because the Fund's Defined Benefit category is a pooled multi-employer sponsored plan.

There is no proportional split of the defined benefit liabilities, assets or costs between the participating employers as the defined benefit obligation is a floating obligation between the participating employers and the only time that the aggregate obligation is allocated to specific employers is when a call is made. As a result, the level of participation of The City in the Fund cannot be measured as a percentage compared with other participating employers. Therefore, the Fund Actuary is unable to allocate benefit liabilities, assets and costs between employers for the purposes of AASB 119.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

9.3 Superannuation (cont.)

Funding arrangements

The City makes employer contributions to the Defined Benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary.

A triennial actuarial review for the Defined Benefit category as at 30 June 2020 was conducted and completed by the due date of 31 December 2020.

The vested benefit index (VBI) of the Defined Benefit category of which The City is a contributing employer was 104.6%. The financial assumptions used to calculate the VBI were:

Net investment returns	5.6% pa
Salary information	2.5% pa for two years and 2.75% pa thereafter
Price inflation (CPI)	2.0% pa.

As at 30 June 2021, an interim actuarial investigation is underway as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category.

Vision Super has advised that the estimated VBI at 30 June 2021 was 109.7%. The financial assumtions used to calculate this VBI were:

Net investment returns	4.8% pa
Salary information	2.75% pa
Price inflation (CPI)	2.25% pa.

The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2020 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years.

Employer contributions

Regular contributions

On the basis of the results of the 2020 triennial actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, the City makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2021, this rate was 9.5% of members' salaries (9.5% in 2019/2020). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2020 triennial valuation.

In addition, the City reimburses the Fund to cover the excess of the benefits paid as a consequence of retrenchment above the funded resignation or retirement benefit.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

9.3 Superannuation (cont.)

Funding calls

If the Defined Benefit category is in an unsatisfactory financial position at an actuarial investigation or the Defined Benefit category's VBI is below its shortfall limit at any time other than the date of the actuarial investigation, the Defined Benefit category has a shortfall for the purposes of SPS 160 and the Fund is required to put a plan in place so that the shortfall is fully funded within three years of the shortfall occurring. The Fund monitors its VBI on a quarterly basis and the Fund has set its shortfall limit at 97%.

In the event that the Fund Actuary determines that there is a shortfall based on the above requirement, the Fund's participating employers (including the City) are required to make an employer contribution to cover the shortfall.

Using the agreed methodology, the shortfall amount is apportioned between the participating employers based on the pre-1 July 1993 and post-30 June 1993 service liabilities of the Fund's Defined Benefit category, together with the employer's payroll at 30 June 1993 and at the date the shortfall has been calculated.

Due to the nature of the contractual obligations between the participating employers and the Fund, and that the Fund includes lifetime pensioners and their reversionary beneficiaries, it is unlikely that the Fund will be wound up.

If there is a surplus in the Fund, the surplus cannot be returned to the participating employers.

In the event that a participating employer is wound-up, the defined benefit obligations of that employer will be transferred to that employer's successor.

The 2020 triennial actuarial investigation surplus amounts

An actuarial investigation is conducted annually for the Defined Benefit category of which the City is a contributing employer. Generally, a full actuarial investigation is conducted every three years and interim actuarial investigations are conducted for each intervening year. A full investigation was conducted as at 30 June 2020.

The Fund's actuarial investigation identified the following for the Defined Benefit category of which the City is a contributing employer:

	2020 (Triennial) $m	2019 (Interim) $m
- A VBI Surplus	100.0	151.3
- A total service liability surplus	200.0	233.4
- A discounted accrued benefits surplus	217.8	256.7

The VBI surplus means that the market value of the fund's assets supporting the defined benefit obligations exceed the vested benefits that the defined benefit members would have been entitled to if they had all exited on 30 June 2020.

The total service liability surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category plus expected future contributions exceeds the value of expected future benefits and expenses as at 30 June 2020.

The discounted accrued benefit surplus means that the current value of the assets in the Fund's Defined Benefit category exceeds the value of benefits payable in the future but accrued in respect of service to 30 June 2020.

The City was notified of the 30 June 2020 VBI during August 2020 (2019: August 2019).

The 2021 interim actuarial investigation

An interim actuarial investigation is being conducted for the Fund's position as at 30 June 2021 as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is anticipated that this actuarial investigation will be completed by October 2021.The City was notified of the 30 June 2021 VBI during August 2021 (2020: August 2020).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

9.3 Superannuation (cont.)

Superannuation contributions

Contributions by the City (excluding any unfunded liability payments) to the above superannuation plans for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 are detailed below:

Scheme	Type of Scheme	Rate	2021 $'000	2020 $'000
Vision super	Defined	9.50%	356	378
Vision super	Accumulation fund	9.50%	3,114	3,032

There were no contributions outstanding and no loans issued from or to the above schemes as at 30 June 2021. The expected contributions to be paid to the defined benefit category of vision super for the year ending 30 June 2022 is $390,000.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Note 10 Change in accounting policy

AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors (AASB 1059) (applies 2020/21 for LG Sector)

The City has adopted *AASB 1059 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors* , from 1 July 2020. This has resulted in no material adjustments to the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

AASB 2018-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Definition of Material (applies 2020/21 for LG Sector)

The City has adopted AASB 2018-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Definition of Material, from July 1 2020. All information has been disclosed where material in nature, amount and impact to ensure primary users of the general purpose financial statements are informed and can make decisions on the basis of the information disclosed regarding the entity.

AASB 2019-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - References to the Conceptual Framework (applies 2020/21 for LG Sector)

The City has adopted AASB 2019-1 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - References to the Conceptual Framework* from 1 July 2020. Financial statements present fairly the financial position,financial performance and cash flows of the Cuty. There is a fair presentation of the effects of transactions, other events and conditions in accordance with definitions and recognition criteria for assets, liabilities, income and expenses set out in the Framework Conceptual for Financial Reporting.

It is not expected that these standards will have any significant impact on the City.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GREATER BENDIGO CITY COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

For the year ended 30 June 2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Description of Municipality

The City of Greater Bendigo is located in the geographic centre of Victoria about 90 minute drive north of Melbourne. Greater Bendigo has an estimated population of 119,980 at 30 June 2021 and covers approximately 3,000 square kilometres of the central Victorian landscape, including smaller towns and villages such as Heathcote, Axedale, Huntly, Marong, Elmore, Goornong, Neilborough, Sebastian, Woodvale, Raywood, Mia Mia and Redesdale.

The resident population of Greater Bendigo at 30 June 2020 was estimated at 118,093, which represents an average annual growth rate of 1.6% or 1,887 people.

The service age structure of Greater Bendigo shows different populations at their different life stages. Looking at age structure this way can better inform the level of demand on specific age based services as well as specific housing needs. At the 2016 Census the age structure shows that overall 19.2% of the population was aged between 0 and 15 and 17.8% of residents were over the age of 65. Compared to regional Victoria, Greater Bendigo has a higher proportion of people in the younger age groups and lower proportion of those 65 and over (18.2% and 20.4% respectively).

Additional demographic information is contained earlier in the annual report.

The Covid-19 pandemic has once again had a significant impact on the operations of the City. In line with government restrictions, the City closed a number of facilities and reduced service delivery throughout the year. The financial impact of these closures has been reflected in the results for 2020-21 and appropriate commentary appears throughout the annual financial and performance statements.

The City will continue to monitor the non-financial and financial impacts of Covid-19 on its operations.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Greater Bendigo City Council
2020/2021 Performance Statement

Sustainable Capacity Indicators					
Indicator /measure	Results 2018	Results 2019	Results 2020	Results 2021	Material Variations
Population					
Expenses per head of municipal population [Total expenses / Municipal population]	$1,551	$1,606	$1,638	$1,588	
Infrastructure per head of municipal population [Value of infrastructure / Municipal population]	$11,140	$11,573	$11,525	$11,970	
Population density per length of road [Municipal population / Kilometres of local roads]	36.46	37.10	37.65	38.19	
Own-source revenue					
Own-source revenue per head of municipal population [Own-source revenue / Municipal population]	$1,286	$1,359	$1,302	$1,184	Own source revenue reduced in 2020/2021 due to lower user fees in the year, and other reduced revenue as part of COVID support or reduced service provided by the City.
Recurrent grants					
Recurrent grants per head of municipal population [Recurrent grants / Municipal population]	$243	$222	$232	$226	
Disadvantage					
Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage [Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by decile]	4	4	4	4	
Workforce turnover					
Percentage of staff turnover [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year x100]	8.9%	14.0%	8.5%	10.9%	

Definitions
"adjusted underlying revenue" means total income other than:
(a) non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and
(b) non-monetary asset contributions; and
(c) contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
"infrastructure" means non-current property, plant and equipment excluding land
"local road" means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004
"own-source revenue" means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)
"relative socio-economic disadvantage", in relation to a municipality, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipality is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Service Performance Indicators					
Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	Results 2019	Results 2020	Results 2021	Material Variations
Aquatic Facilities ***Utilisation*** *Utilisation of aquatic facilities* [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	1.60	4.23	4.26	2.92	Reduction in visits as the public were under stay at home orders
Animal Management ***Health and safety*** *Animal management prosecutions* [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions]	New in 2020	New in 2020	100%	100%	
Food Safety ***Health and safety*** *Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications* [Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100	87.12%	80.88%	85.19%	71%	Lower quantity of non-compliance notifications year-on-year due to lockdown restrictions on hospitality sector.
Governance ***Satisfaction*** *Satisfaction with council decisions* [Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed in making decisions in the interest of the community]	54	57	53	54	
Libraries ***Participation*** *Active library borrowers in municipality* [Number of active library borrowers in the last three years / The sum of the population for the last three years] x100	14.07%	12.91%	12.47%	10.34%	Decrease in active borrowers due to COVID-19 restrictions forcing libraries to close. In line with non-essential services.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Greater Bendigo City Council
2020/2021 Performance Statement

Service Performance Indicators (cont.)					
Service/indicator/measure	Results 2018	Results 2019	Results 2020	Results 2021	Material Variations
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)					
Participation					
Participation in the MCH service					
[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100	77.85%	78.45%	78.02%	77.34%	
Participation					
Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children	80.20%	78.47%	82.97%	72.20%	Reduction in Material & Child Health Services. Programs could not operate when there were stay at home orders.
[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100					
Roads					
Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with sealed local roads	57	60	60	61	
[Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how council has performed on the condition of sealed local roads]					
Statutory Planning					
Decision making					
Council planning decisions upheld at VCAT	71.43%	58.33%	75.00%	87.50%	The last two years have been consistent with 8 planning decisions being disputed in VCAT. This year 7 out of 8 decisions were upheld. Prior year was 6 out of 8 were upheld. FY2018-19 was an outlier as 7 out of 12 decisions were upheld.
[Number of VCAT decisions that did not set aside council's decision in relation to a planning application / Number of VCAT decisions in relation to planning applications] x100					
Waste Collection					
Waste diversion					
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill	46.84%	58.00%	50.80%	50.19%	
[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100					

Definitions
"active library member" means a member of a library who has borrowed from the library
"annual report" means an annual report prepared by a council under section 98 of the Act
"class 1 food premises" means food premises, within the meaning of the Food Act 1984, that have been declared as class 1 food premises under section 19C of that Act
"class 2 food premises" means food premises, within the meaning of the Food Act 1984 , that have been declared as class 2 food premises under section 19C of that Act
"critical non-compliance outcome notification" means a notification received by council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984 , or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health
"local road" means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the Road Management Act 2004
"major non-compliance outcome notification" means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the Food Act 1984, or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken
"MCH" means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age
"population" means the resident population estimated by council

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Financial Performance Indicators						Forecasts				
Dimension/Indicator/Measure	Results 2018	Results 2019	Results 2020	Results 2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Material Variations
Efficiency									
Expenditure level									
Expenses per property assessment [Total expenses / Number of property assessments]	$3,039	$3,158	$3,279	$3,230	$3,235	$3,299	$3,300	$3,375	
Revenue level									
Average rate per property assessment [General rates and municipal charges / Number of property assessments]	New in 2020	New in 2020	$1,710	$1,794	$1,766	$1,845	$1,895	$1,972	
Liquidity									
Working capital									At the end of 2020/2021 cash and investments were $26M greater than the previous year due to additional government grants combined with delays in programs due to lockdown restrictions. However, while cash holdings were higher, the increased grants and lockdowns delaying the City's ability to deliver programs resulted in significant funds being classified as current liabilities (Income received in advance, $14m). In addition, a long term interest only loan ($11M) is due in the next 12 months and hence has been reclassified as current. The forward Financial Plan maintains adequate cash holdings for commitments
Current assets compared to current liabilities [Current assets / Current liabilities] x100	201.62%	244.18%	185.97%	160.09%	178.24%	153.67%	141.02%	139.41%	
Unrestricted cash									
Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities [Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100	81.31%	103.54%	73.67%	68.98%	78.95%	47.73%	40.56%	27.95%	
Obligations									
Loans and borrowings									
Loans and borrowings compared to rates [Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100	42.34%	39.00%	34.27%	32.10%	32.71%	33.25%	33.26%	29.60%	
Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates [Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100	5.37%	5.33%	4.89%	4.74%	13.59%	6.14%	6.83%	7.04%	
Indebtedness									Increased grants and lockdowns delaying the City's ability to deliver programs resulted in significant funds being classified as Current Liabilities 'income received in advance' ($14m). Also a long term interest only loan ($11M) is due for repayment in 2021/2022 which as a result was reclassified to Current Liabilities during 2020/2021
Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue [Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100	36.42%	33.26%	36.66%	28.86%	30.70%	29.95%	28.87%	25.52%	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Financial Performance Indicators (cont.)										
						Forecasts				
Dimension/indicator/measure	Results 2018	Results 2019	Results 2020	Results 2021	2021	2022	2023	2024	Material Variations
Asset renewal and upgrade									Capital expenditure in 2021 was lower overall than previous years - in part due to some significant renewal and upgrade projects being delivered in 2021/2022. Renewal allocations have been increased in the 10 year plan, which begins to improve this ratio in future years.
Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation [Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x100	New in 2020	New in 2020	99.74%	67.88%	78.39%	81.70%	82.71%	84.49%	
Operating position									Lower user fees due to COVID-19 closures (over $4.6m) have impacted on the underlying surplus. The 10 year Financial Plan forecasts a gradual improvement in the underlying result, however funding the full value of depreciation on the City's $1.7 billion asset base remains a challenge.
Adjusted underlying result									
Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) [Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	-0.39%	0.36%	-5.17%	-6.84%	-1.52%	-0.91%	0.61%	1.25%	
Stability									
Rates concentration									Rates as a percentage of underlying income increased in 2020/2021 due to lower user fees in the year.
Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue [Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100	62.93%	62.63%	66.18%	70.84%	68.39%	69.05%	69.37%	69.59%	
Rates effort									
Rates compared to property values [Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100	0.54%	0.54%	0.53%	0.53%	0.52%	0.52%	0.51%	0.50%	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Financial Performance Indicators (cont.)							
Retired indicators	**Results**	**Results**	**Results**	**Results**	**Results**		
Service / indicator / measure	2018	2019	2020	2021			**Comments**
Animal Management							
Health and safety							
Animal management prosecutions [Number of successful animal management prosecutions]	8	4	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020			This measure was replaced by AM7 from 1 July 2019.
Efficiency							
Revenue level							
Average residential rate per residential property assessment [Residential rate revenue / Number of residential property assessments]	$1,677.94	$1,758.73	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020			This measure was replaced by E4 from 1 July 2019.
Obligations							
Asset renewal							
Asset renewal compared to depreciation [Asset renewal expense / Asset depreciation] x100	87.42%	78.64%	Retired in 2020	Retired in 2020			This measure was replaced by O5 in 1 July 2019.

Definitions

"adjusted underlying revenue" means total income other than:
(a) non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and
(b) non-monetary asset contributions; and
(c) contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
"adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)" means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure
"asset renewal expenditure" means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability
"current assets" has the same meaning as in the AAS
"current liabilities" has the same meaning as in the AAS
"non-current assets" means all assets other than current assets
"non-current liabilities" means all liabilities other than current liabilities
"non-recurrent grant" means a grant obtained on the condition that it be expended in a specified manner and is not expected to be received again during the period covered by a council's Strategic Resource Plan
"own-source revenue" means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)
"rate revenue" means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges
"recurrent grant "means a grant other than a non-recurrent grant
"residential rates" means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges levied on residential properties
"restricted cash" means cash and cash equivalents, within the meaning of the AAS, that are not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year
"unrestricted cash" means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Other Information

1. Basis of Preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a performance statement within its annual report. The performance statement includes the results of the prescribed sustainable capacity, service performance and financial performance indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district and an explanation of material variations in the results. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* and Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014 (as per the transitional provisions of the Local Government Act 2020).

Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from council information systems or from third parties (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year. For the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the results are as forecast by the council's strategic resource plan. The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014 requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

The forecast figures included in the performance statement are those adopted by council in its four year budget on 24 June 2021. The four year budget includes estimates based on key assumptions about the future that were relevant at the time of adoption and aimed at achieving sustainability over the long term. Detailed information on the actual financial results is contained in the General Purpose Financial Statements. The four year budget can be obtained by contacting council or located on the Greater Bendigo City Council Website.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Certification of the Performance Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989 and* the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014.*

Nathan Morsillo, FCPA
Principal Accounting Officer
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

In our opinion the accompanying performance statement of Greater Bendigo City Council for the year ended 30 June 2021 presents fairly in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations2014.

The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.

As at the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014* to certify this performance statement in its final form.

Jennifer Alden
Councillor
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

Andrea Metcalf
Councillor
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

Craig Niemann
Chief Executive Officer
Date : *21/09/2021*
Bendigo

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

VAGO
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Councillors of Greater Bendigo City Council

Opinion	I have audited the accompanying performance statement of Greater Bendigo City Council (the council) which comprises the: • description of municipality for the year ended 30 June 2021 • sustainable capacity indicators for the year ended 30 June 2021 • service performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2021 • financial performance indicators for the year ended 30 June 2021 • other information and • the certification of the performance statement. In my opinion, the performance statement presents fairly, in all material respects, the performance of the council for the year ended 30 June 2021 in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
Basis for Opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the performance statement* section of my report. My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. I and my staff are independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the performance statement in Victoria and have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
Councillors' responsibilities for the performance statement	The Councillors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the performance statement in accordance with the performance reporting requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989* and for such internal control as the Councillors determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the statement of performance that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statement	As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the performance statement based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the performance statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of this performance statement.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Standards on Assurance Engagements, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the performance statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the performance statement, including the disclosures, and whether the performance statement represents the underlying events and results in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Councillors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
27 September 2021

Sanchu Chummar
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

NOTES

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

NOTES

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

COUNCIL OFFICES

City of Greater Bendigo office locations and service points:

Main office
15 Hopetoun Street, Bendigo
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E: requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au
W: www.bendigo.vic.gov.au

Adam Street Depot
64 Adam Street, Golden Square

Heathcote Service Centre
125 High Street, Heathcote
T: (03) 5433 3211

Bendigo Art Gallery
42 View Street, Bendigo
T: (03) 5434 6088
E: bendigoartgallery@bendigo.vic.gov.au
W: www.bendigoartgallery.com.au

Bendigo Venues and Events
50 View Street, Bendigo
T: (03) 5434 6100
E: bendigovenuesandevents@bendigo.vic.gov.au
W: www.bendigovenuesandevents.com.au

Bendigo Livestock Exchange
Wallenjoe Road, Huntly
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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

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CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

14. INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING

14.1. DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2021- 2025 FOR ENDORSEMENT

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

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information of the community feedback on the draft Council Plan 2021- 2025, highlight changes made in response, seek Council support to endorse the final plan and advocate for endorsement of the Community Vision and Values by community leaders and partner organisations across Greater Bendigo.

Summary

Over the last twelve months Councillors and Council staff have worked with the community to develop a Community Vision and Values and a Council Plan that will guide Council decision making over the next four years.

The draft Council Plan 2021- 2025 reflects the priorities of the new Council, contributing to achieving the Community Vision and Values, building on previous endorsed plans and strategies. It has been developed in alignment with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

The final step in this planning process was to release the final draft for public feedback for a period of three weeks. Seventeen submissions were received from community groups, individuals and Council staff. As a result of this feedback several changes have been made to strengthen the plan prior to endorsement.

The Local Government Act 2020 requires that a Council Plan must include strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of objectives. Community and Council indicators have been developed and included for each outcome area in the plan. These will be reviewed annually to assist Council in identifying priority actions as part of its annual planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Greater Bendigo City Council endorse the Community Vision and Values, advocate for its endorsement by community leaders and partner organisations across Greater Bendigo and adopt the: Council Plan 2021 – 2025: Mir wimbul and thank the community for its contribution in determining future priorities for Council.

Policy Context

Section 88 of the Local Government Act 2020 outlines the requirement that:

- A Council must maintain a Community Vision that is developed with its municipal community in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.
- The scope of the Community Vision is a period of at least the next 10 financial years.
- A Community Vision must describe the municipal community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- A Council must develop or review the Community Vision in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Community Vision by 31 October in the year following a general election.
- The Community Vision adopted under subsection (4) has effect from 1 July in the year following a general election.

In accordance with Section 90 of the Local Government Act 2020, a Council must prepare and adopt a Council Plan for a period of at least the next four financial years after a general election in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices.

A Council Plan must include the following:

- The strategic direction of the Council
- Strategic objectives for achieving the strategic direction
- Strategies for achieving the objectives for a period of at least the next four financial years
- Strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of the objectives
- A description of the Council's initiatives and priorities for services, infrastructure and amenity

A Council must develop or review the Council Plan in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy utilising deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Council Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.

The Council Plan, once adopted, has effect from 1 July in the year following a general election.

Background Information

The Local Government Act 2020 (Act) received Royal Assent on March 24, 2020. It is a principles-based Act aiming to remove unnecessary regulatory and legislative prescription. The five sets of principles relate to:

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

The Act drives an integrated approach to planning and reporting to support strategic decision making through:

- Recognising that planning must be holistic and driven by the community
- Providing a comprehensive view of available resources and commitments
- Enabling alignment of objectives and capabilities, and
- Supporting an understanding of medium to long-term implications of decisions on resource allocation and Council performance.

The Act requires Council to develop the following:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Title	*Timeframe*	*Due*
Community Vision	10 years	October 2021 (has effect July 2021)
Financial Plan	10 years	October 2021 (has effect July 2021)
Asset Plan	10 years	Adopted by 30 June 2022 (has effect July 2022)
Council Plan	4 years	October 2021 (has effect July 2021)
Revenue & Rating Plan	4 years	Adopt by 30 June 2021 (this was adopted by the City in the June 2021 Council meeting)
Workforce Plan	4 years	31 December 2021
Annual Budget	1 + 3 years	Adopt by June 30 each year (adopted at the June 2021 Council meeting)

The development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan all require *deliberative engagement* with the community. The Greater Bendigo Community Engagement Policy 2020 provides the following definition of deliberative engagement:

"a method of engagement process with a select group of participants. The process focuses on a defined issue. It weighs up options and provides recommendations to decision-makers".

Previous Council Decision Dates:

Council endorsed its previous Community Plan 2017 – 2021 in June 2017.

Report

In September 2020 City staff developed a project plan outlining the steps required for Council to meet its strategic planning obligations under the Local Government Act 2020. Supported by Council, this involved the development of a comprehensive community engagement plan that provided opportunities for the Greater Bendigo community to contribute to the plan through a three-stage process over nine months.

The goals of the community engagement plan were:

1. To build the municipal community's understanding of current Council services, strategy and resources
2. To strengthen trust in Council and its commitment to listening and responding to the municipal community needs
3. Build a more comprehensive understanding of municipal community needs and aspirations to inform the development of short, medium, and long-term strategy.

Commencing in January 2021, stage 1 sought to understand what the community loves, values and wants to see improved or changed in the future. To assist engagement, Council named the project "Imagine Greater Bendigo" and launched its new online

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

community engagement platform “Let’s Talk Greater Bendigo”. A survey was developed that built on the themes from community engagement undertaken over the last few years. Over 1,000 people responded to either the short form or long form survey online or by completing a post card. Members of our non-English speaking communities were engaged using post cards translated in Karen, Dinka and Dari.

Stage 2 sought to understand the broad range of community needs and priorities in relation to Council’s services and program delivery exploring the key themes and outcomes from stage 1 engagement. In this stage City staff and Councillors reached out to key stakeholder groups and individuals asking them to identify their top three to five priorities.

Run concurrently with stage 2 was a Community Panel where we asked members of the community to come together to deliberate over issues, challenges and opportunities to develop a shared Community Vision and Values and provide input into future Council priorities. Over 15,000 invitations were sent to residents of Greater Bendigo by an independent recruiter. This resulted in 45 adults aged between 25 – 70 agreeing to participate over the two and a half days. They were joined by 20 young people aged between 12 – 25 years who responded to an expression of interest to participate. The panel was independently facilitated by expert community engagement practitioners with the following Community Vision and Values developed:

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

Values - transparency; sustainability: inclusion; innovation and equity.

Reports from each stage of the community engagement process are available on the Let’s Talk Greater Bendigo community engagement platform.

The outcomes from the community engagement process along with consideration of the goals and objectives of current Council endorsed plans and strategies were then shared with Councillors over a series of workshops providing them opportunities to feed in priorities from their own community engagement.

The Council Plan has the following goals and outcomes:

1. Lead and govern for all - A community that works together to achieve our shared vision
2. Healthy, liveable spaces and places - A community where all people can live healthy, safe, harmonious lives in attractive and accessible settings
3. Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy - An inclusive, sustainable and prosperous community where all people can thrive
4. Aboriginal Reconciliation - A community that recognises and respects Aboriginal people and culture and enables the self-determination of Traditional Owners
5. A climate resilient built and natural environment - A community featuring healthy regional landscapes and buildings that are developed with the changing climate and earth’s resources in mind.
6. A vibrant, creative community - A community that inspires a culture of creativity, activates its spaces, nurtures and supports talent, champions inclusion and access and shows the world.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

7. A safe, welcoming and fair community - A community where people are respected, safe to participate in all aspects of community life and have equitable access to the resources they need.

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung country. Both Traditional Owner groups have Country Plans and Recognition and Settlement Agreements in place. Council is committed to working closely with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in our city and region. As part of this commitment, the plan is dual named Mir wimbul: Council Plan 2021 – 2025. The meaning of Mir wimbul being close to "community protocol" in the Dja Dja Wurrung language. Feedback from Dja Dja Wurrung has been very positive about this approach.

At the August 2021 Ordinary meeting, Council released the draft Council Plan 2021 – 2025 for final review by the community. Seventeen submissions were received through the Let's Talk Greater Bendigo Platform, seven from individual members of the community, five from local organisations and five from staff. Only one submission was not supportive, with the remainder supportive. A number of suggestions were made for improvement. These included:

- Support and empower Traditional Owners' priorities in public land and cultural landscape management
- Strengthening Council support for the LGBTIQA+ community
- Highlighting investment in early years learning and development
- Supporting sustainable and active transport
- Supporting the development of the Bendigo Regional Dementia Village – GILBRUK Place as an economic development initiative

Modifications have been made to the draft Council Plan 2021 – 2025 to reflect these suggestions.

A key component of the final Council Plan is a set of indicators for each outcome area. These will be monitored annually during the life of the plan to ensure our actions and initiatives are moving us toward our desired outcomes. They include Community Indicators: areas where Council can contribute to change, and Council Indicators: areas for which Council is responsible.

Priority/Importance:

The Community Vision and the Council Plan must be completed and adopted by Council before 31 October 2021.

Timelines:

The Local Government Act 2020 requires that Council adopt the Community Vision and Council Plan by 31 October 2021.

Risk Analysis:

The development of this Community Vision and Council Plan, including the exhibition process, meets legislated requirements.

Consultation/Communication

External Consultation:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Opportunities to provide written submissions on the draft Council Plan 2021 - 2025 were advertised through local media and the City's social media channels.

Internal Consultation:

Staff were invited to provide feedback as part of the Stage 3 community engagement process.

Consultation/Communication

External Consultation:

Opportunities to provide written submissions on the draft Council Plan 2021 - 2025 were advertised through local media and the City's social media channels.

Internal Consultation:

Staff were invited to provide feedback as part of the Stage 3 community engagement process.

Resource Implications

Preparation of the Community Vision and Council Plan was completed within the available budget.

The Financial Plan provides a 10 year financially sustainable projection regarding how the actions of the Council Plan may be funded to achieve the Community Vision.

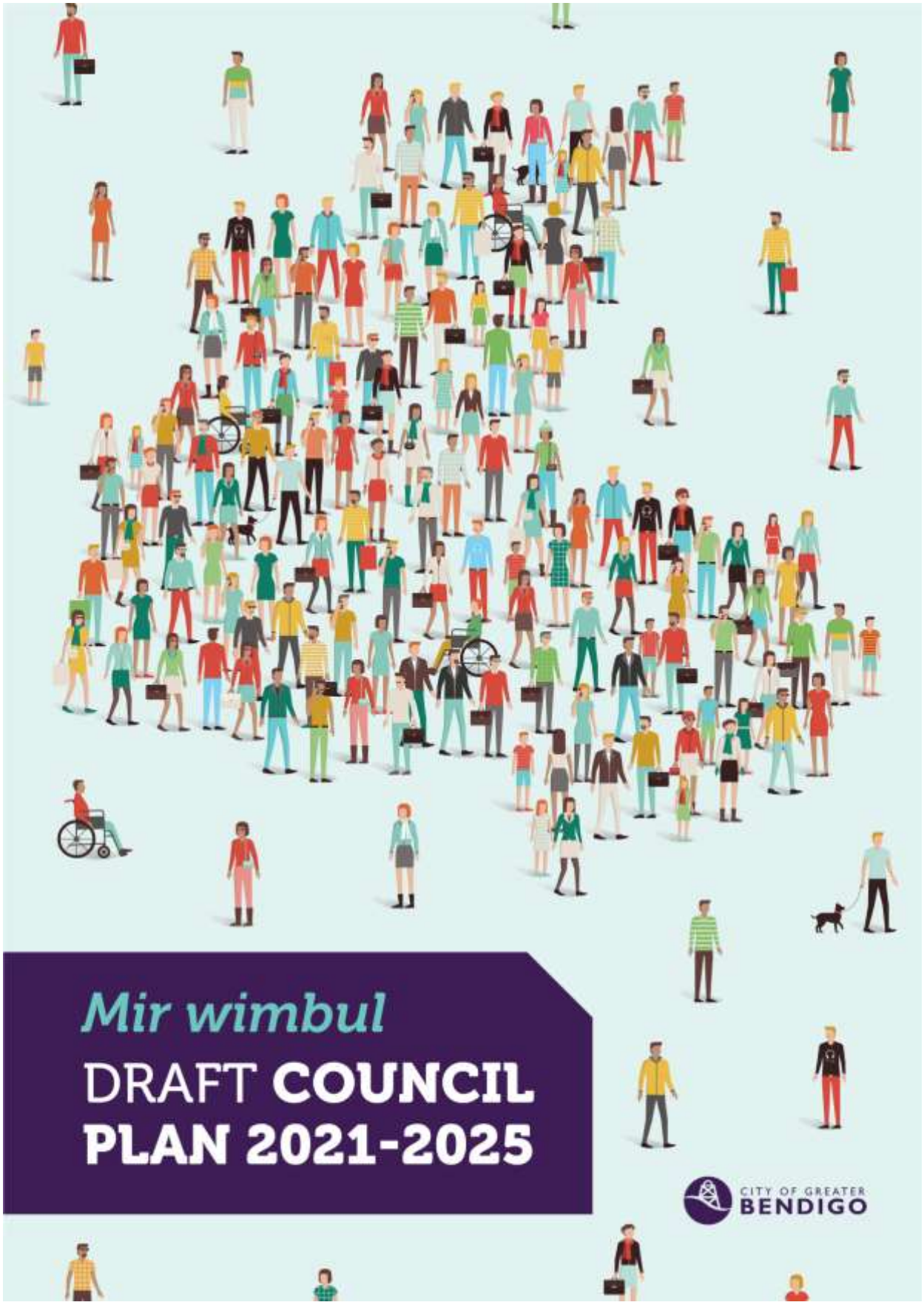
All actions included in the Plan were separately considered and budgeted through Council's annual budget process.

Attachments

1. Council Plan 2021 – 2025: Mir wimbal
2. Stage 3 Community Engagement - Council Plan Submissions Sep 2021 - Summary

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - Council Plan 2021 – 2025: Mir wimbal



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Acknowledgement of Country

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

We would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land.

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

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



Acknowledgement of First Nations People

The City recognises that there are people from many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities living in Greater Bendigo.

We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to all First Nations Peoples who live and reside in Greater Bendigo on Dja Dja Wurrung and Tangurung Country, and we thank them for their contribution to our community.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Community vision 2021-2031

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

The community vision is underpinned by five values:

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

The community vision and values were developed by a dedicated community panel of 61 residents who were specifically chosen to complete this important work.

This is how the panel described the community vision when it was presented to Council:

This vision encompasses what it means to be a citizen of Greater Bendigo. As a city and, more importantly, a community. It is important that we recognise the rich heritage that has formed who we are. As a team, we believe this is evidenced in the last sentence. Not only do we reflect on this heritage as a community, we build on it towards a future that all of us can appreciate.

When we say 'all of us' we mean all of us. Greater Bendigo is an extremely diverse city and region, with community members of all ages, many cultures, religions, sexualities and experiences, and it is of paramount importance that we recognise this.

We are also a community that loves festivals and gatherings, and when there is something to celebrate, we celebrate it. As such, this is reflected in the first sentence.

We are also an incredibly welcoming people, who place an importance on sustainability. This term covers not only environment but also health (both mental and physical), economy, and a sustenance of culture and heritage.

The term 'prosperous' is also included to encompass prosperity in all respects.

The third sentence is also included as an important step towards reconciliation with the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples, and it reflects the desire of the community to include the voice of the traditional custodians in decision making and events.

Thanks very much, we look forward to seeing this vision exemplified as we move towards a bright and happy future, together.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Your Council

The City of Greater Bendigo is represented by nine Councillors, with three Councillors representing each ward.



Left to right - Cr Andrea Metcalf, Cr Vaughan Williams, Cr Julie Sloan, Cr Greg Penna, Cr Dr Jennifer Alden, Cr David Fagg, Cr Margaret O'Rourke, Cr Rod Fyffe OAM and Cr Matthew Evans.

Eppalock Ward

Cr Matthew Evans

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Cr Margaret O'Rourke

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Cr Greg Penna

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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Mayor's foreword



Welcome to the 2021-2025 Greater Bendigo Council Plan.

Councillors are happy to present this plan to the community. It outlines how we want to see Greater Bendigo grow and develop into the future.

This is our document that sets the course for how we will lead and govern for the benefit of everyone.

I am proud that for the first time this document has a dual name in the language of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Mir wimbul (meaning community protocol), representing the City of Greater Bendigo's commitment to reconciliation; a first step in delivering on our new community vision and walking hand-in-hand with Traditional Custodians of this land.

This Council wants to be known as progressive, environmentally aware and future-focused, financially responsible, compassionate and fair minded.

We have a unique role to play in supporting the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and renewal, and managing sustainable growth as people move to the regions from metropolitan areas or remain in their hometown. As a Council we are thinking of what people are looking for and the type of communities we need to build for their future. Building resilient communities can be done while enabling economic and business growth, supporting water and food security, and the health of the natural environment.

Over this term, Council hopes to continue to develop strong engagement opportunities with the community to better understand community sentiment and share information.

I thank all residents for the time and energy they have put into sharing their thoughts on the future of Greater Bendigo as part of the Imagine Greater Bendigo process. You clearly told us what you love about our city and region and how you would like to see communities grow and develop.

This plan has carefully considered and refined all your feedback, which reinforced Council is on the right track and that we share the same hopes for the future. Over the coming four years, this plan will support a transparent account of decisions and actions to be taken to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes in our community, all with the intent of leaving the city and region a better place as our legacy.

It also factors in other decision-making, including delivering on previously adopted strategies and plans and Council's formal acknowledgement of the urgent need for action to address serious future environmental and climate breakdown, as well as our obligations under the *Local Government Act (2020)* and *Gender Equality Act (2020)*.

The actions in this plan seek to deliver on the new community vision and further support Greater Bendigo to grow and develop into the contemporary city and region it is known as, while also acknowledging our heritage and knowing there is always room for improvement to ensure Greater Bendigo is a welcoming, sustainable and prosperous place for everyone.

Challenges and opportunities

Council's focus is to provide services, facilities and programs to benefit the community in a fair manner, ensuring our resources are used in keeping with the principles of the *Local Government Act (2020)* (the Act) to achieve the best outcomes for everyone, including future generations.

A key piece of feedback received during community consultation was that people most value the 'country town feel' of where they live, so it will be important not to lose this as the community continues to grow.

The idea of 'place making' will be critical to our community's health and wellbeing and also the success of this Council term. Design of vibrant and inclusive places based on the idea of '10 minute neighbourhoods' will ensure people can access most of their daily needs within a 10 minute walk or cycle of where they live, or a drive if they live in rural areas. By doing this it also helps to develop an increased sense of belonging for residents.

What will be our environmental legacy and how will we continue to lessen our environmental footprint? There is an opportunity to be leaders in how we deal with waste, treating it as a resource, and our focus on planting more trees will be critical in cooling our streets and suburbs and making us comfortable during warming temperatures. Doing this will also help to meet another key principle of the Act whereby Councils need to take an active role in promoting environmental sustainability, including climate change risk.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Healthy food can be affordable and quick and easy to prepare and there is much we can do to break down barriers to improving our health and wellbeing. Access to local seasonal produce plus helping people learn how to grow and cook food is a high priority, as is the provision of low-cost or free opportunities to exercise and help stay well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the need for Council's work to be inclusive and fair to ensure no-one is left behind. Key ways to do this are through economic development, planning for employment opportunities, such as in the renewable energy industry and manufacturing, supporting access to affordable sustainable housing, the staging of events and art gallery exhibitions that provide pleasure to our community and bring visitors to our region, delivery of infrastructure to support health and wellbeing, and significant business grant support.

Councillors will need to use resources wisely. We know that growing communities expect many services and facilities to be provided, and these will be the subject of discussions as we feel the cumulative impacts of rate capping. Together we will need to decide what will be affordable and fair priorities for investment in communities.

Over the coming years we will need to build on partnerships with State and Federal governments and many others to advocate, collaborate and share resources. We will work to develop spaces such as community hubs to increase the resilience and future happiness and health of our community, and strive to consolidate the successes of Greater Bendigo.

CEO message



The Council Plan is a critical document that guides the work of staff at the City of Greater Bendigo.

Following extensive community consultation, we have reaffirmed the community's priorities and staff look forward to delivering on these in partnership with Council.

The goals within this plan will help to deliver on the community vision to create a bright and happy future for us all as we prepare to support a population of 200,000 people by 2050.

I am grateful to residents for sharing their thoughts and ideas of how they see a future Greater Bendigo and what they will need to have the lifestyle and opportunities they want.

Greater Bendigo continues to be a hub for the wider region, so our work also benefits more than just local residents. We share our facilities and events with neighbouring shires, and many see Greater Bendigo as a place to access education, employment, healthcare, business, recreation and cultural attractions.

Over the coming four years, Council's budget will be valued at approximately $225M each year, so this plan seeks to be innovative while also maintaining ongoing financial viability.

Whatever challenges and opportunities lie ahead, we will continue to adapt as an organisation and respond to community needs while maintaining excellent, high-quality service delivery.

We look forward to your continued input and collaboration through community engagement opportunities on our Let's Talk Greater Bendigo online platform and face-to-face.

Let's keep working together for the benefit of our community.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

About Greater Bendigo

Greater Bendigo population:
119,980
(Estimated Resident Population, ABS, 2020)

Population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:
1.7%[1]
(ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016)

8% of residents born overseas, top 5 countries of birth – United Kingdom, New Zealand, India, Myanmar, Thailand
(ABS Census 2016)

Population growth rate:
1.8%
(Estimated Resident Population, ABS, 2019)

Rural population:
21,144
(Community ID, 2019)

Population forecast to 2036:
155,596
(Forecast ID, 2019)

Catchment area/regional population:
249,192
(Estimated Residential Population, ABS 2020 including Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon, Greater Bendigo, Mt Alexander, Macedon Ranges Shires)

Gross Regional Product:
$7.923B
(REMPLAN, 2019)

Number of businesses:
8,160
(ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses by LGA, 2019-19)

Tourism economic impact:
$744M
(Combined overnight and day trip expenditure, YE Mar 2020, Tourism Research Australia)

Domestic day trippers:
3.37 million
(YE Mar 2020, Tourism Research Australia)

Domestic overnight visitors:
1.272 million
(YE Mar 2020, Tourism Research Australia)

Largest employing industries: Healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, construction, education and training, and manufacturing
(REMPLAN, viewed 2021)

Over 90% of Greater Bendigo's workforce lives locally
(REMPLAN, viewed 2021)

Manufacturing and mining sectors total exports:
$2B per annum
(REMPLAN, 2020)

UNESCO City of Gastronomy

First Local Government in Australia to be named a Welcoming City in honour of our commitment to cultural diversity, Aboriginal reconciliation and social cohesion

The 2019 Active Living Census found
44.5%
of residents rated their health as excellent or very good

1 in 10 households in Greater Bendigo are food insecure (they do not have enough to eat). In some areas, this increases to 1 in 5 households
(Active Living Census 2019)

19.4% of adults do not feel valued by society. Amongst children aged 3 – 17 years, this proportion was 10.5%
(Active Living Census 2019)

Being time poor is a key barrier to participating in physical activities
(Active Living Census 2019)

1. This figure only includes those individuals who have identified and does not capture large numbers of Aboriginal individuals who did not identify on the Census

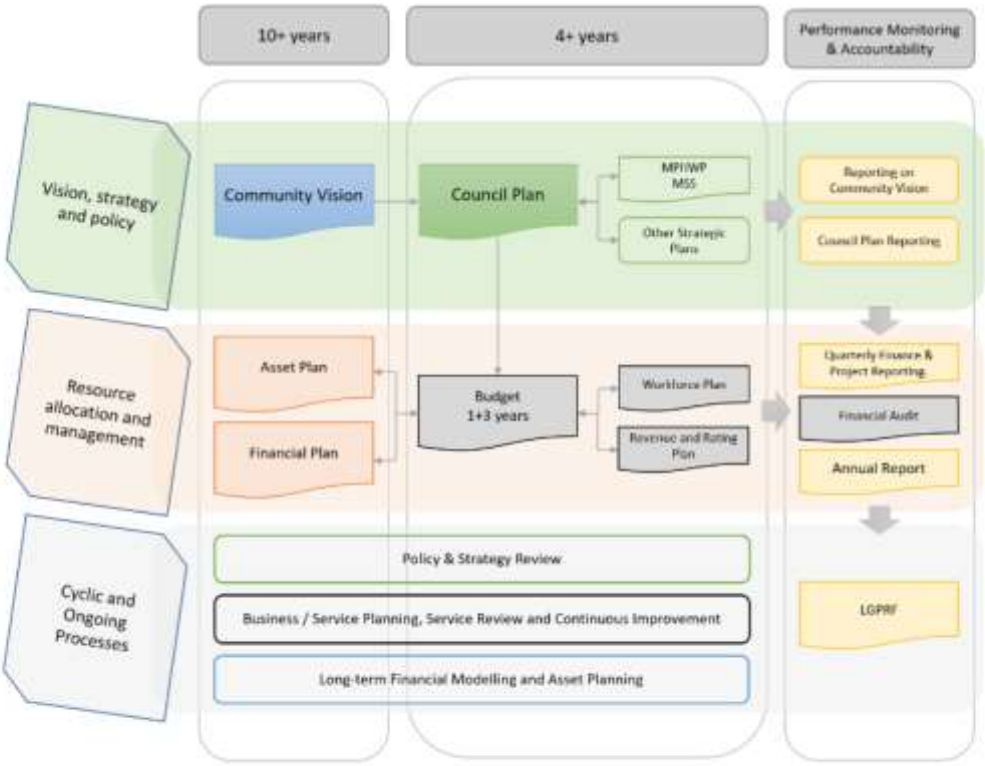
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

About the Council Plan

The Council Plan has been informed by the new *Local Government Act (2020)*, *Gender Equality Act (2020)* and Council's August 2019 notice of motion that acknowledged the urgent need for action to address serious future environmental and climate breakdown.

The role of a Council under the *Local Government Act* is to provide good governance for the benefit and wellbeing of the community. Council must produce this four-year Council Plan, which outlines strategic outcomes, goals, objectives and actions, as well as indicators to measure its success.

The Council Plan is part of the City of Greater Bendigo's integrated strategic framework. This diagram provides an overview of the main legislated elements of the framework:



The new *Local Government Act* is the first major review of the Act in 30 years.

The new Act is a principles-based Act, meaning it provides guidelines on the way Councils need to lead and govern for their communities. The Act's overarching principles aim to achieve the best outcomes for the community now and into the future:

- Priority to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community including future generations
- Economic, social, and environmental sustainability (including climate change risk) is to be promoted
- The community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making
- Innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued
- Collaboration with other Councils and statutory bodies is to be pursued
- Ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured
- Regional, state and national plans are to be taken into account
- Transparency of decisions and actions is to be ensured

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A key part of the new Act is that a Council must deliberatively engage with its community to develop a community vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan. That means it must select a group of participants to consider a set of issues, weigh up options and make recommendations to Council.

The vision has to capture the community's goals and look at least 10 years into the future. The objectives in this Council Plan and any other strategies or plans developed over the next 10 years need to help deliver on the community vision.

The new *Gender Equality Act (2020)* requires all levels of the public sector to meaningfully work towards gender equality and report every two years on their progress. The development of the community vision, Council Plan and any other future strategies or plans will support Council and staff and policies and services to advance gender equality in the community for everyone.

Actions in the plan to address climate change, development of a climate-resilient community and climate-friendly facilities will help to deliver on Council's previously adopted Notice of Motion.

Through the Notice of Motion, Council acknowledged:

1. The urgent need for action to address the environmental and climate breakdown that poses serious future risks to the health and wellbeing of the people of Greater Bendigo, especially those who are socially and economically the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community.
2. That climate risks will impact public health, emergency management, community services and recreation facilities and carry financial and social implications for LGAs requiring a whole-of-Council approach.
3. The current global consensus that cities should be responsive to climate, environmental and biodiversity breakdown, investing in restoration and conservation of biodiversity, and ensuring a resilient city in current and planned actions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
4. That an internal report on the Council's expenditures aligned to greenhouse gas emissions across Council's business will be prepared by December 31, 2019.
5. The need for budget considerations for the 2020/21 year to incorporate Council-wide mechanisms and allocations to address the risks that climate change presents to the future health and wellbeing of the people of Greater Bendigo.

As our community vision outlines, we look forward to continuing our commitment to reconciliation and walking hand-in-hand with the Traditional Custodians of this land. This is consistent with the new Local Government Act, which recognises that Traditional Owners form part of the 'municipal community' in which they live.

This Council Plan also aims to support Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurug Recognition Settlement Agreements with the Victorian Government (including specific actions for Local Government), and also the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung strategic plans – *Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan* and *Taungurung Buk Dadbagi: Taungurung Country Plan*. For more information, see Appendix 2.

Implementing the Council Plan

The Council Plan is made up of various components.

Outcomes: these are the main focus areas of the Council Plan. Each outcome has a set of goals, objectives and actions that will help to achieve the community vision.

Goals: what we want to achieve for each outcome

Objective: how we will achieve the goals

Actions: annual actions to achieve the goals

Key indicators: how we will measure achievement against each goal

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Our climate change and environment goals

In September 2015, Australia was one of 193 countries to commit to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These goals were developed by the United Nations to provide a global roadmap for all countries to work toward a better world for current and future generations.

All stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector, are expected to contribute to the realisation of these goals.

There are 17 goals that the City will align with actions in this Council Plan.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The role of Council

This is Council's plan for the community and the goals and objectives outlined will help to deliver on the community vision. But it will require a team effort. We have many partners in the community that work to make a difference in how Greater Bendigo grows and develops.

The City of Greater Bendigo cannot and does not do it all, but we thank the Victorian and Australian governments and their associated departments, private industry, health providers, education providers, community organisations, clubs and groups, and our residents for the contribution they make to the future of our city and region.

Where the City does not have a direct delivery role, Councillors and staff advocate to the appropriate level of government. To understand more about the services the City provides, see appendix 1 or the details in the range of strategies included under each of the outcomes.

In the delivery of this plan, the City of Greater Bendigo acts as:

Provider – Council directly provides services and/or infrastructure in ways that achieve the aims of its adopted plans and strategies

Regulator – Council is responsible for regulating a range of activities throughout the municipality. Ensuring that this legislation and the administration of it is done in a way that is supporting the community vision

Partner – Council has many partners across the community to deliver services, infrastructure and events with.

Facilitator – Council has a role in bringing groups of people and organisations together to support collaborations and new partnerships to create new opportunities and solve problems for the community

Advocate – Council advocates on the behalf of the community to other levels of government and various other decision makers to deliver the best possible outcomes for Greater Bendigo

Imagine Greater Bendigo

Imagine Greater Bendigo is the name given to the planning process the City of Greater Bendigo undertook to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act, in particular that the community be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

As part of Imagine, community feedback has helped to inform and develop the community vision, Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, 10-Year Financial Plan and eventually the Asset Plan (due 2022).

The public process started in February 2021 with stage 1. Approximately 1,000 people were reached through listening posts, the 'Imagine it – Draw it' community art project, long and short-form surveys on the online engagement platform Let's Talk Greater Bendigo, and postcards in English, Dinka, Dari and Karen.

Stage 2 of the project focused on bringing together 41 adults and 20 young people over one weekend to form a community panel. They were tasked with considering all the feedback collected during stage 1 and used it to develop a community vision and set of values, and also helped Council prioritise the panel's feedback across seven outcomes – Healthy liveable spaces and places; Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy; A climate-resilient built and natural environment; A community committed to Aboriginal reconciliation; A vibrant, creative community; A safe, welcoming and fair community; and Lead and govern for all.

The adults were independently selected at random to form a group that broadly represented the wider community and a group of 20 young people aged 12 – 24 years were selected via an expression of interest process.

It was Council's commitment following the community panel process to accept the community vision and values, and consider the prioritised feedback.

To help the community to participate through stage 1 and 2, a range of supporting documents were prepared including the 'State of Greater Bendigo' report, which included an analysis of current data, policy documents and strategies at the Local, State and Federal government levels, as well as information on City services and our financial story.

Councillors and City staff used all community feedback and worked together to develop the Council Plan as it is presented today.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Council Plan – outcomes

The Council Plan is based on seven outcomes, which are the main focus areas of the Council Plan.

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

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

Lead and govern for all



A community that works together to achieve our shared vision.

Documents to support leadership and good governance:

- Organisation Strategy
- Council Plan
- Annual Report
- Annual Budget
- Council Meeting agendas
- Community Engagement Policy

Healthy, liveable spaces and places



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

Strategies to support the health and liveability of our community:

- Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy
- Walk Cycle Greater Bendigo
- Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan
- Greater Bendigo Affordable Housing Action Plan
- Connecting Greater Bendigo: Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy
- Integrated Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Greater Bendigo Managed Growth Strategy (in development)
- Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026

Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy



An inclusive, sustainable and prosperous community where all people can thrive.

Strategies to support the sustainable, economic growth of our community:

- Economic Development Strategy – A stronger Greater Bendigo 2030
- Bendigo City Centre Plan
- Greater Bendigo Industrial Land Development Strategy
- Commercial Land and Activity Centre Strategy
- Greater CREATIVE Bendigo
- Bendigo Region Destination Management Plan

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Aboriginal reconciliation



A community that recognises and respects Aboriginal People and culture and enables the self-determination of Traditional Owners.

Strategies to support Aboriginal reconciliation:

- Barpangu (Build Together) – Reconciliation Plan
- Greater CREATIVE Bendigo
- Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026
- Reimaging Bendigo Creek
- UNESCO City of Gastronomy Implementation Framework and Action Plan

A climate-resilient built and natural environment



A community featuring healthy regional landscapes and buildings that are developed with the changing climate and earth's resources in mind.

Strategies to support our built and natural environment:

- Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026
- Greening Greater Bendigo
- Reimaging Bendigo Creek
- Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan

A vibrant, creative community



A community that inspires a culture of creativity, activates its spaces, nurtures and supports talent, champions inclusion and access, and shows the world.

Strategies to support our creative community:

- Greater CREATIVE Bendigo
- UNESCO City of Gastronomy Implementation Framework and Action Plan
- Barpangu (Build Together) – Reconciliation Plan
- Bendigo City Centre Plan
- Economic Development Strategy – A stronger Greater Bendigo 2030

A safe, welcoming and fair community



A community where people are respected, safe to participate in all aspects of community life and have equitable access to the resources they need.

Strategies to support an inclusive community:

- COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Plan
- Barpangu (Build Together) – Reconciliation Plan
- Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Greater Bendigo Coalition Gender Equity Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy – A stronger Greater Bendigo 2030
- Greater Bendigo Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 - 2021
- Greater Bendigo Social Justice Framework
- Greater Bendigo Community Volunteering Strategy

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Imagine Greater Bendigo: Draft Council Plan Priorities

Outcome 1: Lead and govern for all

A community that works together to achieve our shared vision.

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
1. Accountable, financially responsible, equitable, transparent decision making	• Establishment of integrated governance, reporting, data management and evaluation systems • Better long-term scoping, planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects • Focusing on the sustainability of our infrastructure, improve our renewal and maintenance of current assets	• Review parking policies • Develop a business case to guide the future delivery of Pound and Animal Services • Finalise an Early Years Infrastructure Strategy • Finalise a Library Services and Infrastructure Strategy • Develop a 10-Year Finance Plan, a 10-Year Asset Plan and Workforce Plan • Identify ways to better promote procurement opportunities to local businesses • Review Council's Procurement Policy and its alignment with Council's strategic goals to strengthen social, economic and environmental impact • Finalise Community Grants Policy review
2. Commitment to innovation, systems improvement and learning	• Integrate data management and use • Developing digital tools and technologies to improve service delivery and our customer experience • Enable a customer-focused approach that delivers efficient and responsive service • Implement a program of service reviews	• Complete a strategic review of key IT systems, security and strategy • Develop an approach to integrated data management across Council • Complete the masterplan for the Adam Street depot redevelopment • Install a new contact centre solution to provide an improved experience for customers contacting Council • Implement an enhanced customer complaints investigation framework and system • Evaluate the Imagine Greater Bendigo Project.
3. Active community engagement and excellence in customer service	• Strengthen our digital engagement capacity and plan for appropriate community engagement to enhance decision making of Council, including the use of deliberative approaches where necessary • Develop models for co-management/co-investment of facilities with community • Build community understanding of the City's services and strategies • Work to employ a greater diversity of staff representative of the wider community • Encourage and equip a broader range of the population to stand for Council	• Update Council's Community Engagement Toolkit • Utilise and promote online community engagement platform Let's Talk Greater Bendigo • Implement a program of community engagement for Councillors • Identify future opportunities to utilise appropriate deliberative engagement approaches • Review the Community Planning model

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
4. Leadership that sets a standard for good governance and integrity in action, working in partnership with regional Councils	• Implement and evaluate the Organisation Strategy • Work with partners to develop a GovHub for Greater Bendigo. • Prioritise investment in rural/suburban areas/outside the city centre • Advocate for more state and federal funding • Develop a new model for delivery of Library services • Establish and implement a Good Governance Framework • Ensure Council has appropriate policy and practices that align with the Local Government Act 2020	• Develop and implement a comprehensive People and Culture Strategy to invest in our workforce • Continue to plan for transition to GovHub (including key ICT and intra-agency actions and implications of COVID-19) • Respond to changes to Environment Protection legislation and regulations • Explore the most effective way to provide governance support to committees of management • Finalise the updating of the Greater Bendigo Domestic Animal Management Plan

Strategic indicators

Council

- Customer Service satisfaction
- Community engagement – number of people reached
- Community satisfaction with community consultation and engagement
- Satisfaction with community decisions
- Level of staff engagement
- Victorian Auditor General Office (VAGO) financial sustainability indicators
- Asset renewal
- Percentage of staff who have completed mandatory training

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Outcome 2: Healthy, liveable spaces and places

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

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
1. Strengthened community health and wellbeing	• Plan and implement the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan. • Lead the Loddon Campaspe Healthy Heart of Victoria initiative • Implement actions for Greater Bendigo from the Goldfields Library Plan • Invest in Early Years development	• Deliver the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Annual Action Plan • Establish a Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Governance and Capability Building Partnership. • Deliver the 2021 – 2022 Loddon Campaspe Healthy Heart of Victoria program and secure ongoing funding • Finalise the Healthy Facilities Policy • Adopt and implement the Reducing Harm from Gambling Policy
2. A healthy, equitable and sustainable food system.	• Implement Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy • Assist local producers to transition to sustainable agriculture practices • Conduct a rural and environmental study to protect productive agricultural land (as part of the Managed Growth Strategy)	• Support the development of the Greater Bendigo Food Hub • Commence the development of Urban Agriculture Guidelines • Advocate for changes to Victorian Government planning policy that promote healthy food environments
3. Everyday walking and cycling is easier for all ages and abilities.	• Implement the Public Space Plan and Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo including defining and implementing a 10-year walking and cycling infrastructure plan	• Endorse a priority list of walking and cycling developments and advocate to State and Federal governments for funding • Implement Stage 1 of the Ironbark Gully Trail • Implement Stage 2 of the Ewing Park development • Develop a management plan for the Long Gully trail • Advocate to Parks Victoria for improvements to local tracks and trails • Finalise design and commence construction of the Mundy Street and Hargreaves Street separated cycleways
4. The supply and quality of affordable housing is increased.	• Implement the Affordable Housing Action Plan	• Provide planning support to community housing agencies to assist in attracting Big Build funding to Greater Bendigo • Provide support and respond to initiatives from the Big Housing Build program • Build collaborations between the public and private housing sectors to support the development of quality affordable housing • Investigate options to increase housing social supply on Local and State government land
5. More sustainable active and public transport services	• Implement relevant priorities from the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy, Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo and the Climate Change and Environment Strategy	• Investigate scooter share scheme • Advocate for improved transport links for Bendigo including improved connections to the Bendigo Metro Train Network • Advocate to State Government for a free bus service for the City centre

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
6. More people live in 10-minute neighbourhoods	• Direct growth to 10-minute neighbourhoods • Develop a network of Community Hubs • Implement the short-medium term priorities of the Public Space Plan	• Finalise the development of the Community Buildings Policy • Develop a Community Hubs Strategy
7. Sustainable population growth is planned for	• Complete the Greater Bendigo Managed Growth Strategy • Advocate for provision of required water and other infrastructure	• Produce a Managed Growth Strategy Issues and Opportunities Report • Progress the Maiden Gully and Marong Structure Plans and Development Contributions Plans • Progress the strategic planning for Huntly South East (Urban Growth Zone land) Precinct Structure Plan
8. Targeted investment in services, facilities, and programs to communities most in need	• Finalise and implement the Active Bendigo Framework • Finalise and implement the Community Aquatics Strategy. • Implement community infrastructure upgrade and renewal projects. • Implement the 10-year Asset Plan	• Progress the Catherine McAuley Sports Precinct development • Deliver upgrades to recreation facilities at Strathfieldsaye Club Court • Complete a Master Plan for Marong Recreation Reserve • Undertake detailed design for the Heathcote Integrated Precinct • Undertake planning for the redevelopment of the Peter Krenz Centre • Complete the Kennington Recreation Reserve redevelopment • Procure additional open space for recreation to support implementation of the Golden Square Recreation Reserve Master Plan • Advocate for funding for the Junortoun Sports Precinct • Advocate for funding to support the North Bendigo Recreation Reserve Redevelopment

Strategic indicators

Community

- How residents rate their health
- Proportion of adults and children who ran out of food and could not afford to buy more
- Proportion of social housing dwellings
- Percentage of dwellings within urban Bendigo within 600m of a bus stop

Council

- Financial investment in footpaths, walking and cycling infrastructure (new and upgrades)
- Proportion of City-owned or managed facilities that provide healthy food options

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Outcome 3: Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy

An inclusive, sustainable and prosperous community where all people can thrive.

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
1. Inclusive employment opportunities for all, sustainable jobs and investment and a diverse economy	• Implement A Stronger Greater Bendigo Economic Development Strategy • Support the redevelopment of the Bendigo Showgrounds • Upgrade the Bendigo Livestock Exchange • Support the roll out of the the Startup Central Victoria project to support regional innovation • Support the development of the Bendigo Regional Dementia in Heathcote	• Develop a governance and partnership model for implementation of a Stronger Greater Bendigo • Support COVID-19 relief and recovery initiatives including the Jobs Advocate, Business Concierge and Hospitality; and Community Employment Connector programs • Implement the Small Business Grants Program • Develop an investment prospectus for the City (Invest Bendigo) and Loddon Mallee region • Finalise costings and scope for increased shade at the Bendigo Livestock Exchange • Complete upgrade works at the Bendigo Showgrounds • Support the implementation of applied Research and Development programs (Advanced Manufacturing) with La Trobe and Deakin universities • Commence development of an Employment Strategy for Greater Bendigo that responds to the Macklin review • Advocate for and support the development of the Bendigo Regional Dementia Village in Heathcote
2. Education and training pathways that fulfil the city's employment needs	• Work with local education and training providers to respond to community needs • Implement the Early Years Infrastructure Strategy • Support the continued roll out of the Bendigo Education Plan	• Participate in the Schools Industry Roundtable as part of the Bendigo Education Plan implementation • Implement immediate actions from the Early Years Infrastructure Strategy • Advocate to La Trobe University to introduce a Bachelor of Environmental Health training • Identify emerging industry trends to better support career pathways, mapping, and planning
3. A transformed and revitalised City Centre	• Implement the City Centre Plan • Support the roll out of 100GB Bendigo establishing Greater Bendigo as the technology hub of Victoria	• Following completion of the current trial, update Council's Outdoor Dining Policy • Review the Outdoor Dining Code of Practice • Develop a planning scheme amendment to implement the City Centre Plan • Continue the Hargreaves Mall beautification including installation of the proposed shade structure and large LED screen • Develop a planning scheme amendment for the removal of minimum car parking rates from the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme • Commence planning stage for the proposed multi-deck car park in Market Street • Deliver a business case that helps support ongoing investment in connectivity improvements for Bendigo and the Loddon Campaspe region • Deliver a regional prospectus to attract additional funding for improvement to connectivity, digital skills, and capability for Bendigo and the region

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
4. Employment land available for industry expansion and attraction.	• Implement the Industrial Land Strategy • Deliver a large-scale employment (industrial land) precinct in Greater Bendigo	• Complete background planning studies to inform the delivery of the employment precinct • Work to secure land and commence advocacy for investment in required supporting infrastructure
5. A strong vibrant tourism sector	• Implement the Bendigo Regional Destination Management Plan • Continue development of the Bendigo Airport Terminal and business park. • Continue to implement the White Hills Botanic Gardens Master Plan	• Implement a comprehensive events program post-COVID • Explore opportunities for eco-tourism • Commence next stage of the Bendigo Airport redevelopment project including the Business Park and Terminal Expansion • Commence the Bendigo Tramways Expansion Project • Commence construction of the White Hills Botanic Gardens Central Hub Precinct • Advocate for the recognition, support and development of the City and region's artisanal agriculture industry and link them with local and regional tourism promotion and marketing
6. Improved safe freight networks	• Implement priorities from the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy and Road Management Plan.	• Develop a city-wide freight corridor and precinct plan to take Greater Bendigo and its growing freight task into the future

Strategic indicators

Community

- Total value of Gross Regional Product (total and per capita)
- Employment growth (number of jobs created)
- Labour force participation rates (number of people employed, unemployed, retired)
- Year 12 or equivalent education completion levels
- Percentage of market share for tourism domestic one day trips and overnight stays

Council

- Number of volunteers, trainees, apprentices and graduate programs (general and targeted)
- Level of local procurement as a percentage of total

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Outcome 4: Aboriginal reconciliation

A community that recognises and respects Aboriginal people and culture and enables the self-determination of Traditional Owners.

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
1. Respecting and celebrating our Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and cultures through all levels of our organisation	• Implement Barpangu (Reconciliation Plan) • Provision of support for NAIDOC and Reconciliation weeks • Implementation of the Aboriginal Place Naming Project • Implementing the City of Gastronomy Action Plan	• Identify three potential Aboriginal place naming sites across Greater Bendigo • Work with the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative to develop and implement a pilot Cultural Safety Training Package for the City • Explore and seek funding to support the presentation of public art created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists • Support the development of the Dja Dja Wurrung Commercial and Cultural Centre
2. Strengthening our trust, relationships and partnerships with Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	• Implement Barpangu (Reconciliation Plan) • Implement Climate Change and Environment Strategy • Strengthen partnership and collaboration work in alignment with the principles agreed in the respective Memorandums of Understanding • Support and empower Traditional Owners' priorities in public land and cultural landscape management	• Establish annual strategic meetings between the City and the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Traditional Owners to determine projects for collaboration and improve engagement • Finalise Memorandum of Understanding with the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Traditional Owner Groups to strengthen collaboration • Establish an agreed approach to Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) negotiations • Work with Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative to review the City's documentation and processes to increase cultural safety • Commence strategic and operational meetings with the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Traditional Owners on their respective priorities for public land and cultural landscape management
3. Enhanced wellbeing of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	• Implement Barpangu (Reconciliation Plan) • Implement the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan • Strengthen Council's Procurement Policy • Strengthen Council's employment practices • Implement Greater Creative Bendigo • Implement A Stronger Greater Bendigo	• Commence implementation of the recommendations of the 'Improving Aboriginal Procurement in Local Government' project in partnership with Loddon and Mount Alexander Shire Councils • Develop an Aboriginal Employment and Retention Plan • Establish a Mentoring Support Program for Aboriginal employees at the City

Strategic indicators

Council

- Percentage increase in Aboriginal business procurement
- Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment
- Proportion of staff who have participated in cultural awareness training

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Outcome 5: A climate resilient and healthy landscape

A regional community that enjoys a restored and thriving natural environment.

Please refer to the Climate Change and Environment Strategy and the implementation plan for the complete list of targets and actions relating to sustainability outcomes.

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
1. Zero carbon	• Implement the Climate Change and Environment Strategy • Use 100% renewable electricity and transition to locally generated renewable energy • Increase Council building energy efficiency • Transition off fossil gas • Transition to an electric fleet	• Establish and facilitate the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration • Implement the Power it from the Roof Top (solar program) • Develop a Zero Carbon Reserve • Prepare a business case to significantly reduce carbon emissions for Council's fleet and incentivise the use of e-bikes/e-scooters • Commence transitioning away from fossil gas in Council facilities • Utilise the planning system to advance zero carbon developments as part of a planning scheme amendment
2. Circular economy	• Implement the Circular Economy and Zero Waste Policy • Implement the single use plastics policy • Engage with the community to reuse and recycle materials • Support businesses to procure and supply recycled content, reused material, or take-back products in their business	• Develop a Circular Economy and Zero Waste Policy • Complete the Circular Economy Expression of Interest • Explore the potential for a fortnightly food organics and general waste kerbside collection system • Complete the Eaglehawk landfill remediation Stage 1 • Commence implementation of a glass collection system
3. Thriving landscapes and ecosystems	• Implement relevant priorities from the Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan • Implement Greening Greater Bendigo • Develop and implement a Biodiversity Policy • Develop and implement a management and monitoring plan for ecological restoration projects on Council-managed land • Increase involvement of Traditional Owners in the management of public spaces • Engage the wider community in actions to support our goals	• Plant 3,000 street trees across Greater Bendigo • Develop a significant tree register • Scope a Gateway Study for Big Hill and Mandurang landscape preservation • Develop a Biodiversity Policy

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
4. Water Sensitive Bendigo	• Implement Reimagining Bendigo Creek • Monitor and raise awareness about waterway health across the City • Retrofit urban catchments with flood mitigation and Water Sensitive Urban Design infrastructure. Identify and implement alternative water supply and water efficiency infrastructure for Council's assets • Support and facilitate water security planning • Advance the adoption of Water Sensitive Urban Design principles in new developments and urban renewals • Implement the Domestic Waste Water Management Strategy	• Advocate for investment via the Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership, including seeking funding for the Reimagining Bendigo Creek prospectus • Advocate and support the identification of a long-term management solution for Bendigo's mining-impacted groundwater by supporting the Bendigo Groundwater Project

Strategic indicators

Community

- Carbon emissions
- Community solar uptake

Council

- Council's carbon emissions
- Percentage of lightweight fleet that are electric
- Amount of waste to landfill per head of population
- Investment in tree planting
- Percentage of City procurement spent on reused/recycled content goods/materials
- Percentage of City investment in fossil fuels

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Outcome 6: A vibrant, creative community

A community that inspires a culture of creativity, activates its spaces, nurtures and supports talent, champions inclusion and access, and shows the world.

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
1. A culture of creativity	• Implement Greater CREATIVE Bendigo • Create opportunities to promote the unique contribution of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives	• Work with local artists and creatives to run an art-based workshop/training session for Aboriginal young people
2. More activated spaces	• Develop and implement a Public Art Strategy and Policy • Expand the Bendigo Art Gallery	• Develop a Public Art Strategy and Policy • Advocate for State and Federal funding for Bendigo Art Gallery expansion • Commence redevelopment of the Municipal Baths in Rosalind Park
3. Nurturing and supporting talent and championing inclusion and access for creatives	• Hold regular networking events, mentoring and grant opportunities • Establish a digital strategy for creative industries • Develop artist-in-residence programs that connect business and creatives • Explore opportunities for career pathways in creative industries for young people	• Ensure that Greater Bendigo's events include opportunities for local creative industries and performers • Investigate establishing a multicultural hub for creativity that provides space for communities from diverse cultural backgrounds • Increase the visibility of Aboriginal culture, history and landscapes across Greater Bendigo through public art, interpretative signage, public performances and initiatives
4. Build international recognition for our designation as a UNESCO Creative City – A City of Gastronomy	• Implement the Creative City of Gastronomy Implementation Framework and Action Plan	• Work with Dja Dja Wurrung to develop and promote the Seasonal Times: Six Seasons Calendar • Promote and support a focus on gastronomy in the Bendigo Writers Festival 2022
5. Recognise and celebrate our significant national and international heritage	• Develop a Heritage Strategy • Complete heritage studies and review old studies, including information about Aboriginal culture and history and post-contact history, and contributions from other cultural groups (e.g. Chinese) • Complete the Gas Works project • Support the bid for World Heritage listing for the Central Victorian Goldfields Region • Redevelop the National Chinese Museum of Australia (Golden Dragon Museum) • Expand the Central Deborah Gold Mine • Complete the Municipal Baths project	• Develop a priority list for future heritage studies • Complete the Bendigo City Centre Heritage Study Stage 2 – Precincts • Complete a Heritage Study for Victoria Hill • Prepare an update of the master plan for the Gas Works to facilitate activation • Advocate for funding for the World Heritage listing of the Central Victorian goldfields • Complete an updated master plan and business case for Golden Dragon Museum Expansion • Complete upgrade works at the Golden Dragon Museum • Review the Gasworks Master Plan and develop a program of works ready to implement

Strategic indicators

Community

- Number of jobs in creative industries

Council

- Value of grants provided to local creative industries sector
- Value of commissioned work
- Percentage of Greater Bendigo covered by contemporary heritage assessment
- Local arts, culture and events supported

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Outcome 7: A safe, welcoming and fair community

A community where people are respected, safe to participate in all aspects of community life and have equitable access to the resources they need.

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
1. A community that values gender equity and is free from violence against women	• Implement initiatives from the Coalition for Gender Equity Strategy • Ensure compliance with the Gender Equality Act 2020 • Work with local partners to prevent violence against women	• Complete the City of Greater Bendigo Workplace Gender Equality Action Plan • Build organisational capacity in Gender Impact Assessment and conduct on relevant services and policies • Commence development of a Women & Girls Recreation Strategy • Explore temporary accommodation for companion animals of people fleeing family violence and/or experiencing homelessness or financial hardship
2. A welcoming community that understands and respects cultural and religious differences and supports multiculturalism	• Finalise and implement the Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan (CDIP)	• Finalise development of the Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan • Support the Intercultural Ambassadors Program • Explore the placement of welcoming signage across the municipality
3. Young people are supported to explore, engage and be empowered to shape the world they live in	• Provide support to the Greater Bendigo Youth Council • Implement youth focused actions from the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan • Partner with other youth services across the City to strengthen collaboration	• Complete the evaluation of the Youth Strategy and identify future objectives and initiatives • Increase investment in youth services • Consult with local youth service providers regarding the need to establish a local service network
4. A community that values and engages with people of all ages, abilities, genders and sexualities	• Promote Connect Greater Bendigo • Implement the Community Volunteering Strategy • Strengthen Greater Bendigo as a Child Friendly / Age Friendly / Welcoming City • Improve disability access across the City • Celebrate our LGBTQIA+ community	• Advocate for funding to improve accessibility of community facilities • Engage with children and young people to identify opportunities to strengthen the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan and supporting actions • Explore opportunities to strengthen community engagement with the LGBTQIA+ community
5. A community who feels safe	• Develop and implement a Community Safety Strategy	• Commence development of a Community Safety Strategy
6. A community that promotes equity and addresses poverty and disadvantage	• Implement the recommendations of the Bendigo Human Rights Charter evaluation	• Develop a Social Justice Framework • Advocate for improved digital connectivity of areas with limited access and training for digital literacy • Identify an approach to build capacity of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to access Council grants • Continue to develop and deliver initiatives to support our community to recover from the impact of COVID-19 • Develop an investment framework to progress equity, social justice, and fairness

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Where do we want to be? (Goal)	How will we get there? (Objective)	2021-2022 Actions
7. Emergencies are prevented or mitigated	• Implement the Integrated Municipal Emergency Management Plan • Implement the Municipal Fire Management Plan	• Support the delivery of the COVID-19 Community Relief and Recovery Plan • Advocate for funding of works to protect Epsom and Huntly as identified in the Epsom Ascot Huntly Flood Mitigation Study • Investigate the need to develop further flood studies • Investigate opportunities for bushfire mitigation

Strategic indicators

Community

- Reported experiences of racial and religious discrimination
- Community perceptions of safety
- Community perceptions of community inclusion
- Family violence incidents

Council

- Workplace Gender Equality indicators
- People Matter Survey outcome
- Participation of staff in inclusion, access and community safety training
- Percentage of rate payers on payment arrangements

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Appendix 1

City of Greater Bendigo services

The City of Greater Bendigo delivers 69 services that focus on the health, economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of our region. Services include:

Animal services – focus on responsible pet ownership. This is done through animal registration, the provision of public spaces where people can exercise their dogs and a ranger service to pick up wandering animals. The Bendigo Animal Relief Centre (BARC) is a shelter to house lost pets and is also an adoption centre for animals.

Arboriculture – protect and maintain the City's trees in urban and rural areas, increase urban shade, and protect significant and heritage trees.

Bendigo Airport – offers a range of commercial and light aircraft operations, including emergency services, flight training and recreational flying, corporate and charter operations, as well as Qantas flights between Bendigo and Sydney.

Bendigo Art Gallery – the collection includes Australian art from the 1850s to the present day, a special collection of art from the Bendigo goldfields, and 19th century European paintings, sculptures and decorative arts. The gallery also hosts an exciting exhibition program that delivers many economic benefits. The Post Office Gallery, located in the Bendigo Visitor Centre, is a satellite gallery that hosts a changing annual exhibition program.

Bendigo Venues and Events – manages The Capital and Ulumbarra theatres, Bendigo Town Hall, Dudley House and The Engine Room (the old Fire Station), and supports large-scale events such as the Bendigo Writers Festival and coordinates ticketing for local events. It also provides support for local artists.

Community organisation support – partner with residents, community groups, organisations and government to ensure all people in the community have opportunities to learn, make connections to other people and groups, have a say and contribute to their community.

Community safety – partner with local organisations and groups that make it possible for people to live free from violence, to deal with emergencies and to cope with the impact of climate change.

Customer support – The City's Customer Service Centres help our community in-person and over the phone, email and webchat.

Early Learning Centres – Provide high quality early years education and care to children in the years before they enter formal education, from 12 weeks until they start school.

Economic development – deliver a range of initiatives and support to help businesses start or grow, such as webinars, accessing grants, mentoring support, facilitating opportunities to expand or work differently (e.g. outdoor dining), and attracting businesses to the region.

Health promotion – support the Greater Bendigo community to be more physically active, consume healthy food and reduce harmful behaviours.

Health protection – Environmental Health Officers inspect, educate and regulate a range of businesses, manage the disposal of sharps, monitor issues in the surrounding environment such as unreasonable noise and odour, and control pest animals on Council land. Staff inspect all registered food, accommodation, beauty, hair and tattooing businesses to protect the public's health. They also issue permits for septic tank and wastewater systems, monitor lakes for blue-green algae and routinely inspect water quality at all public pools.

Heritage and formal gardens – maintain, protect and enhance the City's more than 20 heritage and formal gardens and monuments.

Home support services – short-term support to clients so they can regain capacity to look after themselves as much as possible. Services include domestic assistance, grocery shopping, personal care, respite care, social support, food delivery, and home maintenance

Immunisation – responsible for immunising children under the age of 18 and parents, grandparents and carers of young children, and administering the flu vaccine to adults over the age of 65 and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Livestock Exchange – where agricultural producers buy and sell sheep and cattle at weekly sales.

Major events – attract and retain major events in Greater Bendigo that deliver social and economic benefit. Events include sport, arts and culture, food and wine, agriculture, car clubs, music and business events

Maternal and Child Health Service (MCH) – MCH nurses support the health and wellbeing of children and their families. MCH centres offer child growth and development assessments, referrals to other health agencies, health and early parenting information, links to community resources and new parents' groups.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Natural reserves – Maintain the City's 170 natural reserves and protect and enhance our natural environment.

Parking – Provide a range of parking options to meet the needs of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors, including a mix of on-street and off-street parking. Timed, ticketed parking is used in the city centre to encourage a turnover of car parks so there is more opportunity for people to access a park.

Passive reserves and playspaces – design, deliver and maintain more than 310 passive reserves and 130 playspaces throughout the municipality.

Permit advice – information and advice on obtaining a range of permits, including planning permits, building permits, copies of plans and siting consent. Staff also provide advice on pool fencing, termites, heritage restoration and protection, and building in bushfire-prone areas.

Upgrade and build new projects – deliver and maintain high quality buildings for the community to use.

Property management and maintenance – maintain community buildings through regular reporting and maintenance, which ensures buildings are safe and comply with all relevant building standards.

Rates service – manage the timely collection of rates, charges and Fire Services Levy.

Roads, footpaths and bridges – the City is responsible for the construction and maintenance of all local roads, footpaths and bridges in Greater Bendigo. The City is not responsible for VicRoads' main arterial roads or Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Parks Victoria tracks.

School crossing supervision – provide a safe environment for school students to travel to and from school.

Sports fields – an extensive range of sports fields cater for a variety of sporting activities played at varying levels, from elite to community-based, and help to attract sporting events to the region.

Stormwater drainage – reduce the risk of flooding and infrastructure damage by ensuring the City's waterways are clean and the drainage system is maintained.

Strategic planning – plan and rollout a range of strategies that ensure Greater Bendigo is a sustainable and liveable community that can accommodate future population growth.

Street cleaning – ensure the city centre is well presented, including regular cleaning of roads, footpaths and facilities like public toilets. There is also a regular program of street cleaning in suburban areas and rural townships.

Tourism – actively promote Greater Bendigo as an attractive destination to domestic and international visitors for business and leisure.

Waste education – educate the community about resource recovery and recycling to minimise the amount of waste going to landfill.

Waste management – Provide waste, recycling and organics collection services to more than 49,000 residential properties and 1,700 commercial properties.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Appendix 2

To view the Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan, Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan, visit djadjawurrung.com.au/galka-our-organisation

The Dja Dja Wurrung vision for Country is to ensure that:

The health and wellbeing of our people is strong and underpinned by our living culture.

Our lands and waters are in good condition, and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, culture and rights of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

As this Country's First People we are politically empowered with an established place in society and capable of managing our own affairs from a strong and diverse economic base.

To view the Taungurung Country Plan, Taungurung Buk Dadbagi, visit www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/downloads/Traditional_Owners/Taungurung_CountryPlan_WEB.pdf

The Taungurung Country Plan is being re-newed, however these focus areas were provided to the City of Greater Bendigo during Imagine Greater Bendigo consultation:

- Heal and strengthen knowledge and practice and, through its application, heal Taungurung culture and Country
  - Healing knowledge: Re-activating Taungurung systems of knowledge and practice transfer and management
  - Healing practice: including cultural fire and forest gardening (for land management), cultural and environmental flows (for water management), management of culturally important species
  - Healing country: including cultural landscape management, healing and management of important landscapes, places and species.
- Reading country: the assessment and development of cultural objectives to guide management of water, forests and biocultural diversity. Training in cultural practices and conservation and land management. Management of parks and reserves in partnership with Council and the State Government
- Cultural and Natural Resource Management (CNRM) economic development: Includes private land conservation and management. CNRM enterprise development (agriculture, forestry, fisheries). Contract services on public and private land
- Embedding Taungurung knowledge and practice, including activation of legal rights in the Aboriginal Heritage Act (2006, Vic) and Traditional Owner Settlement Act (2010, Vic). Supporting development and revision of government legislation, regulations, local laws, plans, strategies, policies and procedures, in partnership

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 2 - Stage 3 Community Engagement - Council Plan Submissions Sep 2021 – Summary

Stage 3 Community Engagement - Council Plan Submissions September 2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
1	Staff - CPU	Supportive	Spelling and language edits. Addition of two associated strategies in actions summary. **Outcome 2:** • Needs an action dot point for emergency preparedness to map back to the IMEMP. • Suggest adding 'invest in early years' in objective for action 1. **Outcome 3, Action 2:** • suggest clarification on career pathways for young people. **Outcome 4, Action 1:** • add action 'Work to remove barriers to Traditional Owners caring for Country including traditional owner burns.' **Outcome 7**: • needs editing for clarity of terms, replace Human Rights Charter with Social Justice Framework throughout plan • Strengthen and clarify position on LGBTIQA+ and young people • add Fire management plan to action 7,	To be included in scope for Community Safety Strategy Objective added to Outcome 2, Goal 1. From A stronger Greater Bendigo Relevant objective in Barpangu. Refers to evaluation of the Human Rights Charter informing the Social Justice Framework Outcome 7; Goal 4 expanded to be "A community that values and engages with people of all ages, abilities, genders and sexualities. Objectives and Actions included from Goal 1. Added to Outcome 7. Goal 7. See above.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			• add dot point for bushfire mitigation to associated 2021-22 actions	
2	Individual	Supportive		No action required
3	Individual	Supportive	Support for better cross-city linkages of walking and cycling paths. Request clearer signposting of paths and removal of signs linking skateboarding and cycling to antisocial behaviour. Better rubbish collection on paths	No action required. Comments go to implementation of existing strategies and are covered in the plan's objectives and actions
4	Individual	Neutral	Bendigo needs better disability inclusion facilities to accommodate ageing population	Minor change made to more clearly emphasise disability access as a focus based on this submission and CPU submission. Consistent with current 21-22 action to “Advocate for funding to improve accessibility of community facilities”. Outcome 2 also includes accessible as a key aspect of the definition.
5	Organisation or Group – Thorne Harbour	Neutral	In Outcome 7/Objective 1. - suggest separating supporting the LGBTQI+ community from gender diversity/ violence against women issues, make the point clearer and less of an afterthought. It would be valuable to create a point about valuing, supporting, empowering, respecting the ''Diversity and Intersectionality'' of the Greater Bendigo community.	Outcome 7; Goal 4 expanded to be “A community that values and engages with people of all ages, abilities, genders and sexualities. Objectives and Actions included from Goal 1.
6	Individual	Supportive	My only feedback is related to the overarching statement of “Lead and Govern for all”. This does not appear to be in keeping with the	No change required. As this is a Council plan to deliver on the wider community vision the ‘lead and govern for all’ emphasis is justified.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			remained of the document which is very clearly the communities plan. This statement is more of a statement about how Council itself should work together. I wondered if this should be retained but lowered in its prominence and replaced with a community related statement.	
7	Individual	Neutral	Repeats points about Hargreaves Mall that were well covered in Stage 1.	No change required. Goes to implementation of existing strategy and the Goal: "A transformed and revitalised City Centre".
8	Staff	Supportive	Update to strategy names on Page 14	Changes made
9	Individual	Not supportive	"**General Comment – Four Exhibits:** I'll make this simple. I place little faith in the manner in which council processes residents' submissions given council's past means of assessing public submissions and responses. Despite Council regularly promising improvements the procedures have not changed over the 15 years I have engaged with council. Recommendation: a) Consider my public submission to the draft Council 2021-2022 Proposed Annual Plan and Budget again; it addressed these issues. b) Improve the public exhibition, submission and hearing processes. **The 2021-25 Council Plan** Terms: I note throughout the 2021-2025 Plan the terms priorities, themes and outcomes appear to be interchangeable. This is confusing. Recommendation: Tidy the terminology up and place definitions in the appendix. **Interest and**	Changed one reference to 'themes' to read 'outcomes. Priorities is not used interchangeably with outcomes. Other recommendations are not actionable within the Council plan as they are broader in nature

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			Excitement: Recommendation: Publicly review why council's Imagine Greater Bendigo failed to 'create interest and excitement' with the broader demographic and seek improvements. **Council Overly Steering the Plan:** Recommendation: a) When developing a four-year Plan give the community a clear canvas to work with, then, if Councillors and staff are dissatisfied, negotiate with the community. b) Publicly explain the cherry-picking process. **Which Plan is council following?** The June approved 2021/22 Budget and Annual Plan's "actions" are different to the 2021/22 "actions" in the draft August 2021-25 Plan. Recommendation: Sort this mess out. **Population:** The ten-year Financial Plan states The municipality's population has grown to around 123,000 residents and is expected to increase to around 156,000 by 2036. The Council 2021-25 Plan notes, we prepare to support a population of 200,000 people by 2050. Are these population numbers what Greater Bendigo residents really want? **Independent Review:** Recommendation: Insert an action in the 2021-25 Plan's 2021-22 actions: Before February 2022 undertake community consultations to determine the parameters and terms of reference for a Public and Independent Council Review to be undertaken in the second half of 2022 that seeks improvement ideas.	

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
10	Staff – Strategy & Policy Team	Supportive	Overall supportive **Outcome 1, Lead and Govern for All:** Action: Explore the opportunity to support Friends groups - This is vague - is there any more detail around this one? Who is leading it? Are we supporting them with funding or other support? **Outcome 2: Healthy Liveable: Action:** Commence the development of an Urban Agriculture Policy - not an action of the Food System Strategy. Work in this space is supported by other pieces of work including the Naturestrip Policy, Community Gardens Policy, Community Gardens support work and the home grown booklet. **Objective:** Implement relevant priorities from the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy, Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo and the Climate Change and Environment Strategy - Should Active Transport be part of the goal as it is covered in Goal 3 and no 21-22 actions for this Goal relate to Active Transport?	Removed 2021 – 2022 action on “Friends” groups as not currently resourced. Change to Urban Agriculture Guidelines as per the action of the Bendigo Public Space Plan: 'Prepare urban agriculture guidelines to support community-based food production in public spaces' and a councillor priority. This will complement the work underway on the Food Systems Strategy. Outcome 2. Goal 3. Additional objective: “Support sustainable and active transport”. Aligns with action area in the Climate Change & Environment Strategy.
11	Organisation or Group – Healthy Greater Bendigo	Supportive	**High level feedback:** The draft plan’s outcomes are positive, but the organisation needs to make bigger changes to see more noticeable progress towards achieving them. A big shift needed is the proportion of which Council allocates funding, both in terms of what service is provided and where that funding is invested. For example, the draft Environment Strategy aims	No change required. This feedback will be addressed through the Strategic Indicators

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			to commit Council to invest a higher amount per annum in footpath infrastructure to reflect the demand from our community. This is an aspiration that should be mirrored by Mir Wimbul. (integration and collective action) The geographic allocation of investment is also something that needs further consideration and analysis. The draft plan picks up on this, particularly through the wording of Goal 2.8 " Targeted investment in services, facilities, and programs to communities most in need ". To achieve this goal Council needs a better method of monitoring and analysis of capital investment expenditure and its impacts (Equity)	
12	Organisation or Group – Advance Heathcote Inc	Supportive	**Suggestion 1**: Move the Action Item specific to Heathcote Dementia from: Outcome 7: A safe, welcoming and fair community to Outcome 3: Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy, to give it higher status. **Suggestion 2:** reword the Action Statement: Advocate for and support the development of the Bendigo Regional Dementia Village - GILBRUK Place Dementia Village in Heathcote. **Suggestion 3:** could the project be listed as How will we get there/Objective when I look at the list. **Name change:** Earlier this year the decision was made to move away from Heathcote Dementia Village as it is far wider than Heathcote township as it	Changes made

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			has a 1.5 hour drive catchment area. We were advised to rename the Project to "Bendigo Regional Dementia Village - GILBRUK Place Dementia Village in Heathcote.	
13	Individual	Neutral	Wants accountability and good loop closing	No changes to Council plan required. Goes to implementation of Strategic Directions.
14	Staff – Strategic Planning Unit	Supportive	**Recommendation 1:** Wording change for outcome 2, goal 7 to § Produce a Managed Growth Strategy Issues and Opportunities Report § Progress the Maiden Gully and Marong Structure Plans and Development Contributions Plans . **Recommendation 2:** Outcome 3 – Goal 2, and also in response to COVID, suggest addition of micro-credentialing to support people pivoting into new career paths. § Progress the strategic planning for Huntly South East (Urban Growth Zone land) Precinct Structure Plan	Changes will be made to Outcome 2, Goal 7 to ensure alignment with current workplans. Council's role with regard to micro-credentialing to be explored linked to Outcome 3, Goal 2.
15	Staff – Communications	Supportive	**Outcome 1, Action 3:** suggest the objective be written as: - Strengthen our digital engagement capacity and plan for appropriate community engagement to enhance decision making of Council, including the use of deliberative approaches where appropriate. - Action: Utilise and promote online community	Changes made.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			engagement platform Let's Talk Greater Bendigo.	
16	Organisation or Group – La Trobe Bendigo	Supportive	**Recommendation 1: Advocacy** The key areas of advocacy regarding housing, transport, water and other infrastructure is supported by the university. This should also include advocacy for education funding at all levels from childcare/pre-school to tertiary levels. This is essential to ensure the city has the resources to secure the future of young people, a transitioning economy and future re-skilling. **Recommendation 2: Partnerships** Highlight four key areas of consideration: 1. The role La Trobe Rural Health School can play in community health advisory and expertise; 2. Opportunities provided by the La Trobe Arts Institute and the Visual Arts Program to extend arts programming and contribute to vibrant city life; 3. An extended focus on digital security – from Council to community, to address rising concerns in this area as the internet of things becomes more common; 4. Identification of resources for strategic research initiatives.	**Recommendation 1**: The Council Plan picks up on these key areas for advocacy. Advocacy for education is part of the approach for Outcome 3. **Recommendation 2:** We recognise La Trobe University as a key strategic partner is assisting with implementation of strategic directions. Digital security is considered in Outcome 1: Goal 2. 2021-2022 Actions and is an ongoing focus of Council.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
17	Organiation (Traditional Owner group)	Supportive	Suggested addition of an objective and corresponding 21-22 action to 'Support and empower Traditional Owners' priorities in public land and cultural landscape management': Action- Commence strategic and operational meetings with the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Traditional Owners on their respective priorities for public land and cultural landscape management	Change made. This is consistent with the Climate Change and Environment Strategy and specifically the 'Heal Country Together' flagship project.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

14.2. City of Greater Bendigo 10 year Financial Plan

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

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information of the community feedback on the draft Financial Plan 2021-2031, highlight changes made, and to seek Council's approval of the final plan.

Summary

The City of Greater Bendigo has prepared the 10 year Financial Plan to support the Community's Vision and Council Plan.

The Financial Plan outlines the resources required to deliver the Council Plan and to ensure

- Council is investing in assets the community values
- Services remain affordable and accessible for the community
- Council remains financially sustainable.

At the August 2021 Ordinary meeting, Council released the draft Financial Plan for review and invited submissions from the community. Following the three week public exhibition period, six submissions were received from community members, local organisations and Council staff. All submissions have been considered when preparing the final draft Financial Plan and changes have been made to enhance the plan prior to endorsement by Council.

The 2021/2022 to 2030/2031 Financial Plan is Council's first 10 year Financial Plan to be completed under the Local Government Act 2020, and is required to be adopted by Council by 31 October 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Financial Plan 2021-2031 and thank the community for their contribution and feedback.

Policy Context

Community Engagement Policy
The City is committed to good community engagement to inform its plans and projects. This is a challenge across a City with a diverse range of services, and particularly so in a COVID impacted year. The following is a summary of some of the relevant community engagement undertaken to inform the plan.

Stage 1 of the Imagine Greater Bendigo process included "Our financial story" – which can be accessed on the City's *Let's Talk Greater Bendigo* website. It also asked the question "How should Council prioritise which services it delivers to our growing and changing community, while also maintaining infrastructure it is responsible for and investing in new projects as they are needed?".

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A wide variety of responses were received and considered. The areas which were included “more often” were:

1. Better scoping, planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects (to avoid cost blow outs and to help prioritisation)
2. Prioritise health and wellbeing/equity
3. Prioritise climate risk/Environmentally Sustainable Design (to address climate change and save on energy costs)
4. Reduce operating costs and improve productivity/efficiency
5. More regular informed community consultation on prioritisation
6. Find more ways to generate income
7. Prioritise investment in rural/suburban areas/outside the city centre and mall
8. Advocate for more state and federal funding
9. Co-management/co-investment of facilities with community.

Stage 1 also asked a question around whether a small increase in rates may be necessary to maintain all current services. The answer to this question was approximately 50% for and 50% against.

Stage 2 of the community engagement plan included a community panel made up of 41 adults and 20 young people. Part of the process included consultation around the theme of “Lead and govern for all”. A proposed goal under this theme included:

1. Accountable, financially responsible, equitable, transparent decision making

Relevant supported objectives against this goal are:

- Better long-term scoping, planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects
- Focusing on the sustainability of our infrastructure, improve our renewal and maintenance of current assets.

Legislative Requirements

The Local Government Act 2020 introduces a requirement for Victorian councils to develop, adopt and keep in force a Financial Plan utilising deliberative engagement practices covering at least the next 10 financial years. The Financial Plan must be prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Background Information

The Local Government Act 2020 (Act) received Royal Assent on 24 March 2020. It is a principles-based Act aiming to remove unnecessary regulatory and legislative prescription. The five principles are:

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

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The Act drives an integrated approach to planning and reporting to support strategic decision making through:

- Recognising that planning must be holistic and driven by the community
- Providing a comprehensive view of available resources and commitments
- Enabling alignment of objectives and capabilities, and
- Supporting an understanding of medium to long-term implications of decisions on resource allocation and Council performance.

The Act also outlines a set of Financial management principles including:

- Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans
- Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances
- Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community
- Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.

The Act also provides guidance around financial risk, financial policies, investments, borrowings and accounts and records.

The Act requires Council to develop the following:

Title	***Timeframe***	***Due***
Community Vision	10 years	October 2021 (has effect July 2021)
Financial Plan	10 years	October 2021 (has effect July 2021)
Asset Plan	10 years	Adopted by 30 June 2022 (has effect July 2022)
Council Plan	4 years	October 2021 (has effect July 2021)
Revenue & Rating Plan	4 years	Adopted 30 June 2021
Workforce Plan	4 years	31 December 2021
Annual Budget	1 + 3 years	Adopt by 30 June each year

Previous Council Decision(s) Date(s):

16 August 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting

Council resolved to advertise four documents for formal exhibition and submissions.

- Draft Council Plan 2021-2025
- Draft Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Draft Financial Plan 2021-2031
- Draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026

16 June 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting

Council resolved to adopt the 2021/2022-2024/2025 Budget.

Iin this 'implementation year' of the new Local Government Act requirements, with delayed elections in 2020, the 2021/2022 Budget was adopted in advance of finalising the Council Plan and 10 year Financial Plan.

Report

The City of Greater Bendigo has prepared the 10 year Financial Plan to support the Community's Vision and Council Plan. Through the development of the vision, the community has told us their desire for Greater Bendigo to be sustainable, prosperous and to have a bright and happy future. The Council Plan includes actions to deliver on this vision.

This Financial Plan outlines the resources required to deliver on the Council plan and ensures we are investing in assets the community values; our services remain affordable and accessible for the community; and our organisation remains financially sustainable.

The 2021/2022 to 2030/2031 Financial Plan is the first to be completed under the Local Government Act 2020 and in accordance with Part 2 of the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 for the City of Greater Bendigo. The draft Financial Plan has been developed utilising advice from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Financial Plan better practice guide ensuring the inclusion of:

- Statements describing the financial resources required to give effect to the Council Plan and other strategic plans of the Council
- Information about the decisions and assumptions that underpin the forecasts in the statements as specified above
- Statements describing any other resource requirements that the Council considers appropriate to include in the Financial Plan
- Any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

The Financial Plan is required to be adopted by Council by 31 October 2021.

The key financial outcomes of the 2021/2022 to 2030/2031 Financial Plan have been measured against the financial sustainability targets and indicate an ongoing low to medium risk financial sustainability rating.

Key outcomes include:

- fair and affordable revenue mechanisms with stability in rate increases and rates concentration
- maintaining sufficient working capital (liquidity) to meet our financial obligations
- the allocation of increased funding to meet capital renewal obligations
- ensuring that borrowings meet targets for indebtedness
- the improvement in underlying operational surplus throughout the life of the Financial Plan.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The plan has been drafted using the majority of the 2021/2022 budget as its base year and includes:

- the key financial sustainability risks and issues for the City
- the financial policy statements and strategic actions to address the key issues and risks
- the underlying assumptions underpinning the escalation in revenue and expenditure over the ten-year period
- the financial plan statements
- the financial performance indicators
- financial strategies for rates, borrowings, and reserves.

The City has a commitment to achieving zero carbon through the life of this plan and there are a number of actions in Council Plan that will support this aspiration. This will have generational benefit, but also short-term financial cost impacts. The plan that has been developed considers all of these factors and more.

Submissions recieved

At the August 2021 Ordinary meeting, Council resolved to release the draft Financial Plan 2021–2031 for review and invited submissions from the community. Following the three-week public exhibition period, six submissions were received, three from individual community members, two from local organisations and one from City staff. All submissions have been considered when preparing the final draft Financial Plan. There were some ‘cross-overs’ between these submissions with those for the Council Plan. A summary of these submissions and officer comments is included at attachment 2.

Two submissions received are project related, including seeking additional heritage and historical support, and have been noted for future capital works planning. Some detailed feedback was received in relation to the approach to measuring asset renewal and utilising (or not) depreciation as the primary measure. The draft Financial Plan has been updated to incorporate this feedback, and notes more clearly now that this will also be discussed as part of the Asset Plan work coming up (due by June 2022).

Other submissions included feedback on the engagement process and project - asking that the City make clearer the process and links between strategies. There were also formatting and consistency feedback given, updating some population figures across all plans on exhibition and noting shared commitments with a local organisation.

Timelines:

The Local Government Act 2020 stipulates that the Council must adopt a 10 year financial plan and Council plan by October 2021.

Consultation/Communication

Internal Consultation:

The successive drafts of the Council Plan priorities and 10 year Financial Plan have been discussed with City staff and members of the Executive Team and their feedback has been considered by Council and changes made where agreed by Council.

External Consultation:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The draft Financial Plan was advertised and available electronically on Let's Talk Greater Bendigo from 17 August to 6 September 2021. It was also available in hard copy upon request. Opportunities to provide written submissions on the draft Financial Plan were advertised through local media.

Once adopted, the Financial Plan 2021-2031 will be publicly available on the City's website.

Resource Implications

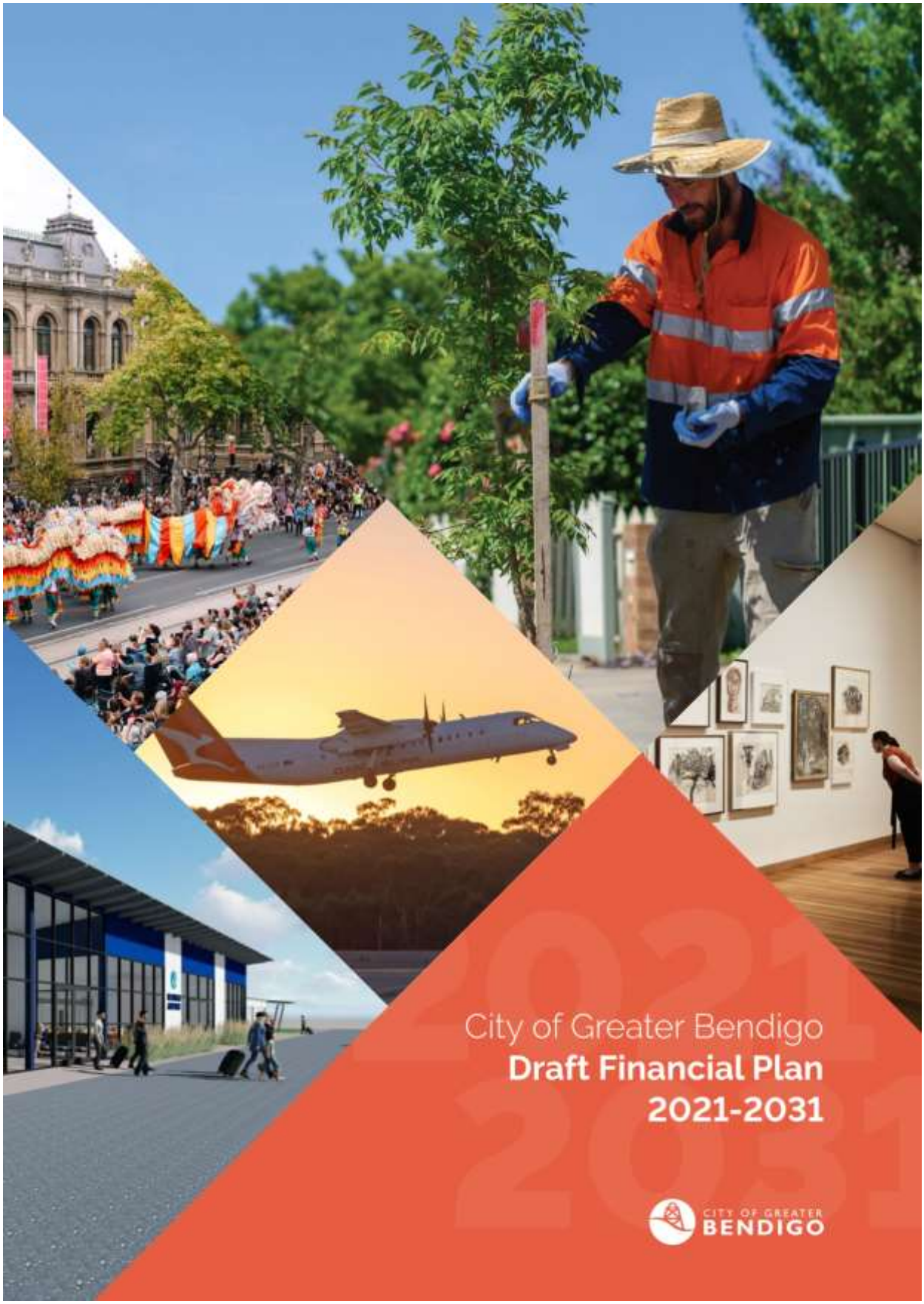
The Financial Plan provides a 10 year financially sustainable projection regarding how the actions of the Council Plan may be funded to achieve the Community Vision.

Attachments

1. City of Greater Bendigo Financial Plan 2021-2031
2. Submissions Summary

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - City of Greater Bendigo Financial Plan 2021-2031



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Contents

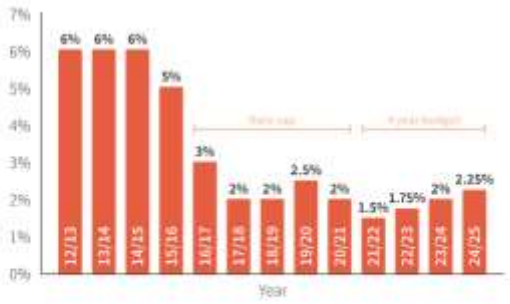
Financial Plan at a glance: 3
Executive Summary 4
Legislative Requirements 5
Community Vision and Strategic Planning Principles 6
Financial Management Principles 7
Engagement Principles 7
Service Performance Principles 7
Financial Plan context and challenges 8
Overview 8
Our Community and Future Growth 8
Our Economy 10
Our Environment and Climate Risk 10
Our Assets 11
Our Strategies, Grants and Partnerships 12
Our Financial Risk Management 13
Financial Sustainability Indicators and Policy Statements 14
Key Financial Assumptions 15
Assessment of the City's projected financial position 17
City of Greater Bendigo Rates - Historical and Projected 18
City of Greater Bendigo - cash holdings 18
City borrowing strategy – supporting capital growth 19
APPENDIX A: Financial Statements 20
APPENDIX B: Further notes on assumptions 25
APPENDIX C: VAGO Financial Sustainability Indicators 28
APPENDIX D: Glossary of Terms 30

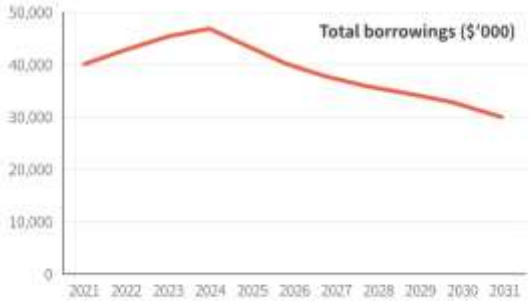
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

City of Greater Bendigo Financial Plan at a glance

- **$223.5M in total operating revenue in 2021/2022**
- **$158.5M in operating expenditure (excluding depreciation)**
- **$66.2M in capital projects (then between $50M and $70M annually)**
- **$133M in rates and charges (increasing with CPI)**
- **$5M-$10M in borrowings annually after 2021/2022 supporting capital expenditure**
- **766 full time equivalent staff in 2021/2022**
- **Average 1.95% increase on rates (1.5% in 2021/2022 budget)**

The City of Greater Bendigo publishes a 10-year Financial Plan to support the community vision and Council Plan. Revenues over the period are forecast to increase from $223M to $269M, and borrowings will continue to be used to support capital expenditure. The graph below on the left shows the percentage that rates have increased in past years as well as the projected increase based on CPI for the next four years. The graph on the right shows the projected borrowings for the next 10 years. The City's borrowing policy ensures money is borrowed sustainably, so that future repayments are manageable.





The following categories of service and capital costs are planned in 2021/2022. More details are available in the City's 10-year Financial Plan 2021-2031 at **www.letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au/imagine**



A snapshot of other responsibilities:

- More than **47,000** drainage pits
- More than **1,400** public buildings and structures
- More than **70** sporting reserves and venues
- More than **100,000** nature strip trees
- More than **900km** of walking and cycling paths
- More than **9,500** street lights
- More than **1,500km** of sealed roads
- **130** playgrounds

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Executive Summary

The City of Greater Bendigo has prepared the 10 year financial plan to support the Community's Vision and Council Plan. Through the development of the vision, the community has told us their desire for Greater Bendigo to be sustainable, prosperous and to have a bright and happy future. The Council Plan includes actions to deliver on this vision.

Our Financial Plan outlines the resources required to deliver the Council Plan and ensure we are investing in assets the community values; our services remain affordable and accessible for the community; and our organisation remains financially sustainable.

Greater Bendigo is growing – our population is currently 119,980[1] and forecast to increase to 155,596 people by 2036[2]. This growth will provide some additional rate revenue for the City, however additional growth also requires additional investment in assets and services to support the larger population. These additional costs add to what we already invest maintaining our existing $1.8 billion in assets, and to the costs of delivering services our community values.

The City enters this financial plan in a stable financial position. The City has sufficient cash reserves, a sustainable level of current borrowings and an efficiently sized workforce. This position has been able to be achieved through a level of financial discipline over many previous years. This discipline has included a commitment to reinvest in our asset base; restraint in additional operational expenses; using a mixture of rates, partnerships, Government funding and, where required, debt to fund new asset construction. A high level summary of the City's financial story was produced to support consultation early in 2021, and can be found here.

Interest rates are currently at record low levels but are expected to rise through the life of this plan. The City will continue a restrained approach to debt and only pursue new borrowings where an intergenerational benefit can be proven.

For the City's finances to remain sustainable and our services to remain affordable for the community, this disciplined approach must continue through the life of this plan and beyond. Increases to rate revenue are currently capped under the State Government's *Fair Go Rates* system, determined by the State Minister for Local Government. This significantly limits revenue available to fund new projects and initiatives. There is the ability to apply to operate above the cap; but it would need to be done with the support of the community. This is one option available for the City and the community, as are increases in other fees and charges for services the City provides.

The City must continue to reinvest in our existing assets so our roads, parks, gardens, pools and buildings that we value stay in a condition we are proud of. As we bring on new assets, to remain sustainable we must also review the assets we already have to assess whether they are still valued by the community or could have a different future.

Services also evolve, and the City will assess the performance and future for current services to understand whether they are relevant and whether the City needs to continue to

[1] Estimated Resident Population, ABS, 2020
[2] Forecast ID, 2019

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

deliver them or whether there is a role for an alternative delivery model. To remain sustainable over the life of this plan, some City services will have to change.

The City has a commitment to achieving zero carbon through the life of this plan and there are a number of actions in the Council Plan that will support this aspiration. This will have generational benefit, but also short-term financial cost impacts. The plan that has been developed considers all of these factors and more.

As part of the plan, the following key documents have been prepared:

- 10 year Financial Statements (Income statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Cash Flow and Capital Works Statement)
- Operational and capital expenditure modelling to guide future budget processes
- 10 year financial sustainability ratios

Through the life of this plan the City forecasts that:

- Rates increases remain with the forecast CPI rate cap
- Asset renewal increases
- Working capital position decreases and still remains strong
- Unrestricted cash reduces over time and still remains strong
- Borrowings as a percentage of rates and charges reduces

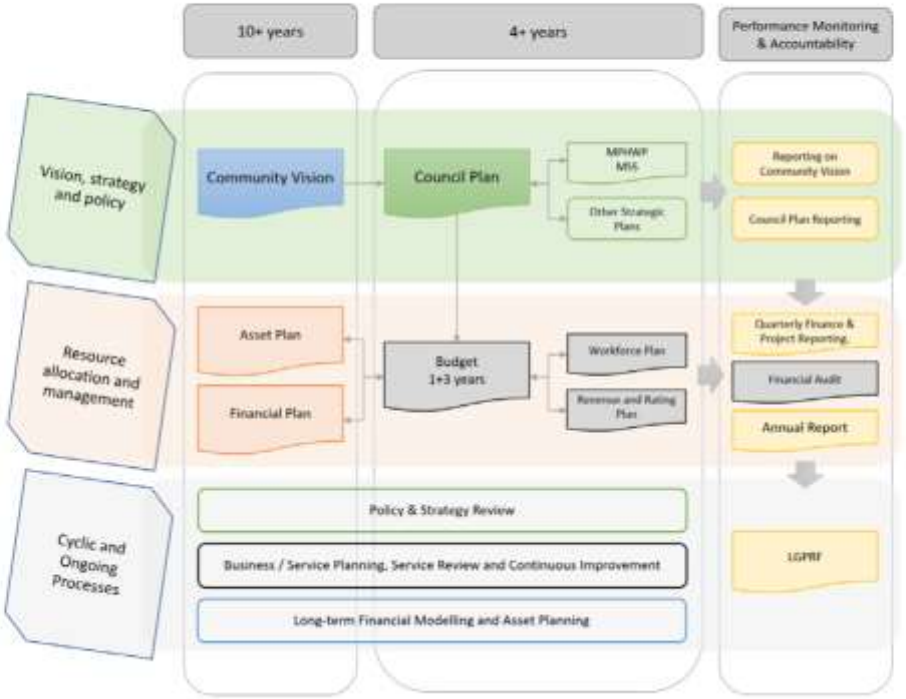
The numbers help confirm that the plan outlines a pathway to continue to achieve high levels of service and affordability for the community and maintain financial sustainability for future generations to benefit.

Legislative Requirements

This section describes how the Financial Plan links to the achievement of the Community Vision and the Council Plan within the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting framework. This framework guides the City in identifying community needs and aspirations over the long term (Community Vision), medium term (Council Plan) and short term (Budget) and then holding itself accountable (Annual Report).

The following diagram provides an overview of the core legislated elements of an Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Source: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
MPHWP – Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
MSS – Municipal Strategic Statement
LGPRF – Local Government Performance Reporting Framework

Community Vision and Strategic Planning Principles

The City 's community vision is:

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

The City contributes to the achievement of this broader community vision through its Council Plan. The Financial Plan provides a 10 year financial projection regarding how the actions of the Council Plan may be funded to achieve the Community Vision.

The Financial Plan is developed in the context of the following strategic planning principles:

- The City has an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting.
- Council's Financial Plan addresses the Community Vision by funding the priorities of the Council Plan. The Council Plan priorities and actions are formulated in the context of the Community Vision.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- The modelled financial statements articulate the resources available over the next 10 years to implement the goals and priorities of the Council Plan to support the Community Vision.
- The City's strategic planning process identifies and addresses risks to financial sustainability (managed as a Strategic Risk of the organisation).
- Reporting on the Financial Plan will provide an opportunity to monitor progress annually, and reviews will identify and adapt to changing circumstances.

Financial Management Principles

The Financial Plan demonstrates the following financial management principles:

- Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments, and financial transactions are managed in accordance with the City's financial policies and strategic plans.
- Management of the risk to financial sustainability. This is currently rated as a medium risk in the City's Risk Management Framework.
- Financial policies and strategic plans are designed to provide financial stability and predictability to the community.
- The City maintains accounts and records that explain its financial operations and financial position.

Engagement Principles

The City has implemented the following consultation process to obtain feedback from stakeholders:

- Early 2021 community engagement undertaken including a summary *Our Financial Story* document, and questions around future rate increases, services and assets on the *Let's Talk* community engagement platform.
- Community Panel involvement by Finance staff, including a community priorities session as part of input to Council planning.
- Draft Financial Plan prepared by officers, incorporating community engagement and input.
- Draft Financial Plan placed on public exhibition following August 2021 Council meeting for a period of 21 days and calling for public submissions.
- The Financial Plan, including any revisions, presented to October 2021 Council meeting for adoption.

Community Engagement will continue with the annual Budget cycle and the Financial Plan engagement will align with the Council term and other strategic planning documents.

Service Performance Principles

The City seeks to provide services on a community needs and value for money basis. The service performance principles are listed below:

- Services are provided in an equitable manner and are responsive to the diverse needs of the community. The Council Plan is designed to identify the key services and projects to be delivered to the community. The Financial Plan shows how the service aspirations within the Council Plan may be funded.
- Services are available to the relevant users within the community.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- The City delivers quality services seeking to provide value for money to the community. The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) is designed to communicate the City's performance regarding the delivery of services. Details can be viewed by the public here: https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/
- The City has a customer service charter and engagement framework that considers and responds to community feedback and complaints regarding service provision.

Our current break-down of service expenditure, at a high level is below, and the City continues to engage with the community on which services they prioritise.



Financial Plan context and challenges

Overview

The City covers a large geographic area of 3,000 square kilometres. While around 85 per cent of the population reside within urban Bendigo, we have a number of unique smaller townships and rural communities which contribute to the rich and diverse fabric of the municipality. Continuing our support for these townships has been a key theme of the consultations.

The City is a regional centre which delivers services for a wider catchment than the municipal boundaries. Examples of these regional services include the Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo Airport, Bendigo Livestock Exchange and a number of regional recreation and sporting facilities. These services come at an additional net cost for the City, but also drive economic development and a higher quality of service provision through the region.

Over the coming years the City will be presented with many opportunities and challenges. A stable and sustainable financial position will position the City to best respond to opportunities that are presented.

Further detail on some key challenges that are relevant to long term financial planning are outlined below.

Our Community and Future Growth

The municipality's population has grown to 119,980 residents and is expected to increase to 155,596 by 2036. The growth has occurred in the municipality's outer suburbs including

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Marong, Maiden Gully, Huntly and Strathfieldsaye and this pattern is predicted to continue into the future

How the City responds to this growth relies on effective planning to ensure timely and coordinated delivery of infrastructure and services to these areas. This planning includes asset and service-based strategies as well as provisions for Development Contributions Plans (DCPs) to support infrastructure delivery through funding partnership arrangements.

DCPs are a mechanism which shares the costs of certain services across developments through a planning process. All DCPs are subject to the Council's formal approval. This plan includes modelled cost estimates for future DCPs in Huntly, Maiden Gully and Marong.

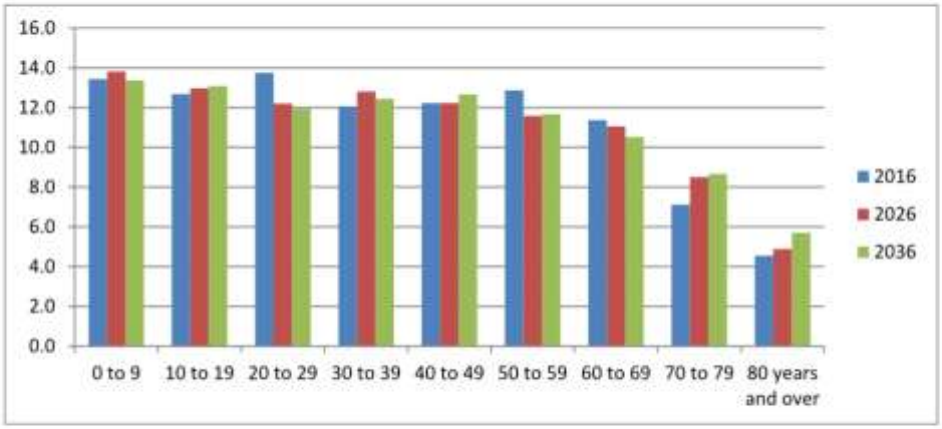
To sustainably contend with growth, the City must also look for ways to encourage and facilitate behavioural change that considers innovative approaches to infrastructure needs, and reduces the reliance on the supply of costly infrastructure. This could include shared community facilities and, providing alternatives such as greater access to public transport and cycling and walking paths to mitigate challenges associated with increased traffic, reducing the community's reliance on cars.

There are also changing expectations and regulation across community services. For example, public swimming pools now require increased additional supervision and oversight to remain safe. Increased female participation in sport is a wonderful step in the right direction for gender equality. However, this is also creating greater demand for additional grounds and appropriate facilities.

Population demographic changes are likely to challenge how the organisation delivers future services and responds to employment needs. The proportion of residents aged over 70 years is expected to grow. This is more pronounced in some communities including in Heathcote where current forecasts suggest that by 2036 around one in four residents will be aged over 70. This may change the municipality's demand for health and wellbeing related services and infrastructure. The proportion of residents of working age (20-64 years) is also expected to decline from 57 to 54 percent, outcomes of which will flow on to Greater Bendigo's workforce.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Percentage of Greater Bendigo's population by age group - forecast changes over time



Our Economy

Greater Bendigo benefits from a strong, diverse and relatively self-contained economy with key industries including manufacturing, construction, finance, healthcare and retail trade. However, this positive economic climate is also experiencing challenges, such as attracting skilled workers for various occupations a relatively high youth unemployment rate and sourcing future industrial land to meet growing industry needs. The City continues to work on actions within the Economic Development Strategy to address these issues.

Bendigo's retail sector is experiencing a period of rapid transformation as technology, record low wage growth, and changing consumer preferences all impact the sector. To support the current business environment through these changes the City Centre needs to evolve and diversify through government and private sector investment. The State Government has committed to significant investment to support the development and transition of the City Centre. The Bendigo GovHub ($90M), new Bendigo Law Court ($152M) and expansion of Bendigo TAFE ($59M) will all be completed over the next four years.

From a built form perspective, positive signs are emerging with new mixed-use buildings being proposed or under construction across central Bendigo. Their continued roll-out will inject new life and a residential population into the heart of Bendigo and make it a much stronger destination and ensure that Bendigo's role as a regional hub is strengthened.

Our Environment and Climate Risk

The City has adopted the *One Planet Living* framework and is committed to implementing this into the City's strategic policy framework and operations. This framework provides a holistic approach to managing the impacts of a changing environment by empowering the community and improving wellbeing as well as improving energy efficiency and reducing waste and water use.

The City has opportunities in planning for this changing environment with potential for longer term cost savings. This will include pursuing a zero-carbon initiative, retrofitting buildings to increase energy efficiency, better utilisation of multiple water sources, planting additional urban street trees and reducing waste through an increased emphasis on our circular economy.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

There are immediate and longer-term challenges related to waste. The key capital assumptions within previous waste modelling have been included in the Financial Plan model and are referenced in the assumptions. The current landfill has a limited lifespan, with only a few years of capacity remaining. The Financial Plan includes landfill remediation and early estimates for future waste costs to support our Circular Economy (forecast currently at an additional $8M over 4 years).

In Victoria we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, with a temperature increase of over 1° C since 1910, a decrease in average rainfall, and an increased fire danger in spring. We are facing more frequent climatic impacts.

The changing climate will make it more expensive for the City to build and maintain infrastructure and deliver existing services due to:

- damage to property and infrastructure
- rising insurance costs
- increasing energy and water costs to cover the infrastructure needed for increased heating/cooling and water preservation
- demand for additional services, shading and trees to address heat stress, new microbial diseases and mental health issues
- demand for emergency management services to prepare, prevent, respond and recover from the increasing frequency of extreme weather events
- some loss of vegetation, birds and wildlife
- impacts on economic development in areas such as tourism, events and recreational activities.

Council passed a resolution in its previous term which recognised Greater Bendigo is in a state of climate and biodiversity breakdown and acknowledged the urgent need for action as well as the need to contribute to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Council Plan includes objectives and actions to prioritise addressing climate risk. These actions will result in benefits for our current community and future generations. This will also require increased investment which has been factored into this Financial Plan.

Our Assets

Provision of infrastructure will remain a delicate balance for the City to consider existing levels of service, increasing community expectations and available resources. Negotiating the current levels of asset-related services identified in the organisation's Asset Management Plans and the required funding to maintain these services in future years will continue to be a challenge. This will require better use of current assets – including community buildings, pools and shared spaces – rather than new assets.

The City tests its assumptions and funding strategies related to maintaining existing service levels through asset modelling. This allows the organisation to understand the implications of particular expenditure profiles on the serviceability of its existing asset base and deliverability of related services. As part of this Financial Plan, from 2020/2021 higher annual yearly increases have been applied to investing in renewing and maintaining our existing assets. As the City's asset modelling improves, in future iterations of the Financial Plan it is intended that growth factors will be applied to reflect expected asset base growth.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The City will work collaboratively across all business units for a framework and set of criteria to assess whether there are some assets in the community that are no longer required and could be deemed as surplus to requirements. This may result in some assets being considered for sale or usage in line with other adopted strategies. Any consideration of disposing of assets will be matched with a level of community engagement and information.

The proposed renewal investment of $34M currently modelled in the first year of the Financial Plan does not align with modelling which indicates investment of approximately $40M is required.

Without a level of intervention which includes considering asset consolidation and alternative revenue sources, the gap between what is required and what is invested will continue to grow.

Another measure of this trend is seen through the VAGO Capital Replacement and Renewal Gap ratios, which for the City over the next four years are indicative of an increasingly insufficient spend on asset renewal. There are issues with this measure, as it does not include a full assessment of condition or required service levels – however it remains one indicator. More details on this will be discussed as part of the City's (upcoming) Asset Plan.

The Financial Plan address this over the life of the plan by increasing renewal funding investment.

The following table provides details on assets which the City has responsibility for that support services to the Community:

Asset Type	Quantity	Value
Sealed roads	1,514 kms	$524M
Unsealed roads	1,427 kms	$21M
Kerb and channel	1,222 kms	$127M
Pathways	897 kms	$145M
Carparks	79 No.	$10M
Bridges	91 No.	$76M
Buildings and structures	1210 No.	$436M
Swimming pool	28 No.	$11M
Drainage and stormwater structures	1,225 kms	$384M
Public furniture	3,193 No.	$33M
Land improvement	701 No.	$69M
Other (incl. tram tracks, parking infrastructure, airport, artworks)	-	$41M
Total:		**$1.877B**

Our Strategies, Grants and Partnerships

If all strategies of the City were to be delivered over the next 5-10 years, the City would require new capital expenditure in the order of $30M-$40M per annum. Currently the City has modelled capacity to contribute towards new and upgrade projects at around $4-$6M per annum.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Previous major projects for the City have cost up to $35M. These projects have been funded with a combination of Council raising rates to fund a contribution as well as significant State and/or Federal Government funding. However, with the introduction of the rate cap, Council no longer has the ability to raise rates for a specific projects or initiatives without first applying to exceed the rate cap. Future investment decisions in major projects will require the consideration of a number of factors, including re-prioritisation of expenditure commitments.

The ability for many community groups to provide funding towards capital infrastructure is also expected to decline, particularly in areas most needed. The City will investigate ways that it can continue to equitably manage an increasingly competitive funding environment for community facilities.

Our Financial Risk Management

The City uses the VAGO sustainability ratios to assess risk whilst also utilising its own Risk Management framework to document strategic and operational risks. Through the assessment of the internal and external environment that impacts the City, *Financial Sustainability* has been assessed as a strategic risk. There are a number in controls in place to manage this risk. Without these controls and regular assessment, this risk could limit the City's ability to operate for the community.

Below is a summary of causes and controls around the City's financial sustainability strategic risk.

Strategic Risk: Unable to deliver operational capability and maintain expenditure within the available funding, which leads to a financially unsustainable City

Risk causes

- Change in fiscal policy (State or Federal grants)
- Inability to be resilient when faced with a disaster
- Inability to sufficiently fund the renewal of the asset base or reduce the asset base
- Inability to scale operational capability / reduce costs within funding envelope
- Lack of ongoing reviews for service effectiveness, or introduction of transformational efficiencies
- Interest rate rises; labour costs are not controlled; further rate capping
- Increasing and mixed expectations from Community. There are conflicting demands; some seeking increased and diverse services, others seeking a return to more traditional services
- Poor financial and/ or resource management, poor project management, poor compliance.

Controls in place

- 10 year financial plan and 4 year Revenue & Rating Plan which focuses on maintaining good working capital; appropriate reserves and surplus positions
- Procurement and delegations framework
- Advocacy and long term relationships across government and region
- Service review program
- Strong focus on Asset Management and funding of renewals
- Finance systems; qualified staff across the organisation

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Relevant training and inductions for staff and Councillors

Further background on the issues around rural and regional Council's financial sustainability was tabled in 2018 to the Victoria parliament, and can be accessed here: https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/401-enrrdc/inquiry-into-the-sustainability-and-operational-challenges-of-victorias-rural-and-regional-councils

Financial Sustainability Indicators and Policy Statements

The table below provides the City's financial sustainability indicators over the next 10 years based on the modelled financials:

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031
Working Capital											
Current Assets / Current Liabilities	206%	178%	154%	141%	139%	145%	156%	144%	158%	152%	149%
Unrestricted Cash											
Unrestricted Cash / Current Liabilities	96%	93%	71%	65%	66%	67%	71%	58%	72%	67%	63%
Obligations											
Borrowings / Rates Revenue	32%	33%	34%	34%	30%	26%	24%	22%	21%	19%	17%
Obligations (repayments)											
Borrowings repayments / Rates	5%	14%	6%	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%
Indebtedness											
Non-current liabilities / Own Revenue	35%	31%	30%	29%	26%	23%	22%	20%	19%	17%	16%
Asset renewal and upgrade											
Asset renewal / Depreciation	73%	79%	82%	83%	84%	89%	87%	88%	87%	87%	106%
Adjusted underlying result											
Adjusted Underlying surplus/(deficit)	-6.1%	-3.7%	-4.3%	-3.1%	-2.3%	-1.3%	-0.7%	0.2%	0.7%	1.4%	1.6%
Rates concentration											
Rates compared to adj. revenue	70%	68%	68%	69%	69%	69%	69%	70%	70%	70%	70%

The following comments and policy statements support these ratios:

Working capital: The City will ensure sufficient working capital is maintained to meet its obligations as they fall due. The City is forecasting that it will have cash or short-term assets available to convert to cash to meet liabilities. Low risk when assessed using VAGO ratios.

Unrestricted cash: The City will maintain a sufficient level of unrestricted cash to support operations. Low risk when assessed using VAGO ratios.

Indebtedness: The City will apply loan funding to new capital for specific projects after consideration of intergenerational equity, and will maintain total borrowings which are affordable when compared to the income and the growth of the municipality. The City continues to plan to utilise debt to fund new capital expenditure or expenditure which occurs as a result of major disruptions such as COVID-19. Borrowings are forecast to slowly decrease over time. Low risk when assessed using VAGO ratios.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Asset renewal and upgrade: The City seeks to allocate adequate funds towards renewal capital in order to replace assets and infrastructure as they reach the end of their service life. This ratio indicates that the City will remain in the medium risk category with current settings in the short term. It is acknowledged that there are issues with this measure – and more details will be contained within the Asset Plan for the City, due in 2022. This is a Medium risk when assessed using VAGO ratios, improving through the life of the plan.

Adjusted underlying result: The City seeks to move the adjusted underlying result towards the positive. Currently this result is rated as a high risk when assessed using VAGO ratios. This is primarily because depreciation charges on City assets are high, and by definition underlying surplus removes other (non-ongoing) government funding – on which the City will continue to be dependent. The forward financial plan builds in a gradual improvement in the underlying result over the 10 years.

Rates concentration: Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue remains steady over time. Low risk per VAGO ratios.

Key Financial Assumptions

The City's Financial Plan incorporates various assumptions:

- Cost increases in relation to inputs, and price increases relating to outputs (refer to the following table)
- CPI per Australian Bureau of Statistics - Victorian economic forecasts
- Rates income continues to be capped in accordance with the Victorian State Government *Fair Go Rates* system
- Continued increase in rateable properties (in line with historical growth)
- Relatively low rates of return on our investment portfolio for the next 2-3 years
- Future loan borrowings for 2021/2022 are based on those recommended to Council as part of the adoption of the 2021/2022 Budget. Modelled future borrowings are identified in the Financial Plan, and will be considered by Council for approval as part of the adoption of each year's Budget
- Operational services in the model have been forecast to continue at similar levels of service – noting the pressures described elsewhere in this document
- Employee costs are determined by the City's Enterprise Agreement, and have been modelled in line with CPI through the life of the plan.

The City has modelled services at relatively similar levels, but also seeks to review these periodically to ensure they are equitable, and provide value. The 10 year plan has materials and services expenses increasing annually (with CPI) to support this objective.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A summary of assumptions is provided in the following table:

2021/2022 - 2030/2031 Indexation Rates for Financial Plan											
Description	Budget 2021/2022 $000s	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031
Council Rates (CPI)	(109,954)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.25%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Rates - Garbage Charge	(13,704)	18.0%	8.0%	6.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Rates - Recycling & Organics	(9,277)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Statutory Fees & Fines	(5,429)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.25%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
User Fees	(29,090)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.25%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Grants - Operating	(27,620)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.25%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Grants - Capital	(13,397)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Contributions - Monetary	(3,453)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Contributions - Non-monetary*	(15,225)	1.5%	-14.6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Income	(1,174)	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.25%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Employee Costs	73,217	1.7%	3.06%	2.58%	2.68%	2.58%	2.14%	2.14%	2.14%	2.14%	2.14%
Materials and Services	76,347	0.0%	1.75%	2.0%	2.25%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Depreciation & Amortisation	45,501	1.5%	3.0%	1.5%	3.0%	1.5%	3.0%	1.5%	3.0%	1.5%	3.0%
Other Expenses	6,666	1.5%	1.75%	2.0%	2.25%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

*Contributions – Non-monetary are projected at $13M from 2022/2023 onwards. This is the average of the prior five years Contributions.

The City has obligations under the defined benefits superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme.

Currently the City does not have any outstanding or forecasts any legal proceedings that will significantly impact operations.

Assumptions – capital expenditure

The following assumptions contain significant capital expenditures with a high likelihood of implementation which have been included within the current model. There are a large number of capital projects which will be part of an annual competitive bidding process. This Financial Plan models available capacity for capital expenditure, rather than identifying specific projects.

2021/2022 - 2030/2031 Capital Expenditure										
Category	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031
Asset Renewal	34,187	36,238	37,235	39,179	40,739	42,271	43,117	43,979	44,858	55,756
New Capital Investment	31,962	18,318	12,000	7,250	9,840	7,144	10,144	10,144	10,144	10,644
Developer Contribution Plans	150	3,944	5,976	2,553	-	1,849	12,197	1,061	10,988	2,017

The "New Capital Investment" line above includes allocations for projects approved in the current 2021/2022 budget, with approximately $4M-$6M unallocated each year over the coming 4 years. Although this varies significantly, each year there are over $30M in project proposals considered.

Major projects with allocations already approved through the annual budget process include:

- Catherine McAuley College (CMC) joint development
- Kennington Recreation Reserve Pavilion Upgrade

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Bendigo Botanical Gardens Central Hub Design & Construct
- Municipal Baths redevelopment
- Landfill remediation

All of these projects were part of the 2021/2022 budget process, with more details available – including mapping of key projects here: https://letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au/budget-2021-2022

There are a large number of projects that are at various pre-construction stages that will require a level of Council funding and funding from other sources.

These projects include:

- Bendigo Airport terminal and business park
- Bendigo Art Gallery expansion
- National Chinese Museum of Australia expansion
- Central Deborah Gold Mine expansion
- Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct
- Bendigo Showgrounds developments
- Bendigo Livestock Exchange shade structure
- Establishment of additional tracks and trails through Greater Bendigo

Further details of the assumptions underpinning the Financial Plan Model are provided at Appendix B.

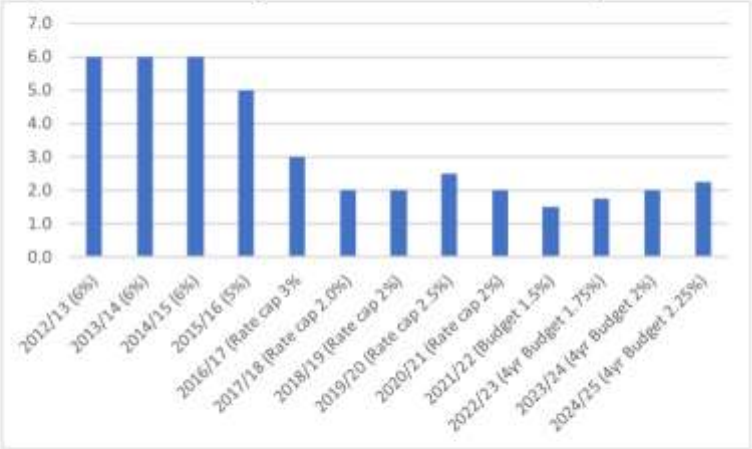
Assessment of the City's projected financial position

The following graphs illustrate the forecast financial position of the City within the Financial Plan model.

Revenues over the period are forecast to increase from $223M to $269M, with 60% of this revenue being raise from rates. The Revenue & Rating Plan adopted by Council in June 2021 has more details on the approach the City takes with regards to rates revenue and pricing.

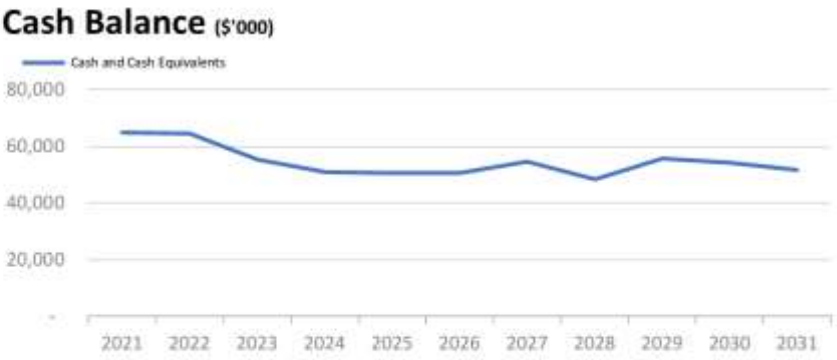
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

City of Greater Bendigo Rates - Historical and Projected



This graph shows the historical annual rate increase that the City applied as part of the annual budgeting process. For 2021/2022 the City has a 1.5 per cent rate increase in line with the cap set by the State Government under the Fair Go Rates System.

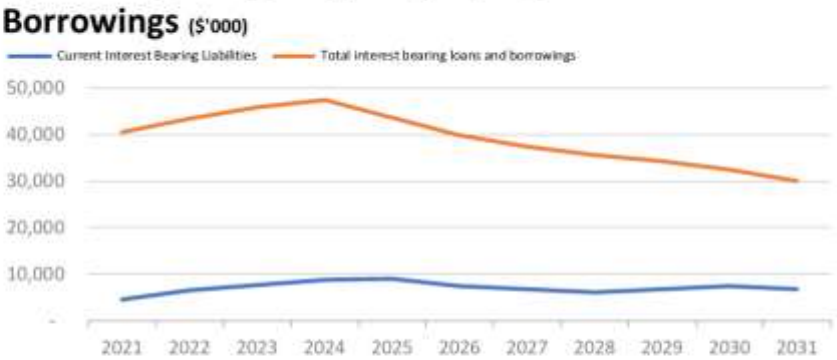
City of Greater Bendigo - cash holdings



The City's cash holdings are projected to drop over the next five years due to DCP expenditure and anticipated investment in the City's existing asset base for required renewal expenditure. The current model takes a conservative approach to future debt redraws. The City aims to manage and control expenditure in line with CPI.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

City borrowing strategy – supporting capital growth



New capital investment is forecast at $32M for 2021/2022. Annual new capital investment to 2030/2031 ranges from $7M to $18M. In addition to this, estimated Development Contribution Program (DCPs) capital works funded by the City add an additional $40M to new asset investment over the forecast period. The City plans to continue to borrow to remain within the low risk for liquidity in the VAGO sustainability indicators.

In 2021/2022 the City will make $16M in loan principal repayments. A proportion of this is planned to be redrawn to maintain cash reserves and support additional capital expenditure. This principal repayment in 2021/2022 includes the repayment of an $11M interest only loan.

It is important also to note that the City is guarantor on a $13M loan for the Bendigo Stadium.

A table summarising these modelled borrowings follows:

	2021/2022 - 2030/2031 Borrowings									
	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029	2029/2030	2030/2031
Opening Balance	40,491	43,479	45,784	47,447	43,653	39,736	37,274	35,523	34,317	32,489
New Borrowings	19,462	9,294	9,754	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254
Loan Repayments	(16,474)	(6,989)	(8,092)	(9,048)	(9,171)	(7,716)	(7,006)	(6,460)	(7,082)	(7,692)
Interest Repayments	(1,586)	(1,463)	(1,438)	(1,330)	(1,152)	(999)	(898)	(852)	(825)	(782)
Closing Balance	43,479	45,784	47,447	43,653	39,736	37,274	35,523	34,317	32,489	30,051

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

APPENDIX A: Financial Statements

City of Greater Bendigo

Budgeted Comprehensive Income Statement

For the ten years ending 30 June 2031	Forecast Actual	Budget	Projections								
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Income											
Rates and charges	126,419	132,935	137,718	142,664	147,474	152,023	156,864	161,397	166,225	171,149	175,801
Statutory fees and fines	4,132	5,429	5,524	5,634	5,761	5,876	5,994	6,114	6,236	6,361	6,488
User fees	20,655	29,090	29,599	30,191	30,870	31,488	32,118	32,760	33,415	34,083	34,765
Grants - Operating	31,717	27,620	28,050	28,549	29,123	29,644	30,176	30,718	31,271	31,835	32,411
Grants - Capital	19,135	13,397	4,998	5,058	5,126	5,189	5,253	5,318	5,384	5,452	5,521
Contributions - monetary	2,030	3,453	3,513	3,584	3,664	3,738	3,812	4,272	4,349	4,429	4,510
Contributions - non-monetary	15,000	15,225	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(6,217)	(4,100)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Share of net profits/(losses) of associates and joint ventures	94	95	49	46	41	23	41	47	65	65	65
Other income	360	374	500	510	521	532	543	553	564	576	587
Total income	213,325	223,518	217,951	224,237	230,581	236,513	242,599	249,178	255,510	261,950	267,947
Expenses											
Employee costs	(73,036)	(73,217)	(75,457)	(77,404)	(79,479)	(81,529)	(83,274)	(85,056)	(86,876)	(88,736)	(90,634)
Materials and services	(73,602)	(76,347)	(77,683)	(79,237)	(81,020)	(82,640)	(84,293)	(85,979)	(87,698)	(89,452)	(91,241)
Depreciation	(38,625)	(43,062)	(44,354)	(45,019)	(46,370)	(47,065)	(48,477)	(49,204)	(50,681)	(51,441)	(52,984)
Amortisation - right of use assets	(2,807)	(2,439)	(1,815)	(1,089)	(667)	(438)	(278)	(69)	-	-	-
Bad and doubtful debts	(268)	(335)	(236)	(242)	(248)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Borrowing costs	(1,841)	(1,586)	(1,463)	(1,438)	(1,330)	(1,152)	(999)	(898)	(852)	(825)	(782)
Finance Costs - leases	(296)	(258)	(159)	(97)	(56)	(27)	(11)	(1)	-	-	-
Other expenses	(92)	(4,434)	(6,842)	(7,539)	(7,664)	(7,838)	(8,016)	(8,199)	(8,386)	(8,579)	(8,776)
Total Expenses	(190,375)	(201,679)	(208,009)	(212,045)	(216,833)	(220,689)	(225,347)	(229,406)	(234,493)	(239,031)	(244,417)
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	22,950	21,839	9,942	12,192	13,748	15,824	17,252	19,772	21,017	22,919	23,530
Other comprehensive income											
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods:											
Net asset revaluation increment /(decrement)	-	57,124	41,742	63,031	45,042	68,813	47,995	74,932	51,524	81,709	55,283
Total comprehensive result	22,950	78,963	51,684	75,223	58,790	84,637	65,247	94,704	72,541	104,628	78,813

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

City of Greater Bendigo
Budgeted Balance Sheet

For the ten years ending 30 June 2031

	Forecast Actual	Budget	Projections								
	2020/21 $'000	2021/22 $'000	2022/23 $'000	2023/24 $'000	2024/25 $'000	2025/26 $'000	2026/27 $'000	2027/28 $'000	2028/29 $'000	2029/30 $'000	2030/31 $'000
Assets											
Current assets											
Cash and cash equivalents	64,874	64,638	55,357	51,049	50,396	50,539	54,509	48,237	55,553	54,095	51,793
Trade and other receivables	22,687	13,277	13,306	13,676	14,123	14,761	15,158	15,543	15,998	16,420	16,811
Total current assets	87,561	77,915	68,663	64,725	64,518	65,300	69,667	63,780	71,551	70,515	68,605
Non-current assets											
Trade and other receivables	142	142	142	142	142	142	142	142	142	142	142
Investments in associates and joint ventures	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	1,832,433	1,723,919	1,787,807	1,869,030	1,924,683	2,005,010	2,083,792	2,162,978	2,227,005	2,331,264	2,409,980
Right-of-use assets	6,775	4,336	2,521	1,452	785	347	69	-	-	-	-
Intangible asset	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482	2,482
Total non-current assets	1,845,171	1,734,217	1,796,291	1,876,444	1,931,431	2,011,320	2,089,824	2,168,941	2,232,968	2,337,227	2,415,943
Total assets	1,732,732	1,812,133	1,864,953	1,941,169	1,995,950	2,076,620	2,139,492	2,232,720	2,304,519	2,407,741	2,484,548
Liabilities											
Current liabilities											
Trade and other payables	15,856	15,611	16,217	16,597	17,047	17,436	17,799	18,119	18,547	18,932	19,326
Trust funds and deposits	3,372	3,406	3,440	3,474	3,509	3,544	3,579	3,615	3,651	3,688	3,725
Provisions	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311	16,311
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	4,552	6,577	7,660	8,815	8,938	7,483	6,773	6,227	6,849	7,459	6,729
Lease liabilities	2,420	1,809	1,083	699	474	312	80	-	-	-	-
Total current liabilities	42,511	43,714	44,711	45,897	46,279	45,086	44,543	44,273	45,358	46,391	46,091
Non-current liabilities											
Provisions	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745	10,745
Interest-bearing loans and borrowings	35,939	36,902	38,124	38,631	34,714	32,253	30,501	29,295	27,468	25,030	23,322
Lease liabilities	4,377	2,649	1,565	866	392	80	-	-	-	-	-
Total non-current liabilities	51,061	50,296	50,435	50,243	45,852	43,078	41,246	40,040	38,213	35,775	34,067
Total liabilities	93,572	94,010	95,146	96,140	92,130	88,164	85,789	84,313	83,571	82,165	80,158
Net assets	1,639,160	1,718,123	1,769,807	1,845,030	1,903,819	1,988,456	2,053,703	2,148,407	2,220,948	2,325,576	2,404,389
Equity											
Accumulated surplus	789,879	811,700	821,895	836,587	851,578	866,985	882,065	901,838	922,855	945,773	969,304
Reserves	849,281	906,423	947,912	1,008,443	1,052,241	1,121,471	1,171,637	1,246,569	1,298,094	1,379,803	1,435,086
Total equity	1,639,160	1,718,123	1,769,807	1,845,030	1,903,819	1,988,456	2,053,703	2,148,407	2,220,948	2,325,576	2,404,389

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

City of Greater Bendigo
Budgeted Statement of Changes in Equity

	Total $'000	Accumulated Surplus $'000	Revaluation Reserve $'000	Other Reserves $'000
2020/21				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,612,265	766,928	816,385	28,952
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	22,950	22,950	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	-	-	-	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	3,945	1	-	3,944
Balance at end of financial year	**1,639,160**	**789,879**	**816,385**	**32,896**
2021/22				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,639,160	789,879	816,385	32,896
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	21,839	21,839	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	57,124	-	57,124	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	(18)	-	18
Balance at end of financial year	**1,718,123**	**811,700**	**873,509**	**32,914**
2022/23				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,718,123	811,700	873,509	32,914
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	9,942	9,942	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	41,742	-	41,742	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	253	-	(253)
Balance at end of financial year	**1,769,807**	**821,895**	**915,251**	**32,661**
2023/24				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,769,807	821,895	915,251	32,661
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	12,192	12,192	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	63,031	-	63,031	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	2,500	-	(2,500)
Balance at end of financial year	**1,845,030**	**836,587**	**978,282**	**30,161**
2024/25				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,845,030	836,587	978,282	30,161
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	13,748	13,748	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	45,042	-	45,042	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	1,243	-	(1,243)
Balance at end of financial year	**1,903,819**	**851,578**	**1,023,323**	**28,918**
2025/26				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,903,819	851,578	1,023,323	28,918
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	15,824	15,824	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	68,813	-	68,813	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	(416)	-	416
Balance at end of financial year	**1,988,456**	**866,985**	**1,092,137**	**29,334**
2026/27				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,988,456	866,985	1,092,137	29,334
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	17,252	17,252	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	47,995	-	47,995	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	(0)	(2,172)	-	2,172
Balance at end of financial year	**2,053,703**	**882,065**	**1,140,131**	**31,506**
2027/28				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	2,053,703	882,065	1,140,131	31,506
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	19,772	19,772	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	74,932	-	74,932	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	-	-	-
Balance at end of financial year	**2,148,407**	**901,838**	**1,215,063**	**31,506**
2028/29				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	2,148,407	901,838	1,215,063	31,506
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	21,017	21,017	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	51,524	-	51,524	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	-	-	-
Balance at end of financial year	**2,220,948**	**922,855**	**1,266,588**	**31,506**
2029/30				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	2,220,948	922,855	1,266,588	31,506
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	22,919	22,919	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	81,709	-	81,709	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	-	-	-
Balance at end of financial year	**2,325,576**	**945,773**	**1,348,297**	**31,506**
2030/31				
Balance at beginning of the financial year	2,325,576	945,773	1,348,297	31,506
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	23,530	23,530	-	-
Net asset revaluation increment/(decrement)	55,283	-	55,283	-
Transfer (to)/from reserves	-	-	-	-
Balance at end of financial year	**2,404,389**	**969,304**	**1,403,580**	**31,506**

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

City of Greater Bendigo
Budgeted Statement of Cash Flows

For the ten years ending 30 June 2031

	Forecast Actual	Budget	Projections								
	2020/21 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2021/22 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2022/23 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2023/24 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2024/25 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2025/26 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2026/27 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2027/28 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2028/29 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2029/30 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	2030/31 $'000 Inflows (Outflows)
Cash flows from operating activities											
Rates and charges	117,320	135,082	137,163	142,186	146,946	151,535	156,346	161,103	165,864	170,812	175,296
Statutory fees and fines	4,164	5,830	5,511	5,624	5,748	5,865	5,988	6,108	6,229	6,354	6,481
User fees	20,832	30,169	29,531	30,134	30,799	31,424	32,083	32,730	33,374	34,047	34,728
Grants - operating	34,181	28,644	27,968	28,499	29,060	29,588	30,147	30,693	31,236	31,804	32,379
Grants - capital	16,940	13,894	5,439	5,050	5,117	5,180	5,249	5,315	5,380	5,448	5,517
Contributions - monetary	2,030	3,453	3,513	3,584	3,664	3,738	3,812	4,272	4,349	4,429	4,510
Interest received	360	374	500	510	521	532	543	553	564	576	587
Trust funds and deposits taken	33	34	34	34	35	35	35	36	36	37	37
Other receipts	23	128	(8)	(7)	(8)	(8)	(4)	(25)	(5)	(4)	(4)
Net GST refund / payment	(88)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employee costs	(72,754)	(73,335)	(75,231)	(77,229)	(79,248)	(81,322)	(83,098)	(84,900)	(86,689)	(88,548)	(90,443)
Materials and services	(60,927)	(76,470)	(77,548)	(79,102)	(80,818)	(82,477)	(84,126)	(85,833)	(87,501)	(89,275)	(91,061)
Other payments	(11,652)	(4,441)	(6,586)	(7,471)	(7,649)	(7,820)	(7,998)	(8,183)	(8,365)	(8,559)	(8,756)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	50,464	67,163	50,296	51,813	54,167	56,270	58,976	61,870	64,492	67,119	69,271
Cash flows from investing activities											
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(47,162)	(66,299)	(58,500)	(55,211)	(48,982)	(50,579)	(51,264)	(65,458)	(55,184)	(65,990)	(68,417)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	1,034	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from investments	61	95	49	46	41	23	41	47	65	65	65
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	(46,067)	(66,204)	(58,451)	(55,165)	(48,941)	(50,556)	(51,223)	(65,411)	(55,119)	(65,925)	(68,352)
Cash flows from financing activities											
Finance costs	(1,849)	(1,586)	(1,463)	(1,438)	(1,330)	(1,152)	(999)	(898)	(852)	(825)	(782)
Proceeds from borrowings	3,000	19,462	9,294	9,754	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254
Repayment of borrowings	(4,233)	(16,474)	(8,989)	(8,092)	(9,048)	(9,171)	(7,716)	(7,006)	(6,460)	(7,082)	(7,692)
Interest paid - lease liability	(296)	(258)	(159)	(97)	(56)	(27)	(11)	(1)	-	-	-
Repayment of lease liabilities	(2,625)	(2,339)	(1,809)	(1,083)	(699)	(474)	(312)	(80)	-	-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	(6,003)	(1,195)	(1,126)	(956)	(5,880)	(5,570)	(3,783)	(2,731)	(2,058)	(2,652)	(3,220)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents	(1,606)	(238)	(9,281)	(4,308)	(653)	144	3,970	(6,272)	7,315	(1,458)	(2,301)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	66,480	64,874	64,638	55,357	51,049	50,396	50,539	54,509	48,237	55,553	54,095
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	64,874	64,638	55,357	51,049	50,396	50,539	54,509	48,237	55,553	54,095	51,793

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

City of Greater Bendigo
Budgeted Capital Works Statement

For the ten years ending 30 June 2031	Forecast Actual	Budget	Projections								
	2020/21 $'000	2021/22 $'000	2022/23 $'000	2023/24 $'000	2024/25 $'000	2025/26 $'000	2026/27 $'000	2027/28 $'000	2028/29 $'000	2029/30 $'000	2030/31 $'000
Property											
Land	530	5,950	1,662	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buildings	10,148	21,143	7,171	15,518	18,213	24,422	20,775	18,936	22,984	33,290	38,021
Total property	14,858	27,093	8,833	15,518	18,213	24,422	20,775	18,936	22,984	33,290	38,021
Plant and equipment											
Plant, machinery and equipment	4,231	3,840	6,296	5,276	4,870	4,891	5,146	6,173	5,597	4,852	5,509
Office equipment, furniture and fittings	515	974	10,028	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fountains, statues and monuments	-	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total plant and equipment	4,746	4,869	16,324	5,276	4,870	4,891	5,146	6,173	5,597	4,852	5,509
Infrastructure											
Land improvements	4,180	6,812	6,602	7,946	4,430	4,208	3,505	10,175	3,799	4,063	3,415
Sealed Roads	8,570	11,640	14,608	16,541	11,428	8,793	12,153	18,360	12,269	11,154	10,029
Unsealed Roads	2,850	3,200	4,193	3,153	3,243	2,924	3,427	4,110	3,727	3,231	3,335
Bridges	510	1,254	750	629	580	523	613	736	667	578	597
Pathways	3,450	3,500	2,651	1,985	1,832	1,652	1,936	2,519	2,106	2,425	1,884
Drainage	1,510	3,160	1,839	1,541	2,298	1,283	1,503	1,803	1,635	4,317	3,480
Public furniture and fittings	1,915	4,771	2,700	2,262	2,088	1,883	2,206	2,646	2,400	2,080	2,147
Total infrastructure	22,985	34,337	33,343	34,057	25,899	21,266	25,343	40,349	26,603	27,848	24,887
Total capital works expenditure	42,589	66,299	58,500	54,851	48,982	50,579	51,264	65,458	55,184	65,990	68,417
Represented by:											
New asset expenditure	-	28,588	21,928	17,706	9,671	9,743	8,860	22,008	11,039	20,817	12,323
Asset renewal expenditure	780	37,388	36,238	37,235	39,179	40,739	42,271	43,117	43,979	44,858	55,756
Asset upgrade expenditure	-	323	334	270	132	98	133	333	166	315	338
Total capital works	780	66,299	58,500	55,211	48,982	50,579	51,264	65,458	55,184	65,990	68,417
Funding sources represented by:											
Grants	7,212	13,091	4,998	5,058	5,126	5,189	5,253	5,318	5,384	5,452	5,521
Contributions	1,185	1,180	1,204	1,228	1,252	1,277	1,303	1,329	1,355	1,383	1,410
Council Cash	27,012	46,078	43,005	39,172	37,349	38,859	39,455	53,557	43,191	53,902	56,232
Borrowings	3,000	5,950	9,294	9,754	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254	5,254
Total capital works expenditure	38,409	66,299	58,500	55,211	48,982	50,579	51,264	65,458	55,184	65,990	68,417

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

APPENDIX B: Further notes on assumptions

Rating and service charge assumptions

Rates and charges are a significant source of revenue for the City, and planning for future rates revenue is an important component of the Financial Plan. The Victorian State Government established the *Fair Go Rates System* in 2016/2017 which caps the percentage of annual rate increases. The City has a rating structure comprised of ten differential rates based on the purpose for which the property is used. These differentials can be found in the City's Annual Budget.

The City levies a general waste and landfill charge, a recyclable waste charge and an organic waste charge on each residential occupancy. Non-residential properties will also be levied the charges if they use the City's collection service. The charges reflect the cost of providing the service.

Rate and charges income

The City's overall rate income for 2021/2022 is capped to increase by maximum 1.5 per cent and has been modelled at 1.75 per cent in 2022/2023 and 2.0 per cent in future years in line with State Government forecasts. Supplementary rates are expected to remain steady at $1.6M annually.

Grants – operational

92 per cent of the operational grants for 2021/2022 are recurrent. This is made up of 51 per cent or $14M of funding from the Victoria Grants Commission for the annual Financial Assistance Grant. Other significant recurrent grants are 16 per cent or $4.5M for aged care funding and 13 per cent or $3.6M for local roads.

For future years the Financial Plan Model assumes that the Financial Assistance Grant and Local Roads Grant will remain constant and increase by 1.5 per cent in 2022/2023 and thereafter annually by 2 per cent. With net decreases in population possible in Victoria and nationwide due to COVID-19, there is a chance these increases could be lower.

The aged care sector is expected to go through significant changes to the market in 2022 and 2023. However, due to it being unclear of the changes, this model has assumed that service levels will remain constant.

Contributions – monetary

For 2021/2022, 40 per cent of contributions are levies that the City collects from developers, 40 per cent are donations to support the operational services and 9 per cent are reimbursements. The City also collects approximately 5 per cent of donations to support the capital and major works program. Contributions are estimated to grow by CPI.

Contributions from Developer Contribution Plans at Huntly are modelled to commence in 2027/2028.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Contributions – non-monetary

The non-monetary contributions are estimated developer gifted assets and found or recognised assets. For 2021/2022 we are anticipating the following assets to be gifted to the City:

- $2.1M – Land
- $4.9M – Drainage
- $2.4M – Footpath
- $5.2M – Constructed Roads

The Financial Plan Model assumes that $13M of contributed, gifted or found assets will be recognised annually in the future.

User fees and charges

User fees make up approximately 13 per cent of income the City receives. The Financial Plan Model assumes that services levels will be maintained, with CPI movements (currently frozen due to COVID-19) changes to user fees and charges.

Employee costs

Employee costs are governed by the City's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA). The current EBA, which expires in 2021/2022 states that annual salary will increase by 80 per cent of the annual rate capping increase or 1.7 per cent, whichever is the greater. The Model assumes that annual salaries will increase by 2.1 per cent which is made up of 1.7 per cent of annual increase, and relevant superannuation increases.

Materials and services

Operational services in the Model have been forecast to continue at the same level of service with annual increases in line with CPI.

The Model assumes that utility costs will increase annually by 3 per cent. This is based on previous trends where utilities have increased by more than CPI annually.

Other components of the materials are:

- From 2022 – Our Future Workplace rental expenditure is estimated to increase expenditure by more than $3M per annum.
- Landfill remediation works will add $4.3M over the next 10 years
- In 2021/2022 the budget has $4.3M of works will be expended for maintenance and operational works on assets (this hits operational expenses, rather than being capitalised.

Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

The loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has passed to the buyer. Write offs also occur on an annual basis. It is predicted that average annual losses on sale and write off are $5M.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Asset revaluation

The valuation process for sealed roads, unsealed roads, pathways, bridges and drainage is performed annually whilst public furniture and fittings and land improvements are completed on a three year cycle. Buildings are revalued every two years.

Contingent liabilities risk

The City has guaranteed a $13M loan as at 31 March 2021 for the Bendigo Stadium.

The City has obligations under the defined benefits superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme.

Currently the City does not have any outstanding or forecasts any legal proceedings that will significantly impact operations.

Renewal program

As noted earlier in this report, future renewal demand is expected to continue to be above the modelled amounts in the model and will require continual monitoring. The model increases support for renewal funding at a faster pace than the modelled rate cap.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

APPENDIX C: VAGO Financial Sustainability Indicators

Indicator	Formula	Description
Underlying result (per cent)	Adjusted net surplus/ total underlying revenue	A positive result indicates a surplus. The larger the percentage, the stronger the result. A negative result indicates a deficit. Operating deficits cannot be sustained in the long term. Underlying revenue does not take into account non-cash developer contributions and other one-off (non-recurring) adjustments.
Liquidity	Current assets/ current liabilities	Measures the ability to pay existing liabilities in the next 12 months. A ratio higher than 1:1 means there is more cash and liquid assets than short-term liabilities.
Indebtedness (per cent)	Non-current liabilities/ own-sourced revenue	Comparison of non-current liabilities (mainly comprised of borrowings) to own-sourced revenue. The higher the percentage, the less able to cover non-current liabilities from the revenues the entity generates itself. Own-sourced revenue is used (rather than total revenue) because it does not include capital grants, which are usually tied to specific projects.
Self-financing (per cent)	Net operating cash flows/ underlying revenue	Measures the ability to replace assets using cash generated by the entity's operations. The higher the percentage, the more effectively this can be done.
Capital replacement	Capital expenditure/ depreciation	Comparison of the rate of spending on infrastructure with its depreciation. Ratios higher than 1:1 indicate that spending is faster than the depreciation rate. This is a long-term indicator, as capital expenditure can be deferred in the short term if there are insufficient funds available from operations, and borrowing is not an option.
Renewal gap	Renewal and upgrade expenditure/depreciation	Comparison of the rate of spending on existing assets through renewing, restoring, and replacing existing assets with depreciation. Ratios higher than 1:1 indicate that spending on existing assets is greater than the depreciation rate. Similar to the investment gap, this is a long-term indicator, as capital expenditure can be deferred in the short term if there are insufficient funds available from operations, and borrowing is not an option.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Risk assessment criteria for financial sustainability indicators

Risk	Underlying result	Liquidity	Indebtedness	Self-financing	Capital replacement	Renewal gap
High	**Negative 10% or less** Insufficient revenue is being generated to fund operations and asset renewal.	**Equal to or less than 1.0** Insufficient current assets to cover liabilities.	**More than 60%** Potentially long-term concern over ability to repay debt levels from own-source revenue.	**Less than 10%** Insufficient cash from operations to fund new assets and asset renewal.	**Equal to or less than 1.0** Spending on capital works has not kept pace with consumption of assets.	**Equal to or less than 0.5** Spending on existing assets has not kept pace with consumption of these assets.
Medium	**Negative 10% to zero** A risk of long-term run down to cash reserves and inability to fund asset renewals.	**1.0–1.5** Need for caution with cash flow, as issues could arise with meeting obligations as they fall due.	**40–60%** Some concern over the ability to repay debt from own-source revenue.	**10–20%** May not be generating sufficient cash from operations to fund new assets.	**1.0–1.5** May indicate spending on asset renewal is insufficient.	**0.5–1.0** May indicate insufficient spending on renewal of existing assets.
Low	**More than zero** Generating surpluses consistently.	**More than 1.5** No immediate issues with repaying short-term liabilities as they fall due.	**40% or less** No concern over the ability to repay debt from own-source revenue.	**20% or more** Generating enough cash from operations to fund assets.	**More than 1.5** Low risk of insufficient spending on asset renewal.	**More than 1.0** Low risk of insufficient spending on asset base.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

APPENDIX D: Glossary of Terms

Asset renewal - Expenditure on an existing asset which returns the service potential or the life of the asset up to that which it had originally. It is periodically required expenditure, relatively large (material) in value compared with the value of the components of the asset being renewed. As it reinstates existing service potential, it has no impact on revenue, but may reduce future operating and maintenance expenditure if completed at the optimum time.

Asset upgrade - Expenditure which enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service or expenditure that will increase the life of the asset beyond that which it had originally. Upgrade expenditure is discretional and often does not result in additional revenue unless direct user charges apply. It will increase operating and maintenance expenditure in the future because of the increase in the asset base.

Asset expansion - Expenditure which extends an existing asset, at the same standard as is currently enjoyed by residents, to a new group of users. Expansion expenditure is discretional which increases future operating and maintenance costs because it increases the City's asset base, but may be associated with additional revenue from the new user group.

Base Services Budget – Plan of services and to be funded for the financial year.

Borrowing strategy - A borrowing strategy is the process by which the City's current external funding requirements can be identified, existing funding arrangements are managed, and future requirements monitored.

Capital works program - Capital works projects that will be undertaken during the 2021/2022 year.

City - City of Greater Bendigo.

Community Plan – Means a Council Plan prepared by the Council under Section 125 of the Local Government Act 2020. This document sets out the strategic objectives of the Council and strategies for achieving the objectives as part of the overall strategic planning framework required by the Local Government Act. Known as the Community Plan at the City.

Councillor – Elected individual holding the office of a member of Greater Bendigo City Council.

Developer Contribution Plans (DCP) – A mechanism used to levy new developments for contributions to planned infrastructure needed by future community. These result in capital project costs for the City, as well as receipts from developers as part of developing "new" areas.

Financial sustainability – A key outcome of the strategic resource plan. Longer term planning is essential in ensuring that a Council remains financially sustainable in the long term.

Infrastructure - Physical assets of the entity or of another entity that contribute to meeting the public's need for access to major economic and social facilities and services.

Land Development Strategy - The City of Greater Bendigo is working in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to develop an Industrial Land Development Strategy to drive the future of industry in Bendigo.

Financial Plan – The Financial Plan is a 10 year tool to assist the City can continue to deliver these high quality services.

Financial Plan model – The Financial Plan model is a financial tool to assist the City to continue to deliver these high quality services.

Financial Plan document– Is a detailed document that explains the City's 10 year Financial Plan.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

New assets - New assets do not have any element of expansion or upgrade of existing assets. New capital expenditure may or may not result in additional revenue for the City and will result in an additional burden for future operation, maintenance and capital renewal.

One Planet Living Framework - One Planet Living, to reflect the City's commitment towards creating a liveable municipality within the capacity of the earth's resources.

Restricted Cash – Restricted cash are funds set aside for specified purposes in accordance with various legislative and contractual requirements.

Road Management Act - The purpose of this Act which operates from 1 July 2004 is to reform the law relating to road management in Victoria and to make relating amendments to certain Acts, including the Local Government Act 1989.

The Act - Local Government Act 2020.

Unrestricted cash and investments - Unrestricted cash and investments represents funds that are free of all specific Council commitments and are available to meet daily cash flow requirements and unexpected short term needs.

VAGO – Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Valuation of Land Act 1960 - The Valuation of Land Act 1960 requires the Valuer-General to cause a general valuation of rateable land to be made as at 1 January in each calendar year.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 2 - Submissions summary

Summary of Financial Plan submissions September 2021

Note that some of these submission 'cross over' between the Council Plan and 10 year Financial Plan. Council plan submissions are summarised in another paper on this agenda.

Submission	Submission source (individual / organisation or group / staff	Key points / summary of submission	Officer comments
1	Individual	Comparing expenditure on asset renewal with depreciation is problematic. Given council has a large stock of infrastructure assets relative to its income, it would be wise to undertake asset renewal when required to achieve affordable service level objectives. 5An indicator measuring actual asset renewal expenditure relative to what councils' asset management plans suggested for the same planning period would be more appropriate.	Some commentary and details on this ratio and measurement have been updated for the final version of the 10 year financial Plan. This will be a part of the discussions to be had as part of the City's inaugural Asset Plan, due in June 2022.
2	Staff – Community Partnerships Unit	• Population clarifications • Formatting • Definition suggestions	Changes noted and made (consistency and formatting).
3	Organisation or group – National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & Region Branch	10 year plan needs to add diversity to Bendigo's offerings. A cultural/exhibition centre at the 'School of Mines' buildings. 'Magnificent buildings in the heart of the city, with a powerful educational history, don't become available often. This site is on a scale that could provide a centre-piece in the reimagining of Pall Mall. There is potential to develop a destination that Bendigo citizens are proud of'	This has been noted as an ongoing priority for future capital program discussions. There are not additional projects separated within the 10 year financial plan (as such). This project idea will be noted in advance of development of upcoming capital discussions into future years.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual / organisation or group / staff	Key points / summary of submission	Officer comments
		The Bendigo and Region Branch of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) believes that this project concept is worth considering in terms of the Council's 10 Year Financial Plan. The Branch also urges Council to consult with a wide range of organisations and the community to develop and implement an additional major attraction to Bendigo's offering.	
4	Individual	Hargreaves Mall - think it could become a 'Live Hub' for our local businesses and an attraction that can be properly managed and policed.	This has been noted as an ongoing priority for future capital program discussions.
5	Individual	'Though I appreciate Council is under some pressure due the requirements of the new Local Government Act, I still feel it was unreasonable and madness to simultaneously release four key draft documents (Council Plan 2021- 2025, Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025, 10 Year Financial Plan, Climate Change and Environment Strategy) with only a three-week public exhibition and submission period. The process appears to be a perfunctory exercise to meet timelines.' Recommendation: a) Consider my public submission to the draft Council 2021-2022 Proposed Annual Plan and Budget again; it addressed these issues. b) Improve the public exhibition, submission and hearing processes. Recommendation: Publicly review why council's *Imagine Greater Bendigo* failed to '*create interest and*	This submission crossed over to also impact on the 10 year financial plan, however is also discussed in Council Plan feedback – refer submission 9. There has been significant engagement over the course of the past 9 months in a variety of forums. It is acknowledged that with this first run of a 10 year Financial Plan, there was a disconnect between the budget timelines and this Council Planning timeline. Thankfully, this should be the only time this happens.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Submission	Submission source (individual / organisation or group / staff	Key points / summary of submission	Officer comments
		excitement' with the broader demographic and seek improvements.'	
6	Organisation or Group - LaTrobe University Bendigo	Shared commitments – La Trobe University and the Campus, support the City of Greater Bendigo's Vision of a diverse community, that is sustainable, prosperous and working with the Traditional Custodians of this land, and shares the Council's values of Transparency, Sustainability, Inclusion, Innovation and Equity. Advocacy - The key areas of advocacy regarding housing, transport, water and other infrastructure is supported by the university. This should also include advocacy for education funding at all levels from childcare/pre-school to tertiary levels. This is essential to ensure the city has the resources to secure the future of young people, a transitioning economy and future re-skilling.	Noted for future priorities.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

14.3. Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025

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

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the community submissions received commenting on the draft Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, outline suggested changes to the Plan as a result and seek Council's support to endorse the final plan.

Summary

Over the last ten months staff from across the City have worked with key partners to review the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021. Together there has been reflection on learnings from work undertaken over the last four years, review of changes in population demographics and changes in national, state and local policy. This has been brought together with outcomes from the Imagine Greater Bendigo community engagement process. A new Draft Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for 2021 – 2025 was developed then made available for public feedback via the Let's Talk community engagement platform for a three-week period.

16 submissions were received, seven from local organisations/groups, eight from individuals and one from a City team. Overall the feedback was very supportive. The main suggestion for improvement were the inclusion of volunteering as an area for action.

A number of other minor changes have been made to improve the language and readability of the plan. Staff are proposing the brand the plan "Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 – 2025 to highlight the outcomes we are all trying to achieve. This will also facilitate greater alignment with work we have been doing under this initiative.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Greater Bendigo City Council endorse Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021- 2025 and thank the community for their input in its development.

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

Goal #2	**Wellbeing and Fairness: Inclusive policies, partnerships and projects that improve learning opportunities and health. Increasing access and building better connections and quality of life for all**
Objectives	2.1 Create a much healthier Greater Bendigo 2.2 Promote positive wellbeing across the Greater Bendigo community 2.3 Promote community connection 2.4 Support positive learning and development for residents of all ages and all abilities 2.5 Create proud and safe public places and commercial areas.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021

Domains:

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

Background Information

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (the Act) mandates that Local Governments have a responsibility to promote and protect community health and wellbeing. As part of the requirements of the Act Councils must prepare a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) every four years within 12 months of the council elections. The Act mandates the plan must:

- Include an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district
- Identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing
- Provide for involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan
- Have regard to the State Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Specify how the council will work in partnership with the Department of Health and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the plan

The Victorian Climate Change Act 2017 requires that every MPHWP also considers the short- and long-term impacts of climate change in relation to health and wellbeing priorities. In addition, in May 2017 the then Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (now Department of Health) advised the need to incorporate actions focused on preventing and responding to family violence in the catchment.

The Act does allow Councils to incorporate the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan into the Council Plan subject to DHHS approval. Regardless of whether the Plan is incorporated or not, it is good to ensure that common language and priorities are reflected in both plans.

The current Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021 (Plan) was endorsed by Council in October 2017. It utilises the domains within the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework outlining agreed priorities under each domain. It also includes a Framework for Action to assist in ensuring evidence based best practice approaches to the work.

The required Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a whole of community plan not just a Council plan so needs to be developed in partnership with the community and organisations who can influence community health and wellbeing. The aim of the final plan is to align strategic objectives with those in the Community Vision and Council Plan.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Previous Council Decision(s) Date(s):

The Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017 – 2021 was endorsed by Council in October 2017.

Report

A significant amount of work has been undertaken since the 2017 – 2021 plan was finalised including the development of a range of specific policies, strategies and programs including:

- Greater Bendigo Food Systems Strategy
- Greater Bendigo Healthy Food and Catering Policy
- Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo
- Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity Strategy
- Northern Victorian Integrated Emergency Management Plan
- All Ages All Abilities Action Plan
- Greater Bendigo Volunteering Strategy
- Greater Bendigo Community Engagement Policy
- Connect Greater Bendigo
- Reconciliation Plan: Barpangu
- Healthy Greater Bendigo
- Healthy Heart of Victoria

A number of other plans also include objectives focused on improving community health and wellbeing including:

- A stronger Greater Bendigo: Economic Development Plan
- Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy
- Greater Creative Bendigo
- Greater Bendigo Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy
- Greening Greater Bendigo
- Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

A number of others are currently being developed or updated including:

- Greater Bendigo Social Justice Framework
- Greater Bendigo Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan

With so much strategy in place it was determined not to make significant changes to the 2021 – 2025 Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan, continue to use the domains from the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework and continue to strengthen existing efforts, evaluation and partnerships.

In reviewing the plan, the requirements as outlined above were undertaken including creating a 2021 Health and Wellbeing Data Profile, reviewing current national, state and local policy and undertaking an evaluation of the previous plan. The findings from this

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

work together with outcomes from the Imagine Greater Bendigo community engagement process were utilised to develop an Issues and Opportunities Paper for further stakeholder consultation, most particularly with the Project Reference Group (see Consultation/Communication).

It is proposed that the new plan be branded Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 – 2025 to highlight the outcomes we are all trying to achieve. This will also facilitate greater alignment with work we have been doing under this initiative.

Key differences in the Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 - 2025 include:

- Structure
    - Incorporation of the Community Vision and Values
    - A proposed shared mission
    - Improved descriptions of each outcome area
    - Identification of “Areas for Action” rather than priorities
- New/changed Areas for Action
    - Oral health
    - Elder abuse
    - Socio-economic disadvantage
    - Gender equity
    - Volunteering
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation
    - Access to affordable, safe and secure housing
    - Access to quality public open space
- Alignment with the Environment Strategy
    - Zero carbon
    - Circular economy
    - Sustainable and Active Transport
    - Water Sensitive Bendigo
    - Thriving landscapes and ecosystems
- Framework for Action
    - Removal of “our focus” and “our settings and environments”
    - Changed “our enablers” to “supports”
        - Shared leadership and governance
        - Capability building
        - Community groups and organisations
        - Financing and resource allocation
        - Media and communications
        - Data, evidence and learnings from others

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Principles outlined in the new plan include:
    - Recognise that health is everyone's business
    - Promote social justice
    - Work in partnership
    - Share learning
    - Include all ages, abilities, genders, sexualities and cultures
    - Incorporate universal design
- Approaches to the work will continue to be:
    - Systems thinking
    - Collective impact
    - Place based
    - Strengths based
    - Risk management
    - Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Following adoption of the new plan, City staff will then work on producing a Healthy Greater Bendigo Action Plan. This will outline all relevant work being undertaken by Council staff both leading initiatives and partnering with others. This will be shared with our community partners. We will also undertake a review on internal coordination and leadership of our work.

It is proposed that the external Project Reference Group for this work continue to meet regularly and take on an overall governance role for the work. Council may want to consider whether we appoint them as a Council Advisory Group.

Priority/Importance:

The development of a four-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is a requirement of all Victorian local governments to be finalised by the October of the year following the Council election.

Risk Analysis:

As highlighted above, Council has legislated responsibilities under the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within their municipalities. The Local Government Act 2020 also discusses Council's role "is to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community.

Consultation/Communication

In September 2020 City staff developed a project plan outlining the steps required for Council to meet its strategic planning obligations under the Local Government Act and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. Supported by Council this involved the development of a comprehensive community engagement plan that provided opportunities for the Greater Bendigo community to contribute to planning through a 3-stage process.

Titled "Imagine Greater Bendigo" the goals of the community engagement plan were:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1. To build the municipal community's understanding of current Council services, strategy and resources
2. To strengthen trust in Council and its commitment to listening and responding to the municipal community needs
3. Build a more comprehensive understanding of municipal community needs and aspirations to inform the development of short, medium, and long-term strategy.

Commencing in January 2021 Stage 1 sought to understand what the community loves, values and wants to see improved or changed in the future. To assist engagement Council named the project "Imagine Greater Bendigo" and launched its new online community engagement platform "Let's Talk Greater Bendigo". A survey was developed that built on the themes from community engagement undertaken over the last four years. Over 1000 people responded to either the short form or long form survey on-line or by completing a post card. Members of our non-English speaking communities were engaged using post cards translated in common community languages.

Stage 2 sought to understand the broad range of community needs and priorities in relation to Council's services and program delivery exploring the key themes and outcomes from Stage 1 engagement. In this stage City staff and Councillors reached out to key stakeholder groups and individuals asking them to identify their top 3 – 5 priorities.

Run concurrently with Stage 2 was a Community Panel where members of the community came together to deliberate over issues, challenges and opportunities to develop a shared Community Vision and Values and provide input into future Council priorities. Over 15,000 invitations were sent to residents of Greater Bendigo by an independent recruiter. This resulted in 41 adults aged between 25 – 70 agreeing to participate over the two and a half days. They were joined by 20 young people aged between 12 – 25 years. The panel was independently facilitated by expert community engagement practitioners with the following community vision and values developed:

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

Transparency; sustainability: inclusion; innovation and equity.

Reports from each stage of the community engagement process can be accessed on the Let's Talk Greater Bendigo community engagement platform.

The outcomes from each stage of the planning process including those from the community engagement were shared with a Health and Wellbeing Plan Project Reference Group. Chaired by the Mayor, the following organisations and groups were invited to participate:

- Access Australia
- Bendigo and District Aboriginal Corporation
- Bendigo Community Health Service
- Bendigo Education Council
- Bendigo Health
- Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership
- Centre for Non-violence

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Coliban Water
- DELWP Regional Office
- Department of Transport Regional Office
- Department of Education & Training Regional Office
- Department of Health, Regional Office
- Haven Home Safe
- Heathcote Health
- Latrobe University
- Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services
- Murray Primary Health Network
- RANCH / Bendigo Neighbourhood Houses
- Regional Development Victoria
- Shine Bright
- Sport & Recreation Victoria Regional Office
- Sports Focus
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Victoria Police Bendigo Office

Meetings of the Project Reference Group were held in February, April, June and July to coincide with key project milestones. Most meetings were able to be held face to face except the July meeting.

The Project Reference Group has agreed to take on the role of Governance Group post endorsement of the plan and will meet quarterly to review, exchange ideas and strengthen joint understanding of the work.

In late 2020 the City of Greater Bendigo was successful in receiving a VicHealth Local Government Partnership Grant. The aim of the grant was to strengthen engagement of children in Council's planning with a focus on the Health and Wellbeing Plan. To date over 250 children have been engaged. A report from the consultation will be shared with Council once finalised. Key themes from this work have been fed into the final draft plan.

Following the August Council Ordinary meeting, the draft Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan was released for final community consultation for a period of three weeks. The community were invited to make a submission using the Let's Talk Greater Bendigo community engagement platform.

Sixteen submissions were received, seven from local organisations/groups, eight from individuals and one from a City team. Overall the feedback was very supportive. The main suggestion for improvement were the inclusion of volunteering as an area for action. A number of other minor changes have been made to improve the language and readability of the plan.

Internal Consultation:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Much of the work for this plan was led by an Internal Health and Wellbeing Working Group comprising staff from across the organisation who have met regularly since the 2017 – 2021 plan was developed.

Publication

Once finalised the Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 – 2025 will be graphically designed and published on-line with relevant links to supporting data and principles on a designated Health and Wellbeing webpage. A poster of the Plan on a Page will be created for distribution to key stakeholders.

Resource Implications

The additional costs of delivering the 2021 – 2025 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan have been found from existing operational budgets. The costs for the Imagine Greater Bendigo community consultation were also met internally.

Attachments

1. Draft Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025
2. Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan submissions and responses summary – September 2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - Draft Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025

Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-25

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 - 2025

City of Greater Bendigo

September 2021

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

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Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Acknowledgement of Country:

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

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

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

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021-25

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 2
BACKGROUND 3
IDENTIFYING OUR OUTCOMES 3
HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED 5
HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY INFLUENCE 9
Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-23 10
ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES PAPER 11
Areas for Action 12
Outcome 1: Healthy and well 12
Outcome 2: Safe and secure 14
Outcome 3: Able to participate 15
Outcome 4: Connected to culture and community 16
Outcome 5: Liveable 17
MONITORING AND EVALUATION 23
GOVERNANCE 24

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

INTRODUCTION

Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 – 2025 (Greater Bendigo Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan) (the Plan) aims to provide the Greater Bendigo community, Council (the City) and its partners with clear direction regarding the priority areas for focus to improve the health and wellbeing of our community over the next four years. The Plan was developed following a review of relevant Federal, State and Local government policy, analysis of local health and wellbeing data, engagement of the community and key stakeholders, and identification of local health and wellbeing issues. The Plan sets out areas for action and a framework to guide the work. An action plan setting out work that will be led or supported by the City will be developed annually.

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health and wellbeing are created in our day-to-day lives – where and how we live, work, play, grow and age. Lots of things impact on our health and wellbeing, including income, housing and education, access to nutritious food, parks and public transport, being free from discrimination and violence, having strong connections with family, friends and the community, early years learning and development experiences and having opportunities to be physically active. The air we breathe, water we drink, the climate we live in and the overall health of our planet have a major impact too. Smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and drug use can also have a significant effect on our health.

Figure 2: The wider determinants of health

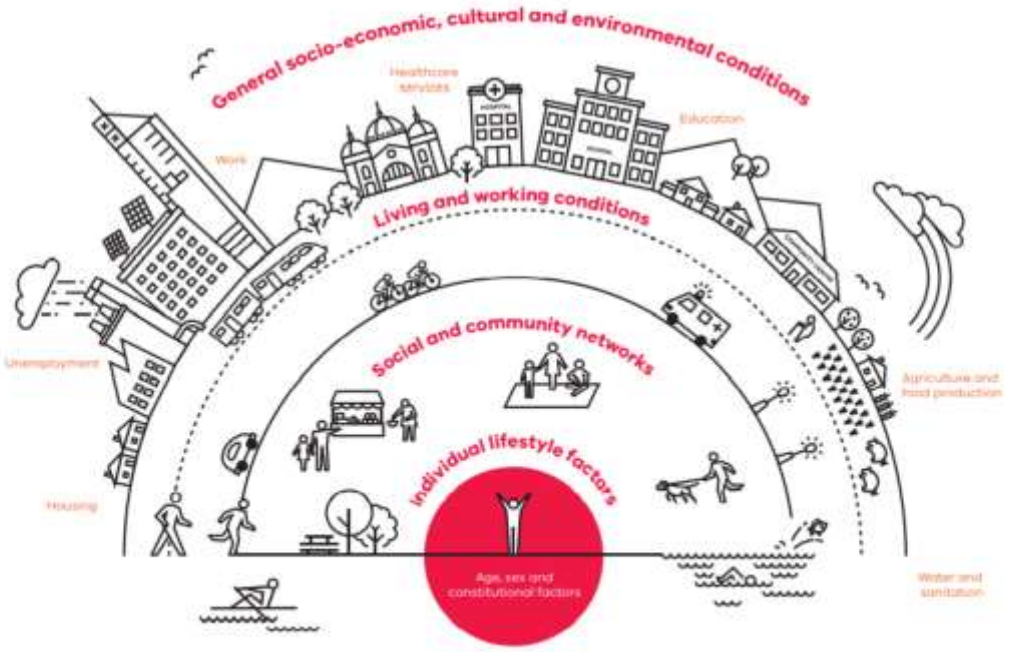


Figure 1 Source- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-23 (Adapted from Dahlgren & Whitehead 2018)

Good health and wellbeing are important to everyone and enable people to participate fully in community life. They are essential for a welcoming, sustainable and prosperous community. Everyone in our community has the right to access the resources and environments necessary for a long and healthy life. Yet many in our community face multiple barriers to achieving good health and wellbeing. Local Government, community organisations, businesses and community groups all have responsibilities and a role to play in addressing these barriers and supporting equitable improvements to community health and wellbeing. This can be through changes to policy, community action, improving our neighbourhoods and environment, and cultural and behavioural change.

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan states: *A comprehensive approach is required to plan for and deliver improved public health and wellbeing outcomes for all Victorians. To achieve this, we must:*

- *drive action towards the factors that contribute most strongly to the burden of disease and health inequalities*
- *ensure all parts of the sector work together towards clear outcomes*
- *take into consideration the wider determinants of health, both social and economic, in how we design and deliver public health and wellbeing interventions*

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

BACKGROUND

the Victorian *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (the Act) outlines the responsibility of Local Government to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within its municipality.

The Act sets out the following functions for Councils:

- Create an environment that supports the health of members of the local community and strengthens the capacity of the community and individuals to achieve better health
- Initiate, support and manage public health planning processes at the Local Government level
- Develop and implement public health policies and programs within the municipal district
- Develop and enforce up-to-date public health standards and intervening if the health of people within the municipal district is affected
- Facilitate and support local agencies whose work has an impact on public health and wellbeing to improve public health and wellbeing in the local community
- Co-ordinate and provide immunisation services to children living or being educated within the municipal district
- Ensure that the municipal district is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition

Councils must prepare a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan every four years within 12 months of Council elections. The plan is a strategic document that sits alongside and integrates with the Community Vision, Council Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement. Like the Community Vision, the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan is a whole-of-community plan that provides guidance and leadership to all stakeholders.

Under the Act the plan must:

a) Include an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district
b) Identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing
c) Provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the public health and wellbeing plan
d) Specify how the Council will work in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the public health and wellbeing plan

The Victorian Climate Change Act 2017 requires that all Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans consider the short and long-term impacts of climate change in relation to health and wellbeing priorities, reflecting its status as the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century (World Health Organisation). The Department of Health guidance on tackling climate change and its impacts on health highlights that 'the earth is warming at an unprecedented rate as a result of increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Without urgent action from all levels of society to mitigate and adapt to climate change, it is evident that the health, safety and wellbeing of Victorians, particularly those most vulnerable, is at risk now and into the future.'

The Victorian Department of Health provides Local Government with guidance to assist with Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing planning. In May 2017 additional advice was provided regarding Councils' responsibilities about preventing and responding to family violence and the need to incorporate relevant actions into Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans. This plan also meets the requirements under the Disability Act 2006, a Council must prepare a Disability Action Plan to reduce barriers in accessing goods, services and employment, promoting inclusion and participation and addressing discrimination faced by people with a disability. Finally the plan needs to meet relevant obligations include promoting gender equality and conducting gender impact assessments under the Gender Equality Act 2020, and responsibilities to consider, promote and protect human rights under Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

IDENTIFYING OUR OUTCOMES

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework has been used to guide the goals and objectives for the Plan. The framework brings together indicators drawn from multiple data sources that can help track whether prevention efforts are improving the health and wellbeing of Victorians over time. Use of the framework and other key strategic indicators will enable Council to benchmark progress and outcomes and identify priority areas for action.

Victorian Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework:

Domain 1: ***Victorians are healthy and well***	Domain 2: ***Victorians are safe and secure***	Domain 3: ***Victorians have the capabilities to participate***	Domain 4: ***Victorians are connected to culture and community***	Domain 5: ***Victoria is liveable***
Victorians have good physical health Victorians have good mental health Victorians act to protect and promote health	Victorians live free from abuse and violence Victorians have suitable and stable housing	Victorians participate in learning and education Victorians participate in and contribute to the economy Victorians have financial security	Victorians are socially engaged and live in inclusive communities Victorians can safely identify and connect with their culture and identity (indigenous)	Victorians belong to resilient and liveable communities Victorians have access to sustainable built and natural environments

The following page provides a high-level summary of the Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 – 2025 using this framework. The plan aligns with the Community Vision developed as part of the Imagine Greater Bendigo process. The areas for action have been identified as those things that we need to concentrate on changing if we are to improve the health and wellbeing of the Greater Bendigo community. The breadth of areas highlights the fact that protecting, promoting, and preventing ill-health is everyone's business, no one group or organisation can do this on their own, reinforcing why this must be a whole of community plan.

These areas for action are supported by a Framework for Action. This includes the following:

Community values – these were developed by members of our community through a process of deliberative engagement to guide action to achieve the community vision
Principles – these will inform decision making and prioritisation of actions
Approaches – these are the recognised best practice approaches in working to improve community health and wellbeing at a community and/or whole-of-population level
Supports – these are the key factors that will support the work

Following the summary plan on a page, this document describes how the plan was developed, provides a short justification for each action area, outlines some key evaluation questions we will use to guide our monitoring, evaluation and learning plan and the governance structure to steward the plan over the next four years. A summary of this Plan on a Page is available for hard copy printing.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

HEALTHY GREATER BENDIGO 2021 – 2025

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

MISSION: WORKING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Outcome	Healthy and well	Safe and secure	Able to participate	Connected to culture and community	Liveable
Description	The Greater Bendigo community has good physical and mental health	The Greater Bendigo community lives free from violence and abuse, is protected from environmental risks and is supported to live affordably	The Greater Bendigo community has the capability to participate and contribute to the local economy and community life	The Greater Bendigo community is socially engaged and inclusive, and is a place where people can safely identify and connect with their culture and identity	The Greater Bendigo community is resilient to a changing climate, and has access to the natural environment and quality public space for enhanced health and wellbeing
Areas for action	Healthy eating, food insecurity and sustainable food systems Oral health Increased physical activity and reduction of sedentary behaviour Mental wellbeing Sexual and reproductive health Harm from: • Tobacco • Alcohol • Other drugs • Gambling	Violence against women and children Elder abuse Community safety Crime and anti-social behaviour Health protection Community-based emergency management planning and responses Socio-economic disadvantage	Early years learning and development Educational attainment Inclusive employment Gender equity Health, financial and digital literacy Positive ageing Empower children and young people	Access and inclusion for people who: • Are culturally diverse • Have a disability • Identify as LGBTQIA+ Aboriginal reconciliation Social connection and reduction of loneliness Community participation and belonging Volunteerism	Zero carbon Circular economy Sustainable and active transport Water Sensitive Bendigo Thriving landscapes and ecosystems Heat health Access to: • Health and community services • Integrated community facilities • Affordable safe and secure housing • Quality public open space

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Community values	Transparency	Sustainability	Inclusion	Equity	Innovation

Principles	Recognise that health is everyone's business	Promote social justice	Work in partnership	Share learning	Include all ages, abilities, genders, cultures and sexualities	Incorporate universal design
Approach	Systems thinking	Collective impact	Place-based	Strengths-based	Risk management	Measurement, evaluation and learning
Supports	Shared leadership and governance	Capability building	Community groups and organisations	Financing and resource allocation	Media and communications	Data, evidence and learnings from others

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The plan was developed by:

- Reflecting on, evaluating and learning from the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021
- Reviewing Federal, State and Local government policy and legislation
- Reviewing the outcomes of the Imagine Greater Bendigo community consultation
- Undertaking a survey and workshops with community stakeholders to identify lessons from the previous plan, emerging priorities, and governance approaches
- Research and analysis of health and wellbeing data and indicators
- Development of an issues an opportunities paper and inviting submissions

A City of Greater Bendigo Internal Working Group and an External Project Reference Group provided strategic input and leadership for this work. Early engagement for development of the new plan highlighted broad support for the overall structure and approach of the 2017-2021 plan, therefore the process focussed on keeping the current domains and considering ways to strengthen the areas for action and the framework for action. The process highlighted support for continuation and strengthening of a coordinated local prevention effort, highlighting and supporting the contribution of all partner organisations.

Evaluation

A measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL) process was retrospectively undertaken to learn from the Greater Bendigo Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 and inform the 2021-2025 plan. Recommendations included the need to strengthen the focus on climate change, capability building, adequate resourcing and local partnerships. The MEL report highlighted the need to more clearly define the principles and approaches, build capability across the community to apply these principles and approaches, and increase the focus on monitoring and evaluation including benchmark indicators.

EXISTING STRATEGY

The City, together with partner organisations and the community, has recently developed numerous strategic plans that guide the work undertaken across the five health and wellbeing domains, including:

- Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Plan (currently under review for update)
- Walk Cycle Greater Bendigo 2019
- Northern Victorian Emergency Management Cluster Heatwave Plan 2019
- All Ages All Abilities Action Plan 2019
- Community Volunteering Strategy 2019-2023
- Greater Bendigo Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026
- Explore, Engage, Empower - Greater Bendigo Youth Strategy 2017-2021
- Barpangu (Build together) - Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan 2021-2025
- Greater Bendigo Coalition Gender Equity Strategy 2020-2025
- A stronger Greater Bendigo: Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030
- Food System Strategy 2020-2030
- Greening Greater Bendigo 2020-2050
- Greater Creative Bendigo Strategy
- Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019
- DRAFT Social Justice Framework
- Affordable Housing Action Plan 2021
- Managed Growth Strategy (in development)
- Community Hub Strategy (in development)

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Community Buildings Policy (in development)
- Reducing Harm from Gambling Policy (in development)

The importance of implementing these plans, strengthening collaboration, monitoring, evaluating, learning and adapting was reinforced through the review and engagement process.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Imagine Greater Bendigo community consultation process informed the development of the Community Vision, Council Plan, and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. It built on the engagement undertaken to develop many of the above plans and strategies asking the community what they value. A three-stage process was utilised.

In Stage 1 (February-March, 2021) we asked:

- What makes Greater Bendigo a great place to live now?
- What would make Greater Bendigo an even better place to live 30 years from now?

We also asked 'When you imagine future in Greater Bendigo, what do you value for a.....:

- A healthy, liveable community
- A strong, inclusive, and sustainable economy
- Aboriginal reconciliation and celebration of diversity
- A healthy natural environment that promotes resilience to a changing climate
- A vibrant, creative community
- A supportive community and social environment

A Healthy, liveable community

The impacts of COVID-19 appear to have re-shaped the community's priorities, as well as provided new insights and opportunities. In previous engagement residents said they valued:

- Cool, shady and green streets with accessible parks and play spaces
- Access to affordable, healthy food
- Walking and cycling paths for people of all ages and abilities
- Growing more food locally in schools, community gardens and on farms
- Affordable, safe and secure housing
- Better access to public transport and walking and cycling paths to move around
- Better access to health services for older residents

These seven areas were all reinforced in new survey responses, and six new areas were identified:

- Environmental sustainability
- Community facilities – sport and recreation
- Social inclusion and connection
- Education, training, and employment
- Planning and urban sprawl, density and walkable neighbourhoods
- More support for rural areas and smaller communities

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A Supportive Community and Social Environment

In previous engagement community members said they value:

- Family-friendly events and activities for people from different generations
- Working together to address loneliness and social isolation
- Improving support and services for mental health, homelessness and financial stress
- Working together to make Greater Bendigo feel safe and welcoming for all and preventing family violence
- Improving internet access, especially for rural residents and households with no internet
- The way the community has banded together during COVID-19
- Support for community sport, recreation and community groups to increase social connection after COVID-19

These themes were reinforced in survey responses:

- There was strong support for community sport, recreation and community groups to increase social connection after COVID-19. This included the need to support volunteers and volunteering, and provide community facilities and hubs that enable social connection
- Working together to make Greater Bendigo feel safe, welcoming and inclusive for all was also a strong theme, with an increased focus on inclusion. Prevention of family violence and the need to address safety in Hargreaves Mall and the City centre was also mentioned.
- Working together to address loneliness and social isolation. Support for older residents and rural and isolated people were strong sub-themes in these responses. Opportunities for children and older people to come together was also mentioned.
- Improving access to internet and phone networks was interrelated with the focus on rural and isolated people under the loneliness and social isolation theme

In Stage 2 Council facilitated a deliberative community engagement panel attended by 41 adults and 20 young people. Their goal was to develop a community vision and values for Greater Bendigo along with providing input into recommended priorities for the Council Plan.

Greater Bendigo Community Vision:

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

Greater Bendigo Community Values:

- *Transparency*
- *Sustainability*
- *Inclusion*
- *Innovation*
- *Equity*

Reports on the outcomes of the Imagine Greater Bendigo process can be accessed at
http://letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Targeted engagement with children

Bendigo was the first city in Australia to be recognised as a Child Friendly City by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 2007. Living in a Child Friendly City is a commitment by the whole community to embrace the vision of children. In 2020 Council received a grant from VicHealth to strengthen its engagement with children. Around 250 children have been involved in these conversations to date and the key themes are strikingly similar to the above, with children prioritising:

- Parks and gardens
- Open spaces with trees
- Cultural activities
- Playgrounds and water parks
- Walking and cycling paths
- Community food gardens
- Support for homeless people
- Access to healthy food

Staff compared the responses from the All Ages All Abilities engagement two years ago and found that children's priorities had noticeably changed with a focus on the things that were taken away from them during the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

Data analysis

Analysis of the Greater Bendigo data profile supported the community's feedback for a renewed focus on areas such as mental wellbeing, sustainable environments and community connectedness. It was also a reminder these are not the only areas requiring support. We know our community has increased rates of obesity and chronic disease, a higher number of vulnerable children and family violence incidents than the Victorian average and poorer oral health. We have reduced rates of STIs, improved physical activity levels and seen a slight reduction in female smokers, but we can't afford to lose focus on these areas now. The following opportunities have been identified by the City, partner organisations and stakeholders:

Advocacy opportunities:

- Water security, access, planning and usage, aligning with Water Sensitive Bendigo
- Influencing how the new State Government's Public Health Units operate in the region
- A stronger regional approach with increased partnerships, information and resource sharing
- Social prescribing
- Digital access and inclusion
- Social housing
- Transport
- Stronger land use policy to promote healthy food environments

Education opportunities:

- Use the implementation of the Domestic Wastewater Strategy to communicate the relationship between climate change and health
- Build understanding of the circular economy and how it benefits the community and influences health and wellbeing

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Identified areas to be strengthened include:

- Equitable access to services and infrastructure
- Being an inclusive city and welcoming diversity
- Gender equality
- Emergency preparedness – looking after the community's physical and psychological safety and needs during an emergency and during recovery
- COVID-19 recovery – responding to new opportunities for funding and an increased awareness of the function and importance of health protection
- Community connectedness through community hubs, social opportunities, and support for organisations and groups
- Provision of social infrastructure
- Promotion of business as usual and strategic work undertaken by the City to protect and promote community safety and security, particularly with respect to safe and secure food, water, environment, housing, early years learning and development, education and employment
- Understanding the relationship between climate change and health
- Cultural safety of City of Greater Bendigo services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and inclusion in opportunities
- Community safety with a focus on responding to anti-social behaviour in the public domain and the use of illicit drugs

As a result, the new plan strengthens the focus on community connectedness, environmental sustainability, climate change, and accessible and liveable communities. The process also highlighted the need to strengthen our focus on advocacy and education and simplify some of the language in the current plan. This feedback will also be factored into development of the City's Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and hopefully also the planning and action of our partners.

At the same time as developing this plan, Council has been refreshing the Climate Change & Environment Strategy. The priorities identified from the work for this strategy are reflected in the plan.

HEALTH & WELLBEING POLICY INFLUENCE

To inform the development of the Plan, a review of key Federal, State and Local government policy documents was undertaken. It highlighted an increased focus over the last few years on:

- Gender equality
- Mental health
- Obesity
- Family violence
- Prevention and health protection
- Climate change
- Aboriginal reconciliation and self-determination
- Affordable housing
- Social procurement
- Addressing inequality
- COVID-19 recovery
- Structural changes across Victoria, such as the establishment of Public Health Units

It also highlighted that the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, the Royal Commission into Aged Care, the Royal Commission into Disability and the impending State Disability Plan will influence future priorities. Due to COVID-19 there is a lot of change, resulting in a rapidly changing policy context. As a result, a flexible approach and ability to respond and adapt will be important.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A key strategy that the plan needs to align with is Koolin Balit (healthy people in Boonwurrung language). It is the Victorian Government's 10-year strategy (2012-2022) that commits the health system to improve the length and quality of life of Aboriginal people in Victoria. Koolin Balit provides a clear path forward to achieving significant and measurable outcomes in Aboriginal health. Barpangu, the City's Reconciliation Plan 2021-2025, picks up on key elements of this strategy.

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023

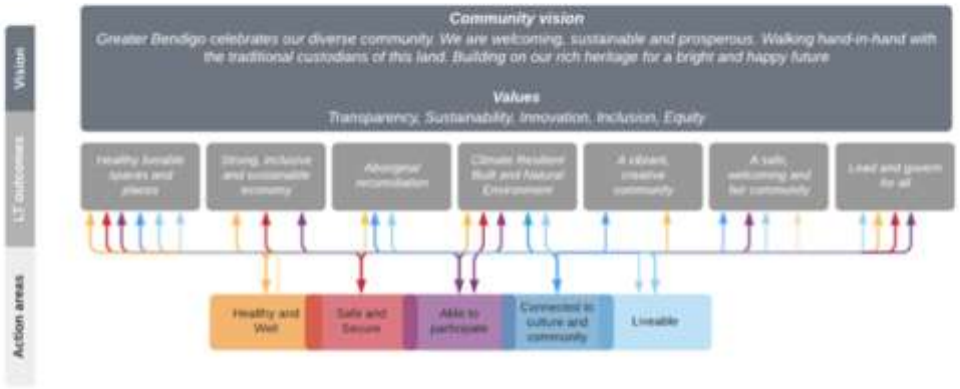
A further key influence for the plan is the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023. It outlines a vision, 10 action areas and four priority focus areas (in bold), as set out below:

A Victoria free of the avoidable burden of disease and injury, so that all Victorians can enjoy the highest attainable standards of health, wellbeing and participation at every age.

- ***Tackling climate change and its impact on health***
- *Reducing injury in the community*
- *Preventing all forms of violence*
- ***Increasing healthy eating***
- *Decreasing the risk of drug-resistant infections in the community*
- ***Increase active living***
- *Improving mental wellbeing*
- *Improving sexual and reproductive health*
- ***Reducing tobacco-related harm***
- *Reducing harmful alcohol and drug use.*

Greater Bendigo Council Plan 2021-2025

In October 2021, the Greater Bendigo Council will endorse its new Council Plan (Council Plan) for 2021-2025. The Council Plan takes an integrated approach that is in alignment with the domains and areas for action of the Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 - 2025. The Council Plan outcomes and strategic directions reflect community engagement priorities and existing strategy:



Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES PAPER

An Issues and Opportunities paper was developed summarising many of the findings above. This was circulated to key stakeholders and promoted through the Let's Talk Greater Bendigo community engagement platform.

Responses to the paper highlighted the need to focus on:

- Universal design and improving the liveability of our buildings
- Oral health promotion and health literacy
- Building community capacity in respectful relationships/consent and a trauma-informed approach
- Supporting community-based planning and encouragement for individual/grassroot actions

Areas to further strengthen that emerged from submissions included:

- Our local approach to neighbourhood density and walkability
- Increased focus on food security
- The way we manage communications with the community on climate change
- Increased civic participation with access to opportunities to participate, to information and to contribute to the community
- Positive ageing with a focus on digital literacy, isolation and loneliness, and greater voice in policy and decision making
- Systems change and collective impact
- Advocacy opportunities for community safety and the built environment
- Help for the most vulnerable communities in addressing racism and inequities
- Responding to high STI rates

GOVERNANCE

Project Reference Group

In January 2021 invitations were sent to leaders from 25 organisations and community groups who were identified as having a key role in promoting community health and wellbeing, inviting them to participate in a series of four Project Reference Group workshops to inform and lead the development of the new plan. Membership included:

- Bendigo Health
- Bendigo Community Health Services
- Heathcote Health
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership
- Bendigo District Aboriginal Corporation
- Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Service
- Centre for Non-Violence
- Haven; Home, Safe
- Goldfields Libraries
- Coliban Water
- Shine Bright Early Years Manager
- Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Sports Focus
- Neighbourhood Houses
- Bendigo RSL
- Department of Health and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Mayor and City staff

This group provided input into evaluation, the draft outcomes, objectives, framework for action and governance.

Backbone support

The City of Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Working Group, with membership from across the organisation, led the development of the plan. This group will guide future implementation of initiatives internally.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

AREAS FOR ACTION

Outcome 1: Healthy and well

The Greater Bendigo community has good physical and mental health.

Healthy eating, food insecurity and sustainable food systems

Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy vision: Greater Bendigo's food system is healthy, equitable and sustainable, and supports the local economy, culture, and health and wellbeing of our communities. Overweight and obesity (8.4 per cent) and dietary risks (7.3 per cent) are the second and third greatest risk factors causing chronic disease in Australia, behind tobacco. Food insecurity and poverty are major barriers to healthy eating and healthy weight, and the current industrial food system is contributing to the poor health and wellbeing of people and the planet.

Healthy eating

Healthy eating is vital for optimal growth, development and health throughout life and contributes to physical vitality, mental health and social wellbeing. Around 60 per cent of Greater Bendigo adults are overweight or obese and public health experts highlight that 'only a comprehensive suite of food and social policies, that protect the economic and physical accessibility of healthy diets for all' has the potential to change the picture.[1]

Food insecurity

To be food secure means being able to regularly buy nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable, safe foods from non-emergency sources like the supermarket or greengrocer. People who are food insecure are less likely to have the resources to eat a healthy diet and have poorer physical and mental health outcomes. Over 10 per cent of Greater Bendigo residents experience food insecurity, meaning they have run out of food and could not afford to buy more at least once throughout the past year. This is more than double the state average, and in some parts of Greater Bendigo it is closer to 1 in 5. Bendigo FoodShare reports demand for food relief increased by 40 per cent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sustainable Food Systems

Our current globalised food system creates multiple challenges for society. This includes year-round access to seasonal foods that are transported long distances, purchasing from a small number of large retailers and buying more processed foods with less nutritional value. This system creates a disconnect between the community and local producers and makes it easier for people to consume foods without the opportunity to develop skills to grow and prepare food. Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy aims to strengthen and support a sustainable local food economy that enables the growth, production and sale of healthy food locally, support local food growing, and producing, sourcing, cooking and sharing knowledge, skills, and culture, and reduce and divert food waste from landfill.

Physical activity

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

Overall 57.3 per cent of Greater Bendigo residents meet physical activity guidelines, which is higher than the Victorian average (48.1%). For both men and women, rates of physical activity drop as people age and a lower proportion of men and women aged 70+ meet the guidelines.

Over half of Greater Bendigo residents want to do more physical activity, and this is particularly true for women aged 18-49, men aged 35-49, people who are struggling to make ends meet, and those who experience poor health and/or low life satisfaction.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

People who require assistance with daily activities and those who report low life satisfaction are significantly more likely to be sedentary and report significantly poorer health outcomes. People who are struggling financially (49.7%) and people who speak a language other than English at home (43.8%) are significantly less likely to do sufficient physical activity. They are also more likely to want to increase the amount of physical activity they do. Cost was the most significant barrier to being more physically active for people who are experiencing financial hardship. Poor health and disability were the biggest barriers for those aged 70 years and over, and people who require help with daily activities.

Oral health

Oral health refers to the condition of a person's teeth and gums, as well as the health of the muscles and bones in their mouth. Poor oral health - tooth decay, gum disease and tooth loss - may result in a person experiencing pain, discomfort and feelings of embarrassment. They may also choose to avoid eating some foods and taking part in certain activities. Poor oral health is also associated with a range of diseases and conditions, such as heart and lung diseases, stroke, low birthweight and premature births. The rate of preventable hospitalisations for dental reasons is higher for children in Greater Bendigo than the state average (5.03 per 1,000 people compared to 3.6 per 1,000 across Victoria). While over 90% of Victorians have access to fluoridated water, some areas in Greater Bendigo do not. Fluoride promotes dental health by strengthening the tooth enamel, making it more resistant to tooth decay.

Mental wellbeing

The World Health Organisation define mental wellbeing as a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Overall, 7.5 per cent of residents report low life satisfaction and this correlates with significantly poorer overall health and wellbeing. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community and low-income households reported significantly lower levels of life satisfaction. Those with high incomes were more likely to report high or very high levels of life satisfaction.

Greater Bendigo has an above average proportion of people who experience anxiety or depression compared to the Victorian average, and the proportion of people in Greater Bendigo with depression or anxiety has increased from 28 per cent in 2014 to 36 per cent in 2017. Diagnosed conditions are more common for women than men. The proportion of people reporting high or very high levels of psychological distress has also increased from 8.7 per cent in 2017 to 20.3 per cent in 2021.

Mental wellbeing has been significantly affected by COVID-19, with a survey conducted to identify community impacts for the Greater Bendigo Relief and Recovery Plan highlighting 'a level of highly distressed and overwhelmed people wondering what the future will hold'.

Sexual and reproductive health

Sexual health is a crucial element of health and wellbeing, requiring respect, safety and freedom from discrimination and violence. It is critically influenced by power dynamics, gender norms and expectations, and is expressed through diverse sexualities (World Health Organization 2015). The pregnancy rate for women under 19 years in Greater Bendigo is higher than the state average and rates of sexually transmitted infections are high among some populations in Bendigo.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Harm from:

Tobacco

Tobacco usage remains one of the leading causes of death and disease in Victoria. It is linked to coronary heart disease, lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In Greater Bendigo 10.6 per cent of residents smoke compared to 16.7 per cent of Victorians.

Alcohol

Excessive alcohol consumption can contribute to the likelihood and frequency of being involved in violence. Alcohol is consumed more frequently and in higher amounts by males than females and declines with age. In Greater Bendigo 58.8 per cent of residents engage in binge drinking (four or more standard drinks in a day) at least once a year, compared to 41.8 per cent of Victorians. Binge drinkers were more likely to also report overweight/obesity, lower fruit and vegetable consumption, and smoke.

Other drugs

Misuse of drugs affect individuals, their families, their friends and their community. We see the impact of drug misuse in our health system as well as many other areas in the community, including law enforcement, family violence response and community perceptions of safety. Engagement with young people indicated significant concerns regarding the use of illicit drugs in the Greater Bendigo community.

Gambling

Gambling related harm affects not only the people who gamble, it can be experienced by family members, other relatives, friends, employers and workmates of those who gamble. In Greater Bendigo people lost over $50M on poker machines in 2018/2019 and this reduced to $37.4M in 2019/2020 with COVID-19 related closures. There are 7.2 poker machines per 1,000 adults in Greater Bendigo, compared to the state average of 5 machines per 1,000 adults. The two geographic areas with significantly higher rates of weekly gambling are Strathdale and Kangaroo Flat; each have two venues with poker machines and a much greater density of poker machines than Greater Bendigo generally.

Outcome 2: Safe and secure

The Greater Bendigo community lives free from violence and abuse, is protected from environmental risks and is supported to live affordably.

Violence against women and children

Women and children have the right to feel safe in their home and their relationships. In Greater Bendigo there are higher rates of family violence compared to the state average and violence against women is still a leading cause of ill-health, disability and premature death for women aged 15 to 44 years. Family violence can result in lifelong health impacts for children.

Elder abuse

Elder abuse is any act causing harm to an older person and is carried out by someone they know and trust, such as family and friends. It is a form of family violence, in that most perpetrators are family members. Research from Australia and overseas shows that around 5% of older people may be experiencing elder abuse. The real number may be higher because many people feel they cannot speak up.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Community safety

Community safety is the right of people to go about their daily activities without fear, or risk of harm or injury. Community safety is experienced in a range of settings and in all aspects of daily life. Perceived levels of safety are as important as the actual levels of crime and risk of harm in communities.

Crime and antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behavior incorporates a range of behaviours from minor offensive or harmful acts, to more serious criminal activity. Antisocial behaviour can have a negative impact on community perceptions of safety and people's quality of life. Individuals who engage in antisocial behaviour risk becoming excluded from important support mechanisms such as school, their families and service providers. They also risk coming into contact with the criminal justice system. There are approximately nine criminal offences per 100 adult residents each year in Greater Bendigo.

Health protection

Health protection builds the capacity of people to make healthy decisions, through increasing health literacy in early years, libraries, immunisations, food safety and environmental health services. The importance of high-quality health protection services has been highlighted in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community based emergency management planning and responses

The number of emergency incidents such as bushfire, flood, pandemic and drought is increasing. It is important that the community is prepared for such events and has systems in place to support relief and recovery.

Socio-economic disadvantage

In 2018 the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, in partnership with the Victorian Council of Social Service, published a report on poverty in Victoria. Data modelled on the 2016 ABS census indicated that approximately 10,500 people living across Greater Bendigo were living in poverty. The report looked at measures of poverty after housing costs are considered. Poverty can lead to an inability to pay for food, shelter, clothing or healthcare, exclusion from social activities and/or severe stress from chronic insecurity. Data for Greater Bendigo indicated that poverty is experienced in all areas of the City. There is a direct relationship between poverty and health outcomes.

Outcome 3: Able to participate

The Greater Bendigo community has the capability to participate and contribute to the local economy and community life.

Early years learning and development

The early years of every child's life are crucial for their healthy growth, wellbeing and development throughout life. Early years learning and development lays the foundations for future stages of life and has a significant impact on future life experiences. The Australian Early Childhood Development Census indicates that 22.5 per cent of Greater Bendigo prep-aged children are vulnerable in one or more areas (Victoria 19.9%) whilst 12.5 per cent are vulnerable in two areas, higher than the Victorian average (10.1%).

Educational attainment

Education is associated with better health throughout life. It equips people to achieve stable employment, have a secure home, provide for families and cope with ill health. Locally 67.7 per cent of 20 – 24-year olds have completed year 12 or equivalent, a measure of future life success. This is compared with 74.4 per cent for Victoria.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Inclusive employment

Having secure employment affects many aspects of our lives. Aside from the obvious financial benefits and the security this brings, employment brings stability to relationships and families, opportunities for personal growth, allows us to connect with other people and gives us greater choice when making decisions. Inclusive workplaces are characterised by respect and where all individuals' unique perspectives, ideas and contributions are recognised and valued. A number of groups within the community have poorer employment outcomes, such as people with a disability and people from a non-English speaking background.

Gender equity

Gender equity is the process of being fair to everyone, whether they identify as male, female or gender diverse and leads to gender equality. With gender equity the community will be healthier; all people's needs will be considered in decision making, policy development and in leadership, and violence against women and children will be reduced.

Health, financial and digital literacy

Literacy is an important determinant of health and wellbeing across the lifespan. Literacy used to refer only to the ability to read and write, but the concept has evolved to focus more broadly on a person's ability to understand and act on information that is needed to function well in society and the role of institutions and health promoters in making information more accessible and understandable. Lower levels of health and financial literacy have been linked to poorer health outcomes and economic disadvantage throughout life.

Digital literacy has become an essential competency for life in the 21st century. The Australian Digital inclusion index, which includes measures of access, affordability and ability, indicates that whilst digital inclusion is improving there is a substantial and widening gap for some groups. Similarly, this is aligned to other health indicators with socio-economic outcomes. In 2021 the index was 63.1 for Victoria overall, however in north-west Victoria, an area including Greater Bendigo, it was 55.8. Access was similar however affordability and ability were significantly lower.

Positive ageing

Being healthy and active throughout life will assist people to be healthy and independent as they age. Positive ageing implies people will continue to participate and contribute socially and economically to the community as they age.

Empower children and young people

Empowering and inspiring youth to shape the world they live in is a principle of Greater Bendigo's Youth Strategy 2017-2021. Including young people in decision making and providing them some control of their lives are important aspects of youth empowerment that promote health and wellbeing. Young people feel less valued by society than adults in Greater Bendigo (The Active Living Census 2019) and promoting the valuable contribution young people provide to the community is important. The City of Greater Bendigo Youth Council assists Council in working toward this goal.

Outcome 4: Connected to culture and community

The Greater Bendigo community is socially engaged and inclusive and is a place where people can safely identify and connect with their culture and identity.

Access and inclusion for people who:

Are culturally diverse

It is important that all residents, regardless of their cultural background, have equal opportunities to participate in the community free from discrimination and fulfil their cultural and religious human rights. Whilst the proportion of residents born overseas living in Greater Bendigo is low compared with other parts of Victoria, this is rapidly changing.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Cultural safety is enhanced through mutual respect for another's worldview and development of shared understanding about social and cultural practices.

Have a disability

People with a disability experience much poorer health outcomes than members of the general community so require a special focus within the health and wellbeing plan. More than 6% of the Greater Bendigo community need assistance with core tasks and it is estimated that another 14.5% have some form of disability that impacts on how they move around, access information and/or interact with other community members.

Identify as LGBTQIA+

The LGBTIQIA+ community experiences higher rates of discrimination and social exclusion, particularly young people who experience poorer physical and mental health outcomes within our community. The LGBTIQIA+ community have lower life satisfaction and are less likely to feel valued by society, which are indicators of mental wellbeing.

Aboriginal Reconciliation

Due to the impacts of colonisation, Aboriginal people experience significantly poorer health outcomes than the general community. As reflected in Victoria's Aboriginal Health Strategy (*Koolin-Balit)* and the City's Reconciliation Plan *(Barpangu),* community leadership in program design and decision making, improving cultural safety of mainstream organisations, and supporting Aboriginal community-controlled organisations are key enablers in improving Aboriginal health and wellbeing outcomes.

Koolin Balit incorporates the holistic definition of health used by the Aboriginal community-controlled sector. This acknowledges that there are broader social determinants of health and that addressing Aboriginal disadvantage is also a priority health issue. At least 1.7% of the Greater Bendigo community are Aboriginal.

Community participation and belonging

To live in a socially inclusive society means feeling valued, respecting each other's differences and having our basic needs met so as we can live in dignity. When we are socially connected, we get to interact with others in the community and can make decisions together and in each other's best interests. This provides a sense of belonging, which is an important part of having good health and wellbeing. In Greater Bendigo, 75 per cent of residents feel part of the community.

Social connection and reduction of loneliness

Despite Greater Bendigo being a vibrant place that offers a wide range of opportunities for socialising, playing, and attending sport or artistic events, some people are isolated, they don't mix with other people or they say they are lonely. Minority groups, including people living with a disability or mental illness, or people from cultural groups that differ from the majority sometimes find it especially hard to feel they belong in our community.

Volunteerism

Volunteering is a critical aspect of our community in Bendigo and it contributes to many health outcomes. Volunteering builds social connection, participation and provides a much-needed community service. Volunteering positively impacts individuals' sense of belonging, happiness and purpose, and improves their overall health and wellbeing.

Outcome 5: Liveable

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

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Zero carbon

Zero carbon is about mitigating the impacts of climate change by rapidly reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to zero to ensure a safe climate future. The Greater Bendigo community is currently responsible for more than 1.8 million tonnes of carbon emissions per year. We can reduce our emissions by transitioning away from fossil fuels, increasing our use of renewable energy, reducing our waste products, implementing environmentally sustainable design, choosing active modes of transport and low emissions vehicles.

Circular economy

Transitioning to a circular economy means moving away from the linear approach to taking resources out of the ground, making them into products for use, and then ultimately discarding of them into landfill or low-value recycling. The Eaglehawk landfill is due to reach capacity in 2022/2023, to prepare for this the City is taking steps to build a 'circular economy' for the region to future-proof our relationship with waste.

Sustainable and active transport

In Greater Bendigo, the motorised transport network is used by greater than 85% of the population. Throughout the Greater Bendigo region, the active transport network is under performing and there is low participation (less than 8%). Social, sustainable transport improves health and wellbeing by increasing active travel. This has multiple benefits as it improves mental wellbeing, whilst also reducing the health costs and personal impacts of sedentary lifestyles.

Water Sensitive Bendigo

Water services provide reliable, safe, high-quality drinking water, water for primary production and wastewater treatment, all of which are essential for good public health and wellbeing. The future availability of water for Greater Bendigo will be challenged by population growth, whereby the population is expected to nearly double to 250,000 by 2056. This challenge will be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change including a decrease in annual rainfall, increase in the frequency and duration of drought, increase in extreme rainfall events and subsequent flooding.

Thriving landscapes and ecosystems

The Greater Bendigo region covers an area of 3,048km2 with an extensive network of national and regional parks, crown land reserves, public forests and private land. Natural ecosystems give significant benefits to the community of Greater Bendigo. Connection to nature underpins our communities, providing us with places (and things) to explore, learn from and enjoy. Our wellbeing, creativity, health and intelligence are increased through connection to the natural world. People who connect with the natural world are more likely to be advocates for our environment. The importance of our parks and open space was a consistent message received through the community engagement process.

Heat health

As the temperature rises, the human body must work harder to cool itself and maintain a healthy temperature. Extreme heat can affect everyone although some members of the community are at greater risk of heat-related illnesses due to a range of social, economic and environmental factors. These include the elderly, young children, those with existing medical conditions and those with limited adaptive capacity to respond to heat.

Greening Greater Bendigo is a 50-year strategy that begins to address this by planting trees and creating shade, with priority placed on areas that are most vulnerable to heat. The strategy aims to increase tree canopy cover from 20.4% at present to 25% by 2030.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Access to services, facilities and basic needs

Where we live has the potential to improve or reduce our quality of life. The design of streets, access to local shopping and recreation facilities, shade and footpaths can make a place appealing and healthier to live in. Similarly, standard features in housing design can make a home more comfortable and less expensive to live in.

Health and community services

Provision of and access to conveniently located health and community services and information are important for people to maintain a healthy life. These services are provided by a wide range of organisations across Greater Bendigo however they do tend to be clustered in the urban areas making accessibility more difficult for residents living in rural areas.

Integrated community facilities

Integrated community facilities play an important role in creating healthy communities through enhancing wellbeing, building social networks and offering a space for community to learn and work. Good, integrated community facilities strengthen community ties and are a place that are valued by the community across the lifespan.

Affordable safe and secure housing

A good quality, secure home is important to our wellbeing. Appropriate housing helps us maintain a job, keep families safe, raise happy and healthy children, better enjoy the lifestyle we want and contribute to society in ways we would like. In Greater Bendigo, 8.5% of households experience mortgage stress, whilst 31.7% experience rental stress. This means they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Within Greater Bendigo, the shortage of affordable and social housing and high rental costs mean disadvantaged people are more likely to become homeless.

Quality public open space

Providing access to quality public open spaces encourages people to be active and supports mental wellbeing. Having access to quality open space was identified by our community as a priority for a healthy liveable community. Around 90% of people living in Greater Bendigo use open spaces, with 60% using open spaces weekly or more often.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

In developing the previous Greater Bendigo Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, it became apparent that we needed a framework for our shared action to ensure that our initiatives were evidence-based and targeted appropriately. The framework has been updated based on the engagement and review process and includes the following:

Community values

The Community Vision developed by a youth and adult community panel as part of Imagine Greater Bendigo is supported by five values – transparency, sustainability, inclusion, innovation and equity – that will help guide decisions to achieve the vision. The panellists' descriptions of these values are outlined below and a definition is proposed that builds on this:

	Community panel description	Proposed definition
Transparency	*Encapsulates honesty and accountability, integrity and clarity of language to make sure that we are using understandable, clear and concise language*	People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made, what information, advice and consultation was considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) were followed.[ii]
Sustainability	*With a focus on our built and natural environment, our health, our economy and our heritage*	Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs[iii]
Inclusion	*Capturing our cultural and community diversity. Anything that sets one person or group apart.*	Creating access to opportunity, addressing structural inequalities, tackling unconscious bias and developing inclusive organisations[iv]
Equity	*To help provide support and to give that opportunity to all to be part of this community.*	An equitable society is one in which we can all participate and prosper. The goals of equity are to create conditions that allow us to reach our full potential. In short, equity creates a path from hope to change[v] Societies who experience higher levels of inequity (a steeper social gradient) also experience higher levels of poor health and wellbeing[vi]
Innovation	To help with growth, including creativity, adaption, continuous improvement and efficiency for the City and the greater community, Greater Bendigo, as we continue to evolve and prosper.	The design and implementation of new solutions involving conceptual, process or organisational change, which ultimately aim to improve the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and communities[vii]

Principles

Recognise that health is everyone's business:

Health is influenced by a wide range of social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors. All members of our community have a role in influencing and shaping improved community health and wellbeing. We need to involve the community and people from a wide range of sectors in efforts to improve community health and wellbeing.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Promote social justice:

Everyone deserves equal rights and opportunities, including the right to good health. Many people in our community face barriers to good health that are avoidable and unjust. We need to adopt a social justice approach to address these barriers and focus on access, equity, inclusion and human rights.

Work in partnership:

To have an impact on the factors that shape the health and wellbeing of our communities, collective efforts by multiple stakeholders are needed. We recognise the importance of working in partnership and continuously improving how we go about it.

Share learning:

As part of our commitment to working in partnership to improve community health and wellbeing, we recognise the importance of building a culture of learning and inquiry.

Include all ages, abilities, genders, cultures and sexualities:

A person's experience is shaped by multiple factors (including gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, geographic location, age, disability and religion). These overlapping characteristics can result in advantages and disadvantages that require attention in our work.

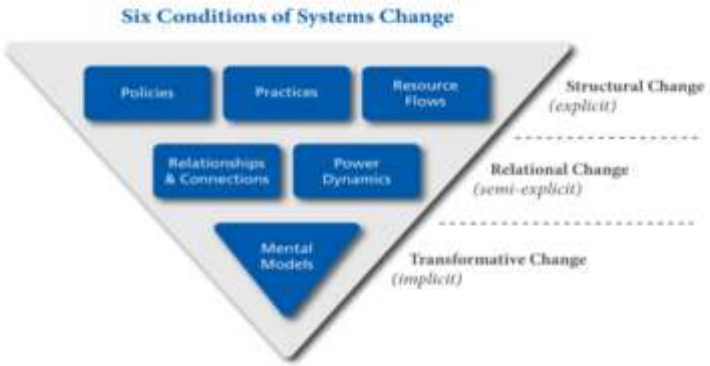
Incorporate universal design:

Promote design of an environment so it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest possible extent; in the most independent and natural manner possible; in the widest range of situations without the need for adaptation, modification, assistive devices or specialised solutions, by any persons of any age, size or having any physical, sensory, mental health, or intellectual ability or disability.

Approach

Systems thinking:

Systems thinking is an approach to problem-solving that views 'problems' as part of a wider, dynamic system. It involves building understanding how things influence one another as part of a whole in order to bring about systems change. Systems change needs to be addressed at a variety of levels.

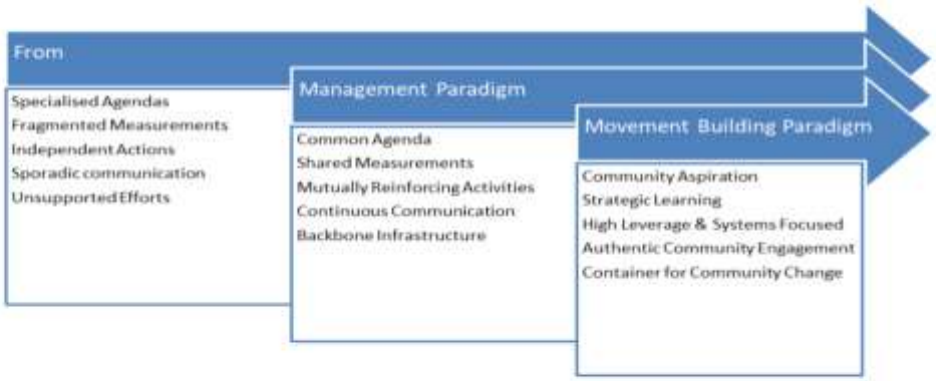


Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Collective impact:

Collective impact brings people together, in a structured way, to achieve social change on complex issues. It is an evolving approach and components include:



Place-based:

This approach can be seen as stakeholders or groups engaging in a collaborative process, to address issues as they are experienced, within a geographic space, be it neighbourhood, a region, or an ecosystem.

Strengths-based:

Approaches that look for opportunities to complement and support existing community or individual strengths and capacities as opposed to focusing on problems or what is lacking.

Risk management:

The practice of identifying potential risks in advance, analysing them and taking precautionary steps to reduce or minimise the risk. This will include both short- and long-term risks for the individual and the community.

Measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL):

A systematic approach to enquiry to assist decision making. It involves: *Measurement:* ongoing collection of and/or drawing insights from data. *Evaluation:* collecting information and then making a judgement to answer some predetermined and defined questions. *Learning*: integrating data and evaluative thinking to adapt strategies in response to what is learnt

Supports

The following factors support the work we do together across the Greater Bendigo community.

Shared leadership and governance

Shared leadership and governance is a process for improved partnerships, equity, accountability and ownership in the work that we do. It strengthens accountability and responsibility for partnerships and collaboration.

Capability building

Capability building refers to strengthening the knowledge and skills of individuals and organisations to complete the required work.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Community groups and organisations

Community groups and organisations provide valuable contributions to the health and wellbeing of the community in many ways.

Financing and resource allocation

The distribution of resources and allocation of funds impact on community health and wellbeing. Allocating resources in line with the principles of this plan will support improvements in community health and wellbeing.

Media and communications

Media and communications support community health and wellbeing through sharing knowledge, building relationships and empowering communities to make informed choices.

Data, evidence and learnings from others

Using data, evidence and learnings from others will improve the health and wellbeing of the community through better informed decision making, targeted resource allocation and adaptability to community needs.

MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

With the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Governance Group as the main audience, the purpose of the measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL) approach will be to have readily available data and judgment of that data to inform how the 2021-2025 plan supports our efforts.

Both agile and traditional methods will seek to answer the following:

Key evaluation question	**What information, data, source or evidence is required?** *Why?*
1. How well does the Plan fit with, and add value to what was already in place?	An understanding of the proportion of Governance Group reporting that the Plan: fits with what is in place (alignment) adds value to what is in place *Regularly measuring and monitoring how the Plan is provides value and alignment along its lifetime can assist us to respond and improve to these objectives.*
2. How well do we uphold our principles and reflect community values?	Proportion of Governance Group reporting that the following principles guide decision making: • Recognise that health is everyone's business • Promote social justice • Work in partnership • Share learning • Include all ages, abilities, genders and cultures • Incorporate universal design *Monitoring principles in action over time can provide detail to our strengths and areas for improvement. We will regularly seek to learn more about each principle in practice to understand leverage points, demonstrate good practice in the network and develop case studies*

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Key evaluation question	What information, data, source or evidence is required? *Why?*
	Proportion of service users (community) reporting five community values being demonstrated in their interaction, including: • Transparency • Sustainability • Inclusion • Innovation • Equity *Regularly measuring and monitoring the community values in action over time can assist in learning more about projects that best demonstrated community values and improve those that don't.*
3. To what extent did the approaches impact our action areas?	An understanding about the application of: • Systems thinking • Collective impact • Place making • Strengths based • Risk management Monitoring, evaluation and learning *Regular reflective practice will assist in eliciting where approaches are supporting work, and where they can be strengthened. Monitoring these approaches will help us understand how the select approaches have been supported over the time and what impact/s that that may have had.*
4. What are the impacts, positive and negative; intended and unintended; produced by the Plan on people and place?	An understanding of what impacts (positive, negative, intended and unintended) have occurred as a result of: • Designing the Plan • Implementing the Plan • Monitoring the Plan *Regular reflective practice will document, elicit and uncover emergent impacts over time. Measuring this each year will help inform us about the impact of the Plan.*

The Governance Group will develop an annual report on progress against these questions.

GOVERNANCE

Improving health and wellbeing is a shared responsibility across all levels of society. Good governance of collective efforts to improve health and wellbeing has itself been identified as an important determinant of health and wellbeing. Managing or solving complex public health challenges requires broad, collaborative and innovative approaches that may demand societal-level change.

Members of the Project Reference Group who guided the development of this plan will become the Healthy Greater Bendigo Governance Group. They will meet regularly to share the outcomes of initiatives, identify opportunities for collaboration, build our collective capability, and discuss new and emerging issues.

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

[i] Christina Zorbas, Kathryn Backholer and Anna Peeters 'To address social inequities in obesity, let's focus on housing and education' The Conversation

[ii] Governance Institute of Australia cited in Baum, Frances. 'Governing for Health: Advancing Health and Equity through Policy and Advocacy. 2019. Oxford Scholarship Online. Chapter 9: Local Government and Health Governance.

[iii] International Institute for Sustainable Development (also the definition used in Newcastle 2030 plan)

[iv] Victorian Government: Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement

[v] Victorian Government: Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement

[vi] OECD Defintion of Social Innovation

Document Set ID: 4634058
Version: 3, Version Date: 29/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 2 - Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan Submissions & Responses – Summary

Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan submissions and responses summary - September 2021

	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
1	Staff -CPU	Supportive	Style and detail edits, prompts to add links to relevant legislation, prompts to add and update items in 'existing strategy. Consider using more inclusive language throughout e.g. gender neutral and youth-positive. Increased clarity /disambiguation for the youth empowerment section. Clarify intent of "strengthening the voice of the community in policy, planning and programs.	Noted – changes made Remove as an area for action. Community engagement covered in the Framework for our work together.
2	Organisation or Group – Youth Council	Supportive	7 Recommendations. Support the creation of an Action Plan to accompany the Health and Wellbeing Plan with a yearly review structure, and focused sections of the plan based on Youth and LGBTQ+ actions and outcomes; Consider the formation of an LGBTQ+ focused advisory committee for the City of Greater Bendigo; Create/support a range of LGBTQ+ specific programs to raise awareness and bring attention to the LGBTQ+ community; Establish/ Support a 'Rainbow Tick' program to show display businesses that are welcoming and supporting of LGBTQ+ customers (also employ/willing to employ LGBTQIA+ people); Co-opting of a dedicated Youth Council member on the Greater	18/12 Council Action Plan to be developed once plan is adopted to re-align with financial year. Consultation required with Council regarding level of support and resourcing for work with LGBTIQA+ community. Add "sexualities" to the principle of "include all ages, abilities, genders and cultures" Youth Mayor was invited to participate in Project Reference Group however seems to have been a breakdown in communications. Will be invited to join on-going Governance Group.

Document Set ID: 4632086
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Governance Group; Change working of the goals in planning documents to be more proactive in handling issues regarding the youth and LGBTQ+ communities; Continue support of the City of Greater Bendigo Youth Council.	
3	Individual	Neutral	Applying a pandemic planning lens to the work.	Noted – community-based emergency management planning ad responses are areas for action in the plan.
4	Individual	Neutral	Better disability inclusion facilities to accommodate ageing population	Noted – access and inclusion for people who have a disability is an area for action in the plan.
5	Organisation or Group – Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre	Supportive	Volunteerism	To be included as an area for action under "Connected to culture and community".
6	Individual	Supportive	Asking for a University of Bendigo	Currently there are four universities with a presence in Bendigo.
7	Organisation or Group – Regional volunteer organisation response collated by	Supportive	Volunteerism	To be included as an area for action under "Connected to culture and community".

Document Set ID: 4632086
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
	Bendigo Health			
8	Organisation or Group – Bendigo Health	Supportive	Volunteerism, Recognising contributions of fundraising to initiatives such as Move for Mental Health, Dry July etc.. Support for Child Friendly city - providing family friendly community engagement including welcoming children in dining facilities, access to toilets, providing clean, safe and appropriate changing spaces for those with disabilities and breast feeding locations.	Volunteerism to be included as an area for action under "Connected to culture and community". Change Community contributions back to Community Groups and organisations as per 2017 – 2021 Plan. Actions to promote a "Child Friendly City" are included as an objective in the Council Plan 2021 – 2025 and are covered by the principle of "include all ages, abilities, genders and cultures" for all action areas in the plan as well as child specific action areas including: • Early years learning and development • Educational attainment • Empower children and young people
9	Individual	Supportive	Volunteerism	To be included as an area for action under "Connected to culture and community".
10	Individual	Supportive	Volunteerism	To be included as an area for action under "Connected to culture and community".
11	Individual	Not Supportive	Gambling policy issues	Did not advocate for removal of the "Reducing harm from gambling" area for action.
11	Individual	Not Supportive	Gambling policy issues (second submission from same person)	Did not advocate for removal of the "Reducing harm from gambling" area for action.

Document Set ID: 4632086
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
12	Organisation or Group – Healthy Greater Bendigo	Supportive	**Governance:** implementation of HWB by solely the HWB directorate is a risk. the City to re-establish a dedicated resource to oversee this responsibility. This could be the role of Healthy Greater Bendigo in the coming years, or the role of a social planning team. **Violence:** suggest that the outcome area for 'Safe and Secure' include an area for action that reflects violence against men – not so much in a domestic setting but acknowledging that in broader society men are most likely to be victims of violence. **Equity:** emphasising that equitable access to services and infrastructure as an area to be strengthened is important for the City to acknowledge. Placemaking: Placemaking is important, but the previous approach of "place-based" aligned with the Victorian PHWP and incorporated both placemaking elements as well as broader concepts. A compromise could be to have both place-based and placemaking within the language used. **Risk management:** note that The Greater Bendigo PHWP should include that both short term and long-term risks need to be considered. Initiatives in public health promotion and health prevention often fall short because of an inherent focus on short-term risks.	Principle – recognise that health is everyone's business Backbone support for the Health and Wellbeing Plan will sit with the Council Health and Wellbeing Directorate. Suggestion re Healthy Greater Bendigo noted for consideration. Violence against men is covered by the "Community Safety and Crime and anti-social behaviour" areas for action. Noted. Approach to be changed back to Place Based to ensure alignment with State government policy. Definition to be included noting that Place making is a subset of this approach. Noted.

Document Set ID: 4632086
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
13	Individual	Neutral	Hargreaves Mall was extensively mentioned in stage 1 engagement and this repeats those themes	No change required.
14	Organisation or Group – La Trobe Bendigo	Supportive	**Recommendation 1: Advocacy** The key areas of advocacy regarding housing, transport, water and other infrastructure is supported by the university. This should also include advocacy for education funding at all levels from childcare/pre-school to tertiary levels. This is essential to ensure the city has the resources to secure the future of young people, a transitioning economy and future re-skilling. **Recommendation 2: Partnerships** Highlight four key areas of consideration: 1. The role La Trobe Rural Health School can play in community health advisory and expertise; 2. Opportunities provided by the La Trobe Arts Institute and the Visual Arts Program to extend arts programming and contribute to vibrant city life; 3. An extended focus on digital security – from Council to community, to address rising concerns in this area as the internet of things becomes more common;	Noted – all key areas are included as areas for action. Council is already working with the La Trobe Rural Health School as partner involved in Healthy Greater Bendigo.

Document Set ID: 4632086
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
			4. Identification of resources for strategic research initiatives.	
15	Organisation or Group – Bendigo Community Health Services	Supportive	In regard to Outcome 3: Able to participate, it was noted that a key influence on general health and wellbeing is the ability to access education and then the ability to gain employment. It was suggested that this section could be strengthened in terms of education and that there is opportunity to expand the commercial aspects of health and wellbeing in promoting employment. GROW Bendigo was proposed as a good reference point with its initiative of working with business, government, community organisations and individuals to grow our community and in turn provide employment opportunities –particularly for those most in need of employment and support into the workforce. It was noted that stakeholder consultation was mainly with the community, and social and health services and a suggestion was made that engagement with business sector or industry is really important to see how they see their role in health and wellbeing.	Noted – covered by current areas for action. The Council Action Plan will note work underway as part of "A stronger Greater Bendigo – Economic Development Strategy". Whilst the Project Reference Group did not include the business sector, it did consider the outcomes of the Imagine Greater Bendigo process that consulted all sectors across the community.

Document Set ID: 4632086
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	Submission source (individual/ organisation or group/staff	Supportive/ Not supportive/ Neutral	Key points	Officer comments
16	Individual	Supportive	Overall supportive. 1. Misunderstanding about how issues and opportunities paper shaped plan. 2. Noting lack of actions in the plan and suggesting actions be developed and circulated for community consultation	18/12 Council Action Plan to be developed once plan is adopted to re-align with financial year.

Document Set ID: 4632086
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/09/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

14.4. Climate Change and Environment Strategy

Author	Liam Sibly, Acting Manager Climate Change and Environment
Responsible Director	Vicky Mason, Director Health and Wellbeing

Purpose

To seek Council's endorsement of the Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026.

Summary

The final draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026 sets the future direction for Council's actions and investment relating to environmental sustainability. This strategy builds upon the 2016-2021 Environment Strategy, and the updated strategy has incorporated several improvements including: refined the focus of Council's action via clear and measurable targets; increased accountability via strengthened governance arrangements; and direct alignment to the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. The updated strategy also includes a stronger focus on climate change, as a means to elevate Council's response to this critical issue. Collectively, these improvements will create a more sustainable Greater Bendigo.

Following Council endorsement on 16 August, stakeholders were consulted about the draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021-26). Feedback received included 34 detailed survey responses and 20 written submissions, which provided useful feedback to refine the final draft strategy.

Overall, the feedback was highly supportive of the draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy. This included acknowledgements that the strategy had progressed from the previous iteration and it provides a significant direction to create a more sustainable future in Greater Bendigo. The main themes to emerge include:

- Solid support for accelerating climate action. This includes many requests for Council to take a stronger leadership role to prepare our communities for climate change and reduce our collective emissions as quickly as possible. Stakeholders were supportive of establishing community owned renewable energy systems, transitioning off gas, and facilitating the uptake of electric vehicles and active transport. The flagship project of the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration also received strong support.
- Many of the submissions encouraged Council to 'lead by example' to inspire others to become more sustainable. This was particularly evident for the action areas of Zero Carbon, Circular Economy, Water Sensitive Bendigo and Sustainable and Active Transport.
- Requests to strengthen community and stakeholder participation in the implementation of the Climate Change and Environment Strategy. This includes greater involvement of youth, business sector, multi-cultural communities, rural communities and disadvantaged groups.
- Strong support for the 'Healing Country Together' flagship project from the Dja Dja Wurrung and community groups. Feedback was received to refine the flagship project.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Inclusion of a ‘Circular Economy’ flagship project to elevate the focus of this priority environmental challenge for the next five years and beyond.

Apart from an additional flagship project, no major change was made to the final draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021-2026).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021-2026)

Policy Context

The Climate Change and Environment Strategy aligns and progresses the following strategic initiatives:

- City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021 - specifically Goal 5 - Environmental Sustainability
- City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2021- 2025 - specifically Outcome 5 - A climate resilient and healthy landscape
- Environment Strategy of Greater Bendigo (2016-21)
- Climate and Biodiversity Breakdown resolution (August 2019)

Background Information

The process to review and renew the 2016-2021 Environment Strategy commenced in January 2021. Consultants - RMCG were employed to assist facilitate and co-design the strategy. An internal governance model was established to co-design and oversee the strategy's development.

Councillors have been engaged five times throughout the process to develop the draft strategy. This includes:

- 26 April 2021 - review findings of 2016-21 Environment Strategy were presented to Councillors. The project process and timelines were also presented.
- 28 June 2021 - draft targets and flagship projects were discussed with Councillors.
- 2 August 2021 - draft strategy and flagship projects were workshopped with Councillors
- 16 August 2021 - Council were presented with the draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy and were asked to release the strategy for community and stakeholder consultation.
- 27 September 2021 - Councillors were presented with the results from the community and stakeholder consultation and the draft implementation plan.

Report

The final draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021-2026) sets the future direction for Council’s actions and investment relating to environmental sustainability. This strategy builds upon the 2016-2021 Environment Strategy, and the updated strategy has incorporated several improvements including:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- developing clear and measurable targets to focus Council's actions and investment;
- aligning the targets to the new community vision for increased 'line of sight' and integration with the Council Plan;
- strengthening governance and reporting arrangements to oversee progress and resource allocation;
- developing new flagship projects to drive high-impact projects;
- strengthening the focus and urgency on climate action; and
- refining the focus of the One Planet Living Framework to 6 actions areas, which includes: Zero Carbon, Circular Economy, Biodiversity and Regeneration, Water Sensitive Bendigo, Sustainable and Active Transport, and Sustainable Food Systems.

Collectively, these improvements set a significantly more progressive direction to create a sustainable Greater Bendigo.

Priority/Importance: High

The strategy sets the future direction for Council's actions and investment relating to environmental sustainability

Timelines:

The implementation of the strategy will commence immediately upon Council's endorsement. Quarterly and annual reports will be produced to show progress and achievements of the strategy.

Risk Analysis:

There are two strategic risks regarding the Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021-2026):
1. Implementation risk about Council's ability to deliver an ambitious strategy with limited resources. To assist manage this, an implementation plan has been developed to outline required actions and the associated resourcing. An operational budget bid will be prepared for 2022/23 and future years.
2. Reputational risks about the potential perceptions that Council is not acting to the required scale, speed and impact on climate change and biodiversity breakdown. The strategy is attempting to address this risk by setting a progressive and ambitious direction for environmental sustainability. Strong leadership from Councillors and staff to implement the strategy will further address this risk.

Consultation/Communication

On 16 August 2021 Council endorsed the release of the draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021-26) for public comment over a three-week period. The release was accompanied by a media release, which resulted in two newspaper articles in the Bendigo Advertiser and three radio segments on ABC radio and Triple M. Stakeholders and partners were also notified via email.

The Let's Talk Greater Bendigo website hosted the draft strategy, and the webpage received 798 visits and drew 46 responses (34 surveys and 12 submissions). An additional eight submissions were received via email, and thus a total of 20 written submissions.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Presentations were provided to four advisory committees, 18 of the City's units and the Organisation Leadership Team. During each of these presentations stakeholders were encouraged to provide written submissions or complete an online survey. An online workshop was held with 25 staff members to develop the implementation plan.

Overall, community members and stakeholders were highly positive about the draft strategy and have praised the progressive direction. One community member's submission included "As a resident of Bendigo for the past 25 years I have enjoyed seeing the progress of our city and this report gives me hope for the future of our city." The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) wrote "congratulations on developing this draft Strategy. The wholistic approach is to be commended."

Copies of all submissions and survey responses received is within the Council Briefing paper dated on 27 September 2021.

Resource Implications

The final draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy has been developed within the current operational budget allowances.

To support the implementation of the strategy, an operational budget bid will be prepared. It is anticipated that this bid will request an increase in staff and operating budget. The quantum of this bid is subject to other Councillor priorities.

The implementation of the strategy is anticipated to have a cost impact to Council, however it is difficult to accurately estimate the full costs to achieve all the targets. This is because there are many unknowns and the operating context will rapidly change over the next five years due to market changes, technology improvements and external funding opportunities. The implementation plan has attempted to provide a high-level cost estimate for specific actions. However, not all costs will be known or have high-degree of confidence. As a result of this uncertainty, budget bids will be developed in subsequent years as progress is made and there is better information available.

Budget Allocation in the Current Financial Year: The Environment Strategy has an annual budget of $190k per year.

Attachments

A. Final draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026

B. Implementation Plan

C Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - Final Draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Table of Contents

Glossary	2
Traditional Owners	3
This strategy	4
Vision	4
A shared effort	5
Evolved One Planet Living Framework	6
Principles	4
Sustainable Development Goals	4
The case for investing in action	8
Climate change & biodiversity risk and action	9
A lot has changed in 5 years…	12
Governance & accountability	13
Implementation and renewal	14
Monitoring and evaluation	15
Flagship projects 2021-26	16
Action areas	23
Biodiversity and regeneration	24
Zero carbon	28
Circular economy	31
Sustainable & Active Transport	34
Sustainable Food Systems	38
Water Sensitive Bendigo	41

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Glossary

Circular Economy (CE)	A circular economy designs out waste and pollution, keeps products and materials in use and regenerates natural systems. It aims to create society wide benefits by designing waste out of systems.
City / Council	City of Greater Bendigo
CO_2	Carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
E-waste	Electronic waste
Embodied carbon	Embodied carbon means all the CO2 emitted in producing materials. It's estimated from the energy used to extract and transport raw materials as well as emissions from manufacturing processes.
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EV	Electric vehicle
FFG Act	Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
GDP	Gross domestic product
ITLUS	Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy
MEPS	Minimum Energy Performance Standards
North Centra CMA	North Central Catchment Management Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals are 17 goals adopted by the United Nations aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VECO	Victorian Electricity Collaboration
VMIA	Victorian Municipal Insurance Authority
VPP	Virtual Power Plant
WSUD	Water sensitive urban design
Virgin materials	Previously unused raw material, such as non-recycled timber, steel or plastic
Zero carbon	No net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Traditional Owners

The City of Greater Bendigo is located on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung Peoples of the Kulin Nation. They are the traditional custodians of this land. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture, pay our respects to their elders past and present.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual, and cultural costs of the sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing. Moreover, we are thankful for the knowledge and insight that Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contribute to our shared work.

Dja Dja Wurrung

The lands and waters across the City of Greater Bendigo are and always have been Dja Dja Wurrung Country. Dja Dja Wurrung Country is a mosaic of cultural landscapes crafted over thousands of generations. Cultural landscapes are the product of the skills, traditions, and technology of Djaara (people) and reflect our way of engaging with the world.

Djaara are forest gardeners: the environment is our garden, and our cultural practices are our management tools. Forest gardening, or our contemporary cultural land management, will produce co-benefits to the wider community such as increased biodiversity, landscape restoration and revegetation.

However, current land use and foreign cultural values have resulted in our cultural landscapes being overgrown and turned upside down. Therefore, reinserting Djaara in Djandak (Country) through sole management and joint management arrangements, will restore and heal Crown Land for the benefit of all Greater Bendigo residents. The primary indicator of healthy Country, healthy people and landscape or ecosystem health is Djaara in Djandak.

~ Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation

Taungurung

Taungurung Country is the cultural landscape north of the Dividing Range, bounded by the Campaspe River in the west, and the Ovens River in the east. The Taungurung People have always cared for Country, and our knowledge and skills are deeply bound in our cultural practices. Taungurung People know what Country needs to be healthy.

Taungurung People have cultural law to carefully care and protect our clans and Country. These cultural practices have allowed us to live in harmony with Country for millennia. We have provided food and fibre to meet the needs of our People and keep Bunjil's creations abundant and healthy.

Colonisation dispossessed and oppressed Taungurung People and destroyed Country and food systems, yet our People remain resilient and proud. Our People have never ceded our intrinsic rights and obligations to care for Country, Culture and People.

The Taungurung Land and Water Council are determined to Heal Knowledge and Heal Country, so that Taungurung People and cultural practices are embedded throughout the cultural landscape. Supporting self-determination is a fundamental act to reconciliation.

~ Taungurung Land and Water Council

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

This strategy

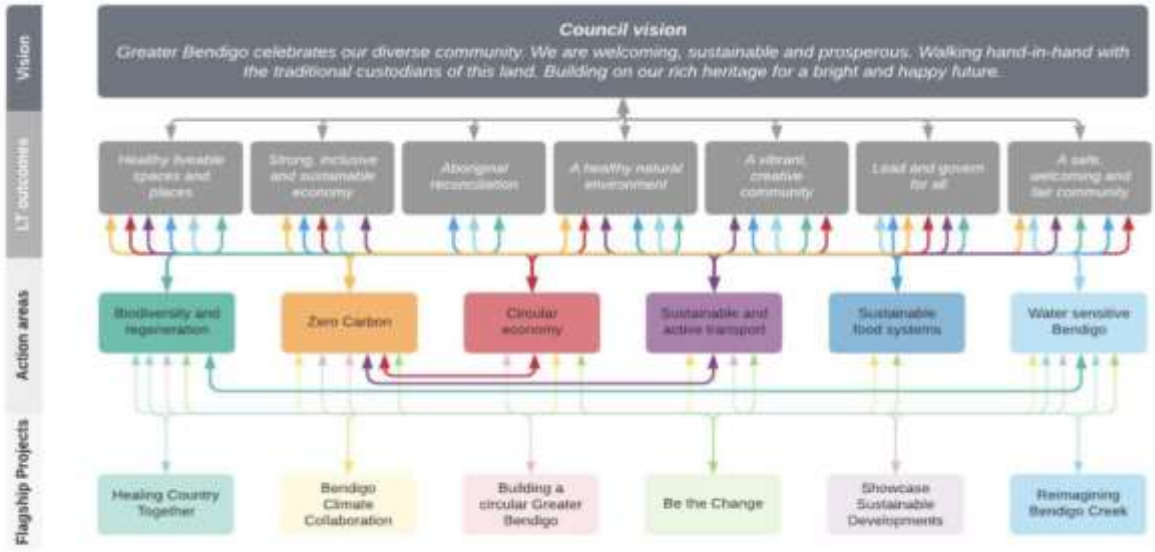
This Strategy is an investment in regenerating and protecting our natural environment, but it goes beyond that. It is an investment that will improve community health and resilience, reduce power bills, increase the attractiveness of our landscapes, reduce pressures on social services and hospitals, increase economic opportunities and secure our local food network.

This Strategy was developed in consultation with the community of Greater Bendigo, agencies, stakeholders, and Council staff.

The Climate Change and Environment Strategy has six action areas, which collectively contribute to all seven outcomes in the Council Plan. The contribution of the City of Greater Bendigo Climate Change and Environment Strategy to achieving our community vision is to: **regenerate biodiversity** in natural environment and green spaces, reach **zero carbon** emissions, create a **circular economy**, have an **active and sustainable transport** network, support **sustainable food systems** and have **water sensitive** places and communities.

Vision

The 2021-26 Climate Change and Environment Strategy has been designed to align with the community vision for Greater Bendigo. This recognises that the success of Greater Bendigo is inextricably tied to the health of our environment and the sustainability of our systems. Without these, we cannot have a healthy, sustainable and prosperous community.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A shared effort

This Strategy was developed in consultation with the community of Greater Bendigo, agencies, stakeholders, and Council staff.

Development of the strategy commenced with a review of 2016-2021 Environment Strategy. We consulted with councillors and staff from across the organisation and external stakeholders such as Traditional Owners, government agencies and community groups about Council's progress to date. This gave us a strong foundation for areas where we could improve for the next five years.

To inform the content for the strategy, we reflected on the community engagement from Imagine Greater Bendigo including the new Community Vision. We further talked with our stakeholders and partner organisations to identify opportunities for alignment to achieve shared goals. This included: Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, Taungurung Land and Waters Council, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Regional Roads Victoria, Coliban Water and Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance.

We also established a project working group of experienced professionals across Council to co-write this strategy. That included staff who work in the fields of health and wellbeing, biodiversity, parks and open space, transport, economic development, emergency management and climate change. Together we wrote and contributed to the goals, actions, and targets in the Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

Once developed, the Strategy was released by Council for broader community consultation.

This approach enabled us to seek the input of all our stakeholders, our staff, and our Greater Bendigo community. This Strategy ensures that Council can advocate for change, influence stakeholders to achieve our shared goals and change what is within our control

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Evolved One Planet Living Framework



The 2016-2021 Environment Strategy was designed using the One Planet Living principles as a framework for action. The One Planet Living principles, developed by Bioregional, are based on the understanding that environmental sustainability is more than protecting the natural environment.

While all ten principles are considered in the Climate Change and Environment Strategy, the strategy will focus on the six action areas shown on the left. The sustainable buildings and materials being consolidated into zero carbon and circular economy.

The other three One Planet Living principles (show below) have been incorporated into the Climate Change and Environment Strategy principles, which shaped the development of goals and targets:

- Health and happiness
- Equity and local economy
- Culture and community

This approach will allow the Climate Change and Environment Strategy to complement rather than overlap with other key Council strategies like the Economic Development Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Plan.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Principles

Each action area in the renewed Climate Change and Environment Strategy has been developed to ensure positive contribution to consideration of the following three **One Planet Living principles**:

Health and happiness	Encouraging active, sociable, meaningful lives to promote good health and well being
Equity and local economy	Creating bioregional economies that support sharing, equity, diversity, employment, emergency response, and fair trade
Culture and community	Respecting and reviving local identity, wisdom and culture; encouraging the involvement of people in shaping their community and creating a new culture of sustainability

This strategy has also considered the **principles within the Local Government Act** 2020, in particular:

- Priority is given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community including future generations
- Economic, social, and environmental sustainability of Greater Bendigo (including climate change risk) is promoted
- Regional, state, and national plans are considered
- We consider the resources needed for effective implementation
- Strategic planning addresses the Community Vision
- The community is engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making
- That innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued
- We provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances and achievements[1]

And finally, the strategy has been developed to uphold the five endorsed **community values within the Community Plan** (2021-2025):

Transparency *Sustainability* *Inclusion* *Innovation* *Equity*

[1] Local Government Act 2020 principles (not all are listed)

Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set global 2030 targets for all countries aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

In September 2015, Australia was one of 193 countries to commit to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector, are expected to contribute to the realisation of these goals.

As such, each of the action area of this strategy contains a figure describing which SDGs they contribute to.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The case for investing in action

Greater Bendigo is an attractive and welcoming regional city surrounded by rural settlements. We have beautiful city parks, access to forests, a diverse economic base, growing population and a nationally acclaimed arts and culture scene.

Our communities, like other communities around the world, continue to be confronted by challenges associated with climate change, loss of biodiversity, depletion of natural resources, landfill closure and water scarcity.

In the first Environment Strategy, released in 2016, the City recognised that the challenges that confront us are not only a threat to the health of the natural environment, they also threaten human health and the wealth and liveability of our city and settlements.

This strategy has been designed to contribute to the whole community vision of Greater Bendigo, not just the aspects relating to environmental sustainability. It considers ways to achieve equity while reaching zero carbon, inclusion while restoring ecosystems, Aboriginal reconciliation while fostering sustainable food systems.

Greater Bendigo is already seeing the vast benefits that came from enacting the 2016 Environment Strategy. In partnership with community and other stakeholders, the City has invested in initiatives like Greening Greater Bendigo, bike paths along urban corridors, supported Dja Dja Wurrung to heal water at Wanyarram Dhelk, and commenced food and organics kerbside collection. These initiatives are changing our communities for the better, socially, economically, culturally and environmentally.

Council's investment in environmental sustainability is certainly an investment in regenerating our natural environment, but it goes beyond that.

> ***This strategy is an investment that will improve community health and resilience, reduce power bills, increase the attractiveness of our landscapes, reduce pressures on social services and hospitals, increase economic opportunities and secure our local food network.***

There is still a lot to do if we are to meet the challenges of our times and avoid the worst of the negative outcomes, but if we act now, we will reap the benefits. Each chapter of this strategy contains a case for investment and action in zero carbon, circular economy, sustainable and active transport, sustainable food systems, water sensitive Bendigo and biodiversity and regeneration.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Climate change & biodiversity risk and action

For thousands of years, a stable climate and ecosystems allowed humankind to flourish due to regular seasons for food production and natural reproductive cycles. This is now changing. Climate change and biodiversity breakdowns now threaten the ecosystems that support life on earth. We need to act now to reduce human impacts to climate whilst also protecting and restoring our ecosystems.

The global perspective

Climate change is a global issue that will have acute impacts at the local level. In late 2021, The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the Sixth Assessment Report on the physical science basis of climate change.

> ***"Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in CO_2 and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades."***
>
> ***"Very low or low greenhouse gas emissions would have rapid and sustained effects to limit human-caused climate change…"***
>
> ~ IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, 2021[2]

In 2019, a landmark report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) found that the health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever before. This is eroding the foundations of human economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life.

> "***The Report also tells us that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global. Through 'transformative change', nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably."***
>
> ~ IPBES Chair, Sir Robert Watson[3]

The role of local government

Local Councils are at the forefront of responding to the impacts of climate change and biodiversity breakdown. The costs largely fall with local communities and are projected to drastically increase in the future.

Under the new *Local Government Act 2020*, it is a requirement that all Councils consider climate and environment risks, including mitigation and planning for climate risks. These considerations must be embedded across Council's services, strategies, policies and processes.

Local councils have played a leading role in climate action to date. Their connection to the community means they are well placed to understand local needs and invest in making their communities more resilient to climate change, as well as facilitating biodiversity.

The City of Greater Bendigo response

In August 2019, the Council passed a resolution seeking urgent action to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and biodiversity breakdown. The resolution recognised that the climate change will pose a serious risk to the health and wellbeing of the people of Greater Bendigo, especially to the vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community.

This strategy has been designed to support action to restore and regenerate ecosystems and mitigate against climate change through reducing carbon emissions and sequestering carbon. It further includes action to adapt to climate change, as our communities and ecosystems must transition to a harsher climate. By adapting early, we can reduce our exposure to climate risks. Failure to do so will exacerbate risks for current and future generations. This strategy, along with the climate and environment working group will provide a strong base for Council to plan and communicate climate risk.

[2] IPCC, 2021: *Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf

[3] IPBES 2019, Media Release: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented' Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating' https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The impacts of climate change in Greater Bendigo

Greater Bendigo has already experienced an increase in temperatures in recent decades and it will continue to get warmer and drier into the future. Greater Bendigo will also experience more extreme weather, increased bushfire risk and intense storms yet less annual rainfall. Figure 1 shows the projected climate change impacts for Greater Bendigo.

The impacts of climate change have far-reaching implications to human health, natural systems, economics and communities. Below and overleaf describes specific impacts to key sectors of our community.



Figure 1: Greater Bendigo future climate projections[4]

Food supply impacts

Food supply systems may be temporarily disrupted by extreme weather or become permanently unviable due to long-term climate shifts or impacts on ecosystems services. This will lead to food insecurity and lost livelihoods. Evolving our food systems to be more resilient to climate change is a critical adaptation action, while modifying our eating preferences to choose more locally based and plant rich diets is a critical climate mitigation action.

Biodiversity and disease impacts

Shifting climate patterns further risk the natural reproductive cycles of our ecosystems. The extent of impacts are not yet fully known but have potential to contribute to a significant decline in biodiversity. This shift may result in further extinctions of native fauna and flora, whilst seeing an increase in disease carrying insects like mosquitoes and lead to an increase in infectious diseases. To reduce these ecosystems impacts and the associated impacts to human health, there is an urgent need to restore habitats and manage threats to biodiversity. This includes trialling novel conservation approaches such as rewilding and supporting regenerative land practices.

Human health impacts

Human health and life will be directly impacted by climate change, extreme heat and prolonged heatwaves are major risks to the mortality of the elderly and vulnerable members of our community. Reducing urban heat through planting street trees, constructing and retrofitting well-designed buildings and developing urban wetlands are just some of the required adaptation actions to cool urban areas.

Financial impacts

The Victorian Municipal Insurance Authority - the Victorian Government's insurer and risk adviser, points out that climate change risks include both physical risks and transition risks[5] to any organisation or community. Both have flow-on financial impacts, across the categories of revenues, expenditures, assets and liabilities, and capital and financing.

Physical risks arise from changes in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events and long-term changes in weather patterns.

Transition risks arise from social and economic changes associated with adjusting to the low- carbon economy including policy, legal, technology, market, reputation, social and financial risk.

For Greater Bendigo, longer-term economic impacts of climate change include increased costs to maintain green spaces, faster deterioration of infrastructure and higher costs for water dependent industries. This strategy incorporates ways to adapt to a warmer drier future and to use the challenges as an opportunity to create a zero carbon economy.

[4] Projections from (Clarke JM, Grose M, Thatcher M, Round V & Heady C. 2019. Loddon Campaspe Climate Projections 2019. CSIRO, Melbourne Australia)

[5] VMIA, Climate Change Risk Management Guide

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Economic impacts

The industries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are similar to those affected by Covid-19 economic risks and economic disruption risks. They include agriculture, construction, manufacturing, tourism and mining sectors. Aside from manufacturing, these industries are not the key industries in Greater Bendigo[6]. Greater Bendigo, therefore, is well placed to plan ahead and support the continued development of a low emission economy. Deloitte Access Economics'[7] estimated that Australia's low emission economy is worth $680 billion and would consist of 250,000 extra jobs by 2070 (Australia wide figures).

The economic impacts of both the physical risks and transition risks and their compounding effects on health and wellbeing will need to be considered in all future planning. Climate change damage impacts how land is used, how people work and how money is spent.

> ***Climate change is not a scenario. It is the baseline for decision making.***
>
> *- Deloitte Access Economics, 2020*

Mental health impacts

Psychological impacts of climate change range from mild stress to chronic stress and significant mental health problems. There is a significant risk of mental health problems following extreme weather event disasters, most commonly PTSD, depression, complicated grief, followed by substance use, and other anxiety disorders. Approximately 30% of people affected by these events are at risk.

For First Nations people, landscape degradation, loss and disruption of native bush foods and medicines has a detrimental impact on physical, mental and spiritual health. In fact, the mental health and wellbeing of all people is negatively impacted by ecosystem decline, heatwaves and extreme weather that prevent cultural and social events, limit access to natural places or damage infrastructure, community services and recreation facilities.

Many people may also feel seriously concerned, frightened, angry, pessimistic, or guilty in response to climate change. Qualitative research finds evidence of some people being deeply affected by feelings of loss, helplessness, and frustration due to their inability to feel like they are making a difference in stopping climate change.

Compounding social factors

Social factors further compound climate change impacts. Factors such as age and gender, health status, socioeconomic status, access to public services and transportation, social capital and housing infrastructure will influence the extent to which climate change impacts are felt by individuals and communities. This demonstrates that the impacts of climate change will not be shared uniformly across communities and the more vulnerable populations are likely to be most impacted. This includes people with disabilities and pre-existing or chronic medical conditions, low-income earners, those with limited English, First Nations people, children, pregnant women and the elderly.

[6] https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/victorias-regions/bendigo

[7] Deloitte Access Economics, November 2020 *A New Choice Australia's climate for growth*,

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A lot has changed in 5 years...

In the last five years, there has been substantial policy and legislative reform, which has changed the operating context for managing our natural environment.

The biggest change for Council is the new Local Government Act (2020). It is a principles-based Act, meaning it provides guidelines on the way Councils need to lead and govern for their communities. The Act's overarching principles aim to achieve the best outcomes for the community now and into the future:

- Priority to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community including future generations
- Economic, social, and environmental sustainability (including climate change risk) is to be promoted
- The community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making
- Innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued
- Collaboration with other Councils and statutory bodies is to be pursued
- Ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured
- Regional, state and national plans are to be taken into account
- Transparency of decisions and actions is to be ensured

Other significant policy and legislation reforms that impact the City include:

Legislative reform:

- Water Act Amendment 2019
- Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018
- Climate Change Act 2017
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Act 2019
- A New Victorian Waste Authority (in development)

New plans and strategies:

- *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*
- *Recycling Victoria: A new economy*
- *Loddon Mallee Renewable Energy Roadmap 2020*
- *Strategic Directions Statement for the Coliban Integrated Water Management Forum 2018*
- *Victoria's Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017*
- *Water for Victoria – Water Plan 2016*
- *Victorian Waterway Management Strategy 2013*
- *Our Catchments Our Communities 2016-19*
- *North Central Regional Catchment Strategy 2021-2027 https://northcentral.rcs.vic.gov.au/*

New Council plans and strategies:

- *Public Space Plan*
- *Food Systems Strategy*
- *Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo*
- *A Stronger Greater Bendigo*
- *Barpangu: Reconciliation Plan*
- *Health and Wellbeing Plan*
- *Greening Greater Bendigo*
- *Municipal Emergency Management Plan*

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Governance & accountability

The goals of the Climate and Environment Strategy rely on a long-term commitment and shared responsibility. Effective governance is required to oversee successful implementation.

The governance process designed for this Strategy will enable ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting on our progress. It will further coordinate resources and investment. Collectively these steps will sustain effective action over the longer term.

This section outlines the governance arrangements which will be complemented by the monitoring and evaluation and implementation planning.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Climate and Environment Working Group is a dedicated group made up of representatives across the organisation. Their role is to support implementation and collaboration across the organisation. They will also support the design, delivery and collation of quarterly and annual reporting against the implementation plan.
The Working Group will be chaired by a member of the Executive Management Team. The Working Group will:

- Provide guidance and implementation support to staff
- Provide a quarterly report to EMT on the execution of the annual implementation plan
- Provide oversight of the development of an annual implementation plan
- Provide an annual report to Council about the progress on goals, targets and interim targets
- Seek advice from the community, agency and sector partners regarding implementation and renewal of annual implementation plans, primarily through Sustainability and Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Council will be accountable to the broader local (and global) community through the Council Annual Report, the Annual Report and the City's Reporting commitments under the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. As part of signing up to the GCoM, Council has committed to:

- Developing greenhouse gas emissions inventories and reporting results
- Assessing climate risks and vulnerabilities and reporting results
- Defining ambitious climate change mitigation targets
- Developing integrated climate actions plans
- Monitoring, measuring, and reporting results

https://www.cdp.net/en
https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/cities/oceania/australia/city-of-greater-bendigo/



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Implementation and renewal

Successful implementation of the strategy requires the combination of long term and annual monitoring, and regular evaluation so that actions can be continuously improved. This section describes the annual cycle to renew the implementation plan (Figure 1), and the longer term lifecycle to update the strategy every five years (Figure 2).

The Climate Change and Environment Strategy will be delivered via a rolling annual Implementation Plan that sets actions focussed on achieving the interim targets. The current Implementation Plan is shown in Appendix 1. The Implementation Plan is a living documents and will be routinely updated based on context, priorities and resources.

The annual monitoring and reporting of the strategy's implementation will allow us to understand our progress and adapt to the shifts in the operating environment and broader context. Detailed monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements are outlined in Appendix 2.

The Working Group will report progress on actions quarterly to the Executive Management Team and report to Council annually on progress and achievement of goals and targets. The Annual report will be made available to the community.



Figure 2: Annual implementation and renewal

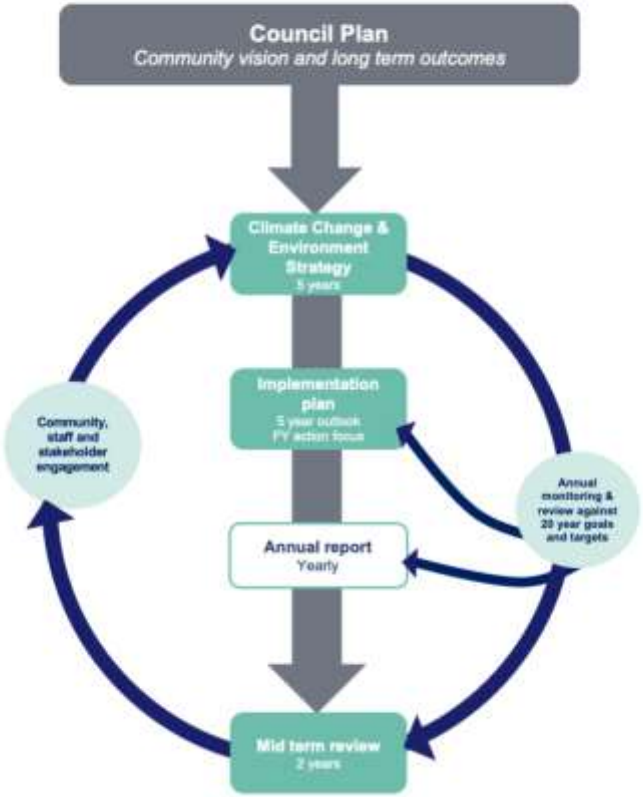


Figure 3: Climate change and Environment Strategy implementation

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Monitoring and evaluation

Council is committed to monitoring and evaluation, as this formalises the collection of learnings from the implementation of the strategy. It further enables continuous improvement, as collected learnings will inform future actions.

The evaluation of the strategy will be guided by the following themes and key evaluation questions (KEQs).

- **Strategy design** - Strategy design focuses on whether the governance and actions were appropriately designed to deliver the intended targets (and goals)
  - *KEQ 1: Was the design of the Strategy appropriate to deliver the intended outcomes?*
- **Strategy implementation** - Strategy implementation focuses on whether the actions of the Strategy were delivered as planned and seeks to identify how these approaches have ensured efficient and cost-effective delivery.
  - *KEQ 2: To what extent have the Strategy actions been delivered as planned?*
  - *KEQ 3: To what extent was the delivery good value for money?*
- **Strategy impact** - Strategy impact focuses on what the Strategy has achieved to date against the intended targets (and goals). At the end of the Strategy term, the focus is also on the legacy of the program and to what extent the impact of the actions will extend beyond the life of the Strategy (long-term outcomes).
  - *KEQ 4: To what extent did the actions lead to the achievement of the targets (and interim targets)?*
  - *KEQ 5: What impact will the actions have beyond the life of the Strategy?*

There is a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for the Strategy, which includes program logics, interim targets, monitoring indicators, and more detailed key evaluation questions.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Flagship projects 2021-26

The following five flagship projects have been chosen for this strategy to lead and inspire municipal-wide action to achieve the goals of the Climate Change and Environment Strategy. Each project will have multiple benefits for our environment and communities.

Flagship projects are designed in consultation with the community and council partners to get the highest impact in multiple action areas, with multiple stakeholders. They are designed to support long term outcomes that inspire broader change. These flagship projects will be used to focus council's efforts as we work towards the goals of the Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

Flagship Project 1: Reimagining Bendigo Creek

Flagship Project 2: Healing Country Together

Flagship Project 3: Be the Change

Flagship Project 4: The Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration

Flagship Project 5: Showcase Sustainable Developments

Flagship Project 6: Building a Circular Greater Bendigo



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FLAGSHIP PROJECT 1: REIMAGINING BENDIGO CREEK

In 2016, *Reimagining Bendigo Creek* marked the beginning of a process of renewal, understanding and connection over many generations, which aims to create a healthier, more inclusive, more connected and more beautiful creek. In 2020, the *Reimagining Bendigo Creek* plan set a vision to restore the health of the Bendigo Creek and the surrounding catchment. It further included goals to create connections to the creek and celebrate Dja Dja Wurrung and migrant cultural values along the creek.

The purpose of this flagship project is to continue that work and implement the plan that was co-designed by the community, Dja Dja Wurrung, City of Greater Bendigo, North Central Catchment Management Authority, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Coliban Water and other agencies.

Over the next five years, we will focus on

- Securing investment including advocating for priorities in the Reimagining Bendigo Creek prospectus
- Undertake investigations and works that restore the creek and catchment, including adjoining tributaries. The works will be jointly implemented by the Dja Dja Wurrung, City, relevant agencies, local schools & community groups.
- Creating and enhancing cultural values along the creek, for greater identity and tourism appeal
- Planning and building cycling and walking infrastructure along the creek lines – including the low line.





Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FLAGSHIP PROJECT 2: HEALING COUNTRY TOGETHER

Greater Bendigo landscapes have undergone significant environmental disruption and fragmentation from mining and land clearance. The Healing Country Together flagship project is about fostering connections between our communities and the natural environment so that we can all become stewards of biodiversity and landscapes. It will involve partnerships between communities, Traditional Owners and agencies, so that we can all heal Country together.

This flagship project aims to regenerate biodiversity, connect more communities with nature and support the self-determination of Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people to heal Country. The project will contribute to the goals in the Country Plans for Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung, and deliver some of the biodiversity, water and sustainable food goals in this strategy.

The project will foster self-determination by initially facilitating co-management of public land, and then progressively transitioning to long term sole management. In doing so, this project will strongly contribute to reconciliation and support implementation of Recognition and Settlement Agreements, through Traditional Owner employment and empowerment. It will also directly support Traditional Owners to achieve the aspirations of their Country Plans

Healing Country Together will produce a range of benefits including increased biodiversity and pollination, landscape restoration and revegetation, revitalising traditional food and fibre plants and improved fire management. It will support communities to connect with nature and regenerate biodiversity in urban, rural and bush landscapes.

During this project we will:

- Facilitate a co-design process with Taungurung and Djaara, Council and relevant agencies to identify public land of interest, management aspirations, opportunities to foster community stewardship
- Partner with communities, Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria, DELWP and North Central CMA to identify opportunities to better connect people with natural places through regeneration
- Support community groups, agencies, Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung to connect with nature and do healing works on Country
- Restore and nurture Country by planting native species, including bush tucker and medicine plant species
- Monitor the current condition of waterways, landscapes, flora and fauna using both Western Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.







Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FLAGSHIP PROJECT 3: BE THE CHANGE

The consultation messages for the Greater Bendigo Council Plan were clear: our community expects Council to play a leadership role in prioritising climate risk, environmentally sustainable design and the sustainability of council infrastructure.

Be the Change is a flagship project to garner and catalyse the expertise of our staff to drive and demonstrate resource circularity, sustainable water, sustainable food, zero carbon, sustainable transport, regeneration and biodiversity. And in doing so, we will play a leadership and support role in our community and with our partners.

Council will run an internal, cross-council sustainability project to support our units to identify and implement opportunities to increase sustainability across everything we do. This will include: reducing, reusing and sourcing circular resources; making buildings energy efficient and powered by renewable energy; and increasing biodiversity outcomes in council projects. We will also support our units to understand the climate risks and vulnerabilities across the municipality determine ways to build resilience and improve emergency preparedness, across a range of systems and sectors (e.g., human health, infrastructure, transport, food, water, air quality, and social well-being).

Economist Mariana Mazzucato[8] points out that, contrary to many opinions, the public plays a crucial role in supporting and seeding innovation. Through this project, the City of Greater Bendigo will support our communities, businesses and partners to take action and invest in innovation following public sector investment.

This flagship project involves:

- Growing an internal culture and capability to drive and demonstrate sustainable outcomes
- Assessing climate risk and vulnerability for all Council buildings and infrastructure and identify necessary adaptation actions
- Assessing climate risk and vulnerability across the municipality to understand current and projected hazards and vulnerable sectors. Report this publicly via the Global Covenant of Mayors
- Incorporate evidence based and scenario planning into Council decision making process
- Planning, designing, and implementing buildings and infrastructure retrofits
- Assessment of Council's systems and policies to identify improvements and efficiencies in line with the goals of this strategy
- Supporting innovation and design thinking to identify new ways of working and programs that build community adaptive capacity.







[8] https://marianamazzucato.com/books/the-entrepreneurial-state

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FLAGSHIP PROJECT 4: THE GREATER BENDIGO CLIMATE COLLABORATION

Greater Bendigo is a thriving, self-contained regional centre with a history of innovation and a goal to become the world's most liveable city. With clear goals, funding, projects and partnerships, Greater Bendigo will reap the economic, social and environmental rewards of the quickly approaching global shift to a zero-carbon emissions economy and will play its part in avoiding the worst impacts of a changing climate.

The Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration is a flagship project that aims to mobilise communities, organisations and agencies within Greater Bendigo to be zero carbon by 2030. It has four levels of collaboration:

- **Households**: 1,000 local households working together to create climate action plans to achieve the 2030 target. These plans will include actions to reduce household emissions. Households will receive support and encouragement to get involved in local community climate projects
- **Organisations**: Support 100 businesses, schools and organisations to create climate action plans and commit to the 2030 target
- **City-wide Projects:** Bringing Greater Bendigo together in key sectors of the local economy to enhance, create and fund city-scale collective climate projects
- **Regional Advocacy**: Bringing together councils from the Loddon Campaspe regional network to create and design the top 10 regional-scale climate projects to advocate for.

The project aims to make real change by building a zero carbon economy for Greater Bendigo and the surrounding region. The transition to zero emissions will mean significant investment and returns for our local economy including our energy, transport, food, waste and building sectors. It will further result in the protection and restoration of our local biodiversity through carbon and landscape restoration investments.

The project will involve:

- Seeking financial partners to support the collaboration and project financing
- Working in partnership with community organisations to increase equity and community ownership
- Working with 1000s of homes & 100s of businesses to make zero carbon plans
- Banding together with organisations across different sectors of the economy to design and deliver city-scale projects that will achieve zero carbon economy
- Hosting a Greater Bendigo Climate Summit in late 2022 with inspirational climate speakers and a climate festival to celebrate progress, make public commitments to zero carbon and announce city-wide projects
- Working with Loddon Campaspe regional councils to collectively design and advocate for the top ten regional projects to support zero carbon
- Providing two years of support for implementation of household and organisation action plans, city-scale projects and regional project advocacy.







Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FLAGSHIP PROJECT 5: SHOWCASE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

Population and economic growth in Greater Bendigo present interlinked challenges and opportunities for community development, housing affordability, services and the environment.

The Showcase Sustainable Developments flagship project will see Council partner with the community, business and government sector to plan, design and build sustainable developments. The developments will be on surplus council land and demonstrate four or more of the One Planet principles of environmentally sustainable design, zero carbon, water sensitive urban design, sustainable and active transport, circular economy and urban food and biodiversity.

One priority development will showcase an affordable residential development. At least one other will showcase a commercial or industrial development. Our showcase developments will give Greater Bendigo a legacy of high-quality developments that demonstrate our community vision for a welcoming, sustainable and prosperous community.

The project will involve:

- Investigating partner opportunities with affordable housing providers, developers and government agencies
- Investigating surplus land appropriately located to support the selected project
- Designing an innovative financing and delivery model
- Collaborating for the planning and design of the development
- Preparing a manual to deliver future, low impact developments achieving zero carbon, circular economy sustainable and active transport and sustainable food and water sensitive Bendigo principles
- Sharing outcomes and learnings with the community to inspire broader change, including the connection between sustainability health, wellbeing and social inclusion.







Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

FLAGSHIP PROJECT 6: BUILDING A CIRCULAR GREATER BENDIGO

The environmental, social and economic cost of waste represents a huge opportunity to be tapped for the benefit of all Greater Bendigo.

The Building a Circular Greater Bendigo project will draw upon the global rise of the circular economy concept to shift how Greater Bendigo consumes resources, moving from a linear Take-Make-Waste approach to a circular 'Take-Make-Remake' approach (see Figure 4). In a linear economy "cost" approach, materials at the end of their life are considered waste, an unavoidable cost of production. In the circular economy "value" approach, materials at the end of their life are valued and cycled back into new products. A circular economy approach not only recirculates end-of-life materials and products back into our system, but reduces the amount of materials businesses and organisations need, reduces negative environmental impacts and increases productivity and profitability.

In this flagship project, Council will work with the community, business, and government sector to develop circular economy solutions for Greater Bendigo. These circular solutions will range from 'downstream' technologies and services that recover end-of-life material ("waste") and recirculate it back into the economy, through to 'upstream' solutions that prevent waste in the first place. Business level solutions include service and take back business models and manufacturing from recycled materials, community level solutions include upcycling centres, remakeries, repair cafes and tool libraries.

This project will involve the City:

- Developing 'Circular Economy Hub' sites to host circular economy business solutions to end-of-life materials, such as those solutions currently being procured to replace the Eaglehawk Landfill
- Procuring further Circular Economy solutions to hard-to-recirculate end-of-life materials e.g. textiles, hard-waste, plastics etc.
- Implementing its recently adopted Circular Economy & Zero Waste Policy to standardise the use of recycled materials in all City projects and procure only recyclable materials and goods
- Working with local businesses to reduce their resource use and identify opportunities for circular economy business models
- Working with residents and community groups to establish local circular economy initiatives
- Developing a detailed model of the flows of materials and goods into and out of the region, to better inform opportunities for circular economy solutions in Greater Bendigo
- Expanding organics waste collection across all viable businesses in the region and recovering it for use in the region

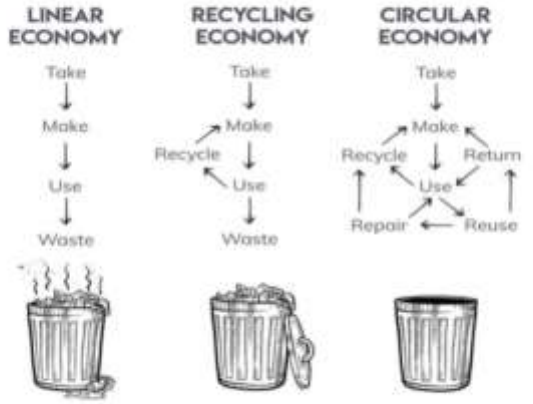


Figure 4 Linear, recycling and circular economies
Source: J. Lorenz, The R Collective, 2017

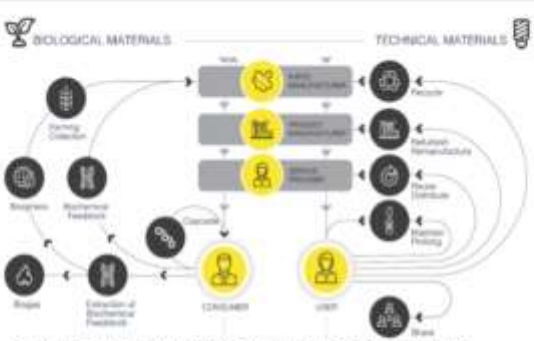


Figure 5: Example model of flows of materials and goods
Source: Green Industries SA, 'Potential Benefits of a Circular Economy in South Australia' 2017

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Action areas

The Climate Change and Environment Strategy has six action areas, which collectively contribute to all seven outcomes in the Council Plan.

The goals and targets in each action area has been set by council in consultation with community, business and agency partners to ensure we can achieve our community vision

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

~ City of Greater Bendigo community vision

This section outlines the 2036 goals and targets for the life of this strategy in each action area:

BIODIVERSITY AND REGENERATION

ZERO CARBON

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

SUSTAINABLE & ACTIVE TRANSPORT

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

WATER SENSITIVE BENDIGO



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Biodiversity and regeneration

Our region's Upside Down Country – the term Dja Dja Wurrung people use to describe environmental disruption and fragmentation from mining and land clearing – requires dedicated regeneration of landscapes. Together with communities and partners, the City will support protection and regeneration of biodiversity and landscapes.

	2036 Goals	2026 Targets	2036 Targets
COUNCIL	**Council projects regenerate landscapes & ecosystems**	• Council has a 'net vegetation gain' plan completed	• 150% net gain in vegetation and biodiversity from Council projects
COUNCIL	**Native habitat and areas of important biodiversity are protected for future generations**	• Completed required investigations and consultation to increase controls under the planning scheme • Baseline biodiversity assessment completed • Indicator species selection and baseline dataset established	• Important environmental assets have formal protection under the planning scheme • No net loss of native habitat in the municipality from 2016 baseline • The population of indicator species (determined by 2026) has increased from the baseline
COMMUNITY	**Connected and flourishing urban and rural landscapes and ecosystems**	• No net loss of tree and shrub cover by 2026 • Fragmented vegetation identified and plans developed for linking them • Completed a baseline assessment of local biodiversity • Reintroduce the 'Magnificent Six' native fish into Bendigo Creek and establish a baseline of their population	• Tree cover in Greater Bendigo has increased to 35% from the 2016 baseline (23%) and shrub cover has increased to 10% from the 2016 baseline • No patch of native vegetation over 20 ha within the municipality is fragmented from other native vegetation • No vulnerable or near-threatened species will have become endangered • The 'Magnificent Six' native fish have a sustained and viable population in Bendigo Creek
COMMUNITY	**Strong community connection to, awareness of and care for our ecosystems and biodiversity**	• 25% of all City residents have actively participated in stewardship of the natural environment	• 50% of all City residents have actively participated in stewardship of the natural environment.
COMMUNITY	**Respectful and effective partnerships with Traditional Owners to regenerate ecosystems**	• Two public land areas are identified to be solely managed by Traditional Owners and current management arrangements are shared, if suitable. • Management framework and, if required, collaborative governance arrangements with other agencies are developed.	• Two additional public land reserves or parks managed by other agencies are solely managed by Traditional Owners (from 2021 baseline)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Why we need to act

The Greater Bendigo municipality covers an area of 3,048km^2. Within this inland landscape is an extensive network of national and regional parks, crown land reserves, public forests and private land. These areas provide important ecological functions and habitats for significant flora and fauna. Bendigo is known as the 'city in the forest' because the Greater Bendigo National Park and the Bendigo Regional Park almost surround the entire city.

Natural ecosystems give significant benefits to the community of Greater Bendigo. Services include fresh air, clean water, nutrient cycling and climate regulation as well as the preservation of culture and amenity.¶

Over the past two centuries, Victoria more broadly has experienced extensive biodiversity loss due to land clearing, fire, pest plants and animals, land development, river regulation, water pollution and climate change. Most biodiversity indicators are poor and trending downwards. In the Greater Bendigo region, the natural environment has been vastly changed for mining, agriculture and urban development.

Many ecological communities and biodiversity in general are still under pressure from urban development, agriculture, habitat fragmentation, invasive species and climate change. Greater Bendigo is home to 105 threatened flora species, 65 threatened birds, seven threatened mammals, four threatened fish, seven threatened reptiles, two threatened amphibians and two threatened invertebrates. Greater Bendigo is expected to lose 15 percent of all Council managed urban trees by 2030 due to their end of life, let alone trees that are lost to storms, development and other pressures. Consequently, Council is addressing this by tripling the street-tree planning program of Greening Greater Bendigo.

There are local successes where local biodiversity is improving including the reintroduction of native fish species into streams and lakes; and populations of Tuans (Brush-tailed Phascogale), Gliders and Powerful Owl at Crusoe Reservoir and Number 7 Park. However, it is difficult to assess the overall health of local biodiversity due to limited data and monitoring.

Limited resources for managing biodiversity is a major impediment to successful management. Available resources are often stretched to address the existing threats of invasive pest species and responding to inappropriate fire regimes. Whereas it is difficult to effectively resource more complex issues of repairing degraded and fragmented landscapes. Finding new approaches and partnerships and better utilising available resources are just some of the approaches required to halt the decline of biodiversity.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Current initiatives, policy, and strategic direction

Greater Bendigo recognises the critical importance of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, protecting areas of vegetation. In 2020, Council endorsed *Greening Greater Bendigo*, which aims to:

- Maintain liveability in a changing climate
- Connect community to nature
- Integrate green and grey infrastructure
- Celebrate the identity and enhance the aesthetic of urban areas and townships
- Increase biodiversity in urban areas

Council's *Public Space Plan* sets the direction to complete the forest edge around Bendigo and increase forest interface. Council's Invasive Plants and Animals Policy and Procedures provides the framework and operational response for pest plant and animal management.

This strategy builds on Council's current work and aligns with the State Government's goals outlined in *Protecting the environment – Biodiversity 2037* to stop the decline of our native plants and animals. We will focus on enhancing and restoring our ecological communities on public land, work with the community to do it on private land and connect vegetation within urban and rural areas.

The benefit of investing



Health and happiness

There is a large body of research that shows the health benefits of time spent in biodiversity-rich natural spaces, from stronger immunity to stress reduction. This is important knowledge for Greater Bendigo where rates of obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes are far higher than the state average and are estimated to cost our community $65m annually[9]. Park visitation in Victoria gives our state $80-$200 million per annum in avoided health costs for physically active park visitors[10].



Equity and local economy

As well as reducing heat related illness, canopy trees help to reduce people's exposure to harmful UV rays. Shade alone can reduce exposure to UV radiation by as much as 75 percent[11].

Healthy and biodiverse ecosystems are critical to some of humans' most basic needs – provisions such as clean air and water, productive soils, natural pest control, pollination, flood mitigation and carbon sequestration. Ecosystems also provide us with food, raw materials for production (such as timber, pastures and fertilizers), genetic resources and pharmaceuticals, while contributing to waste decomposition and detoxification.

The value we get from 'ecosystem services' is immeasurable and replacing them would be impossibly expensive. Protecting and regenerating biodiversity avoids replacing ecosystem services with costly human alternatives.

Vulnerable communities such as the young, the frail, elderly and those with a pre-existing illness greatly benefit from efforts to increase shade in urban areas[12]. Increasing tree cover by 10 percent over a small building or house has an estimated $50-$90 per year in power savings[13].



Culture & Community

Regeneration of biodiversity connects people to their local places in ways that are beneficial for culture and community. Victoria's parks provides social benefits through volunteering work in parks valued at $6 million per annum and park-related heritage valued at $6-23 million per annum[14].

As the custodians of the land, Traditional Owners attach great social and spiritual value to the plants and animals that have supported their subsistence and economies for thousands of years. Traditional Owners have great knowledge and cultural obligations to keep Country healthy. They know that healing country will also heal people. This strategy supports the basic human rights of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to practise their culture, and to enjoy the economic benefits that flow from healthy ecosystems

[9] Healthy Heart of Victoria, https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Community-and-Care/Healthy-Heart-of-Victoria
[10] Parks Victoria DELWP 2015, Valuing Victoria's Parks: Accounting for ecosystems & valuing their benefits.
[11] Parsons et al 1998, The shady side of solar protection, Queensland Cancer Fund Laboratories
[12] *Norton et al, 2013, Planning for a cooler future: Green infrastructure to reduce urban heat, VCCCAR*
[13] Parsons et al 1998, The shady side of solar protection, Queensland Cancer Fund Laboratories
[14] Parks Victoria, DELWP, 2015, Valuing Victoria's Parks - Accounting for ecosystems and valuing their benefits.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

WHAT COUNCIL WILL FOCUS ON FOR 2021-2026

- Develop an ecological baseline and mapping to determine the extent and condition of existing biodiversity and remnant vegetation in Greater Bendigo
- Investigate and progress potential nature corridors between existing remnant vegetation, and commence developing partnerships and implementation arrangements to facilitate corridors
- Investigate and develop stronger planning controls to protect for native vegetation under the Planning Scheme
- Implement the Sustainability and Environment recommendations of the 2019 Planning Scheme Review
- Review and update the Rural Roadside Management Plan 2005
- Implement a program to monitor and maintain the Council's 300 environmentally sensitive water sensitive urban design assets
- Employ an Environmental Education and Community Liaison Officer
- Establish a Gardens for Wildlife program to support and empower the community to actively store biodiversity
- Establish a rare and threatened species collection and research program at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens
- Implement Greening Greater Bendigo, including:
  - Develop a local planning policy to increase tree canopy and vegetation cover in subdivision design
  - Develop a biodiversity management policy and investment plan
- Implement the City's Invasive Plants and Animals Policy and Procedures
- Join ICLEI's Cities with Nature program

WHAT COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS CAN DO

- Create Wildlife friendly Gardens to attract pollinators and create habitat for native animals. Principles for design are illustrated in the City's Creating Wildlife Friendly Gardens
- Avoid removal of native vegetation on your property
- Farmers to increase native vegetation on farm and consider how new vegetation corridors can be linked to existing remnant vegetation on your property and neighbouring properties
- Volunteer in a Landcare group (or similar) and tree planting programs to restore habitats and repair landscape health
- Volunteer in North Central Catchment Management Authority's citizen science program
- Advocate for increased native vegetation on public land to support threatened species habitat
- Advocate for more native revegetation along waterways to improve habitat for local fauna, decrease nutrient loads and decrease sedimentation in waterways
- Advocate for opportunities for Traditional Owners to deliver natural resource and land management strategies on Country

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Zero carbon

Zero carbon is about reducing carbon emissions as quickly as possible, and thus contributing to climate change mitigation. The City is not only committed to achieving zero carbon, we will facilitate energy equity, carbon sinks, and locally owned power.

	2036 GOALS	2026 TARGETS	2036 TARGETS
COUNCIL	**Zero carbon from Council operations by 2030**	• No new gas connections in new council buildings built after 2021 • 60% of council small and medium-sized owned and operated buildings transitioned off-gas • 90% of Council owned buildings have solar systems installed • 35% of lightweight fleet is electric • 5 heavy plant vehicles are electric or powered by a sustainable fuel source • Program for local regenerative offsets established in partnership with North Central CMA • Offsets purchased to reach 2026 net-zero target • More than 60% of Council's funds are: invested with financial institutions that do not lend to fossil fuel industries; or invested in products that reduce carbon emissions	• All council owned buildings powered by 100% renewable locally generated electricity • 100% electric lightweight vehicle fleet • 100% of the heavy vehicle fleet is electric or powered by a sustainable fuel source • Leverage $100 million investment in local regenerative projects that bring Greater Bendigo community beyond net zero • Purchase 25% fewer offsets than in 2031 • 100% of Council's funds are: invested with financial institutions that do not lend to fossil fuel industries; or invested in products that reduce carbon emissions
COMMUNITY	**Zero carbon across Greater Bendigo community by 2030**	• 40% households and commercial businesses have solar system installed • 50% of region's 2021 energy demand is generated through local renewable energy • No gas connection in new subdivisions (e.g.no option to connect) • One Zero carbon new development • 5% of all passenger vehicles in Greater Bendigo are electric or hybrid	• 50% community ownership of local renewable energy (incl commercial solar and wind and community generation) • 500% of the region's 2021 energy demand is generated through local generated renewables • Community and business don't use fossil fuel for stationary energy • 80% of Greater Bendigo's passenger vehicles are electric or hybrid • 100% of public transport is powered by a sustainable fuel source

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Why we need to act

The Greater Bendigo community is currently responsible for more than 1.8 million tonnes of carbon emissions per year. To achieve zero carbon, we need to continue reducing our emissions by focussing on the source – gas, electricity, fuel and the materials we use. We can reduce our emissions by transitioning away from fossil fuels, increasing our renewable energy generation to power our facilities and purchasing offsets.

While the City has little direct control over emissions generated by the community, we can act on behalf of our communities to influence change, and we can show leadership and support our community to transition to net-zero emissions.

Current initiatives, policy and strategic direction

In May 2021, the City was proud to join 45 other Victorian Councils in announcing the Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO) - a joint contract to purchase renewable energy and Australia's largest ever project by local government. The 46 Councils have pooled investment of 240 gigawatt hours of renewable electricity, reducing greenhouse emissions by 260,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. For the City, this means we have shifted all our purchased electricity to 100% renewable, at a lower cost than business as usual. The project demonstrates the value of local governments working together and highlights that large-scale collaboration is possible to transition to a renewable energy future and address climate change.



With this step change to renewable energy, the City's focus now turns to electrification of all buildings and fleet so that all the energy we use can be 100% renewable. And we look further, to the building materials we use and how the planning scheme can deliver healthy, resilient and sustainable buildings and new subdivisions.

[15] Gouldson, Sudman, Khreis & Papargyropoulou (2018), The Economic and Social Benefits of Low-carbon Cities - A Systematic Review of the Evidence', The University of Leeds

The benefit of investing[15]

Research into the economic and social benefits of zero carbon cities shows that direct investment into low carbon projects reduces health and energy costs. For example:

- The community health benefits of improving indoor air quality can be more than 10 times the value of energy savings, especially important in the context of a pandemic
- Staff in energy-efficient buildings have been found to be more productive due to a healthier working environment and less illness

Health and happiness

Up to half of the total benefit of building retrofit programs are in the form of improved health, thermal comfort and living conditions – particularly for more vulnerable groups in the community.

Equity and local economy

Achieving zero carbon will build a more competitive local economy and create high-quality jobs. The focus on energy equity in this strategy will increase energy efficiency and improve access to affordable energy for low income homes.

Supporting local ownership and control over energy generation and supply will contribute to a more competitive energy market, bringing down costs for our community and council operated facilities and homes.

In the long term, a Zero Carbon Greater Bendigo will reduce liability risks and costs to Council and ratepayers, by preparing for climate impacts.

Culture & Community

Collectively reducing our emissions will foster communities to move toward more sustainable lifestyles. Exchanging knowledge and skills amongst neighbours and local communities about how we can live a zero carbon lifestyle will increase our confidence and community connections.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

WHAT COUNCIL WILL FOCUS ON FOR 2021-2026

- Purchase all electricity used by Council owned and operated facilities from 100% renewable energy via VECO (2022).
- Support community groups operating from Council owned facilities to access 100% renewable energy via VECO
- Facilitate and plan for the transition to locally generated renewable energy power supply
- Install solar panels on Council owned buildings via Power it from the Rooftop program
- Progressively remove existing gas appliances from Council owned buildings (including those run by community) and replace them with electric alternatives
- Develop a policy mandating no new gas connections installed in Council owned and operated buildings
- Progressively replace Council's lightweight vehicle fleet to be electric vehicles
- Investigate options and costs to transition Heavy Fleet away from fossil fuels
- Install Electric Vehicle charging stations at selected Council sites powered by renewable energy
- Purchase offsets for other emissions to reach 2026 Target, including offsetting emissions from fleet, landfill and gas
- Raise awareness and support community groups to prepare for climate change and create zero carbon homes and lifestyles
- Identify and retrofit Council owned buildings to maximise energy efficiency
- Develop a baseline of energy intensity across all Council's assets and operations
- Partner with North Central Catchment Management Authority and other stakeholders to explore and develop local carbon offset schemes
- Advocate for upgrading inefficient street lights on major roads

WHAT COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS CAN DO

- Participate in the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration, including developing and implementing zero carbon plans
- Retrofit homes with energy efficient appliances and fixtures; install solar panels and batteries; and progressively remove gas appliances at the end of their working life
- Support Bendigo businesses to transition to 100% renewable electricity and increased energy efficiency
- Support locally owned renewable energy generation and storage projects, including:
  - via the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration flagship project
  - Partnering with housing agencies
  - Solar Savers – zero interest loans for solar.
  - Australian Energy Foundation
- Advocate for the community partnership in renewable energy development projects (e.g. solar farms require 20% local community ownership)
- Advocate for:
  - Victorian Renewable Energy target
  - Finance products and options for low-income households to gain access to renewable energy and housing upgrades
  - Minimum rental energy efficiency standards for rental housing
  - Minimum Energy Performance Standards

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Circular economy

It is time for Greater Bendigo to transition to a circular economy. A circular economy aims to revolutionise the cycle of production, consumption and disposal, by designing out waste and pollution. It will do this by keeping products and materials in use and regenerating natural systems. With good design and effective recovery of materials, we can avoid waste and create new industries.

	2036 GOALS	2026 TARGETS	2036 TARGETS
COUNCIL	**Zero recoverable waste from Council operations**	• 35% reduction in Council's 'general waste' production (baseline of 3420t/y general waste from 2020) • Zero organics to landfill from the Council • 25% reduction in the 'embodied carbon' footprint of Council operations • Reused and recycled content products and materials are a standard part of project design and service delivery	• 90% reduction in Council's 'general waste' production (baseline of 3420t/y general waste from 2020) • Zero organics to landfill from the Council • 50% reduction in the 'embodied carbon' footprint of Council operations • Council use reused and recycled content products and materials in all projects
COMMUNITY	**A well-established circular economy with zero recoverable waste to landfill**	• Zero organics to landfill from the region • 72% of region's 'waste' diverted from landfill • Council has established 'Circular Economy Hubs'	• Zero recoverable resources (including organics) sent to landfill from the region • Reduce material consumption to 7.2 tonnes per person per year (baseline in 2020 was 34.8 tonnes per person per year) • All products and materials in Greater Bendigo have recycled or reused content • Exceed Victorian Government's targets of 80% waste diversion from landfill and 15% per capita reduction in waste production



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Why we need to act

All levels of government in Australia face a challenging future when it comes to dealing with the end-of-life materials currently known as 'waste'. This challenge is influenced by Australians' high level of consumption and disposal of 'waste', along with Australia's previous reliance on exporting our "recycling" waste. However, in 2017 China decided to stop accepting recycling waste, which has forced Australia's waste and recycling industry to rapidly change its approach. A raft of state and national strategies have been prepared to inform this transition.

For Greater Bendigo, the imminent closure of Eaglehawk Landfill is exacerbating the urgency for new solutions, as the site will close as a landfill in 2022. Consequently, innovative solutions are required. This includes evolving from a waste resource management approach to a circular economy approach.

Circular economy aims to shift how society consumes resources, moving from a "waste cost" approach of 'take-make-waste', to a "value" approach of 'take-make-remake'. It is estimated that this shift is worth $US 4.5 trillion per year globally[16]. Simultaneously, it represents an opportunity to mitigate climate change, as material consumption represents 45% of global emissions[17].

However, material consumption and disposal is heavily embedded in current Australian lifestyles, therefore we must change our practices and attitudes towards 'waste'. This change must start within our homes and workplaces but also be supported by new business models to utilise previously discarded waste.

Current initiatives, policy and strategic direction

Council has taken measures to reduce waste reaching landfill by making it easier for the community to divert food and organics (FOGO) from landfill through a kerbside system. Council further provides collection programs for electronic waste (e-waste), hard rubbish and chemical waste. Educational resources are also provided to the community to promote better use of materials and incorrect disposal. Recently, Council has developed a Circular Economy and Zero Waste Policy to encourage better use of the materials we design, develop, and use. This policy aims to avoid 'waste' by keeping our material resources in circulation.

By implementing this policy, Council can make significant changes including improving use of resources and decreasing emissions from material production and landfill. This approach will help us contribute to mitigating climate change.

Over the next five years, Council has committed to build on the work we have already done to:

- Find ways to reduce the quantity of virgin materials used
- Drive regional demand for recycled content and create a market for recirculated materials
- Reduce the embodied carbon footprint in Council operations

The benefit of investing



Health and happiness

A circular economy supports sustainable growth, good health and decent jobs, while reducing our impact on the environment and natural resources. The benefits are both direct, such as savings in the health care sector, and indirect, from reduced environmental impacts of production and consumption18.



Equity and local economy

Innovation is crucial to realising possible economic gains from designing new products and materials, advanced manufacturing and embracing new business models to create domestic and export markets for waste streams. Designed well, the transition could triple job creation from resource recovery in Greater Bendigo. The recycling sector currently generates 9.2 jobs per 10,000 tonnes of 'waste' product, compared to only 2.8 jobs for the same amount sent to landfill. Increasing Australia's recovery rate by just 5% would add an estimated $1 billion to GDP19. The transition to a circular economy will take significant upfront

[16] Lacy, P., Long, J., Spindler, W., 2020, The Circular Economy Handbook: Realising the circular advantage

[17] Ellen McCarthur Foundation, 2019, Completing the picture: How the circular economy tackles climate change, V3

[18] International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2020, Effects of the Circular Economy on Jobs

[19] Access Economics, 2009, Employment in waste management and recycling
A report prepared for the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Culture & Community

investment and will need to consider how environmental impacts can be reduced at a local scale and how to improve equality within the economy through reforms and economic tools.

Consumer demand is driving changes in materials choices. A circular economy increases opportunities for increasing community connections by creating sharing platforms for equipment, knowledge, appliances or vehicles, connecting businesses who have by-products that can be used as a resource somewhere else, and promoting the right to repair equipment.

WHAT COUNCIL WILL FOCUS ON FOR 2021-2026

- Evaluate options and implement solutions to address the closure of Eaglehawk Landfill
- Revise design and procurement approaches for new and existing projects that require the use of reused and recycled products and ensure product recyclability at end of life.
- Provide all Council facilities with access to organic recycling options
- Implement the single use plastics policy
- Reduce general waste to landfill by implementing the Circular Economy and Zero Waste Policy
- Quantify the City's embodied carbon emissions (e.g. scope 3 emissions)
- Engage with businesses and residents to support adoption of reused and recycled materials
- Establish 'Circular Economy Hubs' that act as physical material hubs for the drop-off and recirculation of materials and products from and for both commercial and residential activities
- Support the establishment of Tool Libraries, Repair Cafes, Library of things to facilitate the repair and sharing of products and goods rather than the need to buy new

WHAT COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS CAN DO

- Commercial and industrial businesses can seek new opportunities to use waste as a resource and reduce waste generation
- Avoid disposal of 'waste' materials and products by practising the 5 Rs of refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle
- Divert food and organics from landfill by using kerbside FOGO collection or backyard composting
- Avoid plastic bag shopping and single use plastic
- Buy products with less packaging to influence suppliers
- Actively support retailers who offer take-back old products or recycling schemes for end of life consumables

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Sustainable & Active Transport

Greater Bendigo has the opportunity to recalibrate our transportation system to enable more sustainable and active forms of transport. Such a shift will stimulate our local economy, improve our health and reduce our emissions.

	2036 Goals	2026 Targets	2036 Targets
COUNCIL	**Council staff use active, public and low carbon transport**	• 20% of staff trips to work are by active, shared and public transport.	• 66% of staff trips to work are by active, shared and public transport
COUNCIL	**Greater Bendigo has a safe and well-connected active transport network**	• Priority gaps in the walking and cycling network have been reduced by doubling the new footpath program (baseline 2.2 km in 2020 • 10-year walking and cycling infrastructure plan developed and implementation commenced	• All priority gaps in the footpath network have been addressed (as identified in the 10 year walking and cycling infrastructure plan.) • The shared path network[20] includes strategic connections in: Bendigo City centre, Regional City Trail, Ironbark Gully Trail, Bendigo Low-line, University to City Centre, Eaglehawk to city centre, Huntly to Bendigo, Maiden Gully to Bendigo
COMMUNITY	**Transport and development installs infrastructure that supports active and public transport**	• A commuter rail service is servicing Goornong (via Huntly and Epsom), Raywood (via Eaglehawk) and Kangaroo Flat to Bendigo • 10 kilometres of additional shared paths installed in new developments • Urban bus service established servicing Marong • Adjusted bus services to reach growth areas in Maiden Gully and Huntly	• A commuter rail service is servicing Goornong (via Huntly and Epsom), Raywood (via Eaglehawk) and Kangaroo Flat to Bendigo • 60 kilometres of additional shared paths installed in new developments • Bus stops within 400m of 90% of dwellings within the urban area of Bendigo and 15-minute frequency on priority routes
COMMUNITY	**Greater Bendigo community uses active, public and low carbon transport network**	• 10% of trips are by active transport • Car sharing program established by 2024	• One third of all trips are by active transport • One third of all trips are by public transport • 50% of the population are using car and/or bike sharing programs

[20] As identified through the Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo Strategy

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Why we need to act

Greater Bendigo relies heavily on private and commercial vehicles to transport people and goods to and from destinations and around the region. However, cars are responsible for roughly half of Australia's transport emissions. In Greater Bendigo, more than 85% of the population rely on cars for their transportation.

Throughout the Greater Bendigo region, the active transport network is fragmented and there is low participation (<8% of the population). There is also low connectivity between urban bus services and low service frequency. Regional centres and towns are not well integrated, for example, it is difficult to get from Bendigo to Ballarat because there is no rail link. Collectively, these factors increase Greater Bendigo's reliance on private cars.

Active transport drives improved health outcomes and reduces carbon emissions. There is currently 700 km of footpaths in the City of Greater Bendigo relative to 2,800 km of roads (approximately half unsealed[21]). Socially, sustainable transport improves health and wellbeing by increasing active travel. This has multiple benefits as it improves physical and mental wellbeing, whilst also reducing the health costs and personal impacts of sedentary lifestyles.

Current initiatives, policy and strategic direction

The Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (ITLUS) and the Walk Cycle Greater Bendigo Strategy have changed the way we think about movement across Greater Bendigo. Both strategies have set clear directions for strengthening connections between people and places, improving health and wellbeing, improving public transport networks, changing individual travel behaviours, using low carbon modes of transport and inspiring innovation.

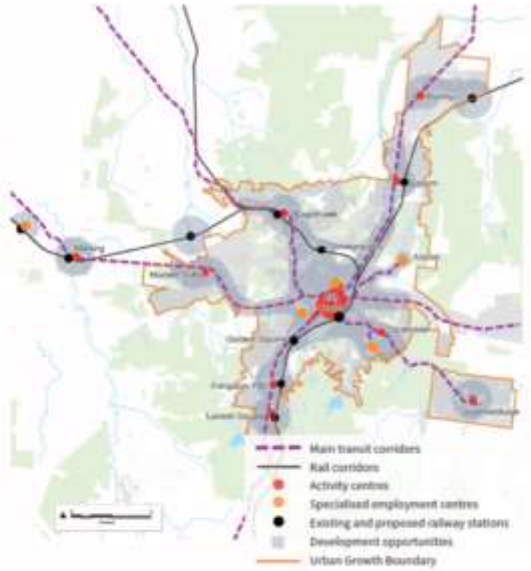
These strategies are driving an increasing shift to more shared paths and linking existing paths and trail networks around Greater Bendigo. Creating safe and convenient travel options is a priority for the Council.

[21] Multi-model Integrated Transport Strategy, Bendigo Action Plan Case Study 2020-2040

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

This Strategy builds on the direction of ITLUS and Walk Cycle Greater Bendigo to provide a greater emphasis on active modes of transport, which can help us reduce our individual carbon emissions.

Figure 4 ITLUS land use objectives[22]



[22] Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy, 2015, p15.

[23] Regional Roads Victoria, Multimodel Integrated Transport Strategy, Bendigo Action Plan Case Study 2020-2040

The benefit of investing

Health and happiness

Active transport contributes to good physical and mental health through exercise, being outdoors and improved air quality (e.g. less smog from cars). Victoria Transport Policy Institute research adapted for Bendigo shows that investment in sustainable transport has a benefit-cost ratio greater than 1.3, due to the wide benefits in increased safety, improved health, time savings and better use of public land[23]. Additionally, every time someone cycles 20 minutes to and from work, the Greater Bendigo community will gain a net economic benefit of $21.[24]

Equity and local economy

While there are benefits for all community cohorts, sustainable transport and sharing services has even greater benefits for vulnerable communities, as it improves accessibility for young people, the elderly, non-drivers and those without the means to own and run a car.

Economically, sustainable transportation will help reduce the costs of car dependency and the costs to upgrade road infrastructure. Additionally, there are avoided costs by reducing the health costs associated with sedentary lifestyles.

Culture & Community

Sustainable transport increases the opportunities for the interactions that build communities and social capital. Sustainable transportation modes prevent urban sprawl and expansion of road infrastructure that places physical separation between people and places.

[24] https://www.smh.com.au/national/bike-riders-save-economy-21-on-each-commute-20130730-2qxdg.html

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

WHAT COUNCIL WILL FOCUS ON FOR 2021-2026

- Implement Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo Strategy including:
  - A 10 year walking and cycling infrastructure plan
  - An activation plan to increase community capacity to use active transport
  - Develop a budget bid to increase the funding for new footpaths
- Design and construct the Mundy Street and Hargreaves Street separated cycleway infrastructure to enable better connections to the City Centre
- Deliver priority works to reduce gaps and barriers within the walking and cycling network (including building underpasses and road crossings)
- Deliver sustainable transport education program promoting low carbon modes of transport
- Update the Environmentally Sustainable Design policy and deliver increased bicycle parking and change room facilities for new developments
- Partner with Development Victoria to deliver best practice bicycle and end of trip facilities in GovHub
- Advocate for additional and more frequent public transport options that meet growing community needs
- Advocate for bike sharing and car sharing programs
- Advocate for the Greater Bendigo commuter rail service
- Advocate for Public Transport to be powered by renewable or sustainable fuel sources

WHAT COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS CAN DO

- Reduce transport related emissions by regularly walking and riding, using public transport and carpooling
- Advocate for improved workplace facilities to support active transport
- Advocate for improved public transport services including more frequent services and greater coverage
- Advocate for improved walking and cycling infrastructure
- Start or join a shared car and/or bike program

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Sustainable Food Systems

The Greater Bendigo region is a unique landscape, with extensive agriculture, excellent hospitality and Indigenous food systems that date back thousands of years. Faced with biodiversity decline, climate change and the need for healthier lifestyles, Greater Bendigo is changing what we grow and eat, how we support our community and heal our regional landscape.

	2036 GOALS	2026 TARGETS	2036 TARGETS
COUNCIL	**The City is a leader in sustainable food procurement, practices, and policy**	• 30% of relevant City contracts, leases and tenders include clauses related to sustainable food practices	• All relevant City contracts, leases and tenders pertaining to food include clauses related to sustainable food practices
	Sustainable food production systems are viable, resource efficient and regenerate natural ecosystems	• 20% farms are on the sustainable agriculture rate • 20% primary producers involved in a Landcare group or similar	• 60% farms are on the sustainable agriculture rate • 60% primary producers involved in a Landcare group or similar
COMMUNITY	**Communities are aware of the resources required to produce food and know how they can influence the food system**	• 80% of early childhood education settings, primary and secondary schools incorporate sustainable food system education into the curriculum	• All early childhood education settings, primary and secondary schools incorporate sustainable food system education into the curriculum
	Enable Traditional Owners to grow and harvest indigenous food and fibre plants	• Annual target area of land to plant and harvest, as set by Traditional Owners, is achieved	• Annual target area of land to plant and harvest, as set by Traditional Owners, is achieved



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Why we need to act

Council recognises that the majority of our food is, and will continue to be, sourced from commercial-scale production systems because these provide affordable food to the majority of people. However, with the evolving impacts from climate change and biodiversity decline, and impacts to global supply chains, we will require our food systems to be more sustainable and locally sourced.

Our food systems are currently reliant on significant inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, and herbicides to enable continuous, large-scale food production. However these practices cause many environmental impacts including: degradation of water and soil; destruction of beneficial insects, pollinators and microbes; and large carbon emissions. Additionally, the production of processed and packaged food is resource intensive and generates large volumes of by-products, which often end up as waste disposable.

The need to change our food systems is abundantly clear, and collectively we need to work towards a food system that can absorb carbon, create circular resource flows and regenerate our local biodiversity.

Current initiatives, policy and strategic direction

In 2019, Bendigo was designated a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy – the first in Australia. Our gastronomy story is about growing, sourcing, cooking and sharing food. This has given Greater Bendigo a strong link to networks across the globe through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which aims to drive sustainable development through creativity.

Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy was developed in 2020, and it provides direction for Council and its partners to create a healthy, equitable and sustainable food system. This includes supporting local primary producers to produce healthy food whilst regenerating the land and ecosystems; reducing food waste; improving the health and wellbeing of our communities; and enabling Traditional Owners to grow and harvest food and fibre plants. It further provides a framework for Council to be a leader in sustainable food procurement, practices, and policy.

[25] Lock & Associates, 2011
[26] Block et al. 2019

The benefit of investing



Health and happiness

Cultivating sustainable local food systems can significantly enhance the health and wellbeing of communities; improve the availability of and access to nutritious food; strengthen the local economy; and revitalise urban and natural environments[25]. A national review of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program indicated the program increased children's willingness to try new foods and improved children's knowledge and confidence in relation to growing, preparing, cooking and eating a diverse range of fresh foods[26].



Equity and local economy

Sustainable food systems can help build stronger and more sustainable local economies and support networks[27], which in turn improves food security and the health of local residents.[28]



Culture & Community

Greater Bendigo has a diverse cultural heritage. Celebrating culture through growing, cooking and sharing food brings people together, helps bridge cultural differences and fosters connection. Growing food offers a way to connect the broader Bendigo community with caring for the land and create connection through sharing of knowledge and swapping seeds and produce.

For Greater Bendigo's Traditional Owners, Country is more than a place and is linked to identity – spiritually, culturally, socially, physically, and emotionally. Growing and harvesting food, fibre and medicine plants supports healing, reconciliation and caring for Country.

[27] Bell et al. 2013
[28] https://localfoodenvironments.com.au/page/13/economicenvironments

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

WHAT COUNCIL WILL FOCUS ON FOR 2021-2026

- Implement Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy
- Progress the City of Gastronomy, including promoting and supporting sustainable food production
- Provide financial incentives for producers to transition to sustainable agricultural practices including applying for the sustainable agriculture rate
- Improve the City's procurement practices by preferencing caterers who source locally produced food
- Encourage local businesses and community to procure food from local producers
- Support schools and early education centres to incorporate sustainable food education into the curriculum, including kitchen garden programs
- Enable Traditional Owners to grow and harvest traditional food and fibre plants
- Support local businesses and the community to avoid food and packaging waste
- Partner with North Central Catchment Management Authority and Landcare groups to promote and deliver sustainable agricultural practices
- Advocate for greater incentives for primary producers to transition to regenerative / agro-ecological practices, including carbon sequestration
- Advocate to State and Federal government to create more sustainable food systems

WHAT COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS CAN DO

- Learn about the origins of your food purchases and who and how it is produced
- Grow food and create pollinator habitats within your backyard, including practicing organic and permaculture gardening techniques
- Support local farmers and producers by buying locally and sustainably grown and produced food
- Choose foods that are fresh and in season
- Consume less meat and dairy, and eat more plant based diets
- Select food that is as close as possible to its natural form, with minimal processing and packaging
- Plan meals and consume food responsibly to avoid food waste
- Join a local Landcare group or similar

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Water Sensitive Bendigo

Waterways across Greater Bendigo have high environmental, recreational, cultural and economic value. They play an important role in sustaining physical and mental wellbeing of our communities and the appearance of our city and towns. Tackling current and future water challenges will require an integrated and coordinated approach so that the full benefits of the urban water cycle are realized by all.



	2036 GOALS	2026 TARGETS	2036 TARGETS
COUNCIL	**Council operations are water efficient and utilise diverse water supplies**	• Council's total use of potable water reduced by 5%	• Council's total use of potable water reduced by 30% from the 2016 baseline (307 ML)
	Flood risk in Greater Bendigo is reduced through flood mitigation infrastructure and planning	• A 5% reduction in flooding occurrence affecting properties (2020 baseline).	• A 30% reduction in flooding occurrence affecting properties (2020 baseline).
	Investment in water projects is secured through collaborative partnerships	• The Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership has leveraged $0.5 million investment in water initiatives and infrastructure	• The Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership has leveraged $50 million investment in water initiatives and infrastructure
	Waterways in Bendigo are healthy, connected & nurturing places	• Three large WSUD infrastructure projects are designed and approved • Design and approvals for 5 kilometres of new shared paths along waterways of Bendigo¶ • 50 new meeting places located along waterways of Bendigo	• All Bendigo catchments have WSUD infrastructure that reduces peak flows and average nutrients and suspended solid loads by 60% • 20 kilometres of new shared paths along waterways of Bendigo • 150 new meeting places located along waterways of Bendigo

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The City of Greater Bendigo is situated within the catchments of the Loddon and Campaspe Rivers, which is an upper part of the Murray Darling Basin. Greater Bendigo is naturally water scarce, and significant water supply infrastructure has been built to support the development of Bendigo and surrounding towns. These contextual factors continually require the Greater Bendigo community to be prudent with their water usage so that water can be equitably shared with the broader catchment. It further requires the Greater Bendigo community to avoid polluting our creeks and rivers so that we pass on clean water to downstream communities and ecosystems.

Why we need to act

The future availability of water for Greater Bendigo will be challenged by population growth, whereby the population is expected to more than double to 250,000 by 2056. This challenge will be exacerbated by climate change, as annual rainfall is expected to reduce by up to a third by 2070. The duration and frequency of drought is also forecast to increase over the course of the century. Overcoming these challenges, along with addressing current water challenges, will require ongoing leadership and innovation.

Flooding remains an ongoing challenge for Greater Bendigo, and future storm events are projected to increase in severity and frequency[29]. Urban areas will be particularly impacted due to the abundance of concrete and pavements and development of floodplains. To reduce flood risk, urban areas must be progressively retrofitted with flood storages and levees, whilst also reducing the amount of hard surfaces and incorporating water sensitive urban design elements.

Greater Bendigo has legacy mining issues that impact the local groundwater, creeks and land. Mine impacted groundwater has resulted in contaminated groundwater which is rising within parts of Bendigo. This problem is currently reliant on high cost management interventions of groundwater extraction and treatment. However, the interim solution is not sustainable, DELWP is currently working with relevant agencies to identify a long-term solution.

[29] Timbal, B. et al. 2015, *Murray Basin Cluster Report, Climate Change in Australia Projections for Australia's Natural Resource Management Regions: Cluster Reports*, eds. Ekström, M. et al., CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology, Australia

Current initiatives, policy, and strategic direction

The City of Greater Bendigo is committed to building and supporting collaborative partnerships to address current and future water challenges. In 2019, a cross-agency partnership known as Water Sensitive Bendigo was formed to implement the Vision and Transition Strategy for Water Sensitive Bendigo. The partnership has been formalized via memorandum of understanding, and the partner organisations include: Dja Dja Wurrung, City of Greater Bendigo, Coliban Water, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and the North Central Catchment Management Authority. The Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership includes a cross-agency governance structure, and they continue to progress and adapt their implementation plan.

Water for Victoria (2016) is the key policy for water management in Victoria, and amongst other things, it has driven the uptake of integrated water management approaches across the State. This means there is better integration of social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors in water decision making. To support this, DELWP has created Integrated Water Management forums to allocate priority investment and coordinate future policy development.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The benefit of investing



Health and happiness

It is widely understood that water quality is strongly linked to our health and the health of our environment. Water ecosystems both replenish and purify our water resources which is essential to human health and wellbeing.

Research by Beyond Blue[30] shows that, irrespective of socio-economic background, age or gender, contact with natural environments are has a significant positive effect both physically and psychologically on human health and wellbeing. It affects numerous parts of a person's life such as:

- Reducing anger, frustration and aggressions,
- Increases a sense of belonging and acceptance
- Socialisation, mobility, mental stimulation, touch and physiological benefits.



Equity and local economy

Access to clean safe drinking water is a human right. Adequate planning protections, infrastructure and stewardship of our waterways can significantly reduce the threats to water quality from the introduction of contaminants through activities on the water, intensification of land use, bushfires, and flooding events[31].

It is estimated that urban landscapes with 50–90% impervious cover can lose 40–83% of rainfall to surface runoff compared to 13% in forested landscapes[32]. Water sensitive urban design and implementation of water efficiency measures in projects will help to conserve the potable water we have by retaining water in the landscape rather than putting extra demand on our potable water supply for parks and home gardens.



Culture & Community

People who are connected to waterways are often motivated to look after them because they have a special connection to their local part of the waterway, landscape, and community. Providing opportunities to interact with the natural environment through shared paths, seating areas, citizen science and environmental volunteering facilitates that connection overtime.

Traditional Owners have lived on and cared for Country over many thousands of years. Enabling Traditional Owners to care for Country (particularly through joint and sole management opportunities) will produce a wide range of benefits for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, the wider community, and biodiversity.

[30] Townsend, M & Weerasuriya, R. (2010) Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and wellbeing. Beyond Blue Limited: Melbourne, Australia.
[31] Annual report on drinking water quality in Victoria 2019-20
[32] IUCN, 2013, Urbes Project - Valuing ecosystem services in urban landscapes

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

WHAT COUNCIL WILL FOCUS ON FOR 2021-2026

- Implement Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan including:
  - Finalise integrated water quality monitoring plan
  - Commence creating chain of ponds on Bendigo Creek
  - Retrofit the urban catchment with flood mitigation and WSUD infrastructure
  - Enhance cultural values and connections to urban creeks
- Develop a policy for the water quality reserve that advances Water Sensitive Urban Design outcomes for new developments and stormwater offsets
- Develop the Central Bendigo and Heathcote flood mitigation studies
- Evaluate and secure funding for highest priority flood mitigation options for Greater Bendigo
- Partner with Coliban Water to install digital meters on Council's water connections and implement water efficiency measures
- Investigate and evaluate alternative water supply infrastructure for Council's assets
- Develop a policy to promote alternative water supply options (includes stormwater harvesting) for new sporting fields and recreational reserves
- Implement Council's Domestic Wastewater Management Strategy
- Facilitate the Water Sensitive Bendigo Partnership including shared decision making for integrated water management outcomes
- Support and facilitate relevant agencies to undertake water security planning including investigating alternative supply options
- Enable Traditional Owners to heal Country and actively manage waterways
- Partner with North Central Catchment Management Authority and other agencies to monitor and raise awareness about waterway health
- Partner with DELWP to identify a long-term solution for the Bendigo Groundwater project
- Partner with Coliban Water to improve household and business water use efficiency
- Advocate for investment for priority water initiatives via the Water Sensitive Bendigo Partnership

WHAT COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS CAN DO

- Install water tanks and adopt water saving behaviours in your homes and businesses
- Construct a frog pond or rain garden in your backyards
- Businesses can increase water efficiency and/or adopt recycled water and stormwater for non-potable water uses
- Volunteer in a Landcare group (or similar) to restore catchment and creek health
- Volunteer in North Central Catchment Management Authority's citizen science program
- Advocate for Traditional Owners to secure adequate and equitable water rights that meet their social, cultural, spiritual, economic, and environmental needs

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 2 - Attachment B - Implementation plan(1)

Climate Change and Environment Strategy - implementation plan

No.	Action	Year	Lead officer	Unit	Supporting Unit(s)	Cost $ = <$100k $$ = $100k to $250k $$$ = >$250k
Biodiversity and regeneration						
1.1	Develop an ecological baseline and mapping to determine the extent and condition of existing biodiversity and remnant vegetation in Greater Bendigo	1 to 3	Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$$
1.2	Investigate and progress potential nature corridors between remnant vegetation, and commence developing partnerships and implementation arrangements to facilitate corridors	1 to 3	Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$
1.3	Investigate and develop stronger planning controls to protect native vegetation under the Planning Scheme	1 to 3	Manager Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	Statutory Planning, Climate Change & Environment	$$
1.4	Implement the Sustainability and Environment recommendations of the 2019 Planning Schemes Review	1 to 3	Manager Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	Statutory Planning, Climate Change & Environment	$$
1.5	Review and update the Rural Roadside Management Plan 2005	2 to 3	Biodiversity Officer	Parks & Open Space	Climate Change & Environment	$$
1.6	Implement a program to monitor and maintain Council's 300 environmentally sensitive water sensitive urban design assets	3 to 5	Natural Reserves Team leader	Parks & Open Space	Engineering, Climate Change & Environment	$$
1.7	Employ an Environmental Education and Community Liaison Officer	1 to 5	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$$$
1.8	Establish a Gardens for Wildlife program to support and empower the community to actively store biodiversity	2 to 5	Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$$
1.9	Implement Greening Greater Bendigo, including:	1 to 5	Urban Forester	Parks & Open Space	Climate Change & Environment	$$$
1.9.1	Develop a local planning policy to increase tree canopy and vegetation cover in subdivision design	2 to 3	Urban Forester	Parks & Open Space	Strategic Planning	$
1.9.2	Develop a biodiversity management policy and investment plan	2 to 3	Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$$
1.10	Implement the City's Invasive Plants and Animals Policy and Procedures	1 to 5	Coordinator Arboriculture and Natural Reserves	Parks & Open Space	Safe and Healthy Environments, Climate Change & Environment	$
1.11	Establish a rare and threatened species collection and research program at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens	1 to 3	Coordinator Heritage Parks	Parks & Open Space		$$
1.12	Join ICLEI's Cities with Nature program	1	Sustainability Planner	Climate Change & Environment		$
Zero carbon						
2.1	Purchase all electricity used by Council owned and operated facilities from 100% renewable energy via VECO (2022).	1 to 5	Procurement Coordinator	Governance	Climate Change & Environment	-
2.2	Support community groups operating from Council-owned facilities to access 100% renewable energy via VECO.	1 to 5	Sustainability Planner	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services, Active and Healthy Lifestyles	$
2.3	Facilitate and plan for the transition to locally generated renewable energy power supply	1 to 5	Sustainability Planner	Climate Change & Environment		$$$
2.4	Install solar panels on Council-owned buildings via Power It from the Rooftop program.	1 to 3	Energy Innovation Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services	$$$
2.5	Progressively remove existing gas appliances from Council-owned buildings and replace them with electric alternatives.	1 to 5	Property Coordinator	Property Services	Climate Change & Environment	$$$
2.6	Develop a policy mandating no new gas connections installed in Council owned and operated buildings.	1	Environmentally Sustainable Development Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services	$
2.7	Progressively replace Council's lightweight vehicle fleet to be electric vehicles.	1 to 5	Fleet Services Coordinator	Works	Climate Change & Environment	$$$
2.8	Investigate options and costs to transition Heavy Fleet away from fossil fuels	1 to 5	Fleet Services Coordinator	Works	Climate Change & Environment	$
2.9	Install Electric Vehicle charging stations at selected Council sites powered by renewable energy	1 to 5	Fleet Services Coordinator	Works	Property Services, Climate Change & Environment	$$$
2.10	Purchase offsets for other emissions to reach 2026 Target, including offsetting emissions from fleet, landfill and gas.	1 to 5	Sustainability Planner	Climate Change & Environment	Financial Strategy	$$$
2.11	Develop a shadow carbon price to better account carbon emissions in Council's investment decisions	1 to 2	Circular Economy Coordinator	Climate Change & Environment	Governance, Financial Strategy	$
2.12	Raise awareness and support community groups to prepare for climate change and create zero carbon homes and lifestyles	1 to 3	Climate Change Resilience Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Community Partnerships	$
2.13	Audit and retrofit Council owned buildings to maximise energy efficiency.	2 to 4	Energy Innovation Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services, Active & Healthy Lifestyles	$$
2.14	Develop a baseline of energy intensity across all Council's assets and operations	1 to 2	Circular Economy Coordinator	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services, Active & Healthy Lifestyles	$
2.15	Partner with North Central Catchment Management Authority and other stakeholders to explore and develop local carbon offset schemes	1 to 3	Sustainability Planner & Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space, Governance	$
2.16	Advocate in partnership with CVGA for upgrading inefficient street lights on major roads (cost shared lights)	1 to 3	Sustainability Planner	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering	$$$
Circular economy						
3.1	Evaluate options and implement solutions to address the closure of Eaglehawk Landfill	1 to 3	Manager Resource Recovery & Education	Resource Recovery & Education	Climate Change & Environment	$$$
3.2	Revise design and procurement approaches for new and existing projects that require the use of reused and recycled products, and ensure product recyclability at end of life.	1	Circular Economy Coordinator	Climate Change & Environment	Resource Recovery & Education	$
3.3	Provide all Council facilities with access to organic recycling options	1	Resource Recovery Development Coordinator	Resource Recovery & Education	Climate Change & Environment	$$
3.4	Implement the single use plastics policy	1 to 2	Resource Recovery Development Coordinator	Resource Recovery & Education	Climate Change & Environment	$
3.5	Reduce general waste to landfill by implementing the Circular Economy and Zero Waste Policy	1 to 5	Circular Economy Coordinator	Climate Change & Environment	Resource Recovery & Education	$$$
3.6	Quantify the City's embodied carbon emissions (e.g. scope 3 emissions)	1 to 2	Circular Economy Coordinator	Climate Change & Environment	Governance, Financial Strategy	$
3.7	Engage with businesses and residents to support the adoption of reused and recycled materials	1	Resource Recovery Development Coordinator	Resource Recovery & Education	Climate Change & Environment	$

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Climate Change and Environment Strategy - implementation plan

No.	Action	Year	Lead officer	Unit	Supporting Unit(s)	Cost $ = <$100k $$ = $100k to $250k $$$ = >$250k
3.8	Establish 'Circular Economy Hubs' that act as physical material hubs for the drop-off and recirculation of materials and products from and for both commercial and residential activities	1 to 3	Circular Economy Coordinator	Climate Change & Environment	Resource Recovery & Education	$$$
3.9	Support the establishment of Tool Libraries, Repair Cafes, Library of things to facilitate the repair and sharing of products and goods rather than the need to buy new	1 to 2	Resource Recovery Development Coordinator	Resource Recovery & Education	Climate Change & Environment	$$
Sustainable and active transport						
4.1	Implement Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo Strategy including:	1 to 5	Coordinator, Strategy and Policy	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Engineering, Strategic Planning	$$$
4.1.1	A 10 year walking and cycling infrastructure prioritisation plan	1 to 2	Manager Engineering	Engineering	Strategic Planning, Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Climate Change & Environment	$
4.1.2	An activation plan to increase community capacity to use active transport	5	Coordinator, Strategy and Policy	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Strategic Planning, Climate Change & Environment	$
4.1.3	Develop a budget bid to increase the funding for new footpaths	2	Coordinator Infrastructure Development	Engineering	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Strategic Planning	$
4.2	Design and construct the Mundy Street and Hargreaves Street separated cycleway infrastructure to enable better connections to the City Centre	1 to 3	Coordinator Infrastructure Development	Engineering	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Strategic Planning	$$$
4.3	Deliver priority works to reduce gaps and barriers within the walking and cycling network (including building underpasses and road crossings)	1 to 5	Manager Engineering	Engineering	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	$$$
4.4	Deliver sustainable transport education program promoting low carbon modes of transport	2 to 3	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Engineering	$
4.5	Update the Environmentally Sustainable Design policy and deliver increased bicycle parking and change room facilities for new developments	3 to 5	Environmentally Sustainable Development Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Strategic Planning	
4.6	Advocate for additional and more frequent public transport options that meet growing community needs	1 to 5	Manager Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	Climate Change & Environment	$
4.7	Advocate for bike sharing and car sharing programs	1	Manager Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	Climate Change & Environment	$
4.8	Advocate for the Greater Bendigo commuter rail service	1 to 5	Manager Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	Climate Change & Environment	$
4.9	Advocate for Public Transport to be powered by renewable or sustainable fuel sources	1 to 5	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Strategic Planning	$
Sustainable food systems						
5.1	Implement Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy	1 to 5	Food Systems Officer	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Climate Change & Environment, Economic Development	$$$
5.2	Progress the City of Gastronomy, including promoting sustainable food production	1 to 5	Creative Cities Officer	Economic Development	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Climate Change & Environment	$$
5.3	Provide financial incentives for producers to transition to sustainable agricultural practices including applying for the sustainable agriculture rate	1 to 5	Agribusiness Support Officer	Economic Development	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Climate Change & Environment	$
5.4	Improve the City's procurement practices by preferencing caterers who source locally produced food	2 to 3	Food Systems Officer	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Governance	$
5.5	Support schools and early education centres to incorporate sustainable food education into the curriculum, including kitchen garden programs	1 to 5	Food Systems Officer	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Community Wellbeing	$$
5.6	Enable Traditional Owners to grow and harvest traditional food and fibre plants	1 to 5	Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Economic Development	
5.7	Support local businesses and the community to avoid food and packaging waste	1 to 5	Resource Recovery Development Coordinator	Resource Recovery & Education	Economic Development	$$$
5.8	Partner with North Central Catchment Management Authority and Landcare groups to promote and deliver sustainable agricultural practices	1 to 5	Agribusiness Support Officer	Economic Development	Climate Change & Environment	$$
5.9	Advocate for greater incentives for primary producers to transition to regenerative / agro-ecological practices.	1 to 5	Agribusiness Support Officer	Economic Development	Climate Change & Environment	$
5.10	Advocate to State and Federal government to create more sustainable food systems	1 to 5	Food Systems Officer	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Climate Change & Environment, Economic Development	$
Water Sensitive Bendigo						
6.1	Develop a policy for the water quality reserve that advances Water Sensitive Urban Design outcomes for new developments and stormwater offsets	1 to 2	Stormwater Engineer & Development Engineer	Engineering	Climate Change & Environment, Statutory Planning	$$
6.2	Develop the Central Bendigo and Heathcote flood mitigation studies	1 to 2	Stormwater Engineer	Engineering	Climate Change & Environment	$$
6.3	Evaluate and secure funding for highest priority flood mitigation options for Greater Bendigo	2 to 5	Stormwater Engineer	Engineering	Climate Change & Environment	$$$
6.4	Partner with Coliban Water to install digital meters on Council's water connections and implement water efficiency measures	1 to 2	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services	$$
6.5	Investigate and evaluate alternative water supply infrastructure for Council's assets	3 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space, Property Services	$$
6.6	Develop a policy to promote alternative water supply options (includes stormwater harvesting) for new sporting fields and recreational reserves	2	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space, Engineering	$
6.7	Implement Council's Domestic Wastewater Management Strategy	1 to 5	Coordinator Investigations	Safe and Healthy Environments	Climate Change & Environment	
6.8	Facilitate the Water Sensitive Bendigo Partnership including shared decision making for integrated water management outcomes	1 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$
6.9	Support and facilitate relevant agencies to undertake water security planning including investigating alternative supply options	3 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment		$$
6.10	Enable Traditional Owners to heal Country and actively manage waterways	1 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$
6.11	Partner with North Central Catchment Management Authority to implement the Waterwatch program including citizen science program for Bendigo Creek	1 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Climate Change and Environment Strategy - implementation plan

No.	Action	Year	Lead officer	Unit	Supporting Unit(s)	Cost $ = <$100k $$ = $100k to $250k $$$ = >$250k
6.12	Partner with DELWP to identify a long-term solution for the Bendigo Groundwater project	1 to 3	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	CEO	$$$
6.13	Partner with Coliban Water to improve household and business water use efficiency	3 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment		$$
6.14	Advocate for investment for priority water initiatives via the Water Sensitive Bendigo Partnership & Reimagining Bendigo Creek Prospectus	1 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$
Reimagining Bendigo Creek						
7.1	Finalise and implement the integrated water quality monitoring plan for Bendigo Creek	1 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$
7.2	Commence creating chain of ponds on Bendigo Creek	1 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$$
7.2.1	Obtain approvals and funding for instream works downstream of Kings Bridge	1	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$
7.2.2	Construct instream works downstream of Kings Bridge	2	Stormwater Engineer	Engineering	Parks & Open Space	$$$
7.2.3	Establish and maintain instream works downstream of Kings Bridge	3 to 5	Natural Reserves Team leader	Parks & Open Space		$$
7.3	Establish priority constructed wetlands	1 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$$
7.3.1	Obtain & funding approvals for Long Gully constructed wetlands (stage 1)	1 to 2	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$
7.3.2	Construct Long Gully constructed wetlands (stage 1)	3	Stormwater Engineer	Engineering	Parks & Open Space, Works	$$$
7.3.3	Establish and maintain Long Gully constructed wetlands (stage 1)	3 to 5	Natural Reserves Team leader	Parks & Open Space		$$
7.3.4	Design and seek approvals for later stages of the Long Gully constructed wetlands	3 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$$
7.4	Investigate and prioritise channelised sections of the urban creeks to renaturalise	2	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$
7.4.1	Design and seek approvals for priority renaturalisation sections	2 to 5	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$$
7.5	Assess the catchment and identify potential interventions to reduce sediment and retain water in the landscape	2	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$
7.6	Co-develop a video with Dja Dja Wurrung to celebrate the creek's heritage and future aspirations	2	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment		$
7.7	Plan cycling and walking infrastructure along the creek lines including low line	1 to 5	Manager Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Active & Healthy Lifestyles	Engineering, Parks & Open Space, Strategic Planning, Climate Change & Environment	$$$
7.7.1	Obtain funding to undertake design and approvals for the Low Line trail	1 to 2	Senior Water Strategy Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Engineering, Parks & Open Space, Strategic Planning	$$
7.7.2	Plan and detailed design of the low line trail from Golden Square to Lake Weeroona	2 to 4	Manager Engineering	Engineering	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Parks & Open Space, Strategic Planning, Climate Change & Environment	$$
7.7.3	Obtain approvals and funding for the low line trail from Golden Square to Lake Weeroona	4 to 5+	Manager Engineering	Engineering	Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Parks & Open Space, Strategic Planning, Climate Change & Environment	$
7.7.4	Construct the low line trail from Golden Square to Lake Weeroona	5 +	Manager Engineering	Engineering	Works	$$$
Healing Country Together						
8.1	Facilitate a co-design process with Taungurung and Djaara, Council and relevant agencies to identify public land of interest, management aspirations, opportunities to foster community stewardship	1 to 2	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space, Property Services	$$
8.2	Partner with communities, Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria, DELWP and NCCMA to identify opportunities to better connect people with natural places through regeneration	1	Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$$
8.3	Support community groups, agencies, Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung to connect with nature and do healing works on Country	2	Senior Biodiversity Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Parks & Open Space	$$
8.4	Restore and nurture Country by planting native species, including bush tucker and medicine plant species	2 to 5	Coordinator Arboriculture and Natural Reserves	Parks & Open Space	Climate Change & Environment	$$$
8.5	Monitor the current condition of waterways, landscapes, flora and fauna using both Western Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge	2 to 5	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment		$$$
Be the change						
9.1	Develop a project plan including communications and engagement approach to implement 'Be the Change'	1	Climate Change Resilience Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Communications, People and Culture	$
9.1.1	Develop and deliver an internal training program to raise awareness and drive behaviour change to deliver goals of Climate Change and Environment Strategy	1 to 5	Coordinator Organisation Development	Climate Change & Environment	Communications, People and Culture	$
9.1.2	Collaborate with 'Change Champs' to deliver drive behaviour change activities to deliver goals of Climate Change and Environment Strategy	2 to 4	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Communications, People and Culture	$
9.2	Develop a capability framework for climate change and environmental responsibilities	2	Organisation Development Adviser	People and Culture	Climate Change & Environment	$
9.2.1	Develop climate change and environment related Key Performance Indicators for relevant Directors and ...	1	CEO	EMT	Climate Change & Environment	$
9.2.2	Develop standard Key Performance Indicators that progress climate change and environment actions to be included in all performance development plans	2	Manager People and Culture	People and Culture	Climate Change & Environment	$
9.3	Review budget decision making principles and assessment metrics to increase climate change considerations in investment decisions	1 to 2	Manager Financial Strategy	Financial Strategy	Climate Change & Environment	$
9.4	Review procurement assessment metrics to increase climate change considerations in purchasing decisions	1 to 2	Manager Financial Strategy	Governance	Climate Change & Environment	$

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Climate Change and Environment Strategy - implementation plan

No.	Action	Year	Lead officer	Unit	Supporting Unit(s)	Cost $ = <$100k $$ = $100k to $250k $$$ = >$250k
9.5	Audit and assess Council's buildings and infrastructure from climate resilience, climate adaptation and	1 to 2	Environmentally Sustainable Development Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services, Engineering	$
9.6	Undertake a climate risk and vulnerability assessment for all Council buildings and infrastructure and identify necessary adaptation actions.	1 to 3	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services, Active & Healthy Lifestyles, Engineering, Parks & Open Space	$$
9.7	Plan, design and implement buildings and infrastructure retrofits	2 to 5	Environmentally Sustainable Development Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Property Services, Engineering	$$$
9.8	Assess Council's systems and policies to identify improvements and efficiencies in line with the goals of this strategy	1 to 2	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Governance, Business Transformation	$
The Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration						
10.1	Secure financial partners to support the Greater Bendigo Climate collaboration	1	Coordinator Climate Change	Climate Change & Environment	Governance, Business Transformation	$$$
10.2	Develop project approach including education program, monitoring and evaluation and project governance	1	Coordinator Climate Change	Climate Change & Environment		$$
10.3	Facilitate 1000 households & 100 businesses to develop zero carbon plans	2 to 3	Coordinator Climate Change	Climate Change & Environment	Economic Development, Community Partnerships	$$
10.4	Facilitate Greater Bendigo's sectors of the economy to co-design and deliver city-scale projects that will achieve zero carbon economy	2 to 5	Coordinator Climate Change	Climate Change & Environment	Economic Development, Community Partnerships	$$$
10.5	Host a Greater Bendigo Climate Summit	2	Coordinator Climate Change	Climate Change & Environment		$
10.6	Partner with Loddon Campaspe regional councils to collectively design and advocate for the top ten regional projects to support zero carbon	2 to 5	Coordinator Climate Change	Climate Change & Environment		$$
Showcase sustainable developments						
11.1	Investigate opportunities via the Big Housing Build to partner with affordable housing providers, developers and government agencies to deliver environmentally sustainable housing projects	1 to 2	Strategic Planner	Strategic Planning	Climate Change & Environment	$
11.2	Investigate and progress partnership opportunities for the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct to create an environmentally sustainable industrial estate	1 to 2	Strategic Planner	Strategic Planning	Climate Change & Environment	$
11.3	Investigate and design an innovative financing and delivery model	2 to 4	Strategic Planner	Strategic Planning	Climate Change & Environment, Governance, Financial Strategy,	$
11.4	Facilitate a co-design approach to the planning and design of the identified projects	2 to 4	Environmentally Sustainable Development Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Engineering, Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning,	$$$
11.5	Develop a manual to guide the design and construction of Environmental Sustainable Developments	1 to 2	Environmentally Sustainable Development Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning, Engineering,	$
Foundational actions						
12.1	Establish monitoring arrangements so each indicator is embedded within corporate monitoring systems	1	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Business Transformation, Information Technology, Financial Strategy	$$
12.2	Establish the working group to implement the Strategy	1	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment		$
12.3	Complete OPEX bid to secure adequate resources for the Strategy's implementation	1 to 5	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment	Financial Strategy	$
12.4	Complete annual report	1 to 5	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment		$
12.5	Undertake mid-term evaluation of strategy implementation in 2023	3	Manager Climate Change & Environment	Climate Change & Environment		$
12.6	Develop a communications and engagement plan to implement the strategy	1	Climate Change Resilience Officer	Climate Change & Environment	Communications, Community Partnerships	$

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 3 - Attachment C - MERI framework(1)

Draft MERI Framework – Climate Change and Environment Strategy

City of Greater Bendigo – Environment Strategy
October 2021

1 Introduction

OVERVIEW

The 2021-26 Climate Change and Environment Strategy has been designed to align with the community vision for Greater Bendigo. This recognises that the success of Greater Bendigo is inextricably tied to the health of our environment and the sustainability of our systems. Without these, we cannot have a healthy, sustainable, and prosperous community. ¶

The Climate Change and Environment Strategy has six action areas, which collectively contribute to all seven outcomes in the Council Plan. The contribution of the City of Greater Bendigo Climate Change and Environment Strategy to achieving our community vision is to: drive carbon emissions to zero, create a circular economy, have an active and low carbon transport network, support sustainable food systems, have water sensitive places and communities, and regenerate our natural environment.

The purpose of this document is to outline the framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Strategy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which this project was conducted. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. Moreover, we express gratitude for the knowledge and insight that Traditional Owner and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contribute to our shared work.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

2 Evaluation framework overview

The evaluation framework is comprised of five parts:

- Strategy logic – the logic provides a visual representation of how the actions and flagship projects delivered under the Environment Strategy contribute to the short-term and long-term goals, targets, and community vision.
- Governance structure – the roles and responsibilities for the delivery of the Strategy
- Monitoring framework – the monitoring framework provide a list of indicators that can be used to measure progress at each level of the logic
- Reporting – frequency of reporting
- The key evaluation questions (KEQs) give high level lines of enquiry for evaluating the Environment Strategy and the main data sources.

These are further described in the subsequent sections.

3 Strategy logic

The Strategy logic illustrates the linkages between the actions, focus areas and which long term outcomes they contribute to that underpin the council vision. For this monitoring and evaluation plan, there is:

- An overarching logic that explains the links between the flagship projects, focus areas, long term outcomes and community vision (Figure 3-1)
- A logic for each of the action areas demonstrating the links between the actions (what council will do by 2026), the goals for that action area, the long-term outcomes of the Council Plan and the community vision. Each action area logic is provided below in figures 3-2 to 3-7.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

OVERARCHING STRATEGY LOGIC

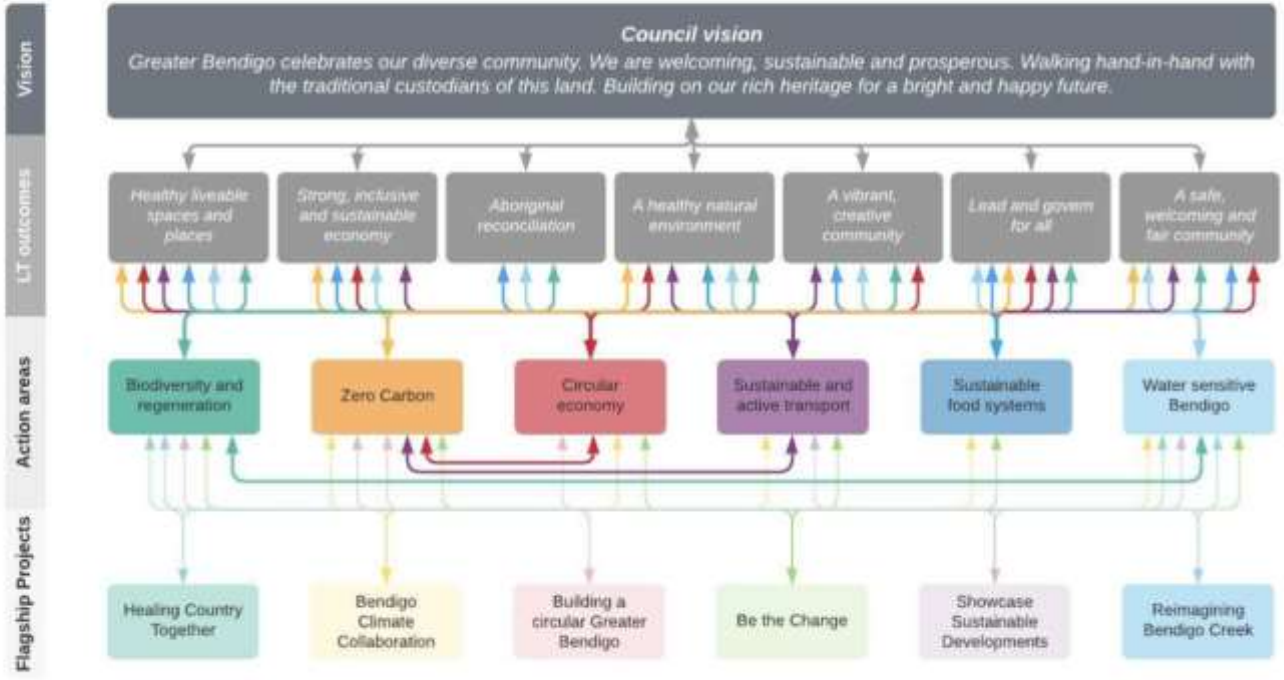


Figure 3-1: Overarching strategy logic

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ACTION AREA LOGIC: BIODIVERSITY AND REGENERATION

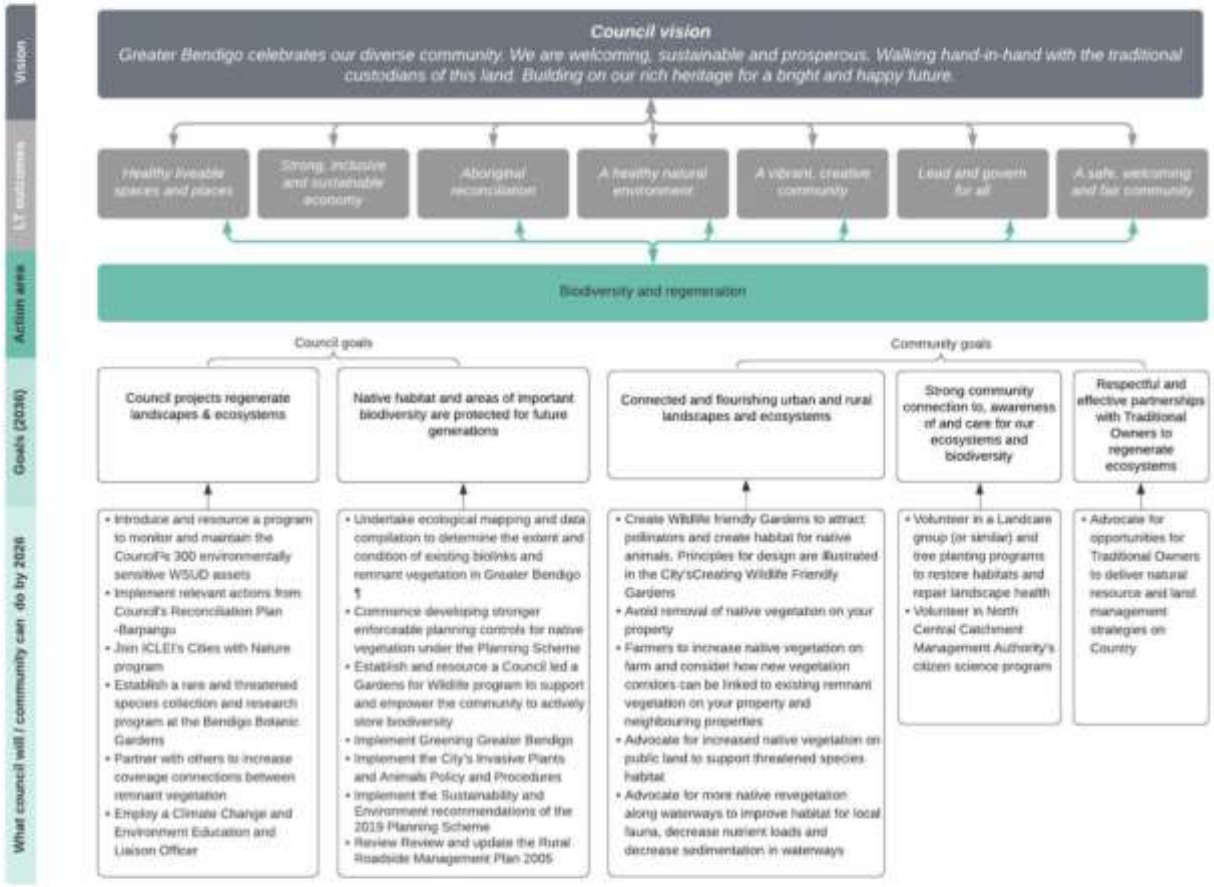


Figure 3-2: Biodiversity and regeneration - action area logic

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ACTION AREA LOGIC: ZERO CARBON

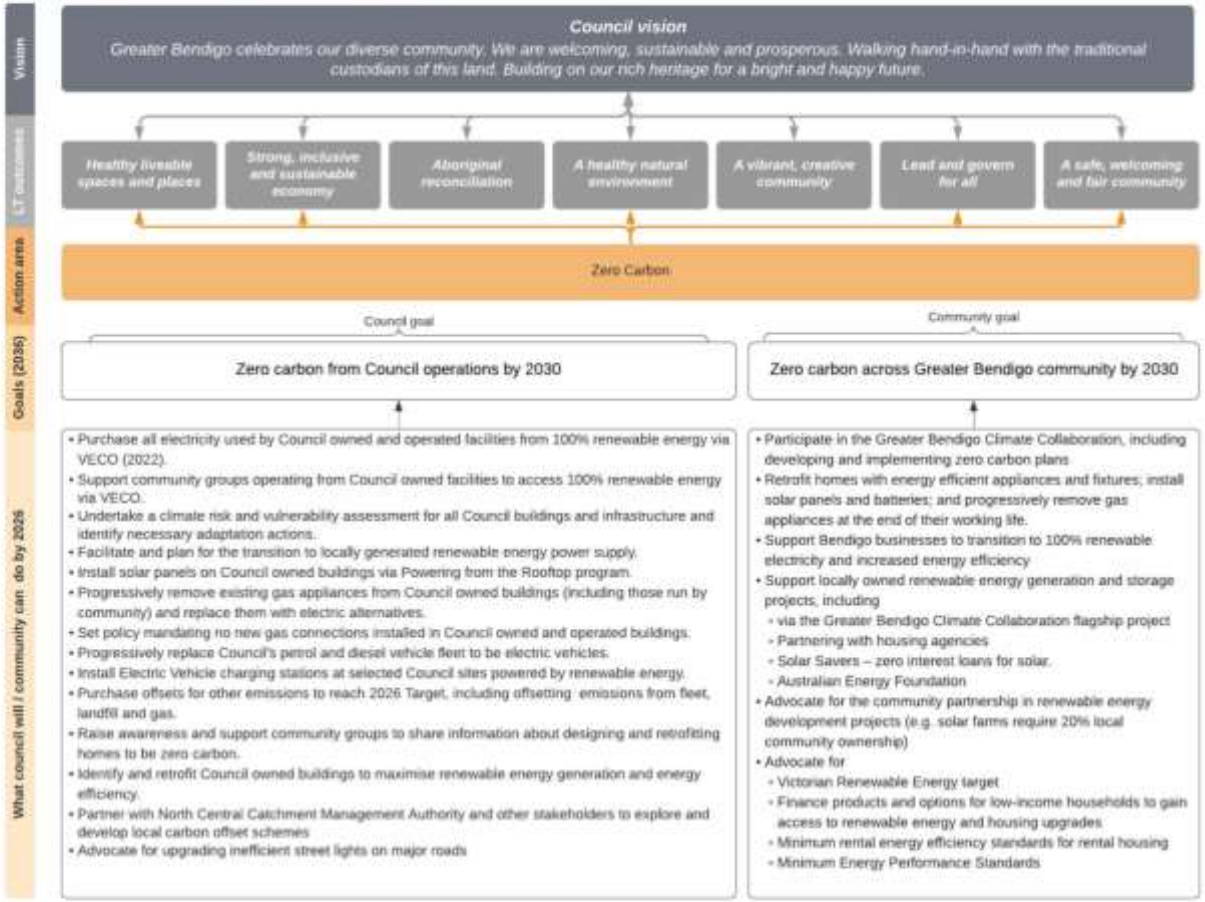


Figure 3-3: Zero Carbon - action area logic

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ACTION AREA LOGIC: CIRCULAR ECONOMY

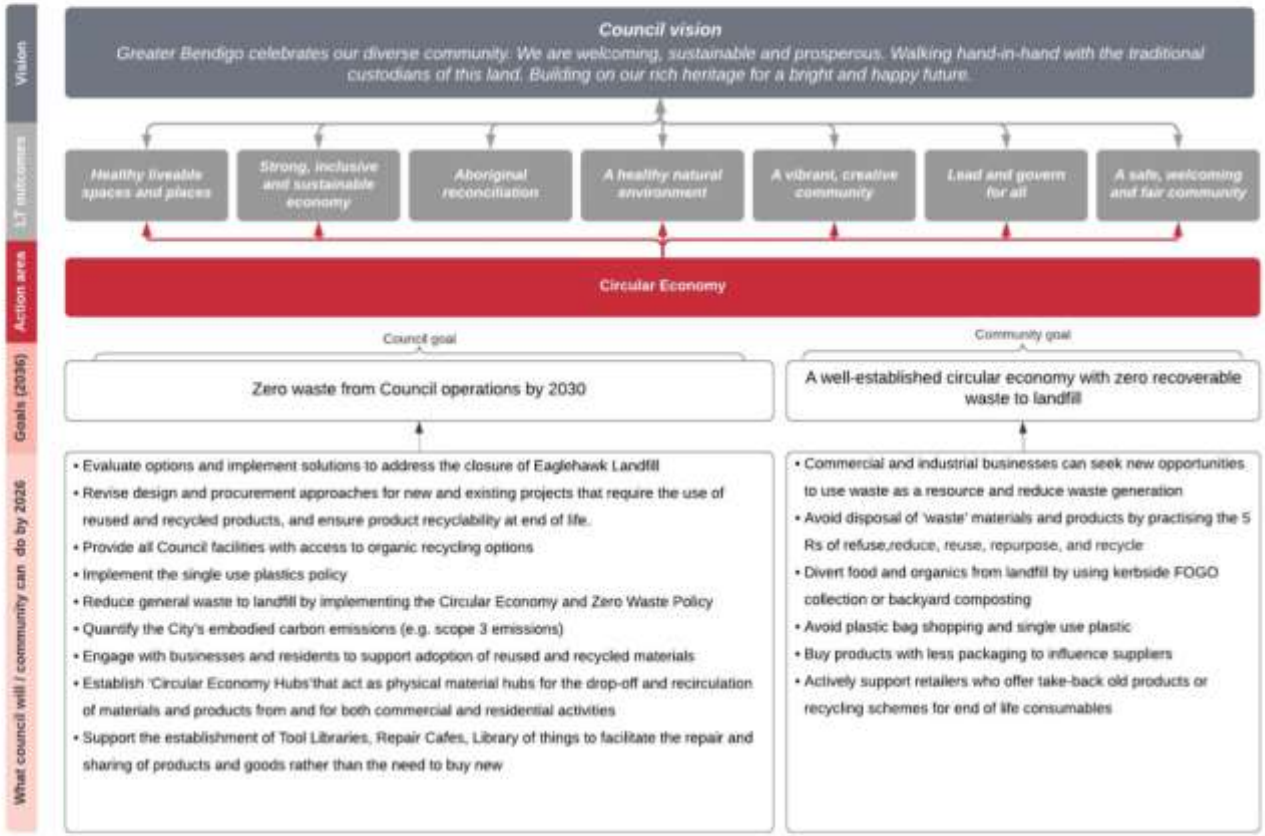


Figure 3-4: Circular Economy - action area logic

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ACTION AREA LOGIC: SUSTAINABLE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORT

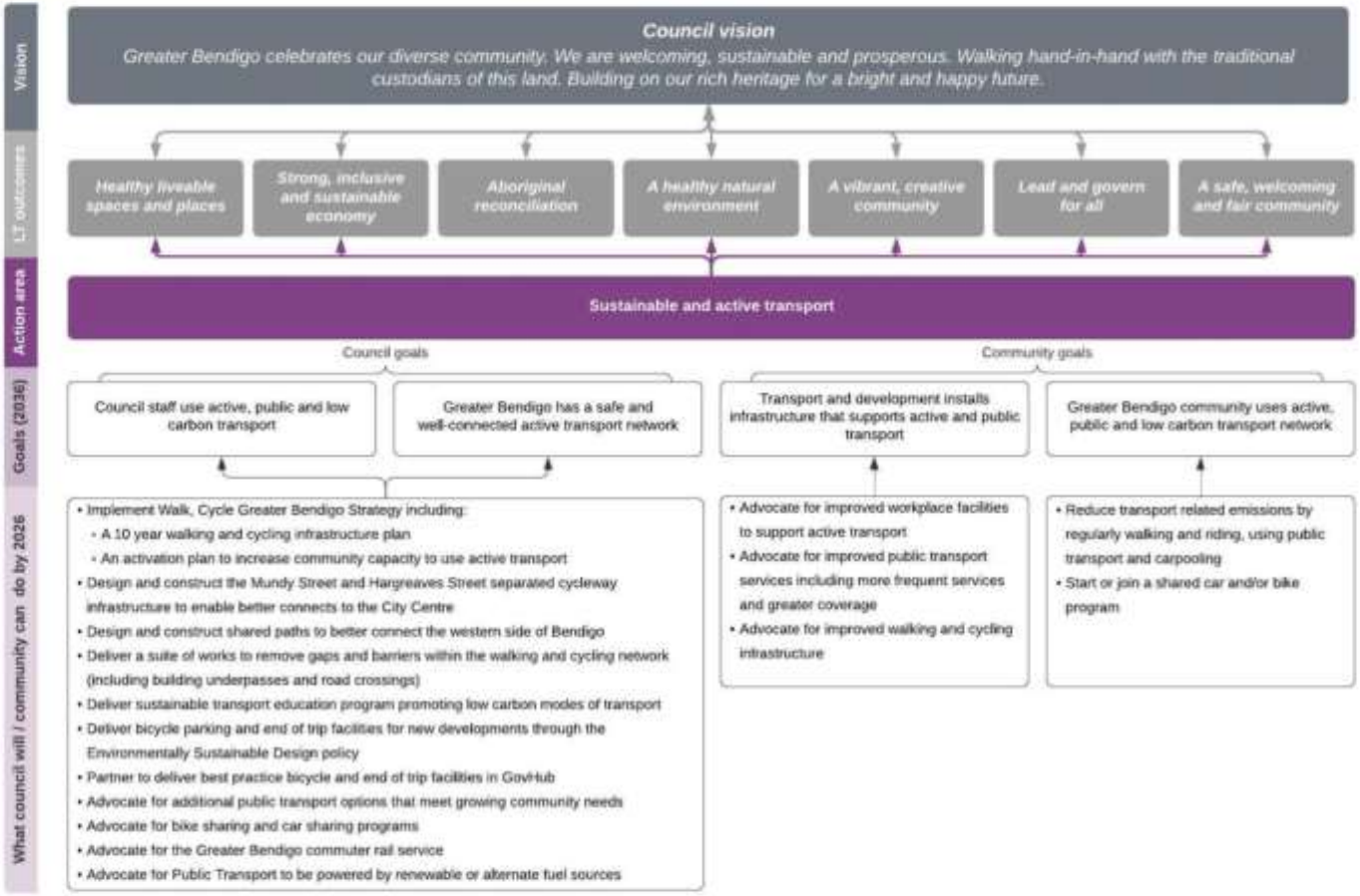


Figure 3-5: Sustainable and active transport - action area logic

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ACTION AREA LOGIC: SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

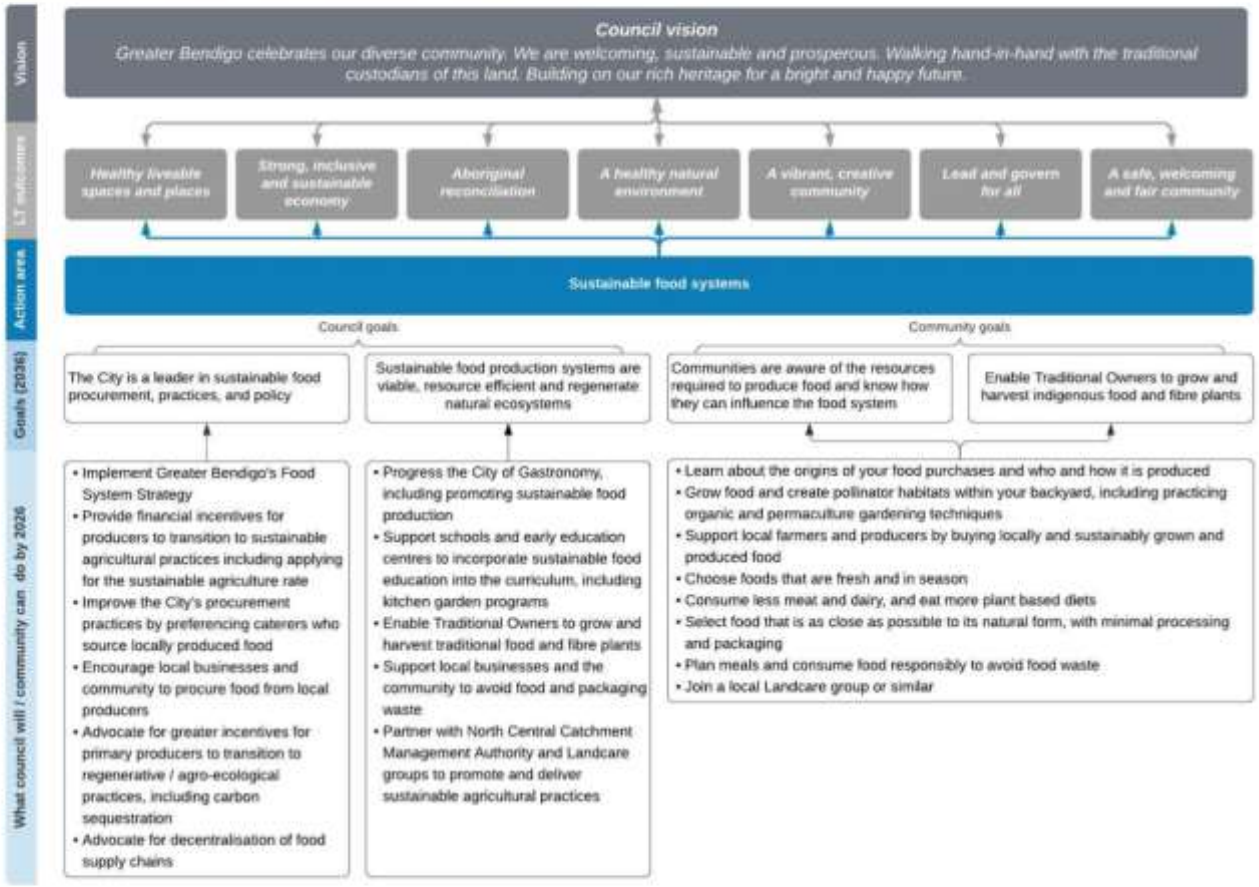


Figure 3-6: Sustainable food systems - action area logic

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ACTION AREA LOGIC: WATER SENSITIVE BENDIGO

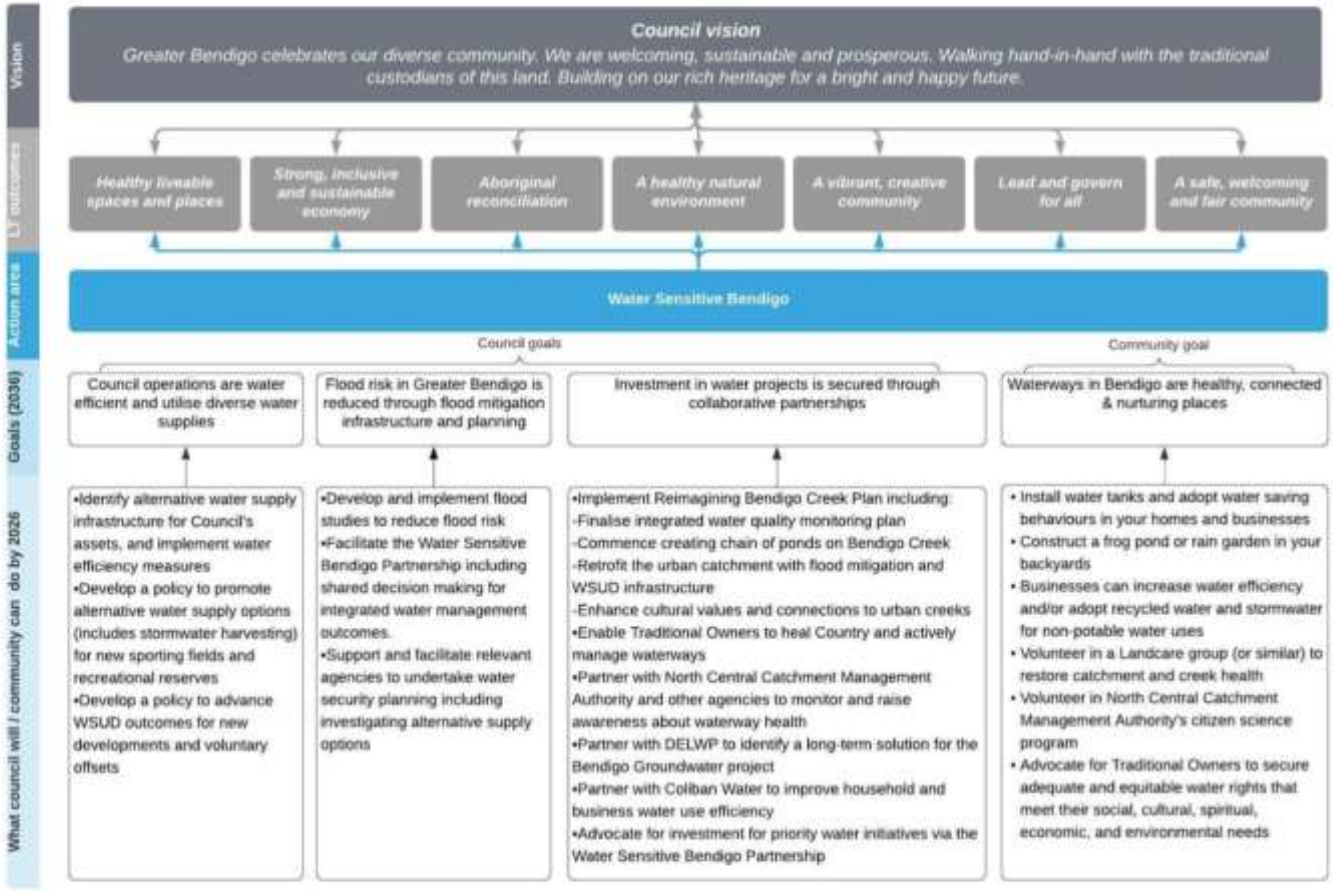


Figure 3-7: Water Sensitive Bendigo - action area logic

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

4 Governance structure

The goals of the Climate and Environment Strategy rely on a long-term commitment and shared responsibility. Effective governance is required to oversee successful implementation.

The governance process designed for this Strategy will enable ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on our progress. It will further coordinate resources and investment. Collectively these steps will sustain effective action over the longer term.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The climate and environment working group is a dedicated group made up of representatives across the organisation. Their role is to support implementation and collaboration across the organisation. They will also support the design, delivery and collation of quarterly and annual reporting against the implementation plan.

The Working Group will be chaired by a member of the Executive Management Team. The Working Group will:

- Provide guidance and implementation support to staff
- Provide a quarterly report to EMT on the execution of the annual implementation plan
- Provide oversight of the development of an annual implementation plan
- Provide an annual report to Council about the progress on goals, targets and interim targets
- Seek advice from the community, agency and sector partners regarding implementation and renewal of annual implementation plans, primarily through Sustainability and Environment Advisory Committee (SEAC)

An overview of the structure is provided in **figure 3-8.**



Figure 3-8: Governance framework for implementing the Climate Change and Environment Strategy

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5 Monitoring framework

The following table describes each of the focus area goals and outlines the interim targets for measuring progress towards achieving those goals. Each target coincides with the renewal date of the Strategy. In the far-right hand column are the monitoring indicators which outline what data Council will collected to inform progress against each of the targets.

Table 5-1: Monitoring framework

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
Biodiversity and regeneration				
Council projects regenerate landscapes and ecosystems (Council)	150% net gain in vegetation and biodiversity from Council projects	50% of actions from net vegetation gain plan achieved	Council has a 'net vegetation gain' plan completed	• Amount of native vegetation removal from Council projects • Amount of revegetation
Native habitat and areas of important biodiversity are protected for future generations (Council)	Important environmental assets have formal protection under the planning scheme	All relevant key environmental recommendations from the 2018 planning scheme review are implemented	Completed required investigations and consultation to increase controls under the planning scheme	• The number of recommendations from the 2018 planning scheme review achieved • Additional assets protected under the planning scheme
	No net loss of native habitat in the municipality from 2026 baseline	No net loss of native habitat in the municipality from 2026 baseline	Baseline biodiversity assessment completed	•
	The population of indicator species (determined by 2026) has increased from the baseline	Population of indicator species (determined by 2026) has stabilised or increased from the baseline	Indicator species selection and baseline dataset established	•
	Tree cover in Greater Bendigo has increased to	Tree cover in Greater Bendigo has increased to 25% from the	No net loss of tree and shrub cover by 2026	• % Tree and shrub cover in the municipality

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
Connected and flourishing urban and rural landscapes and ecosystems	35% from the 2016 baseline (23%) and shrub cover has increased to 10% from the 2016 baseline	2016 baseline (23%) and shrub cover has increased to 5% from the 2016 baseline		
	No patch of native vegetation over 20 ha within the municipality is fragmented from other native vegetation	60% of identified patches over 20 ha in size no longer fragmented	Fragmented vegetation identified and plans developed for linking them	• Number of remnant vegetation patches over 10ha fragmented from other vegetation
	No vulnerable or near-threatened species will have become endangered (based on 2021 baseline)	No vulnerable or near-threatened species will have become endangered (based on 2021 baseline)	Completed a baseline assessment of local biodiversity	• Species richness and abundance
	The 'Magnificent Six' native fish have a sustained and viable population in Bendigo Creek	All six species are found in Bendigo Creek catchment	Reintroduce the 'Magnificent Six' native fish into Bendigo Creek and establish a baseline of their population	• Presence or absence of the magnificent six
Strong community connection to, awareness of and care for our ecosystems and biodiversity	50% of all City residents have actively participated in stewardship of the natural environment	35% of all City residents have actively participated in stewardship of the natural environment	25% of all City residents have actively participated in stewardship of the natural environment	• Number of people participating in citizen science or environmental volunteering groups
Traditional Owners are recognised decision makers in land management, healing Country, culture and	Two additional public land areas managed by other agencies are solely managed by Traditional Owners	Two public land areas are solely managed by Traditional Owners	Two public land areas are identified to be solely managed by Traditional Owners and current management arrangements are shared, if suitable.	• No. of Traditional Owner managed parks or reserves

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
regenerating ecosystems			Management framework and, if required, collaborative governance arrangements with other agencies are developed.	
Zero carbon				
Zero carbon emissions from Council operations (Council)	All council owned buildings are powered by 100% renewable locally generated electricity	50% of Council owned buildings transitioned off gas (maybe all small and medium buildings in operational control moved off gas = 90% of buildings	No new gas connections in buildings built between 2021-26 60% of council small and medium sized owned and operated buildings transitioned off gas	• Number of Council buildings with gas connections • Size of buildings (small, medium, large)
		All council operated buildings to have maximum solar systems installed appropriate to their usage	90% of Council owned buildings have solar systems installed	• Number of Council owned buildings with on-site renewable energy generation • Size of renewable energy system installed • Building electricity usage data
	100% all electric lightweight and heavy vehicle fleet	75% light weight fleet is all electric	35% of light weight fleet is electric	• % of electric light weight vehicles in the fleet
		50% heavy plant vehicles are all electric	5 heavy plant vehicles are all electric	• No. of heavy vehicles • % of electric heavy plant vehicles
		Fewer offsets required to meet net zero compared with 2026.	Offsets purchased to reach 2026 net-zero target	• Offsets purchased

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
	25% Fewer offsets required to meet net zero compared with 2031. Council has leveraged $100 million investment in in local regenerative projects to go beyond net zero	All offsets are local regenerative / revegetation projects	Program for local regenerative offsets established in partnership with NCCMA	• Number of local offset projects • Size of investment leveraged
Zero net carbon in Greater Bendigo (community)	50% community ownership of local renewable energy (incl commercial solar and wind and community generation)	65% households and commercial business rooftops have solar installed 40% households and businesses have 'behind the meter' battery storage systems	40% households and commercial business rooftops have solar installed	• % of community owned local renewable energy generation • % of households and commercial rooftops with solar installed • % of households and businesses with battery storage systems • % of electric vehicle uptake in the community •
	Generate 500% of region's 2021 energy demand through local renewable generation	Generate 100% of region's 2021 energy demand through local renewable generation	Generate 50% of region's 2021 energy demand through local renewable generation	• % of region's 2021 energy demand through local renewable generation

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
	Community and business in Greater Bendigo no longer use fossil fuels for stationary energy	Existing housing stock upgraded to a high (6 star) standard for comfort, equity, and energy efficiency.	No gas in new subdivisions (option to not connect) Zero carbon new development (via local planning policy)	• New zero carbon development established • No. of sub-divisions without gas post 2021 • No. of building permits indicating a 6-star rating for renovations (note this is likely to be an underestimation as not all energy efficiency measures will require a building permit)
	80% of Greater Bendigo's passenger vehicles are electric or hybrid 100% of public transport is powered by a sustainable fuel source	50% of all passenger vehicles in Greater Bendigo are electric or hybrid 75% of public transport is powered by a sustainable fuel source	5% of all passenger vehicles in Greater Bendigo are electric or hybrid	• % of electric fleet vehicles reported by businesses and government organisations • % of new car sales that are electric or hybrid
Circular economy				
Zero recoverable waste to landfill from council operations	90% reduction in City 'general waste' production vs. 2020 levels (down to 500t/y)	60% reduction in City 'general waste' production vs. 2020 levels (1970t/y general waste from City)	35% reduction in City 'general waste' production vs. 2020 levels (3420t/y general waste from City)	• Tonnes of 'general waste' deposited at Landfill (weighbridge data)
	Zero organics to landfill from the City	Zero organics to landfill from the City	Zero organics to landfill from the City	• % of organic materials delivered to City facilities for subsequent transportation to a landfill
	50% reduction in the 'embodied carbon' footprint of City operations	40% reduction in the 'embodied carbon' footprint of City operations	25% reduction in the 'embodied carbon' footprint of City operations	• 'Planet Price' based on the externalities per $-spend in different categories. In the longer-term (short-term) • Measure once systems are established - Materials Accounting capture of material

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
				types will then allow for the development of tools to directly calculate the embodied carbon i.e. carbon footprint of the materials/services used by the City ('Scope 3 emissions')
	All City projects and services use recycled products / materials and circular business models as standard	All City projects and services use recycled products / materials and circular business models as standard	Reused and recycled content products and materials are a standard part of project design and service delivery	• % of procurement briefs that include requirements/requests for reused products/recycled content AND end-of-life recyclability in the EOI/RFQ/tender requirements (short-term) • % of materials (as a proportion of our total material procured e.g. %wt) that are classed as reused/recycled content etc.
A well established circular economy with zero recoverable waste to landfill and circular materials are the norm	Zero recoverable resources (including organics) sent to landfill from the municipality	Zero recoverable resources (including organics) sent to landfill from the municipality 80% of municipal 'waste' diverted from landfill	Zero organics to landfill from the municipality 72% of general waste diverted from landfill	• Measured as a % of materials delivered to City facilities for subsequent transportation to a landfill
	Reduce material consumption to 7.2 tonnes per person per year (baseline in 2020 was 34.8 tonnes per person per year)	80% of municipal 'waste' diverted from landfill Per capita 'waste' generation is reduced by 15% vs. 2020 levels (across all streams e.g. general waste, recycling, organics)	72% of region's 'waste' diverted from landfill	• Monitoring this figure will combine existing 'waste' data from the City and its resource management partners, with necessary detailed analysis at a state level regarding material flows into and out of the Greater Bendigo region
	All products and materials in Greater Bendigo have recycled or reused content	90% of residents are regularly using Circular Economy Hubs OR supported repair/sharing facilities in place of new purchases	The City has established 'Circular Economy Hubs' that act as physical material hubs for the drop-off and recirculation of	• % Residents using recycled content products (qualitative survey)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
			materials and products from and for both commercial and residential activities.	
Sustainable transport				
Council staff use active and low carbon transport	66% of staff trips for work are by active, shared and public transport.	50% of staff trips for work are by active, shared and public transport.	20% of staff trips for work are by active, shared and public transport.	• % of staff trips to work • % of staff trips for work • (Fleet booking data, staff survey) • Active living census and a targeted staff survey
Greater Bendigo has a safe and well-connected active transport network	All priority gaps in the footpath network have been addressed (as identified in the 10 year walking and cycling infrastructure plan.)	Reduce priority gaps in the walking and cycling network by doubling the new footpath program (baseline 2.2 Km in 2020)	Reduce priority gaps in the walking and cycling network by doubling the new footpath program (baseline 2.2 Km in 2020)	• Km of new paths in the walking and cycling network
	The shared path network includes strategic connections in: Bendigo City centre, Regional City Trail, Ironbark Gully Trail, Bendigo Low-line, University to City Centre, Eaglehawk to city centre, Huntly to Bendigo, Maiden Gully to Bendigo	50% of strategic shared path connections have been made	Develop and commence implementation of a 10-year walking and cycling infrastructure plan	• Number of existing SUPs and trails that are isolated and not connected to other links.
Transport and development installs	A commuter rail service is extended servicing	A commuter rail service is servicing Goornong (via Huntly	A commuter rail service is established servicing Goornong	• No. of commuter orientated services

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
infrastructure that supports active and public transport	Goornong (via Huntly and Epsom), Raywood (via Eaglehawk), Marong (via Maiden Gully), Harcourt and Kangaroo Flat (via Golden Square to Bendigo	and Epsom), Raywood (via Eaglehawk) and Kangaroo Flat to Bendigo with services conducive to the 9am – 5pm working day	(via Huntly and Epsom), Raywood (via Eaglehawk) and Kangaroo Flat to Bendigo	
	60 kilometres of additional shared paths installed in new developments	10 kilometres of additional shared paths installed in new developments	10 kilometres of additional shared paths installed in new developments	• Length of separated bike lanes and shared paths (GIS)
Greater Bendigo community uses active, public and low carbon transport network	One third of all trips are by active transport	20% of trips are by active transport	10% of trips are by active transport	• Number of users on popular trails (includes. embedded counters and Super Tuesday survey)
	90% coverage bus stops within 400m of dwellings within the urban area of Bendigo and 15 minute frequency on priority routes	Bus services at 20 minute intervals for Bendigo's 6 major bus routes (#5 Kangaroo Flat to Huntly, #52 Bendigo to Eaglehawk (via Arnold Street), #53 Bendigo to Eaglehawk (via Eaglehawk Road), #55 Bendigo to Kangaroo Flat, #61 Bendigo to University (via Strathdale) and #63 Hospital to University)	Urban bus service established servicing Marong. Adjusted bus services to reach growth areas in Maiden Gully and Huntly	• No. of bus stops and spacings in urban areas • Frequency of bus services
	One third of all trips are by public transport	20% of trips are by public transport	10% of trips are by public transport	• No. of users on public transport (count data) % of trips by public transport (survey/ABS)
	50% of the population are using car and/or bike sharing programs	20% of the population are using car and/or bike sharing programs	Car sharing program established by 2024	• % of CoGB population using car sharing programs (Data from the (future) car share company)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
Sustainable Food Systems				
The City is a leader in sustainable food procurement, practices and policy	All relevant City contracts, leases and tenders pertaining to food include clauses related to sustainable food practices	60% City contracts, leases and tenders pertaining to food include clauses related to sustainable food practices	30% City contracts, leases and tenders pertaining to food include clauses related to sustainable food practices	• % of contracts, leases and tenders with sustainable food practice clauses
Sustainable food production systems are viable, resource efficient and regenerate natural ecosystems	60% farms on the sustainable agriculture rate 60% primary producers involved in Landcare group or similar	40% farms on the sustainable agriculture rate 40% primary producers involved in Landcare group or similar	20% farms on the sustainable agriculture rate 20% primary producers involved in Landcare group or similar	• % of farms on the sustainable agriculture rate • % of primary producers in a Landcare group or similar
Communities are aware of the resources required to produce food and know how they can influence the food system	All educations settings incorporate sustainable food system education into the curriculum	90% of early childhood education settings, primary schools and secondary schools incorporate sustainable food system education into the curriculum	80% of early childhood education settings, primary schools and secondary schools incorporate sustainable food system education into the curriculum	• % of education settings in Greater Bendigo who have sustainable food systems as part of the curriculum
Traditional Owners are supported to actively grow and harvest indigenous food and fibre plants to heal Country, culture and revitalise ecosystems.	Annual target area of land to plant and harvest, as set by Traditional Owners, is achieved	Annual target area of land to plant and harvest, as set by Traditional Owners, is achieved	Annual target area of land to plant and harvest, as set by Traditional Owners, is achieved	• Traditional Owners are meeting their targets for growing traditional foods (qualitative - determined through a discussion with Traditional Owners each year)
Sustainable water				

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

GOALS	TARGETS (INCLUDING INTERIM)			MONITORING INDICATORS
20 year	*By 2036*	*By 2031*	*By 2026*	*The data will collect to measure progress toward targets. Proxies are used in instances where there is no direct data.*
Council is water efficient and harnesses diverse water supplies	Council's total use of potable water reduced by 30%	Council's total use of potable water reduced by 15%	Council's total use of potable water reduced by 5%	• Potable water usage (megalitres)
Flood risk in Greater Bendigo is reduced through flood mitigation infrastructure and planning	A 30% reduction in flooding occurrence affecting properties (2020 baseline).	A 15% reduction in flooding occurrence affecting properties (2020).	A 5% reduction in flooding occurrence affecting properties (2020 baseline).	• No. of customer requests related to flooding and emergency response.
Investment in water projects is secured through collaborative partnerships	The Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership has leveraged $50 million investment in water initiatives and infrastructure	The Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership has leveraged $5 million investment in water initiatives and infrastructure	The Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership has leveraged $500 thousand investment in water initiatives and infrastructure	• $ of Investment attracted to any partner organisation of Water Sensitive Bendigo
Waterways in Bendigo are healthy, connected & nurturing places	All Bendigo catchments have WSUD infrastructure that reduces peak flows and average nutrients and suspended solid loads by 60% 20 kilometres of new shared paths along waterways of Bendigo 150 new meeting places along waterways of Bendigo	All Bendigo catchments have infrastructure that reduces peak flows and average nutrients and suspended solid loads by 30% Build 10 kilometres of new shared paths along waterways of Bendigo 70 new meeting places along waterways of Bendigo	Three large WSUD infrastructure projects are designed and approved Design and approvals for 5 kilometres of new shared paths along waterways of Bendigo¶ 50 new meeting places located along waterways of Bendigo	• Daily flow rate (megalitres/d) measured at Huntly • Monthly water quality samples of total nitrogen (mg/L), total phosphorus (mg/L) and turbidity (NTU) collected at Huntly • Kilometres of shared path along a waterway in Bendigo • Building of meeting places including park benches and shelters

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6 Reporting

The following table outlines the type of reports, content, and reporting frequency to monitor the delivery and achievement of targets and long-term outcomes.

Table 6-1: Reporting type, frequency, and content

TYPE	CONTENT	FRQUENCY
Quarterly report	• Brief assessment of Strategy actions commenced, completed, and not yet commenced • Overview of the outputs from the actions partially or fully delivered • An assessment of what worked well and what could be improved from the delivery of the actions • Expenditure to date	Quarterly
Annual report	• Brief assessment of Strategy actions commenced, completed, and not yet commenced to be carried over to the next year's implementation plan • Overview of the outputs from the actions partially or fully delivered • Instances of adaptive management on projects (where projects deviated from the project plan to ensure delivery of outcomes) • An assessment of what worked well and what could be improved from the delivery of the actions • Assessment of progress towards goals and targets using the monitoring indicators • Expenditure • Recommendations for improving delivery to achieve targets (if applicable)	Annually
Five-year evaluation	• Report on the strategy design, implementation and impact at the five-year mark using the key evaluation questions (outlined in the next section) to inform the next five-year term of the Strategy. • **Recommendation** – Interview Council staff and survey stakeholders and community more broadly to inform the findings of the evaluation.	5 years (next evaluation is in 2026)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

7 Key evaluation questions

The key evaluation questions are based on the evaluation themes: project design, delivery, and impact. The definition for each of these terms are described in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Evaluation themes

EVALUATION THEME	DEFINITION
Strategy design	Strategy design focuses on whether the governance and actions were appropriately designed to deliver the intended targets (and goals)
Strategy implementation	Strategy implementation focuses on whether the actions of the Strategy were delivered as planned and seeks to identify how these approaches have ensured efficient and cost-effective delivery.
Strategy impact	Strategy impact focusses on what impact the Strategy has had and level of achievement to date of the intended targets (and goals). At the end of the Strategy term, the focus is also on the legacy of the program and to what extent the impact of the actions will extend beyond the life of the Strategy (long-term outcomes).

There are five main questions to consider when evaluating the Climate Change and Environment Strategy. The sub-questions provide further guidance for the lines of inquiry into the design, implementation, and impact of the Strategy. The key evaluation questions are outlined in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2: Key evaluation questions

EVALUATION THEME AND OBJECTIVE	KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES
Strategy design *Appropriateness of the Strategy to achieve long-term outcomes*	• Was the design of the Strategy appropriate to deliver the intended outcomes?	• Are there more effective ways to achieve the goals (extrapolate here)? • Was the resourcing (both funding and staff time) appropriate for delivering these actions? • What evidence exists to suggest that this approach works? • Does the Strategy align with Council's principles and values?	• Quarterly reports • Annual reports • Project plans and contracts (where appropriate) • Community survey (5 years) • Interviews with staff (5 years)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

EVALUATION THEME AND OBJECTIVE	KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES
Strategy implementation *Effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of the Strategy*	• To what extent have the Strategy actions been delivered? What are the key outputs? • To what extent did the delivery of the actions provide good value for money?	• What decisions or actions were taken over the course of the Strategy to ensure efficient delivery? • To what extent were the actions delivered as planned (governance, budget, timelines, community engagement, communications, partnerships, risk management)? Has anything changed over time? • Are there any ways the delivery of the Strategy could be improved? • How well are you collaborating across council units to minimise duplication of effort?	• Quarterly reports • Annual reports • Project plans and contracts (where appropriate) • Community survey (5 years) • Interviews with staff (5 years)
Strategy impact *Impact of the actions delivered as part of the Strategy*	• To what extent did the activities achieve the targets and interim targets? • What impact will the activities have beyond the life of the Strategy?	• To what extent did the activities contribute to the long-term Council Plan outcomes?	• Monitoring indicators • Quarterly reports • Annual reports • Community survey (5 years) • Interviews with staff (5 years)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

15. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

16. PRESENTATION AND MANAGING GROWTH

16.1. 153 McNiffs Road, Redesdale 3444 - Use and Development of Land for a Dwelling, Outbuilding (Shed) and Ancillary Buildings and Works

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

Summary/Purpose

Application details:	Use and development of land for a dwelling, outbuilding (shed) and ancillary buildings and works
Application No:	DR/920/2020
Application Documents	Application Documents
Applicant:	Shane Muir Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd
Land:	153 McNiffs Road, REDESDALE 3444
Zoning:	Rural Conservation Zone
Overlays:	Environmental Significance Overlay 1 Environmental Significance Overlay 3
No. of objections:	Nil
Consultation meeting:	NA
Key considerations:	• Whether the proposal would result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to the purposes of the Rural Conservation Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with rural dwellings and the protection of agricultural land. • Whether the proposal is acceptable with regard to Crown Allotments and their intent when created. • Whether appropriate justification has been provided in support of the proposal.
Conclusion:	The application is not in accordance with the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. It is recommended that Council refuse to grant a permit as the proposal does not present an acceptable planning outcome with regards to the purposes of the Rural Conservation Zone and the relevant planning policy that deals with rural dwellings, the protection of agricultural land and treatment of historic allotments.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to section 61 of the Planning and Environment Act (1987), Council issue a Notice of Decision to Refuse to Grant a Permit for Use and development of land for a dwelling, outbuilding (shed) and ancillary buildings and works at 153 McNiffs Road, REDESDALE 3444 on the following grounds:

1. The proposal is inconsistent with the purpose and decision guidelines of the Rural Conservation Zone:

a. To provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area.

b. To conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.

2. The proposal is inconsistent with local planning policy (Clause 22.02) by:

a. Making use of historic unplanned lots for rural residential purposes.

b. Leading to fragmentation of agricultural land through removal of 8ha of land from active production.

c. Encouraging the proliferation of dwellings in the rural landscape and intensifying the potential for conflict between incompatible land uses.

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 4 Presentation and managing growth
- Goal 6 Embracing our culture and heritage

Attachments

1. Planning Assessment Report

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - 153 McNiffs Road Planning Assessment Report

PLANNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

Background

This matter was previously considered by Council at its Ordinary Meeting of 24 June 2021, with the following motion being adopted:

"That Council defer a decision on Planning application DR/920/2020 to:

- *Allow the applicant the opportunity to develop an enhanced Environmental Management Plan that clearly sets out the environmental benefits and actions to result from using and developing a dwelling on the land, to be submitted to the City not later than two months after the date of this meeting; and*
- *Allow the subsequent assessment of the Environmental Management Plan by Planning staff, with summary advice presented to Council at the first reasonably practicable Council meeting following lodgement of the revised plan by the applicant.*
- *Allow for further discussion by Planning staff with the applicant and landowner to understand the future intention of the remaining lots within the balance farming tenement, and any actions that could be undertaken to limit further fragmentation of that tenement."*

The applicant has subsequently prepared a modified Environmental Management Plan. The applicant has not however engaged in further discussion regarding the future intention of the remaining lots within the balance farming tenement.

This report re-presents the matter, updating the assessment to include the new material received.

The subject site is one lot of a larger tenement of land comprising around 15 individual lots that are used for agricultural purposes (grazing). The majority of the surrounding area is also used for agricultural production. The lot is an old Crown Allotment, pre-dating modern planning instruments, and the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme discourages their use for de-facto rural living purposes.

The applicant for the dwelling is not the present owner. The applicant is seeking to acquire the land, subject to planning approval.

Early in the application process concerns were raised with the applicant as to why a dwelling was required on site, to support either an agricultural or environmental outcome on the land. The applicant responded that a dwelling was required for the revegetation and management of the site as per the submitted Environmental Management Plan.

The original Environmental Management Plan (EMP) was found to be of a generic nature to any parcel of land (ie. it was not tailored to the specifics of the site). The EMP did not include the assessment and location of areas within the site that have significant flora and fauna or areas with high environmental or biodiversity values, and the plan did not detail a comprehensive land management strategy. Instead, the plan offered general examples of how the land *could* be managed and regenerated.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A revised Environmental Management Plan has since been received following Council's previous resolution. An analysis of that plan and whether its changes the recommendation is provided later in this report.

Report

Subject Site and Surrounds

The site is legally described as Crown Allotment 83B, Parish of Redesdale, and is part of an overall larger agricultural property consisting of approximately 15 separate land parcels, all of which are old Crown Allotments. The total area of the broader tenement is approximately 236ha. The tenement contains a dwelling at the northern end adjoining McNiffs Road.

The subject site is located on the corner of Campbells Road and Tooks Road (unmade road), is rectangular in shape and has a total area of 8.38 hectares. The site has a southern boundary of 208.61 metres and an eastern boundary of 401.13 metres in length. The site contains an existing drainage line that traverses the site from north to east to around the middle of the site.

The site has historically been used for agricultural practices (grazing) in conjunction with the adjoining lots. The site is currently devoid of any structures and vegetation although one (1) tree is located within the middle of the parcel. Informal access is afforded to the subject site via Campbell's Road.

The site is located within the Rural Conservation Zone and is affected by the Environmental Significance Overlay Schedules 1 and 3. Surrounding land to the north, east and south are located within the Rural Conservation Zone with land to the west located within the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) and is the location of the Mount Lofty Bushland Reserve, and land located to the south-west of the site is located within the Farming Zone. Most surrounding lots are used for agricultural purposes (primarily grazing). Lots directly to the east tend to be smaller individual holdings, with some dwellings and larger patches of vegetation.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

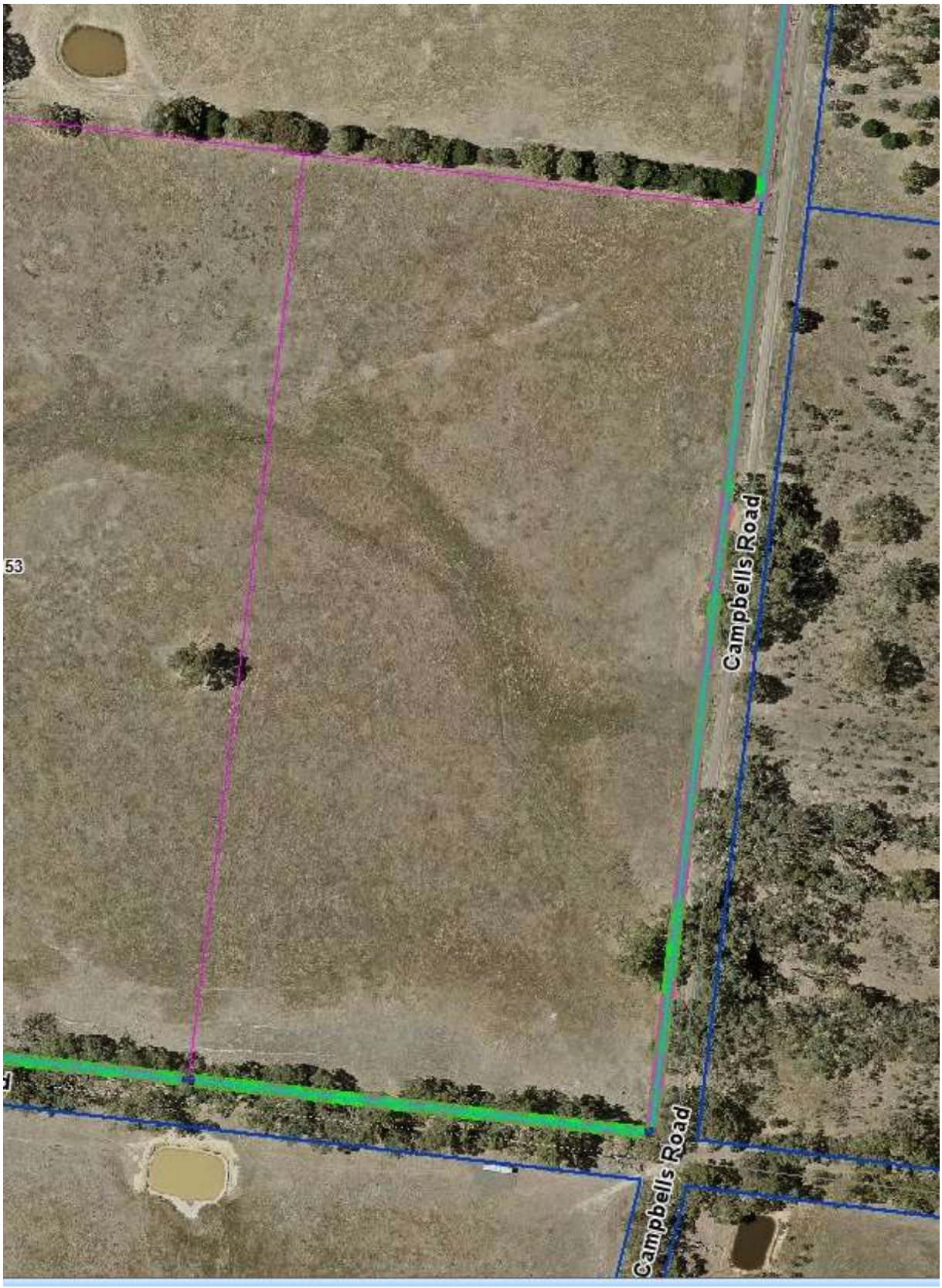


Figure 1: Location map showing subject site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Figure 2 – Broader tenement

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Figure 3 – Tenement showing title composition. Subject parcel shown.

Proposal

The application proposes the use and development of land for a dwelling, outbuilding (shed) and construction of a 100,000 litre water tank.

The dwelling is proposed to be located a minimum of 20 metres from the southern boundary (Tooks Road), 31 metres from the western (side) boundary and 12.9 metres from the proposed outbuilding (shed). Access would be derived from Campbells Road.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

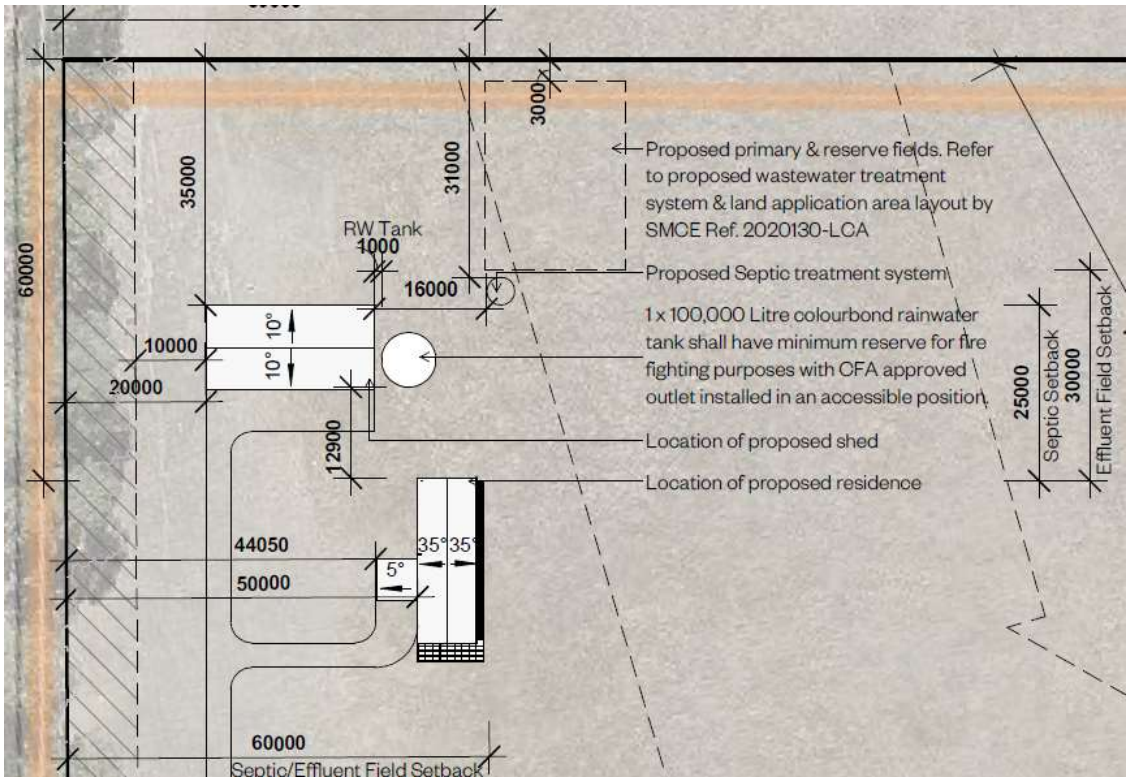


Figure 4 Site Plan. (West to top of page.)

The dwelling is proposed to consist of 4 bedrooms – master with WIR and en-suite, bathroom, toilet, laundry with WIL, an open plan kitchen, living and dining area – kitchen with walk in pantry, verandah, pergola and an attached double carport.

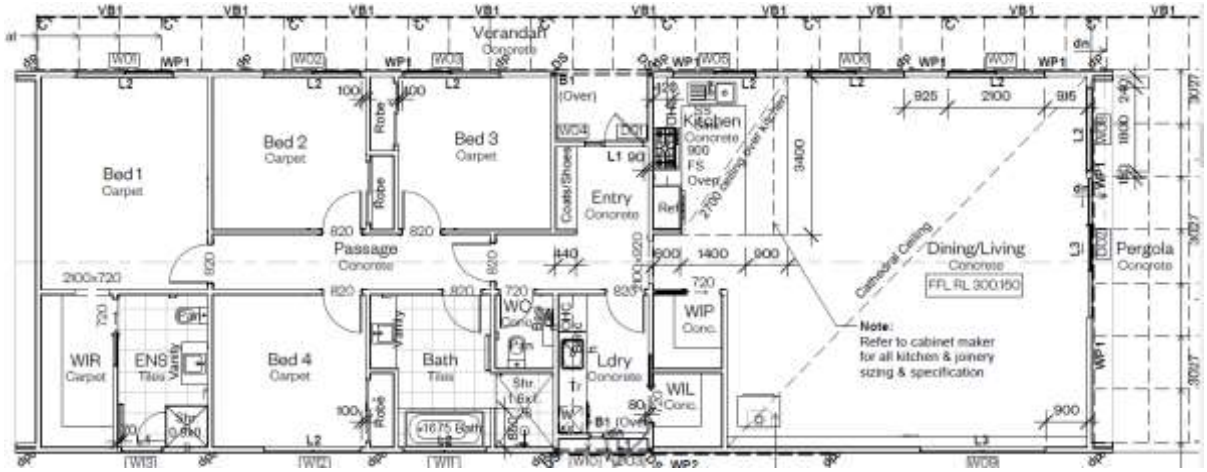


Figure 5 Floor Plan

The proposed dwelling would have a total floor area of 276.46 sqm including verandah, carport and pergola. The proposed dwelling would have a floor to ceiling height of 2.7 metres and an overall height of 6.15 metres.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Figure 6 Southern elevation

The dwelling is proposed to be constructed of a mix of metal and timber cladding for the external walls and Colorbond cladding for the roof.



Figure 7 Colour and materials schedule

The outbuilding would be located a minimum of 20 metres from the southern boundary (Tooks Road) and 35 metres from the western (side) boundary. The outbuilding would be setback a minimum of 12.9 metres to the west of the proposed dwelling.

The outbuilding (shed) would have a total floor area of 288 sqm (24 m x 12m), an overall height of 5.035 metres and be constructed of Colorbond in ‘monument’ (black).

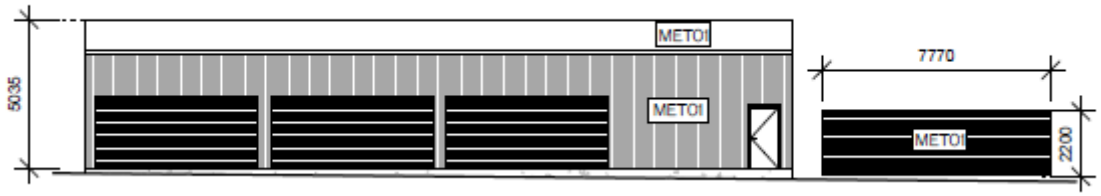


Figure 8 Southern elevation of outbuilding (shed)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

A 100,000 litre water tank would be located on the northern elevation of the outbuilding (shed) and to the west of the dwelling.

The application documentation states that the dwelling is proposed in order to support the revegetation and land management of the subject site

Planning Controls - Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

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

State Planning Policy Framework

- Clause 11 Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee South
- Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility
- Clause 14.01-1S Protection of agricultural land
- Clause 14.02-1S Catchment planning and management
- Clause 14.02-2S Water quality
- Clause 15.01-6S Design for rural areas
- Clause 16.01-5S Rural residential development

Municipal Strategic Statement

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

Local Planning Policies

- Clause 22.02 Rural dwellings policy

Other Provisions

- Clause 35.06 Rural Conservation Zone
- Clause 42.01 Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 1 and 3

Consultation/Communication

Referrals

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

Referral	Comment
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	No objection subject to five (5) conditions.
North Centre Catchment Management Authority	No objection subject to one (1) condition.
Goulburn-Murray Water	No objection subject to seven (7) conditions.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Referral	Comment
Coliban Water	No objection subject to four (4) conditions. Coliban advised that an amended EMP be submitted to include the identification of environmental areas, increased focus on the drainage line and revegetation and for these works to be included within the 10 year Management Plan. An amended plan was submitted and re-referred to Coilban Water who consented to the application.
Traffic & Design	No objection subject to two (2) conditions.
Drainage	No objection and no conditions.

Public Notification

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

As a result of advertising, no objections were received.

Planning Assessment

Background to issue – remnant lots in rural areas

The original Crown Allotment subdivisions were undertaken at a time before mechanized farming techniques, where closer-settlement strategies were encouraged by the governments of the day. Many of these lots were never developed. Over time, through market forces and the introduction of mechanical farming implements, such lots became aggregated into larger holdings.

In the second half of the twentieth century, further subdivisions were often permitted by small local councils to encourage small-scale farming opportunities or for rural lifestyle pursuits. These lots also sit within the rural landscape, with some lots developed and others remaining vacant.

Most farms today now consist of multiple lots and can only be effectively managed and made financially sustainable if they are used in aggregate rather than individually. Once the land is fragmented the productive capacity of the land is diminished significantly, unless intensively used. Once individually developed with dwellings, lots are unlikely to ever be re-aggregated due to the increased costs involved.

Today, market forces apply pressure to use remaining lots for other purposes, including rural-residential (‘lifestyle’) purposes through the construction of dwellings. This has impacts on the availability of land for genuine farming enterprises. Further to this is the visual outcome within the rural landscape arising from the development of the dwellings. In aggregate, this can impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

This is a challenge faced by many rural and regional municipalities, which they seek to address by directing such developments to lots zoned for rural lifestyle pursuits (Rural Living Zone) along with the implementation of local planning policies.

The Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme approach

Clause 22.02 Rural Dwellings Policy of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme has been developed and implemented for the purpose of protecting and effectively managing the large number of vacant rural lots that exist within the municipality. This Policy will be further discussed in the sections below, alongside the Statewide Rural Conservation Zone provisions.

Clause 22.02 Rural Dwellings Policy highlights the themes discussed above to ensure a consistent approach for considering the use of rural land for dwellings, and has the following relevant objectives:

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

Clause 22.02 has the following relevant policy on rural dwellings:

- *Discourage dwellings on existing small lots (lots smaller than the schedule minimum) in all rural areas except if:*
    - *Subdivisions have been created since the introduction of planning controls,*
    - *Substantial infrastructure works have been completed; or*
    - *The land has no agricultural potential and native vegetation will be retained and managed.*

The policy basis as outlined above seeks to ensure that the agricultural productivity of the land is carefully maintained to prevent adverse impacts on the land, including a decrease in agricultural productivity, to prevent the fragmentation of rural lots, and to ensure residential development is orderly so as to not negatively impact upon the agricultural productivity of significant agricultural land.

The *Rural Areas Strategy, September 2009,* asserts that when assessing the protection of agricultural land, consideration must be given to the oversupply of rural residential land which currently exists within the municipality. The strategy asserts that there is approximately 80 years supply of land currently zoned for rural-residential purposes within the Rural Living Zone and as such rural lifestyle development should be directed toward these areas.

Clause 22.02 also has the following relevant policy on new dwellings:

- *Ensure an application for a new dwelling is accompanied by an environmental management plan that addresses and details the following requirements, where relevant:*
    - *Building envelopes and lot boundaries.*
    - *Land forming, drainage and dams.*

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- *Extent of native vegetation and any native revegetation. Services and infrastructure including the location and design of roads and wastewater disposal.*
- *Adjoining land uses including other dwellings.*
- *Wildfire hazard.*
- *Environmental features including degraded land, saline discharge, recharge areas, potential inundation and flooding.*
- *Cultural, historic and conservation values including significant flora and fauna.*
- *Use of adjoining public land.*
- *Boundaries of any relevant declared water supply catchments.*

Original Environmental Management Plan

The applicant originally submitted an Environmental Management Plan which mainly focused on how the proposed dwelling would impact on the site in its current form, during the development stage, fencing and revegetation of the drainage line located within the site. That plan was quite general in nature.

Amended Environmental Management Plan

The applicant submitted an amended Environmental Management Plan, prepared by Cumbre Consultants Pty Ltd on 16 August 2021. The Environmental Management Plan is summarised as follows:

- An amended site plan has been provided with proposed management zones for the site, characterised as domestic, conservation and grazing.
- Two (2) zones will be used for agriculture, specifically sheep grazing.
- The main conservation area would take in the centre of the site where a shallow gully area exists.
- The Plan sets out actions for revegetation of the conservation areas of the site, weed management, pest management and the like.

The full plan is available at: LINK

An extract showing the management zones is provided below.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Figure 9 Proposed land management zones

The applicant has now included an agricultural element of sheep grazing which will have a total area of 4 hectares. The applicant has proposed to improve the pasture through rotational grazing within the two proposed grazing areas. The proposed stocking rate for the subject site is 0.5 to 2 Dry Sheep Equivalent (DSE) per acre. The grazing area has been assessed as being a Class 3 ('fair') which supports agricultural uses with low to moderate levels of land disturbance such as broad acre cultivation in rotation with improved pastures. Moderate levels of production may be possible with specialist management practices such as minimum tillage. The holding capacity proposed is 24 sheep in an average season within the 4 hectares of pasture, if the site is well managed according to the actions of the EMP.

A biodiversity assessment via a site visit has been undertaken by the consultant, which has determined that the biodiversity value of the site has been severely degraded due to overgrazing and land clearing since the late 1800's. The site currently contains mainly

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

introduced species, being deemed as low strategic value of 0.41 to 0.60. The site's current strategic value is also derived from vegetation located within the road reserve, therefore the strategic biodiversity value is deemed to be lower than the cited 0.41 to 0.60. The proposed revegetation of the site would account for a maximum coverage of 30% within the two conservation areas, one being located along the drainage line within the approximate center of the site and the other running the length of the rear boundary of the site. This equates to 70% of the site being used for domestic and small scale agriculture of the site.

Assessment of the Amended Environmental Management Plan

The amended plan provides an improved understanding of the proposal, with more specific details of the environmental management actions proposed for the site. The revegetation of large sections of the site is unquestionably of benefit to the land.

However, the following elements of the proposal are noted.

The intended small scale agricultural grazing component has been newly submitted, although raises concerns with the proposed holding rates and the specialist knowledge required to improve the pastures on a continuous basis. The holding rates have not been assessed during times of drought and it is acknowledged that the land would not support the proposed holding rate of 24 sheep per season in a less than average season.

Water assets have not been identified, which is an important aspect given the introduction of an agricultural component onto the site.

The proposed agricultural element is therefore considered to be somewhat optimistic.

Notwithstanding the above, the key consideration is whether planning policy supports the development of dwellings in association with either small scale grazing or revegetation. The conclusions of the original report remain the same in this regard, being that the proposal is not supported by the Planning Scheme. Further discussion on this point continues below.

Future intention of remaining lots

The applicant has not responded to this element of Council's resolution. The future of the balance lots within the farming tenement therefore remains unclear.

Rural Dwellings Policy

The revised Environmental Management Plan proposes part revegetation of the site, along with small scale grazing. It is noted that grazing already occurs on the land, therefore there is no particular change of use from that perspective and the proposal is not found to warrant a dwelling based on agricultural reasons. This therefore leaves the question of whether the revegetation of part of the site is adequate justification to use and develop the land for a dwelling. Planning officers agree that the proposed revegetation of parts of the site would be beneficial for the land. However the Scheme does not identify that dwellings should be supported in this area 'in exchange' for good land management practices. *Good land management* and *whether the land should contain a dwelling* are distinct (ie. not dependent) issues.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Approving a dwelling on the site would also be contrary to the City's rural dwellings policy at Clause 22.02 which states that it is policy to discourage dwellings on existing small Crown allotments in all rural areas created before planning controls. As outlined earlier in this report, the site is part of an overall larger agricultural property in common ownership, consisting of around 15 separate land parcels, all of which are old Crown allotments If approved, the proposal would essentially break up a larger land tenement, which already contains a dwelling, resulting in the fragmentation of rural land. Further, it would invite the fragmentation of the remaining lots within the common ownership in the same manner.

The municipality contains many thousands of vacant historic lots that each form part of a broader holding. Individual development of each of these, parcel by parcel, would have significant economic, environmental and landscape issues for the municipality.

The applicant has not engaged on the third element of Council's resolution, to be able to understand the future intention of the remaining lots within the balance farming tenement.

Based on the assessment, it is concluded that the proposal would not be acceptable when considered against local planning policy.

Environmental Significance Overlay

The site is also affected by the Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedules 1 and 3. Schedule 1 relates to the protection of watercourses and associated ground water quality, which supplies the Greater Bendigo region for the provision of potable water and agricultural activities. Schedule 3 aims to ensure the protection and maintenance of water quality and water yield within the Eppalock Water Supply Catchment Area. The development would likely cause a negative detrimental impact on these significant watercourses and catchment areas if the land is not managed correctly. Although the applicant submitted a 10-year land management plan, the plan is not detailed enough to ascertain whether the proposal would improve the quality of watercourses within the subject site. Whilst the referral authorities did not object to the proposal, their assessment was isolated to specific fields and not the comprehensive assessment against the Planning Scheme as required by the City.

This, however, is not a key area of concern and the recommendation for refusal does not derive from this particular planning control.

Conclusion

While the amended Environmental Management Plan is more detailed than the previous plan, the consideration for assessment is whether the Plan changes the original recommendation. The conclusion of the assessment is that the plan does not change the recommendation because the substantive in-principle reasons for the original recommendation remain, regardless of the quality of the plans provided.

The Scheme does not identify that dwellings should be supported in this area 'in exchange' for good land management or environmental outcomes. Given the context of the land as agricultural, the applicant could potentially have proposed a more intensive

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

agricultural enterprise necessitating the support of a residence, however this is not understood to be the intention.

Having regard to the relevant planning controls, the amended Environmental Management Plan still does not demonstrate Planning Scheme support. The proposal remains a ‘de facto’ rural living outcome. The added agricultural component of sheep grazing does not necessitate a dwelling being located onsite, given that the small scale of these activities can occur without one. The advice of the City’s agribusiness team is that small flocks and their offspring do not require a dwelling for support, as long as the minimum welfare standards have been put in place by the owner.

The proposal continues to reflect an incremental and concerning shift towards rural living in an area of the municipality not intended for such a purpose. The City has around 70 years land supply remaining within Rural Living Zones. Planning policy seeks to direct such activities to such areas to safeguard remaining rural areas from the impacts of dwelling proliferation and land fragmentation.

It remains of concern that the applicant has not engaged on the second element of Council’s resolution to convey the intended future of the land within the residual farming tenement. Approval of the current proposal has the potential to set in chain the gradual outselling and pressure to develop the other 14 lots, disaggregating the farm and reducing its productive capacity. It would also undermine planning policy that seeks to direct such activities to strategically defined areas in the form of Rural Living Zones.

Finally, it is noted that the refusal of the application would not hinder the ability for the land to continue to be used for agriculture in accordance with the purposes of the zone, nor would it prevent good conservation and land management being practiced.

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

Options

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

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

16.2. 15 Panorama Road, Lockwood South 3551 - 2 Lot Subdivision of Land (Dwelling Excision)

Author	Peter O'Brien, Planning Coordinator and Liz Commadeur, Planner - Subdivisions
Responsible Director	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Summary/Purpose

Application details:	2 lot subdivision of land (dwelling excision)
Application No:	DS/266/2021
Application Documents	Application Documents
Applicant:	W A Martin and K L Martin
Land:	15 Panorama Road, LOCKWOOD SOUTH 3551
Zoning:	Farming Zone
Overlays:	Nil
No. of objections:	Nil
Consultation meeting:	NA
Key considerations:	• Will the proposal result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to Planning Policy and the Farming Zone? • What has the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) said about dwelling excision subdivisions in the Farming Zone?
Conclusion:	The applicant has appealed to VCAT against the City's failure to determine the application within the statutory timeframe. This report recommends Council establish the position of *not supporting* the proposal at the VCAT hearing scheduled for 27 October 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council advise VCAT and the Permit Applicant that it does not support the granting of a permit for a 2-lot subdivision of land (dwelling excision) at 15 Panorama Road, LOCKWOOD SOUTH 3551 for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is inconsistent with planning policy regarding rural subdivisions and dwellings.
2. The proposal is inconsistent with the purposes of the Farming Zone.
3. The proposal does not support or enhance agricultural production which would be one of few reasons that a dwelling excision subdivision may be supported.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 4 Presentation and managing growth
- Goal 6 Embracing our culture and heritage

Attachments

1. Planning Assessment Report

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - 15 Panorama Road Planning Assessment Report

Background Information

In March 1994 the site was created by the consolidation of two Crown Allotments by the former Rural City of Marong.

Report

Subject Site and Surrounds

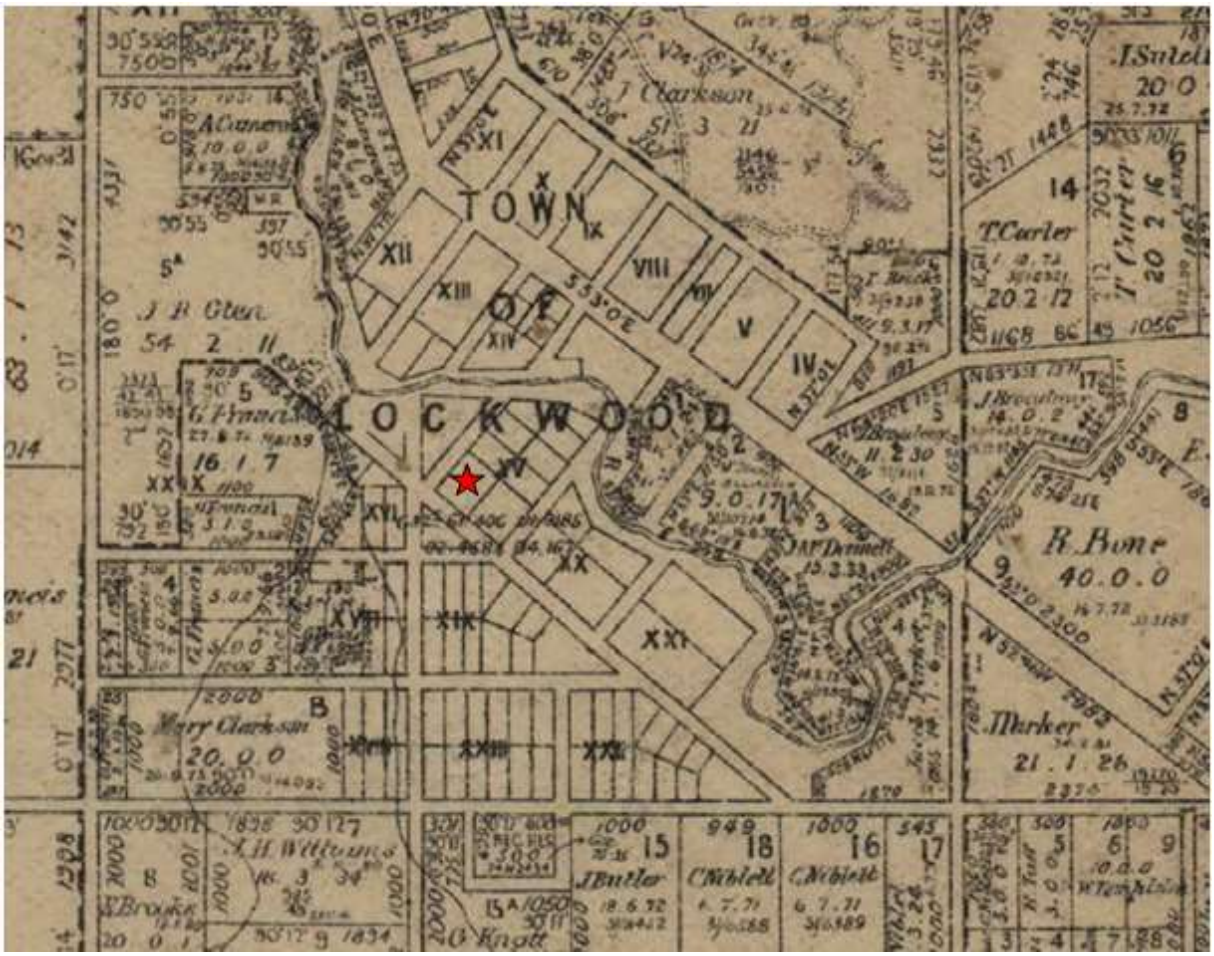


Figure 1: Location of application site on original survey / parish map for Lockwood.

The subject site is located on the corner of Panorama Road and Brooke Street, Lockwood South, approximately 150 south east of the Bendigo-Maldon Road. The site is rectangular in shape with an area of 8,093 square metres. The site has a frontage of 80.46 metres to Panorama Road and 100.58 metres to Brooke Street. A dwelling and outbuildings are in the south eastern part of the site. Access to the site is available from Panorama Road and Brooke Street. The site is currently serviced by electricity and telecommunication supply systems. Potable water can be provided by existing water tanks adjacent to the dwelling and a septic tank system is available for the management of wastewater on site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The site is described as Land in Plan of Consolidation 354339 with two former Crown Allotments having been joined together to make the title which now exists. All other titles in the immediate surrounds are 4,000 square metres in size and above.

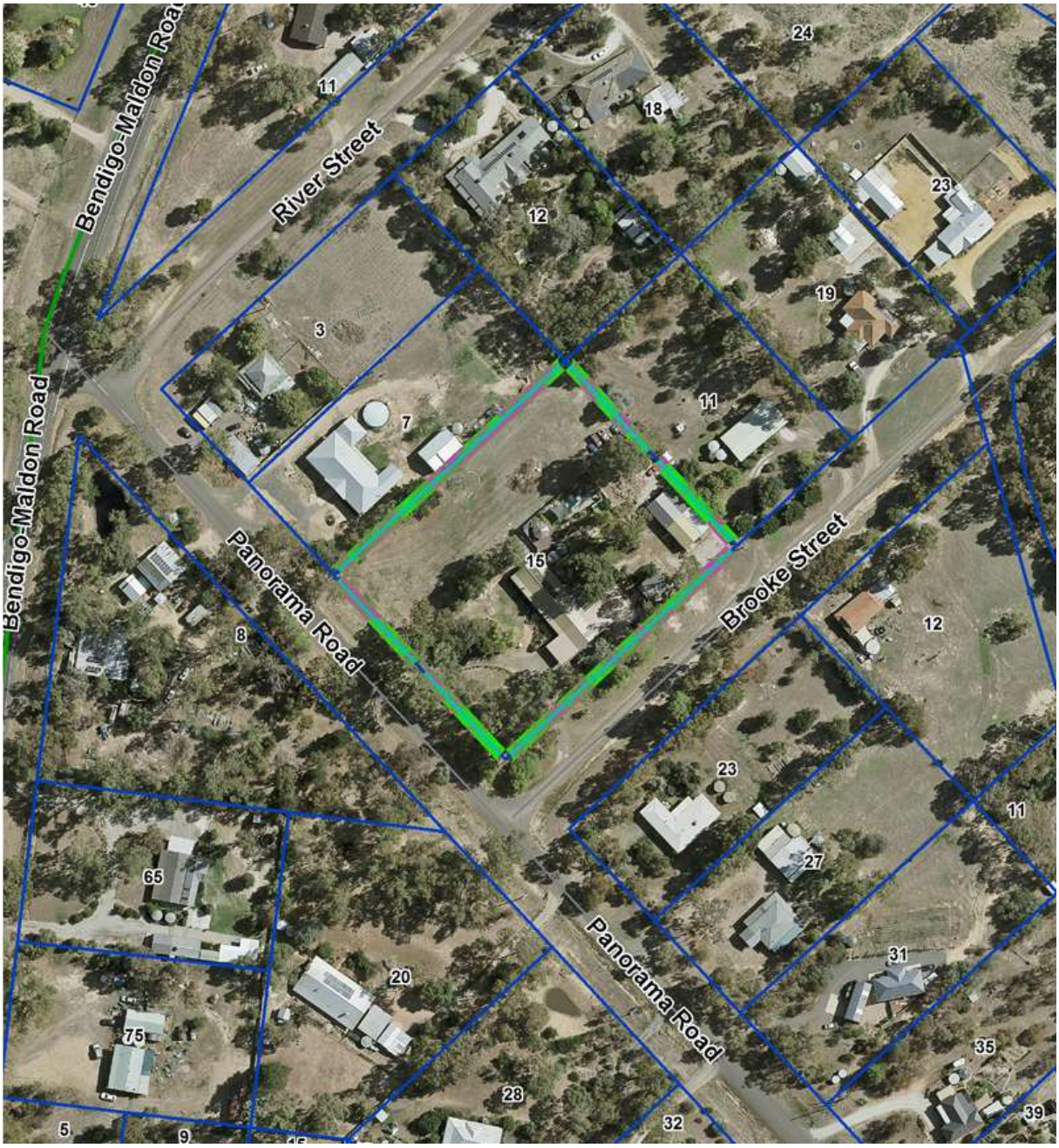


Figure 2: Location map showing subject site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Figure 3: Application site in relation to Low Density Residential Zoned land.

Proposal

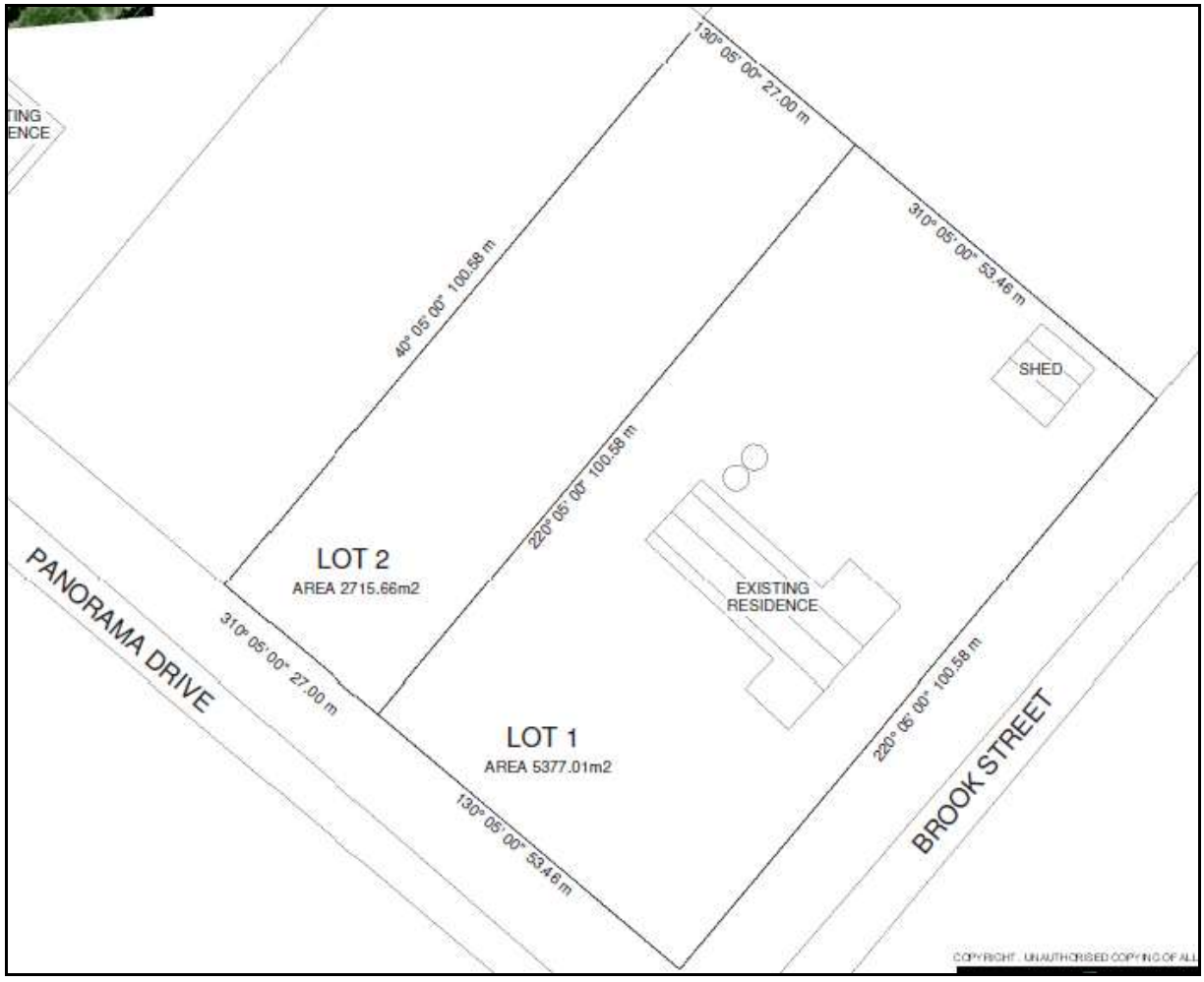


Figure 4: Proposed plan of subdivision.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The applicant seeks approval for a two-lot subdivision (dwelling excision). The subdivision layout would feature:

- Lot 1 would have an area of 5,377.01 square metres.
- Lot 2 would have an area of 2,715.66 square metres.
- An existing dwelling and associated outbuilding would be retained on Lot 1.
- Access to Lot 1 is from Panorama Drive Road and a secondary access from Brook Street, while access to Lot 2 would be from Panorama Drive.
- The lots created by the subdivision are capable of being serviced by electricity and telecommunication supply systems.
- Water supply can be provided by onsite water tanks (in the absence of reticulation).
- The management of wastewater on site would be reliant on septic tank systems.

Planning Controls - Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme

The need for a planning permit is triggered by:

- Clause 35.07-3 of the Farming Zone, which states that a permit is required to subdivide land.

The zone states that the minimum lot size for subdivision of land is 40 hectares, meaning that at least 80 hectares would be required to undertake a two-lot subdivision.

The application site is approximately 8,092.7 square metres. The Planning Scheme does, however, state that a permit may be granted to create smaller lots if the subdivision is to create a lot for an existing dwelling. The Planning Scheme at clause 35.07-3 states that a subdivision of this type must be a two-lot subdivision.

This provision is commonly referred to as being a ‘dwelling excision’ type of application.

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

<u>Planning Policy Framework</u>

- Clause 11 Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1S Settlement
- Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Loddon Mallee South
- Clause 14.01-1S Protection of agricultural land Clause 15.01-3S Subdivision design
- Clause 16.01-5S Rural residential development
- Clause 16.01-3S Housing diversity

<u>Local Planning Policy Framework</u>

- Clause 21.02 Key Issues and Influences
- Clause 21.07 Economic Development
- Clause 22.02 Rural Dwellings Policy
- Clause 22.03 Rural Subdivision Policy

<u>Other Provisions</u>

- Farming Zone (clause 35.07)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Decision guidelines (clause 65).
- Referral and notice provisions (clause 66).

Consultation/Communication

Referrals

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

Referral	Comment
Traffic & Design	No objection subject to conditions
Drainage	No objection subject to conditions
Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions

Public Notification

The application was advertised by way of notice on the site and letters to adjoining and nearby owners and occupiers. No objections to the granting of a permit were received.

Planning Assessment

Will the proposal result in an acceptable planning outcome having regard to Planning Policy and the Farming Zone?

The applicant is seeking approval to subdivide land into two parcels, to allow the excision of an existing dwelling (Lot 2). The balance lot would be able to be separately sold and it is assumed any future purchaser would want to construct a dwelling. The construction of dwelling on the balance land would need a further Planning Permit given the zoning and that the current and proposed lot are both well under 40 hectares in size.

The Farming Zone specifies that all lots created by subdivision should be at least the area specified in the zone. In Greater Bendigo, the required minimum lot size is generally 40 hectares, however in this case, the area of the proposed lots does not comply.

There is discretion to grant a permit for a smaller lot if the subdivision is to create a lot for an existing dwelling and the Scheme states that it must be a two-lot subdivision. Because a permit may be granted does not mean it should be granted. The responsible authority must decide whether the proposed subdivision will produce acceptable outcomes in terms of the decision guidelines of the Farming Zone.

The purposes of the Farming Zone encompass the following relevant matters:
- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for the use of land for agriculture.*
- *To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.*
- *To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.*

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- *To provide for the use and development of land for the specific purposes identified in a schedule to this zone.*

Only one of the zone purposes directly refers to 'dwellings', however this should not be taken to mean that the zone purpose supports the construction of dwellings, rather that purpose is centred around ensuring dwellings *do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture*.

In addition to the minimum lot size provision, the provisions of the Farming Zone direct that consideration must also be given to several decision guidelines under the Farming Zone which consider the question of how rural subdivisions fit within these purposes.

The decision guidelines provide a means by which to assess such applications. The decision guidelines include the following matters that are relevant to this application:

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

The Rural Dwellings Policy (Clause 22.02) and Rural Subdivision Policy (Clause 22.03), supported by both State and local policy at Clauses 14.01-1S and 21.07- 8 and 21.07-10 discourage subdivision and dwellings on lots smaller than the schedule minimum. The Rural Subdivision Policy states:

- *Ensure lots created by excising dwellings under the provisions of Clause 35.07-3 should have a maximum size of 2 hectares, except as otherwise required by a provision of this planning scheme.*
- *Discourage subdivision that is likely to lead to such a concentration of lots as to change the general use and character of the rural area and which is not consistent with the purposes of the zones.*
- *Ensure lots created under the provisions of Clause 35.03-3, 35.06-3 or 35.07-3 for residential use and development are: -*
  - *Clustered in order to minimise the area taken up by residential use and development;*
  - *Not located to limit the productive use and development of rural land; and*
  - *Boundary realignments will be discouraged except if they are minor adjustments to take account of physical, person made or topographical features on the site.*
- *Ensure that lots created are of sufficient size to contain and manage domestic wastewater within the boundaries of each lot, to be demonstrated by a land capability assessment, where connection to reticulated sewerage is not required by the responsible authority.*
- *Discourage subdivision of high-quality agricultural land.*
- *Ensure subdivisions are carefully planned to protect water quantity and quality and significant native vegetation.*

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- *Discourage serial excisions and further subdivision after re-configuration of existing titles.*

Officers do not assert that the land is being used productively, nor (given the context) would it likely raise issue for land which is being used in this way. Likewise, there is no issue with 'technical' ability for the lot to contain a dwelling, particularly regarding onsite effluent disposal for the proposed lot, and the system associated with the existing dwelling which has been confirmed by advice received from the City's Environmental Health team.

The factual situation for this site is atypical given the lot is located within an area originally surveyed to be the Lockwood Township (refer to Figure 1) and both the Low-Density Residential Zone and Farming Zone are applied in this former Township. The Low-Density Residential Zone has a minimum subdivision lot size of 4,000 square metres in cases where sewer is not available and there is no equivalent 'dwelling excision' provision which would allow those lots to be further subdivided. It seems counter to orderly planning that the Farming Zone lots could potentially be further subdivided, yet the Low-Density Residential Zone (which is a residential zone) cannot be.

The City has not sought to provide further locality specific guidance for area in the same way it has for Ravenswood, Neilborough and Kamarooka where the planning tool of the Restructure Overlay has been applied so that these areas develop in a more orderly way. The City has also not planned strategically for this area to develop as a township, had that been the case a different planning regime, for example the Township Zone would apply.

With respect to the proposed subdivision, what is being sought is atypical. This type of subdivision is generally confined to the subdivision of an existing dwelling from a significantly larger rural lot, with the balance lot continuing to be farmed. In many cases the balance (larger lot not containing the dwelling) is then restricted via permit conditions requiring the use of section 173 agreements to not allow for a further dwelling for a defined period, or at such time that the zoning changes. This is not the case in this instance.

Dwelling excision subdivisions (particularly those on larger lots) can be detrimental to the efficient operation of farming land if the subdivision does not relate to and is not required for the farming activity on the land. Both the current and proposed lots are under 2 hectares in size – and this element of the Rural Subdivision Policy is in place as it assumes that an excision would occur only in a case where the land was a large lot, the balance would be farmed hence the importance of minimising the lot area for the excised dwelling.

The excision of an existing dwelling in this case would create the expectation that an additional dwelling would be constructed on the vacant lot. In this case officers hold the view that there is no strategic basis for the approval of the subdivision, which could potentially be the case if the subdivision was of a larger farming lot where a nexus was demonstrated that the excision was related to the process of the consolidation of a larger farm. Further, the City has not planned strategically for the Lockwood Township to contain more dwellings as has been the case with other localities faced with similar contexts.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Panorama Road and its surrounds (both within the Farming Zone and Low-Density Residential Zone) represents what would be described as fragmented in terms of ownership and a more rural residential pattern of development. Larger Farming Zone holdings exist beyond this area, including a poultry farm approximately 1 kilometre to the south of the site.

Strategically, it is well under understood that Greater Bendigo has a significant supply of land zoned for Rural Living purposes (an estimated 70 years supply), so whilst this proposal would only introduce a further Farming Zoned lot, there is clearly no strategic imperative for this subdivision to be approved.

Whilst planning does not operate under precedent, Council must be cautious in how discretion is exercised, and that exercise of discretion should be fair, orderly and consistent. Given the challenges the City currently has in assessing applications on existing Crown Allotments, it would not be an orderly planning outcome strategically if the dwelling excision provisions were used to create additional small unserviced allotments.

What has the VCAT said about dwelling excisions in the Farming Zone?

Most of the VCAT decisions that were reviewed tended to be cautious of dwelling excision applications, where the proposal has no relationship with, or is required for, the continuing operation of the agricultural use of the land and would merely allow the lot to be sold to another unrelated party.

It is acknowledged that VCAT decisions all rely on their own particular facts, contexts and application of the relevant Planning Scheme; however, in *Graham v Surf Coast SC [2016] VCAT 883 (31 May 2016)*, the Tribunal found:

> *"The planning loss in this case is less about the loss of productive land, because the proposed house lot is relatively small (and even though it may be cropped/grazed). Rather, the loss relates to the creation of a small house lot that can only be used for rural living or lifestyle purposes. It is not proposed to contribute to agricultural production and is not intended to have any link with the balance lot that will continue in agricultural production. The current owners may have no issue with farming on abutting land because of their own experience but that is not necessarily the case for new occupants. Mr Forbes acknowledges issues can and do arise when "urban romantics" take issue with agricultural activities even though his evidence is that the impacts are not significant and the concerns are not well founded."*

With respect to the current viability of land or otherwise as a productive farming enterprise *Smith v Baw Baw SC [2016] VCAT 611 (28 April 2016)* found that:

> *"There is now, and for decades past has been, a desire by some people to capitalise on the residential value of farming land but this is to the detriment of farming purposes. It is thus that policies against the fragmentation of farming land by subdivision into small less useful or useless pieces (useless, that is to say from a farming point of view) have been formulated. Indeed, the tendency over 50 years or so has been for the areas needed for viable farming to increase rather than decrease, notwithstanding the advantages of advanced farming techniques, machinery, fertiliser and so on.*

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

> *I should add, that it is not a question of every piece of land being a viable farm, standing alone. Substantial pieces of land can be aggregated to be the basis of viable agricultural activities. To do that it is convenient but not always necessary for pieces of land being used to be contiguous. A piece of land, not sufficient for a viable farm in itself, is still valuable farm land that can be owned, leased or used for agistment in association with other farm land. However, fragmentation into little bits is strongly contraindicated."*

Officers have been unable to locate a VCAT decision which relates to a parcel of land *as small* as 15 Panorama Road. In support of the recommendation being made, there are cases where councils, in approving dwelling excision subdivisions in order to be satisfied that the balance land will not be used for a dwelling, have in fact included permit conditions requiring section 173 agreements to this effect. These types of conditions / restrictions can be challenged at VCAT, however the use of this type of condition again underscores the sorts of circumstances where a dwelling excision should be entertained – such a circumstance is not the case for this proposal.

Conclusion

The applicant has appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) against the City's failure to determine the application within the statutory timeframe. This report recommends Council establish the position of *not supporting* the proposal at the VCAT hearing scheduled for 27 October 2021.

Options

Council may resolve to either:

- Advise VCAT it does not support the Grant of Permit as recommended; or
- Advise VCAT it does support the grant a permit with conditions.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

16.3. Planning Scheme Amendment C241 - Former Golden Square Primary School at 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square

Author	Wonona Fuzzard, Coordinator Public Spaces and Place Making
Responsible Director	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide details of the proposed planning scheme amendment affecting the former Golden Square Primary School at 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square (known as Amendment C241gben).

Summary

Council has now been formally advised that following a request from the Department of Treasury and Finance (on behalf of the Department of Education), the Minister for Planning has referred Amendment C241gben to the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee (GLSAC) to facilitate the planning scheme amendment for the former Golden Square Primary School.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Make a submission regarding Planning Scheme Amendment C241gben to the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee based on the position outlined in this Report.
2. Authorise City officers to present at any future Directions Hearing or Public Hearing on behalf of Council's submission.

Policy Context

Primary Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 2 Wellbeing and fairness
- Objective 2.2 Promote positive wellbeing across the Greater Bendigo community
- Objective 2.5 Create safe and resilient communities

Secondary Community Plan Reference(s):

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 3 Strengthening the economy
- Objective 3.1 Support our local businesses and industry to be strong, vibrant and to grow and develop
- Goal 4: Presentation and managing growth
- 4.1.3 Complete agreed structure and township plans, this includes a neighbourhood revitalisation program for Golden Square.
- 4.2 Plan to meet future housing needs

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Goal 6: Embracing our culture and heritage
- Recognise and celebrate our unique history and diverse cultures.

Other References:

Connecting Greater Bendigo – Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2015

Aims for a compact city, providing better access for people to both goods and services and promotes improved public transport and active transport for better health and wellbeing. Advocates for the reopening of the Golden Square railway station which is immediately adjacent to the subject site.

Greater Bendigo Residential Strategy (2014)

The Residential Strategy seeks to plan for and manage future residential development of the municipality. It includes the following relevant key direction:

"*Facilitate the utilisation of significant infill and urban renewal sites with new innovative forms of housing, residential development and community focused neighbourhoods with an initial focus on land commonly referred to as 'the Chum Street site' and progressively focusing on a series of other publicly owned sites that have development potential."*

The development objectives relevant to the subject site are:

- Encourage the efficient use of land within the Urban Growth Boundary, including infill development while carefully managing any environmental risk and respecting the character of the area.
- Promote higher density and diversity on sites that demonstrate high levels of accessibility and proximity to activity centres and nodes such as the university and hospital precincts.
- Support high quality, well designed higher density residential development, especially in accessible locations, such as the City Centre, University Precinct and Village Centres.

Greater Bendigo Housing Strategy (2016) (Amended 2018)

The relevant key strategic directions which arise from the Housing Strategy include:

- To provide greater diversity in housing with a focus on smaller housing on smaller lots with a component of affordable housing.
- To have housing in accessible locations and for future residents to have safe active transport options.
- To improve the design quality of housing and the public realm and a generous provision of quality public open space and areas for people to gather.

Draft Golden Square Structure Plan and Urban Design Framework

The Draft Golden Square Structure Plan aims to develop a framework which will provide direction to revitalise and transform the suburb over time. The Plan sets out objectives, strategies and planning scheme recommendations on matters including land use (residential, commercial, industrial, passive open space), environmental risks (bushfire, flooding, and soil contamination), public realm improvements and the public transport network. The subject site has been considered in the Plan and is addressed in more detail in the Urban Design Framework which promotes the reuse of the site for higher

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

density residential development and reuse of the exiting heritage listed former school building.

Background Information

The City was advised of the Education Department's intention to sell the property on 17 November 2015 as per the First Right of Refusal process. Various parts of the City provided feedback, including units such as Strategy, Active and Healthy Lifestyles, Property, Community Partnerships, Economic Development, Property and Engineering.

The City, at the time, advised the Department of Treasury that it did not intend to purchase the site. The City, however, did indicate that it was interested in the future use of the site, and specifically, that it has potential for an innovative housing development that would take advantage of its location i.e. close to commercial centre, community facilities, Calder highway and the disused railway station identified as part of the Bendigo Metro network.

Previous Council Decision Date:

19 August 2020 – Council resolved to place the Draft Golden Square Structure Plan, Background Report and Urban Design Framework on public exhibition.

Report

Government Land Standing Advisory Committee

A Government Land Standing Advisory Committee (GLSAC) has been appointed for the Golden Square Primary School site which is a fast-track planning scheme amendment process. Council is not the planning authority for Amendment C241gben, but can prepare and lodge a submission to GLSAC if it chooses. Council's submission would be considered alongside all other submissions that are received from the community. Submitters will also be able to present their views in front of the GLSAC at a public hearing.

At completion of the public hearing, the GLSAC will provide a report directly to the Minister for Planning with recommendations on Amendment C241gben, and the Minister for Planning will determine the final planning scheme controls.

In the event that If the site is to be rezoned for residential development, then the Department of Treasury and Finance could decide to commence a sale process.

Subject Site

The former Golden Square Primary School at 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square is comprised of 9 lots:

- Crown Allotment 3A, Section15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst (Crown land)
- Lots 1-3 Title Plan 951463
- Crown Allotments 15 and16, Section15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst
- Lots 1-3 Title Plan 812382

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Figure 1: Aerial photo

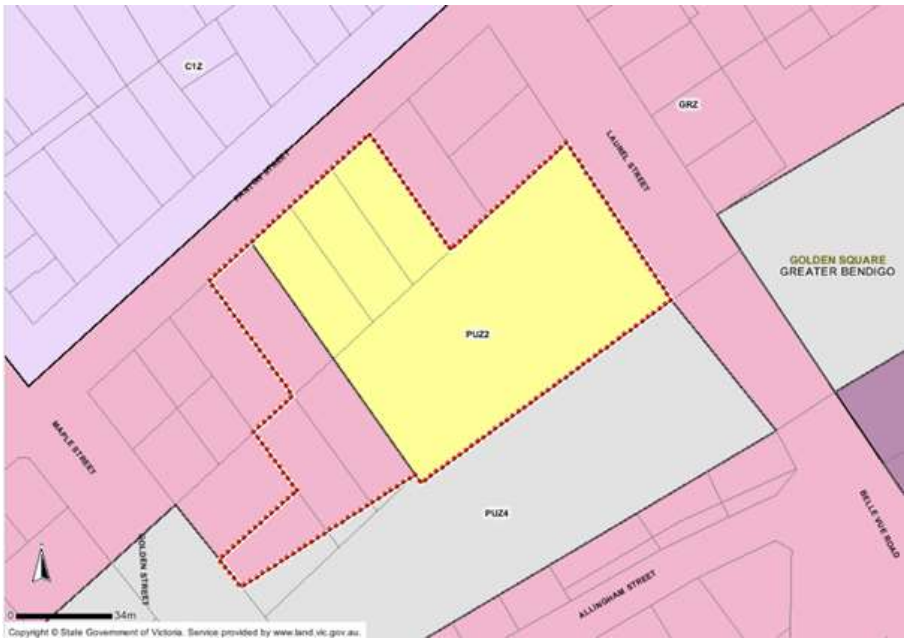


Figure 2: Zoning map

The site is currently part zoned Public Use Zone (PUZ6) and General Residential Zone (GRZ).

Amendment C241gben

The amendment proposes to:

- Rezone part of the site from Public Use Zone 2 (Education) to General Residential Zone (Schedule 2), to facilitate residential development.
- Apply the Development Plan Overlay (Schedule 30).
- Apply the Environmental Audit Overlay.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Remove the Heritage Overlay (HO25) that covers part of the site, and apply a new Heritage Overlay (HO916) that includes the heritage significant former school building and peppercorn tree.
- Remove the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (Schedule 1) from part of the site.
- Amend the Golden Square Residential Character Policy, and remove from part of the site.

In summary the proposal:

- Identifies a higher density dwellings scenario;
- Promotes adaptive reuse and protection of the heritage listed main former school building;
- Demonstrates active support for the protection of the heritage elements of the site through the identification of curtilage areas and protection of views to Laurel Street;
- Building heights that range from 9m to 13.5m; and
- A public open space component for connection from the former train station to Laurel street.

The Explanatory Report for Amendment C241gben is included as Attachment 1, and provides information on what the amendment does, and also its justification.

Draft Golden Square Structure Plan and Urban Design Framework

The draft Golden Square Structure Plan and Urban Design Framework provide the following strategic directions for the Golden Square Primary School site:

- Protect the existing heritage buildings on the site
- Support for higher density development on the site
- Support four storey apartments along the southern boundary
- Support 2-3 storey dwellings in the central part of the site
- Support 2 storey dwellings along the Panton street frontage
- Support the re-use of the heritage listed school building
- Protect key views from Laurel street to the heritage listed school building
- Provide a pedestrian connection from the former train station site to Laurel Street

Overall the information in the Explanatory Report is comprehensive, and the proposed higher residential density development is generally consistent with the vision outlined in the draft Golden Square Structure Plan. The protection and promotion of an adaptive re-use of the former school building is supported and allows opportunity for complementary uses and ongoing access.

However, a key point of difference is the recommended building heights. The draft Structure Plan took a conservative approach to increasing density on the site, particularly in regard to the height of buildings. This component of the draft Structure Plan was already under review due to consideration of a submission received on behalf of the Department of Education. The submission was supportive of the overall vision of the draft

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Structure Plan, however, requested reconsideration of the heights proposed. Heights proposed are generally a storey higher than recommended in the Structure Plan with the height stepping up towards the back of the site.

Panton street is wide and lined with street trees. The width and depth of the site provides opportunities to develop a quality integrated design solution that could accommodate additional height in the central/ rear part of the site if the controls provide clear direction. With respect to the two to three storey buildings (up to 11m height) that are proposed to front onto Panton street and be included in the central area, any potential adverse impacts have been addressed well in the Development Plan Overlay (Attachment 2) through the following requirements:

- Front setbacks to Panton Street must be determined by the setbacks of the nearby church buildings;
- Buildings must be setback a minimum of five metres to side boundaries; and
- Buildings taller than two storeys must incorporate upper level side and front setbacks in order to reduce bulk and reduce amenity impacts.

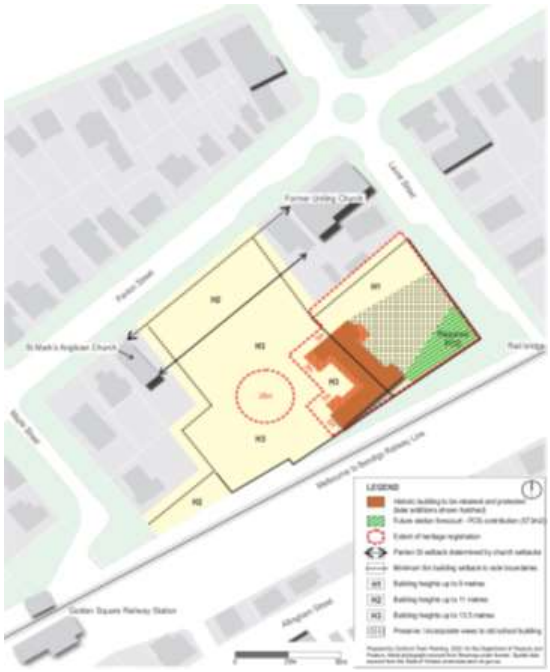


Figure 3: Development Plan Overlay – Proposed heights and setbacks

Having regard to the controls in the Development Plan Overlay it is considered that the heights as proposed in this amendment have merit and will assist in achieving optimum use of an important infill development site which are becoming increasingly limited across Greater Bendigo. The draft Structure Plan will be presented to Council shortly and the relevant recommendations from this Report will be incorporated into the final document.

Affordable Housing

Appropriately located social housing to support the growing community needs, has been actively supported by the State government's recent Big Housing Build Program and Council's recent adoption of the Affordable Housing Action Plan. The subject site offers an excellent opportunity to consider a percentage of the site to be used for affordable housing. The site is ideally located for easy access to facilities and services which is why it was identified as a higher density development site. Further, this would provide an

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

opportunity for adaptive reuse of the heritage building to provide complementary community-based services. There is precedence for this requirement to be included in planning schemes (most likely through the Development Plan Overlay) and would allow the State government to support the delivery of their own policy platform for delivery more affordable housing in the Big Build Housing Program.

Heritage

The heritage significance of the site has been considered in the Heritage Assessment Report and Statement of Significance (Attachment 3). The proposed amendment has included the recommendations of the Heritage Assessment and includes the protection of the main school building and peppercorn tree.

The Assessment also includes:

- A 5m curtilage around the school building;
- A view corridor that extends from Laurel Street to school building;
- A height control of 13.5m for development at the rear of the school building; and
- A height control of 9m on either side of the view corridor to Laurel Street.

The controls recommended are supported having regard to the high heritage value of the former school building, however, an extension of the curtilage area at the rear of site from five to eight metres should be considered due to the development height proposed at this part of the site.

Public Open Space

As part of the development of the draft Golden Square Structure Plan, discussions were held with Department of Treasury and Finance to look at opportunities to protect a portion of the land adjacent to the former railway station, as Council was advocating the reopening of the station. This would be the only opportunity to get a public access connection from the station to link to Laurel street allowing easy access to the commercial area on High Street. It was agreed that the wedge of land in question could be the offset of the required Open Space Contribution, and this agreement is recommended to form part of Council's submission to Amendment C241gben. It should be noted that originally this portion of land had been identified for development to a height of nine metres.

Priority/Importance:

This is of high importance due both to the importance of this site for the community and the timing for the exhibition period which concludes on 24 October 2021.

Options/Alternatives:

Council has the option of:

- Making a submission regarding the Planning Scheme Amendment to the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee which outlines our recommendations for the proposed amendment.
- Making a submission regarding the Planning Scheme Amendment to the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee which supports the amendment as exhibited.
- Not making a submission regarding the Planning Scheme Amendment to the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Consultation/Communication

On Monday, 13 September 2021 Council was formally advised that following a request from the Department of Treasury and Finance (on behalf of the Department of Education), the Minister for Planning has referred Amendment C241gben to the GLSAC. The closing date for submissions is Sunday, 24 October 2021. The Directions hearing will take place in the week of 8 November 2021 followed by the Hearing in the week of 6 December 2021. Individual letters have been sent to a large area surrounding the development and an information session was held on 28 September 2021.

Interested community members and Council are now able to make a submission regarding the content of the proposed Amendment to the GLSAC as well as present at the Hearing

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to prepare a submission to the Government Land Planning Service Advisory Committee.

Attachments

1. Golden Square Primary School Planning Report
2. Development Plan Overlay Schedule 30
3. Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - Golden Square Primary School Planning Report

Golden Square Primary School
Planning Scheme Amendment



Town Planning Report

Prepared by

centrum
TOWN PLANNING

For the Department of Treasury & Finance
December 2019

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Use of report

This report has been prepared by Centrum Town Planning with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the timescale and resources allocated to it by agreement with the Client.

This report is confidential and for the exclusive use of the Department of Treasury and Finance.

No warranties or guarantees are expressed or should be inferred by any third parties. This report may not be relied upon by other parties without written consent from Centrum Town Planning. Centrum Town Planning disclaims any responsibility to the Client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the work.

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Date	121 December, 2019

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Contents

1 Introduction 5
2 Site summary 5
3 Background 7
4 Urban context 8
5 Site description 12
6 Planning provisions 17
7 Site history & significance 19
8 Site surrounds 22
9 Site analysis 27
10 Legislative context 33
11 Strategic context 38
12 Policy context 42
14 Proposed zone provisions 46
15 Proposed design guidelines 51
16 Risks and threats 55
17 Conclusion 59
18 Summary of recommendations 60
19 References 61

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Figures

Figure 1 Site location and aerial photograph....6
Figure 2 Urban context....11
Figure 3 Zone map....17
Figure 4 Overlay map....18
Figure 5 Site analysis: heritage and built form....29
Figure 6 Site analysis: landscape and environment....30
Figure 7 Site analysis: amenity and interfaces....31
Figure 8 Site analysis: transport and movement....32
Figure 9 Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity....35
Figure 10 Golden Square Residental Character Policy map (from Clause 22.15)....44
Figure 11 Recommended zones....49
Figure 12 Recommended changes to overlays....50
Figure 13 Recommended design guidelines....54

Tables

Table 1 Population and housing forecast for Golden Square from 2016 to 2036....10
Table 2 Overview and analysis of Residential Growth Zone and General Residential Zone....47

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared to support a planning scheme amendment to rezone the former Golden Square Primary School ('the site'). The site is located in Laurel Street, Golden Square, as shown in Figure 1 on the following page. The primary school closed in June, 2015. The site has been declared as surplus to education requirements by the Department of Education and Training (DET). In order to enable the sale of the land, the report recommends that a planning scheme amendment is prepared to rezone the site to the General Residential Zone with a Development Plan Overlay and Environmental Audit Overlay.

Centrum Town Planning was engaged to prepare this report by the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF). The report provides a description of the site and surrounds, a description of the strategic and policy context, an analysis of the constraints and opportunities presented by the site, a discussion of its redevelopment potential and recommendations for planning provisions that should apply to the land.

The report is accompanied by two reports prepared by other consultants: a Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance prepared by Amanda Jean, architect and heritage consultant, and a traffic and transport report prepared by Trafficworks. These reports are separately available as background documents.

2 SITE SUMMARY

Name of school	Golden Square Primary School
Address	6 Laurel Street, Golden Square
Land area	12,680 square metres (1.268 hectares)
Legal description	Total of 9 lots: • Crown Allotment 3A, Section15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst (Crown land) • Lots 1-3 Title Plan 951463 • Crown Allotments 15 & 16, Section15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst • Lots 1-3 Title Plan 812382
Municipality	City of Greater Bendigo
Zone	• General Residential Zone (GRZ) - Part • Public Use Zone - Education (PUZ2) - Part
Overlays	Heritage Overlay (HO25) – Part
Covenants / Easements	• Sewerage easement over CA16

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

3 BACKGROUND

Surplus sites are offered for sale to Victorian Government Agencies, local government and the Commonwealth Government via a First Right of Refusal (FROR) process. For the Golden Square Primary School, this process occurred from 17/11/2015 to 16/01/2016. No other government authority or agency elected to purchase the site through this process.

From a town planning perspective, the *Victorian Government Land Transactions Policy and Guidelines (April 2016)*, state that:

Prior to offering land for sale by a public process, agencies must have in place the most appropriate planning provisions (including zoning) so that the land can be sold on the basis of its highest and best use. An agency must not offer land for sale to a private purchaser that is zoned for a public purpose under a planning scheme unless an exemption is obtained under section 2(d) of the Policy (State of Victoria, 2016, 4).

The Crown land component of the site therefore needs to be removed from the Public Use Zone and appropriate planning provisions applied, prior to sale.

The site comprises a mix of freehold and crown land. The Crown land, Crown Allotment 3A, Section15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst, has an area of approximately 6,620 square metres. In accordance with the *Strategic Crown Land Assessment Policy and Guidelines (April, 2016)*, a Strategic Crown Land Assessment (SCLA) was undertaken on 15/6/2016. The report found that there were low public land values present at the site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

4 URBAN CONTEXT

This section of the report describes the urban context of the site and the suburb of Golden Square under a number of themes relevant to planning.

Location and linkages

The site is located in the central part of Golden Square, two kilometres to the south-west of the Bendigo CBD. It is strategically located in a narrow corridor of land that lies between the Bendigo-Melbourne Railway Line and High Street, the main arterial road route in Bendigo.

Golden Square is located in the middle of an eight kilometre long stretch of urban development that extends from Kangaroo Flat to the Bendigo CBD. The suburb is traversed by three major features that cross Bendigo in a south-east to north-west direction: High Street (Calder Highway), which connects Melbourne with the Bendigo CBD, the Melbourne to Bendigo Railway Line and the Bendigo Creek. These features are visible in Figure 2.

Golden Square is strategically located in urban Bendigo. The north eastern boundary of the suburb adjoins inner Bendigo and the Bendigo CBD, where most of the City's retail, services and education facilities are located. The south-western boundary adjoins Kangaroo Flat, the gateway to the City from Melbourne and the south. The site has a high level of connectivity to the rest of urban Bendigo via High Street and two inter-urban arterial road routes, the 'inner box' (Don Street/Myrtle Street) and 'outer box' (McKenzie Street West).

Settlement pattern

Golden Square is a diverse suburb from a physical and social perspective. This diversity reflects its location and history. Golden Square was the location of the first gold discoveries in Bendigo and was one of the earliest areas settled by Europeans during the gold rush of the early 1850s. Golden Square contains various former mining sites and large areas of industrial and commercial land that are a remnant of the mining and manufacturing history of the area. Urban development historically followed the transport spines of High Street and the Melbourne to Bendigo Railway line and the oldest buildings are concentrated along these routes.

Population profile

Golden Square is, first and foremost, a residential area. The usual resident population of Golden Square at the 2011 Census was 8,303[1], which represented approximately 10% of the population of Bendigo[2]. In 2011, Golden Square, together with the adjoining suburb of Kangaroo Flat was home to over 20% of Bendigo's population. Together, these suburbs form the most populous part of the Bendigo urban area. A map showing the extent of Golden Square from the 2011 Census is provided in the background documents that form part of this project.

[1] Golden Square, Code SSC20553 (SSC)
[2] Bendigo Code UCL211003 (UCL)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Housing stock

Golden Square has a population density of approximately 10.0 people per hectare (http://profile.id.com.au/). Despite its relatively low-density built form, this population density is amongst the highest in Bendigo and reflects the significant extent of urban development across the suburb. There is little diversity in housing stock of Golden Square: 86% of houses are separate dwellings and 11.5% were medium density dwellings at the 2011 Census (http://profile.id.com.au/). This is similar to the profile of housing across the City of Greater Bendigo as a whole.

Shops and services

Following the gold-rush, Golden Square was developed as a village in its own right. This role is reflected in the diverse range of recreational, religious, employment and other services available in the suburb. Major uses and destinations in Golden Square include:

- Golden Square swimming pool, football, bowling and netball clubs in Wade Street;
- Woolworths supermarket, 234 High Street;
- Mercy Health Bethlehem Home for the Aged, Taylor Street;
- Fortuna Villa, Chum Street;
- Deborah Triangle industrial area, Hattam Street;
- Central City Caravan Park, High Street.

The locations of these sites are shown in Figure 2. Retail uses are today focused around the intersection of Laurel Street and High Street, 100 metres to the north-west of the site, as shown in Figure 1. This area includes a small independent supermarket, hotel, post office, medical centre and dentist. The identity of Golden Square as a village continues to be valued to this day, although functionally, it operates as a suburb of Bendigo.

The Bendigo CBD contains a broad range of shops and services that service the central Victoria region, including retail, commercial, recreation, cultural and civic infrastructure.

Future growth

As a result of its location and attractive attributes, as described above, Golden Square continues to experience residential development in a variety of forms. This includes small residential subdivisions and large infill residential development such as an 82 lot development in Aspinall Street. It also contains a number of 'brownfield' sites that are in the process of being converted to new uses such as the Coliban Water depot in Alder Street and land at Fortuna Villa in Chum Street. The locations of these sites are shown in Figure 2.

According to small area population projections prepared by the City of Greater Bendigo, the population of Golden Square is anticipated to increase by 1,707 people between 2016 and 2036, generating the need for an additional 703 dwellings (http://forecast.id.com.au/bendigo/). A summary of these projections is provided as Table 1, below. A map showing the extent of the Golden Square locality used in these projections is provided in the background documents.

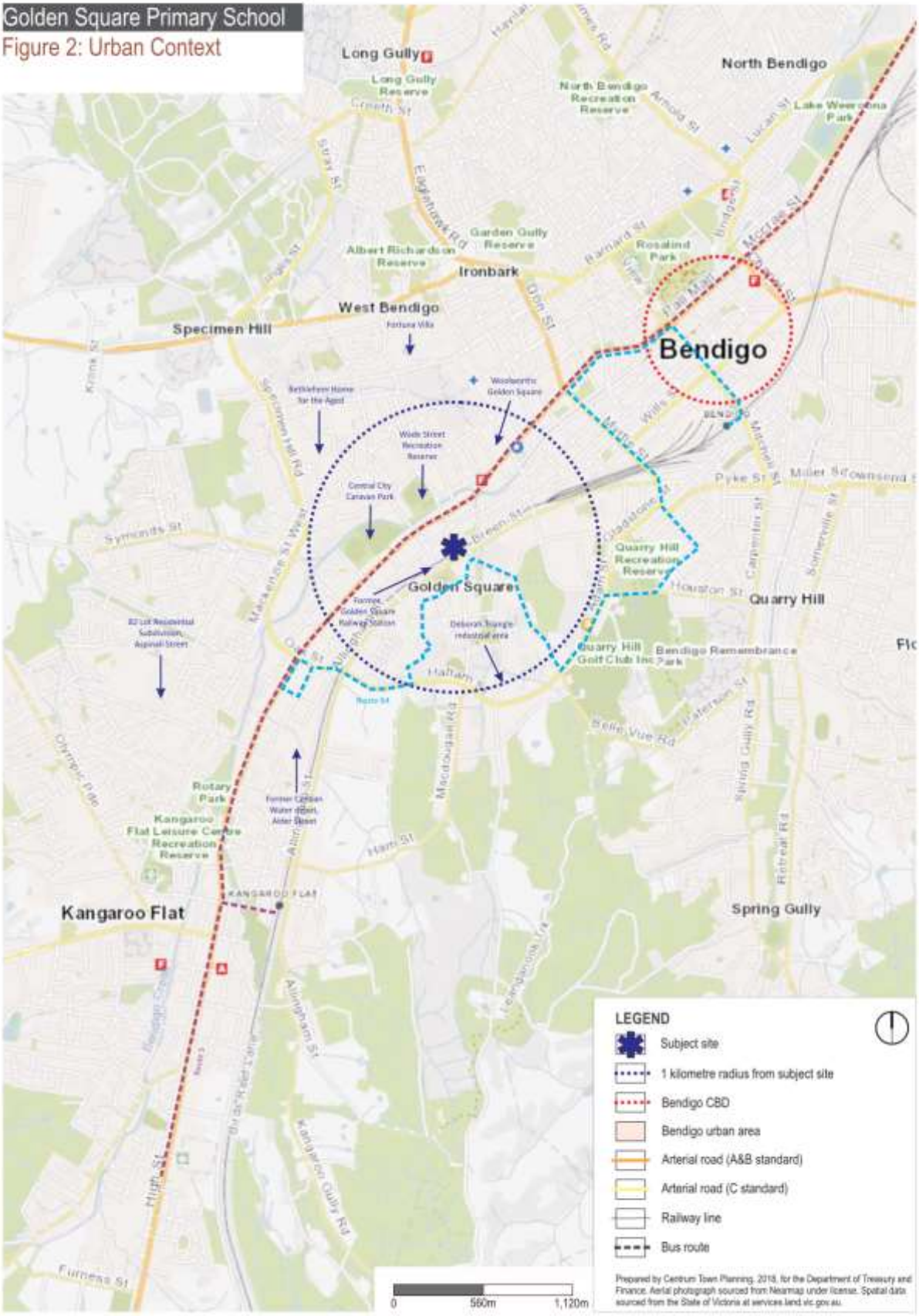
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Table 1 Population and housing forecast for Golden Square from 2016 to 2036

Summary	2016	2036	Net change	% Change
Population	9,208	10,915	1,707	19%
Households	3,849	4,602	753	20%
Average household size	2.32	2.27	-0.05	-2%
Population in non private dwellings	285	489	204	72%
Dwellings	4,030	4,733	703	17%
Dwelling occupancy rate	95.51	97.23	1.72	2%

Source: http://forecast.id.com.au/bendigo/, prepared by Centrum Town Planning, 2016

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5 SITE DESCRIPTION

This section of the report provides a description of the key physical and planning related characteristics of the site. Many of the features that are described are shown in Figure 1 and the title and features plan in the background documents.

Physical characteristics

The site has an area of approximately 1.3 hectares. It is irregular in shape and has road frontages to Laurel Street, Panton Street and Maple Street. The south eastern boundary of the site abuts the Bendigo to Melbourne Railway Line. The high point of the land is the south western corner near Maple Street (237m AHD). From this point, the land falls approximately five metres to the north-west (Panton Street) and north-east (Laurel Street).

Legal attributes

The site comprises eight allotments. The largest of these is CA3A, the State School Reserve, which has an area of approximately 6,620 square metres. The remaining eight lots are freehold land owned by the Department of Education and Training. These include five lots that front Panton Street (approximately 3,750 square metres) and three lots near Maple Street (approximately 2,310 square metres).

The site is not affected by any registered restrictive covenants or Section 173 Agreements. Crown Allotments 16 is affected by a sewerage easement, which connects the site with sewerage infrastructure in Panton Street.

Existing use and development

The site has been developed with a large number of structures that reflect its former use as a school. The largest and most prominent building on the site is a Victorian school building that dates from 1874 (the 'main school building'). This is located centrally on the State School Reserve part of the site. It fronts Laurel Street to the north east and has a setback of approximately 40 metres from Laurel Street.

The main school building is constructed of red brick in the Gothic Style and has a central section and two wings. The building has a number of annexes at the front and rear that were added to the original building in the early 19th century. Apart from this, the building is substantially intact and in good condition. More details about the appearance, condition and layout of the building are provided in the Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance provided as a background document.

The other structures on the site include portable classrooms, a hall and shelters. These are mainly located on the north-west (Panton Street) side and south-west (Maple Street) side of the site. It should be noted that a number of the portable classrooms that were located on the site when the background research for this report was carried out have since been removed by DET due to their age and condition. A number of these buildings are visible in photograph 7.

The site is currently used by Victoria Police for training purposes.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Landscape and vegetation

The remainder of the site has been developed for a mix of hardstand, gravel and grassed playground areas. The forecourt of the building on Laurel Street has been developed with hardstand playing courts, which are flanked by areas of native landscaping and several large trees. There is a grass oval that fronts Panton Street with a small row of gum trees inside the Panton Street boundary. Two large old peppercorn trees are located near the main school building, one to the south west of the building and one to the north.

Access and services

The site currently has three access points for vehicles and pedestrians:

- Laurel Street, the main pedestrian entry, there is no vehicle access from this gate;
- Panton Street, which allows vehicle and pedestrian access via a driveway;
- Maple Street, which features informal access for pedestrians and vehicles.

Electricity, gas, sewerage, water and telephone infrastructure are located in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site drains to Panton and Laurel Streets, which feature underground drainage pipes. These drains discharge into Bendigo Creek in Laurel Street to the north-west of High Street.

Site photographs

Photograph 1:
View of the main school building and playground forecourt from Laurel Street



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Photograph 2:

View of the landscape plantings near the Laurel Street frontage of the site



Photograph 3:

Rear of main school building showing annexes and shade structures



Photograph 4:

View of the large old peppercorn tree to the north of the main school building



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Photograph 5:

View of the large old peppercorn tree to the south-west of the main school building



Photograph 6:

Hall and storage sheds looking north-west.



Photograph 7:

Entrance to the site from Maple Street showing portables (removed since photograph taken)



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Photograph 8:
Looking across the school oval towards the main school building from Panton Street.



Photograph 9:
Panton Street frontage of the site showing school oval, avenue of gums and Dutch elm street trees in Panton Street.



Photograph 10:
Existing vehicle and pedestrian access point on Panton Street.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6 PLANNING PROVISIONS

The following zone and overlay provisions apply to the site under the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme.

Zone provisions

The eastern part of the site is zoned Public Use Zone (Schedule 2). The remainder of the site is zoned General Residential (refer to Figure 3, below). The existence of land zoned General Residential is understood to reflect the historical acquisition of freehold land to the south west as the school expanded.

In the surrounding area, the land to the north-west is zoned Commercial 1. The other nearby land is zoned General Residential, with the exception of the Railway Line, which is zoned Public Use Zone (PUZ4) and Commercial 2 Zone on the south eastern side of the Railway Line.

Figure 3 Zone map



Source: www.services.land.vic.gov.au

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Overlay provisions

The Heritage Overlay (HO25) applies to eastern part of the site that is zoned Public Use (refer to Figure 4). The Heritage Overlay is discussed in detail in the Heritage Assessment Report and Statement of Significance provided separate as a background document.

The Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO1) applies to CA16, which fronts Panton Street (refer to Figure 4, below). This overlay is discussed in more detail in Section 12 of this report.

The Heritage and Neighborhood Character overlays also apply to land in the surrounding area. The Heritage Overlay applies to most of Laurel Street and the north-west side of Panton Street. The Neighbourhood Character Overlay applies to the residential areas to the north-east and south-west along Panton Street.

Figure 4 Overlay map



Source: www.services.land.vic.gov.au

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

7 SITE HISTORY & SIGNIFICANCE

This section of the report provides an overview of the findings of the Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance prepared by Amanda Jean, 2018 (the 'Heritage Assessment'). A copy of this report is available as a background document. This assessment uses a range of primary and secondary data sources including heritage studies prepared by the City of Greater Bendigo. It was developed in accordance with the methodology set out in relevant VPP Practice Note for "Applying the Heritage Overlay" (DELWP, 2018), and other accepted methodologies. The key findings of the assessment are summarised below under relevant sub-headings.

Heritage significance

The Heritage Assessment found that the main school building is a "key feature and contributory historic place" in the Laurel Street heritage precinct and "contributes to the high degree of integrity" of this precinct (Jean, 2018, 6). In its assessment against the relevant criteria for applying the heritage overlay, the Assessment found that the main school building:

- *The former Golden Square Primary School, No.1189, building is of historic significance as one of the oldest schools in Bendigo opening in 1874 and also one of the wealthiest. The evolution of the school illustrates the changing philosophy to public education in Victoria. (Criterion A)*
- *The former Golden Square Primary School, No.1189, is socially significant for providing education to the local population continuously for over 160 years prior to its closure in 2015. It is an unusual early example of a Junior Cadet School with onsite military training for students in the front drill parade ground. (Criterion H)*
- *The mature Peppercorn tree, Schinus molle, at the rear of the primary school has historic significance as an exceptionally fine example of a school yard shade tree, which is over a hundred years old. (Criterion A)*
- *The former Golden Square Primary School, No.1189, has aesthetic significance as an excellent representative example of a colonial school based on the influential Buninyong Competition School Plan designed by architect, WH Ellerker, under the direction of HR Bastow, the Education Department's Chief Architect. The building's design has an aesthetically pleasing bichrome red and cream brick Gothic Revival composition that has a high level of integrity. (Criteria E and D)*

Source: Jean, 2018, 18

The Assessment makes a number of recommendations about the future planning provisions for the site, including the application of the Heritage Overlay, as follows:

- *The existing Laurel Street Heritage Precinct, HO25, be removed from the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, as it extends to the original State School Reserve.*
- *Recommendation for the application of a new individual Heritage Overlay over the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, over the original State School Reserve and extended to include the rear mature Peppercorn trees (Schinus molle).*

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- *A curtilage be introduced for the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, heritage place in order to protect the heritage structure from future development including: -*
  - *View corridor that extends from Laurel Street to the front facade of the former Golden Square Primary School No 1189.*
  - *Height Control (H1) of 9 metres for all new development on either side of the View Corridor to Laurel Street.*
  - *5 metres curtilage around the side and rear elevations of the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189.*
  - *Height Control (H3) of 13.5 metres height control for future development at the rear of the former state primary school.*
- *The Peppercorn Tree (Schinus molle) located at the rear of the Main School Building be included in the new individual Heritage Overlay for Tree Controls for the former Golden Square Primary School No 1189. Tree controls are specific to the Peppercorn Tree (Schinus molle) and include a no development curtilage of 25 metres diameter root protection zone around the tree.*
- *Recommendation that the former primary school sports playing fields, Lots 1-3 Title Plan 951463, Crown Allotments 15 Section 15A Parish of Sandhurst, be removed from the Heritage Overlay HO25, Laurel Street Heritage Precinct.*

Source: Jean, 2018, 19-20

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Vegetation condition

The Department of Treasury and Finance commissioned A.C.A. Arboricultural Consultants Australia Pty Ltd to prepare an assessment of the condition of all trees on the site. A copy of the report is available as a background document. The assessment found that:

- *The former Golden Square Primary School site consists of a tree-scape which is largely made up of Australian native species, the majority of which appear to have been planted in the early to mid1990's.*
- *There are only two trees of potential significance upon the former Golden Square Primary School site, the two large (Schinus molle) Peppercorn trees.*
- *The Peppercorn tree at the rear of the main building (centre of site) is an exceptional specimen with a healthy and sound canopy. It is genuinely a tree worthy of protection.*
- *The Peppercorn adjacent to the corner boundary fence of allotment…has been heavily lopped back to the boundary fence line. This has diminished the tree's aesthetic amenity to some extent but more seriously has resulted in a very large wound at the stem which is unlikely to heal over with new wound wood before internal decay takes its toll upon the tree's remaining structure over the longer term*
- *All other trees within the site have no particular significance and were planted relatively recently or are self-sown. The majority of these trees are exhibiting problems related to either their health, structure, overcrowding or proximity to infrastructure.*

Source: A.C.A. Arboricultural Consultants Australia Pty Ltd, 2017, 3-4.

The report considers that the Peppercorn tree adjacent to 4 Laurel Street, does not have good long term prospects of survival. On this basis, it is considered that it should not be identified or protected through the heritage overlay.

The report recommends a Tree Protection Zone of 12 metres (radius) around the Peppercorn tree at the rear of the main building. This distance should be used as the basis for the application of the Heritage Overlay, and a 25 metre diameter overlay is considered to be appropriate.

Recommendations

The key recommendations of the Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance and Vegetation Assessment are, in summary:

- Removal of the existing Laurel Street Heritage Precinct, HO25 from the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, as it extends to the original State School Reserve.
- Application of a new individual Heritage Overlay (HO916) over the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, over the original State School Reserve and extended to include the rear mature Peppercorn tree (Schinus molle), with tree controls to protect this Peppercorn tree.
- Identification of a curtilage for the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, heritage place in order to protect the heritage structure, including view corridor to Laurel Street and height controls.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

8 SITE SURROUNDS

This section of the report describes the areas surrounding the site with a focus on land use, built form and heritage and traffic and transport. Many of the features described are visible in Figure 1.

Land use and activities

The land fronting Panton, Laurel and Maple Streets in the immediate area is used predominantly for residential purposes. In addition, there are a number of small-scale service and industrial uses (auto repairs and supplies) on Laurel Street and Panton Street to the north east.

The site is located approximately 100 metres to the south of the Golden Square shopping precinct, which is focused on High Street but extends around the street block on Laurel Street. Key retail uses include the United Kingdom Hotel, a post office and newsagent and a small supermarket. A number of the commercial uses in High Street, including the supermarket, also have customer entry from Panton Street.

Heritage

The site is located in a cluster of religious and education buildings that are of heritage significance. These include:

- the former Golden Square Uniting (Wesleyan) Church, a significant red-brick Victorian church located on the south corner of Panton and Laurel Street (HO445);
- the former Uniting Church manse at 19 Panton Street;
- St Mark's Anglican Church at 29 Panton Street (HO452);
- the former Methodist Sunday School at 311-313 High Street (HO438);
- Laurel Street Railway Bridge (HO444).

The adjoining former Uniting Church is of architectural and historical significance to the state of Victoria, and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (H1371). The former Church and its manse are no longer used by the Church and were recently sold to private owners. The heritage significance of the surrounding area is discussed in more detail in the Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance provided as a background document.

Built form

The church buildings described above are larger in height and form than the surrounding built form. They typically are greater than 8 metres in height, as shown in Figure 5. The former Uniting Church is the most dominant building in the area by virtue of its prominent corner location and impressive spire which extends to an estimated height of approximately 25 metres. The buildings associated with the shopping precinct are generally built with zero front and side setbacks to the street, reflecting their historical and ongoing retail role.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The land on the north west side of Panton Street in the vicinity of the site has a strong residential character. It is characterised by single storey timber and brick dwellings with verandahs and garden settings. Most of the dwellings date from the Victorian era. Laurel Street opposite the site also features a number of Victorian dwellings. Most of these dwellings have heritage significance associated with the Laurel Street Precinct (HO25). A number of the dwellings are individually listed in the Heritage Overlay, as shown in Figure 5.

Traffic and movement

Panton Street is a collector road that provides one lane of traffic in each direction, bicycle lanes and footpaths on both sides of the road. It provides a link between the southern part of Golden Square and the Bendigo CBD (via Hargreaves Street). According to the Traffic and Transport report prepared for this project, Panton Street currently carries approximately 4,800 vehicles per day adjacent to the site (Trafficworks, 2016).

Laurel Street is also a collector road that provides one lane of traffic in each direction. It provides pedestrian footpaths on the north east side of the road and up to the school gate on the south-west side of the road. It provides a connection between the parts of Golden Square on the north-west side of High Street and those to the south east of High Street. The road carries approximately 4,000 vehicles per day adjacent to the subject site (Trafficworks, 2016). Laurel Street travels underneath the Railway Line just to the south of the site. This bridge has a clearance of 3.2 metres, which makes it unsuitable for some large vehicles.

Maple Street to the east of Panton Street provides access to only four dwellings and is estimated to carry fewer than 100 vehicles per day. There is a footpath on the north-east side of the road.

Traffic and movement matters are addressed in more detail in the reports prepared by Trafficworks, which are provided as background documents.

Public transport

The following bus services are located close to the site:

- Route 5: Kangaroo Flat – Epsom via CBD along High Street, half hour intervals, Monday to Friday.
- Route 64: Golden Square to CBD along Belle Vue Road (East of Railway Line), hour intervals Monday to Friday.

These routes are shown in Figure 2. The former Golden Square Railway Station is located at the southern end of Maple Street. The station buildings are currently used for residential and media purposes. An underpass provides pedestrian access across the Railway Line at this point. Additional details about the traffic and transport network in the area are provided in the background documents.

Key features and places of interest in the surrounding area are shown in the photographs below.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Photographs of surrounds

Photograph 11:
Former Uniting Church on the corner of Laurel and Panton Streets.



Photograph 12:
Looking south east down Laurel Street from High Street.



Photograph 13:
Looking north-east along High Street from the Laurel Street intersection.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Photograph 14:
Looking north-west along Laurel Street adjacent to the site.



Photograph 15:
Looking south-east along Laurel Street at the historic rail bridge.



Photograph 16:
View of the former Golden Square Railway Station at the end of Maple Street.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Photograph 17:
Pedestrian underpass near the former Golden Square Railway Station.



Photograph 18:
St Marks Anglican Church on Panton Street.



Photograph 19:
Dwellings on the north west side of Panton Street, opposite the subject site



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

9 SITE ANALYSIS

The subject site presents a range of opportunities and constraints for a new use or development. These will affect the future of the site in different ways depending on the type of use and development that is proposed. The opportunities and constraints are summarised below and shown visually in Figures 5-8. Each figure deals with a separate planning theme: urban design and heritage; landscape and environment; amenity and interfaces and transport and movement.

Key opportunities

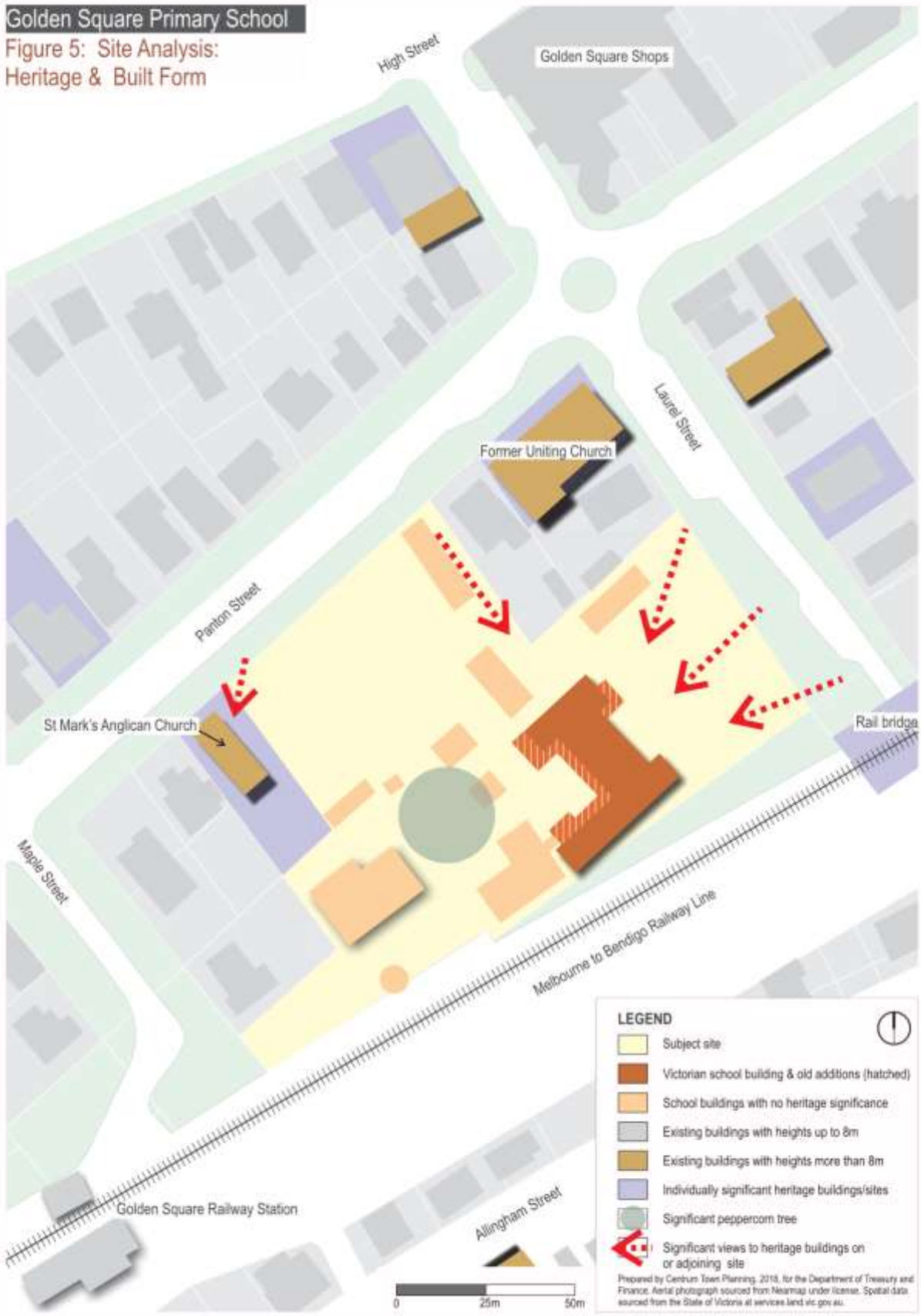
- Close proximity to Golden Square shopping precinct is beneficial for a range of uses, particularly residential and commercials.
- Large size of site provides opportunity for different uses and forms to be re-developed across the site.
- Three street frontages provide opportunities to create multiple access points to the site.
- Main school building has significant size and character that could lend itself to a wide variety of future uses.
- All buildings, apart from the main school building, could be demolished to facilitate new development.
- Large peppercorn trees with heritage significance could be incorporated into new opens space for amenity and shade.
- Existing Dutch elm street trees in Panton Street provide significant shade and amenity along this frontage.
- Site has a relatively gentle fall that should simplify site planning and construction.
- High level of pedestrian, cycling and public transport infrastructure in the immediate area.
- Capacity of roads in surrounding area is good.
- Long-term opportunity to capitalise on the potential to re-open the Golden Square Railway Station, consistent with the vision set out in the City of Greater Bendigo's Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (2015).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Key constraints

- Presence of important heritage places and dwellings in the immediate area requires careful consideration of building heights and forms close to site boundaries.
- View to the main school building from Laurel Street is important as it identifies the building and captures the extent of the building.
- Main school building has a layout and structure that could make conversion to some uses difficult or expensive.
- Large peppercorn trees are likely to require a large curtilage to ensure their long-term health.
- Close spacing of existing Dutch elm street trees in Panton Street limits access options along this frontage.
- Close proximity of private secluded open space on the northern and western boundary requires careful consideration of overlooking and building forms.
- Railway line could present noise issues for new residential development on or near the southern boundary.
- Maple Street frontage is narrow and may limit access arrangements or the type of development that could occur in this area.
- Advice from Government Land Planning Services that one zone should be used for the site, and that no re-subdivision or consolidation of lots will occur prior to sale of the land.

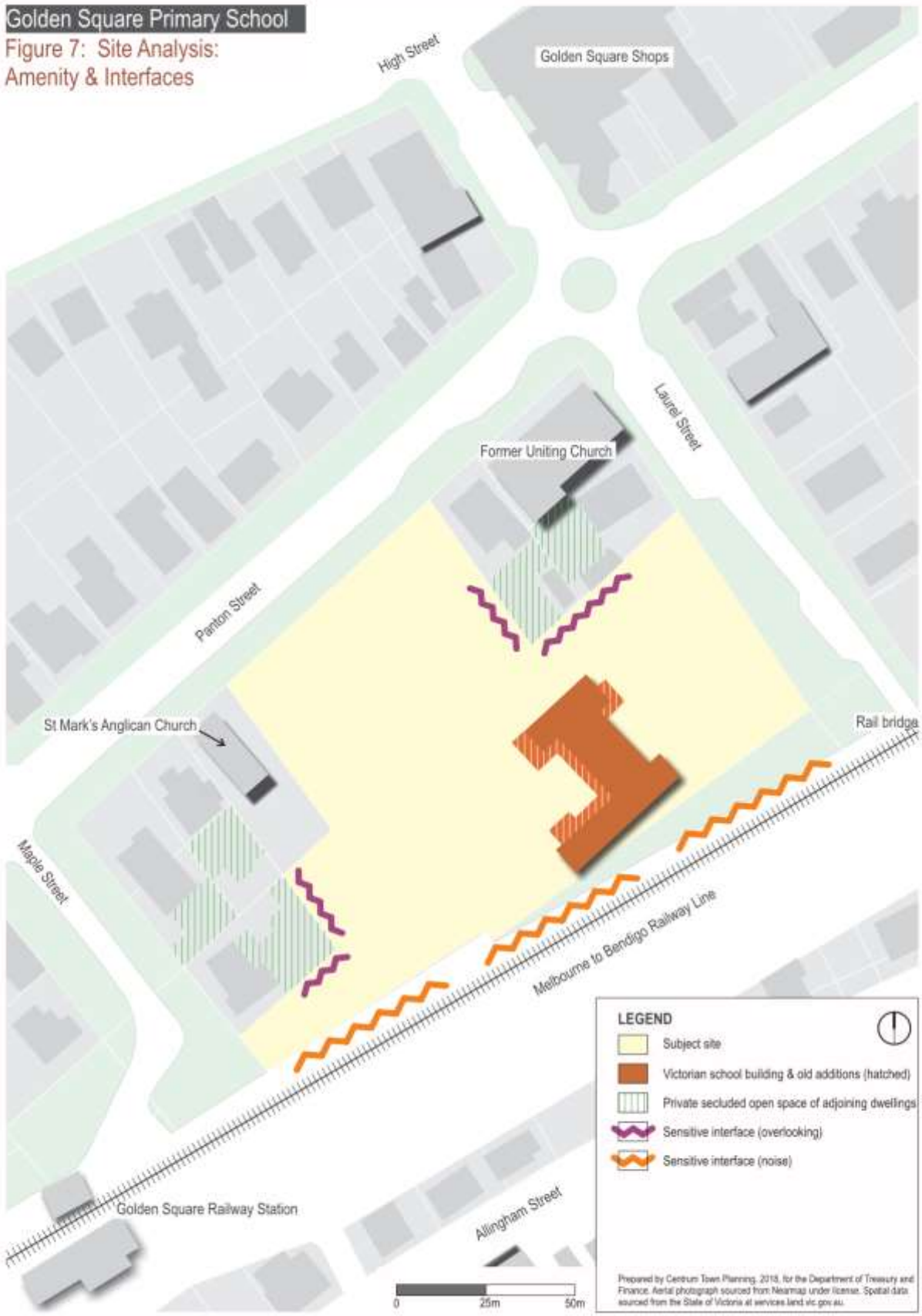
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



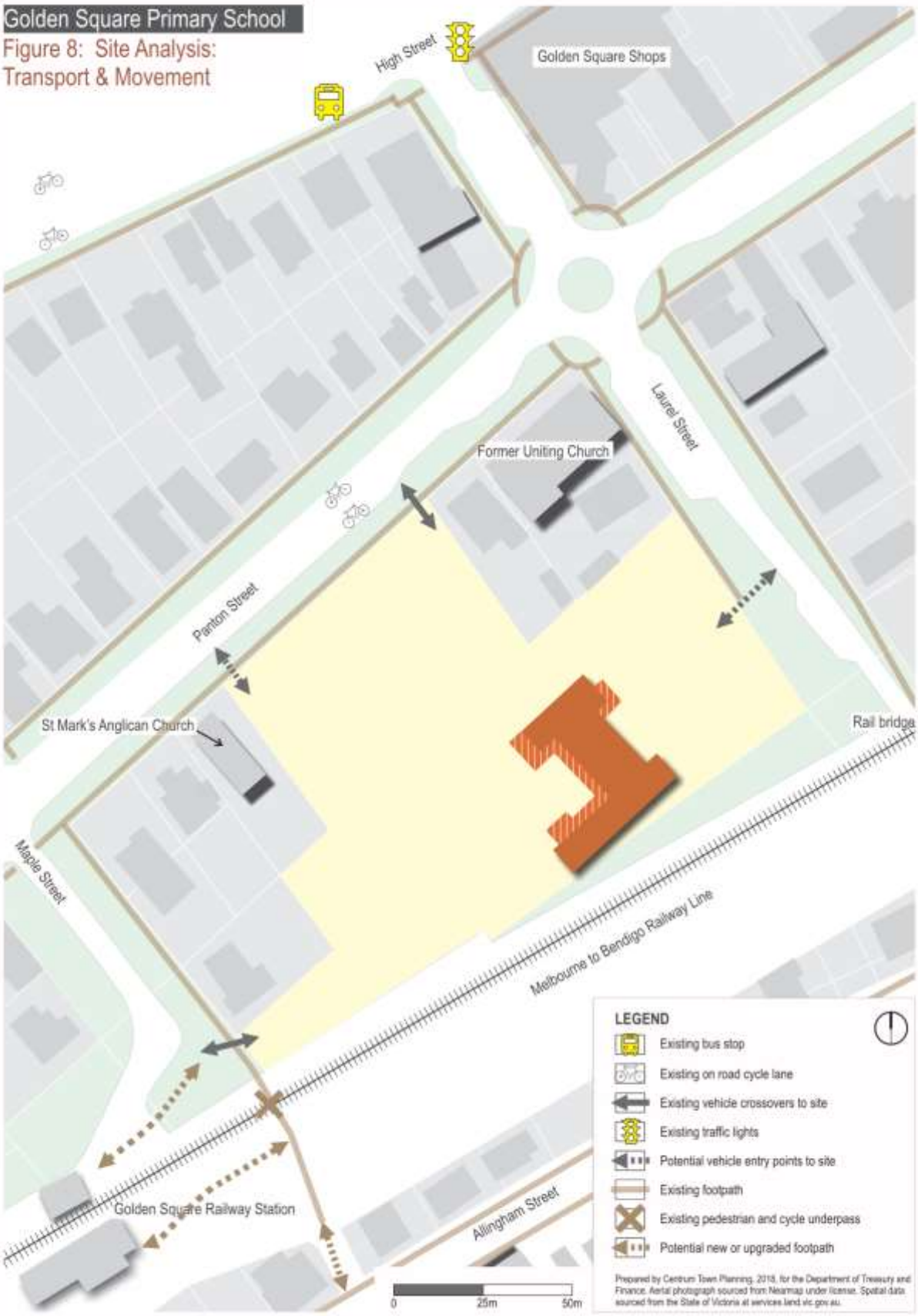
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

10 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Planning & Environment Act 1987

Section 4(1) of the Planning Environment Act outlines the objectives of planning in Victoria. Objectives that are considered to be most relevant to the application include:

- to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land;
- to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria;
- to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value;
- to facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in [the objectives];
- to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

Response

The proposed planning scheme amendment is considered to further the objectives of planning as set out in Section 4(1) of the Act, by providing a new planning framework that will fairly balance the various competing interests on the site. The interest that will be protected are the main school building and its immediate environs and the character and amenity of existing dwellings in Panton and Laurel streets. These will be balanced by the opportunity to develop parts of the site for higher density building forms that will contribute to the diversity of housing stock in the local area and capitalise in the site's close proximity to retail and transport services in Golden Square.

The proposed new planning framework will facilitate new development and will add to the economic and sustainable use of land by allowing for higher building forms in the central parts of the site. It will conserve and enhance the main school building, which is of local heritage significance by allowing a wide range of future uses that will ensure the long-term viability of the building.

Transport Integration Act 2010

This Act requires that all decisions affecting the transport system be made within the same integrated decision-making framework and support the same objectives. Planning authorities, acting under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, are an 'interface body' under the Transport Integration Act 2010 (TIA). The Act requires a planning authority to have regard to a set of transport system objectives and decision making principles where a planning scheme amendment is likely to have a 'significant impact on the transport system'.

Response

The proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on the transport system. The subject site is located within a long-established urban area that has well-established road and bus infrastructure. This infrastructure is capable of accommodating the needs of future uses on the site, even if the ultimate use of the site includes a higher density development scenario or intense use.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

This Act provides for the protection and management of Victoria's Aboriginal heritage. It requires that Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) be prepared for large developments or high impact activities in culturally sensitive landscapes, amongst other matters.

The Aboriginal Heritage Regulations (2018) specify that a CHMP is required for an activity if all or part of the activity area for the activity is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and all or part of the activity is a high impact activity (Regulation 6), unless exempt under Division 2.

Response

The development site is partly located within two areas of cultural heritage sensitivity, as shown on Figure 9, below. The first area is a strip of land along Panton Street that is within 200 metres of Bendigo Creek to the north west. The second area extends from the northern side of the land to a maximum of approximately 90 metres along the south eastern boundary of the land. This area covers most of the main school building.

The effect of this situation is that, unless it can be demonstrated that the land has been previously subject to significant ground disturbance, any high impact activities that are proposed to take place within these areas will require a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to be prepared before the responsible authority can issue a planning permit. Uses that are 'high impact activities' include office, industry, place of assembly and car park. Small subdivisions of less than 1,100 metres are exempt from the need for a cultural heritage management plan.

The requirement for a cultural heritage management plan could represent an additional restriction on the development potential of the main school building and the playground area in front of the building, as most of the likely non-residential uses of the building are 'high impact activities'. It may also represent a restriction on residential development on the land fronting Panton Street, although this will ultimately depend on the form of development.

It is possible that the use of the main school building for conversion to, say, residential apartments and subdivision will also require a cultural heritage management plan. Again, the need for a cultural heritage management plan will depend on the ultimately form and size of the development.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Figure 9 Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity



Source: www.services.land.vic.gov.au

Ministerial direction No.1 – Potentially contaminated land

This direction aims to "*ensure that potentially contaminated land is suitable for a use which is proposed to be allowed under an amendment to a planning scheme and which could be significantly adversely affected by any contamination*". Potentially contaminated land includes land that was used for mining or industry.

Under the Direction, a planning authority must be satisfied that the environmental conditions of the land are suitable for sensitive uses including residential, child care and primary school, open space or agriculture. They must require that a certificate or statements of environmental audit is issued for the land in accordance with Part IXD of the Environment Protection Act 1970. Alternatively, the conditions can be postponed through the application of an Environmental Audit Overlay, which requires these declarations prior to the commencement of a sensitive use or any associated buildings and works.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Response

The Department of Education and Training carried out environmental assessment work on the site. The following points provided a summary of the findings of a gap assessment undertaken to supplement the previous works done by DET and their consultant:

- Lead and arsenic concentrations were above the guidelines across the site.
- Arsenic concentrations are considered to be naturally occurring in the Bendigo region (historic mining in the area).
- Leachability testing (used to simulate leaching through soil and to classify waste or ground/surface water contamination) of lead and arsenic indicated that concentrations are not leachable.
- Leachability testing of naphthalene and total PAH indicated that the concentrations are leachable, however - given the depth to groundwater is very deep (over 20m), the risk to groundwater was considered low.
- There are hot spot areas (BH6 and BH16) where soil is classified as Category B (i.e. Elevated concentrations of benzo(a)pyrene and PAH). There will be an additional cost to remove from this from the site.
- Asbestos fragments were also detected across the site.

Based on these findings, the assessment work makes the following recommendations:

- *Where further demolition of buildings is proposed at the Site, an asbestos building survey and risk register should be compiled in accordance with relevant legislation and guidelines.*
- *Where future excavation of soils is proposed at the Site, a Soil Management Plan should be prepared and implemented to prevent exposure of site workers to asbestos, metals, TPH and PAH impacted soil.*
- *Undertake a remediation financial risk assessment (RFRA) for potential future low density land use of the Site use which may include:*
  - *strategies to deal with contamination above acceptable environment and human health guidelines e.g. off-Site disposal, risk assessment etc.; and*
  - *likely quantities and costs for proposed remediation strategies, including hot spot removal and off-Site disposal of soils, if required.*
- *Liaison with the relevant planning authority and/or associated parties regarding the triggers for a Statutory Environmental Audit, in accordance with the Environment Protection Act 1970. As per EPA Victoria Publication 1609 (http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/~/media/Publications/1609.pdf) potential triggers may include:*
  - *a planning need (e.g. permit condition, Environmental Audit Overlay, Ministerial Direction No.1).*
  - *due diligence.*
  - *when previous uses may have introduced contamination.*

Bluesphere Environmental, 2017, 19-20

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Ministerial Direction No.19 (Parts A&B)

This direction and its associated ministerial requirements relate to amendments that may result in impacts on the environment, amenity and human health. It requires planning authorities to seek the views of the Environment Protection Authority in the preparation of planning scheme reviews and amendments that result in the use or development of land that may result in significant impacts on the environment, amenity and human health due to pollution and waste. This includes amendments that allow the use or development of potentially contaminated land under Ministerial Direction Number 1, or the use or development of land within a buffer distance for industry and material recycling, refuse disposal or transfer station. Part B of the Direction ensures that the EPA's views are included when the Minister authorises an amendment.

Response

We understand that the Government Land Planning Service is seeking clarification with the EPA about its requirements in relation to the site, however, it is expected that the application of the EAO will address any contamination related issues. This will be resolved through the planning scheme amendment process.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

11 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section presents an overview of state and local strategic plans that are relevant to the proposal.

Plan Melbourne: Metropolitan Planning Strategy 2017-2050

'Plan Melbourne: Metropolitan Planning Strategy' outlines the State Government's long-term plan to accommodate Melbourne's future growth in population and employment. It predicts that Melbourne will grow by another 3.4 million people to be a city of 7.9 million people by 2051 (State of Victoria, 2017, 7). In order to accommodate this growth, the Plan estimates that an additional 1.6 million dwellings and 1.5 million jobs will be required (State of Victoria, 2017, 7).

One of the key principles driving the Strategy is an acknowledgement that Melbourne should be a "city of centres linked to regional Victoria", noting that regional centres that are well connected and within viable commuting distance of capital cities offer attractive housing and employment opportunities. As such, they have the capacity to relieve pressures on capital cities by absorbing some of their growing population. The Strategy contains a series of outcomes, objectives and directions for achieving the Strategy. The elements most relevant to Bendigo are:

- Acknowledgement of the important role that Bendigo will play in housing population growth in regional Victoria, and the need to invest in housing and employment in regional Victoria (p.28).
- The need to improve public transport links to Melbourne from Bendigo, protect the corridors and improve infrastructure and services to encourage commuting (p.133)
- The completion of Regional Rail Link, which has separated regional and metropolitan trains in Melbourne's west and create capacity for extra regional services (p.51).
- Various government-led initiatives to better integrate metropolitan and regional planning initiatives so that regional cities can accommodate a greater proportion of the State's residential and employment growth with good transport and infrastructure connections.

Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan (2014)

This plan was prepared to guide growth and change in the Loddon Mallee South region for the next 30 years. The plan aims to promote Bendigo as the Regional city where significant residential and other urban growth will occur (DTPLI, 2014 iii). The plan considers the implications of a population of 150,000 to 200,000 in the City of Greater Bendigo by 2041 (DTPLI, 2014 11). Elements of the Plan that are most relevant to this application are:

- the relationship of Bendigo to metropolitan Melbourne for employment and exchange of goods and services, and potential for the relationship to become closer as transport links are improved (p13);
- the importance of Bendigo as a significant tourism asset, and its role in providing high level services and facilities to the region (p13);
- a goal to reinforce the role of Bendigo as the regional city, offering a range of employment and services as an alternative to Melbourne (p17);

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- recognition that the majority of growth in the region will be accommodated in Bendigo over the next 30 years (pp 39&42).

Municipal Strategic Statement

The following elements of the Greater Bendigo Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) are considered to be most relevant to the application:

- Clause 21.02 (Key issues and influences), which identifies a 'compact Greater Bendigo' as a key aim: Key drivers include:
  - the need to provide 1,000 new dwellings per year to satisfy growth in housing demand;
  - the lack of housing diversity and high cost of greenfield development;
  - the need to integrate transport and land use planning.
- Clause 21.05 (Compact Greater Bendigo), which aims to promote a compact urban area. A core element of the strategy is to create "10 minute neighbourhoods" where people can access many of their daily needs within a 10 minute walking or cycle trip. Key strategies include supporting proposals for well-designed developments that provide a diversity of dwellings, prioritizing walking and cycling and reducing car parking requirements where appropriate. Under the strategy, key infill development sites that are close to the CBD and other activity centres are to be the focus of high density housing, which is two to four storey development in the context of Bendigo.
- Clause 21.07 (Economic Development), which describes the activity centre hierarchy in Bendigo and sets out objectives and strategies for commercial development in the CBD. The clause:
  - identifies the Bendigo CBD at the top of the hierarchy and Golden Square as a "neighbourhood activity centre" that meets the day-to-day needs of the surrounding neighbourhood;
  - projects that Golden Square will experience demand for 1,400m2 of specialty shops and 1,700m2 of supermarket floorspace in Golden Square to 2031;
  - includes a direction to support additional speciality retail at the front of the Woolworths site and expansion of supermarket floorspace to serve infill housing demand.
- Clause 21.08-4 (Heritage), which identifies the importance of the City's heritage to its identity and aims to
  - *identify and protect heritage places with historic value;*
  - *encourage the appropriate reuse of heritage buildings;*
  - *support appropriate sympathetic redevelopment;*
  - *encourage compatible development adjacent to heritage places and features.*
- Clause 21.09 (Infrastructure), which identifies the need for transport planning to be integrated with land use planning by:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- *directing growth to areas in activity centres and along main transit corridors*
- *facilitating new development based on the 10-minute neighbourhood principle;*
- *continuing to implement the expansion of Bendigo Metro Rail;*
- *advocating for a new railway station at Golden Square.*

Greater Bendigo Residential Strategy (2014)

This is strategy was adopted by Council in 2014. Its key findings have been incorporated into the planning scheme and are reflected in the Municipal Strategic Statement (see above). The Strategy contains a direction that explicitly clarifies the intent of the MSS in relation to higher density development in activity centres:

- *Provide for high quality, well designed, medium density residential development of two to four stories that respects existing heritage settings and neighbourhood character…. in and around the commercial activity areas and urban villages of Eaglehawk, Golden Square…" (City of Greater Bendigo, 2014, 5).*

Integrated Transport & Land Use Strategy (2015)

This strategy was adopted by the City of Greater Bendigo in 2015. The strategy sets the framework and direction for an integrated approach to transport and land use planning and reducing the reliance on cars. The recommendations of the strategy that are most relevant to the site are:

- *A target to progressively plan and design Bendigo to increase the percentage of residents living within 400 metres of an Activity Centre or Neighbourhood Activity Centre (p.33).*
- *Developing an urban design framework for Golden Square – short term action for the next 5 years (p.77).*
- *"Investigate critical success factors including land use and urban development opportunities as well as productivity, liveability and health dividends associated with providing additional railway stations at… Golden Square" - short term action for the next 5 years (p.79).*
- *The re-opening of the Golden Square Railway Station as part of a long-term goal to provide an inter-urban high speed rail system in Bendigo - medium term action for the 2020-2030 period (p.47, 71).*

Commercial Land and Activity Centre Strategy (2016)

This strategy provides the framework to facilitate future commercial development in Bendigo. The strategy forecasts commercial floorspace growth through to the year 2031. Key aspects of the strategy as it relates to the subject site are:

- Recommendations to support the State Government in rezoning the subject site as a short term action (p.55 of Strategy).
- A recommendation to prepare an urban design framework for the Golden Square Activity Centre, including the former railway station and primary school site as medium term action (p.54).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Key findings

- The State Government has introduced initiatives to encourage residential and employment growth in regional cities such as Bendigo through good transport and infrastructure connections.
- The Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme contains clear strategies to promote a compact urban area and new, more diverse housing in close proximity to existing activity centres such as Golden Square.
- Various Council strategies identify the need to unlock development opportunities in Golden Square and support the re-opening the former Golden Square Station as part of an inter-Bendigo rail system.
- The City of Greater Bendigo has adopted specific strategies to rezone the subject site to support the enhancement of the Golden Square Neighbourhood Activity Centre.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

12 POLICY CONTEXT

This section of the report provides an overview of the policies and provisions of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme that are considered to be most relevant to the proposal.

Planning Policy Framework

The following clauses of the Planning Policy Framework are considered to be most relevant to the application:

- Clause 11 (Settlement), which states that planning is to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing and future communities through the provision of zoned and serviced land for housing, employment, recreation and open space…community facilities and infrastructure.
- Clause 11.01-1R (Settlement – Loddon Mallee South), which identifies Bendigo as a 'regional city' where major urban growth is to be encouraged.
- Clause 11.03-1S (Activity Centres), which aims to build up activity centres as a focus of high quality development and living for the whole community. Key strategies of this clause include:
  - developing centres of different sizes and function;
  - encouraging a diversity of housing types at higher densities in and around activity centres;
  - improving access by walking, cycling and public transport to services.
- Clause 13.04 (Soil degradation), ensure that potentially contaminated land is suitable for its intended future use and development, and that contaminated land is used safely.
- Clause 15.01 (Urban design), which aims to create urban environments that are safe, healthy, functional and that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity. This clause sets out a range of urban design principles that should be followed for non-residential development, including building design, subdivision design, healthy neighbourhoods and neighbourhood character.
- Clause 15.03 (Heritage), which aims to conserve places of heritage significance by identifying and protecting them through the planning scheme. Key strategies to achieve the objectives relate to:
  - encouraging appropriate development that respects heritage places with identified heritage values; and
  - supporting the adaptive reuse of buildings where their use has become redundant.
- 16 (Housing), which aims to provide for housing diversity and associated infrastructure that is sustainable and close to activity centres, transport and other destinations. Key strategies for achieving the objective relate to:
  - increasing the supply of housing in existing urban areas, including under-utilised land;
  - ensuring that housing is integrated with infrastructure and services;

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

  - encouraging housing development on sites that are well located in relation to activity centres, employment corridors and public transport;
  - increasing residential densities in existing urban areas;
  - improving housing diversity and affordability.

- 18 (Transport), which aims to ensure an integrated and sustainable transport system that provides access to social and economic opportunities in a sustainable and safe way. Strategies to achieve this include:
  - making jobs and community services more accessible
  - concentrating urban development around activity centres; and
  - public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure.

Clause 22.06 - Heritage policy

Clause 22.06 applies to all applications under the Heritage Overlay. Its relevance to the proposal is discussed in the Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance provided as background documents.

Clause 22.15 - Golden Square Residential Character Policy

This policy applies to all development and subdivision in the General Residential Zone. The lots on the subject site that front Panton Street are located in Golden Square Precinct 1 (GS1), as shown in Figure 10. The remainder of the site is located outside the area affected by the policy.

Clause 22.15 aims to ensure that development is responsive to the desired future character of the area in which it is located and retains and enhances the identified elements that contribute to the character of the area. The remainder of the site is not affected by the policy. The 'statement of desired future character' for the area is as follows:

The heritage qualities and the distinctive characteristics of each streetscape will be maintained and strengthened.

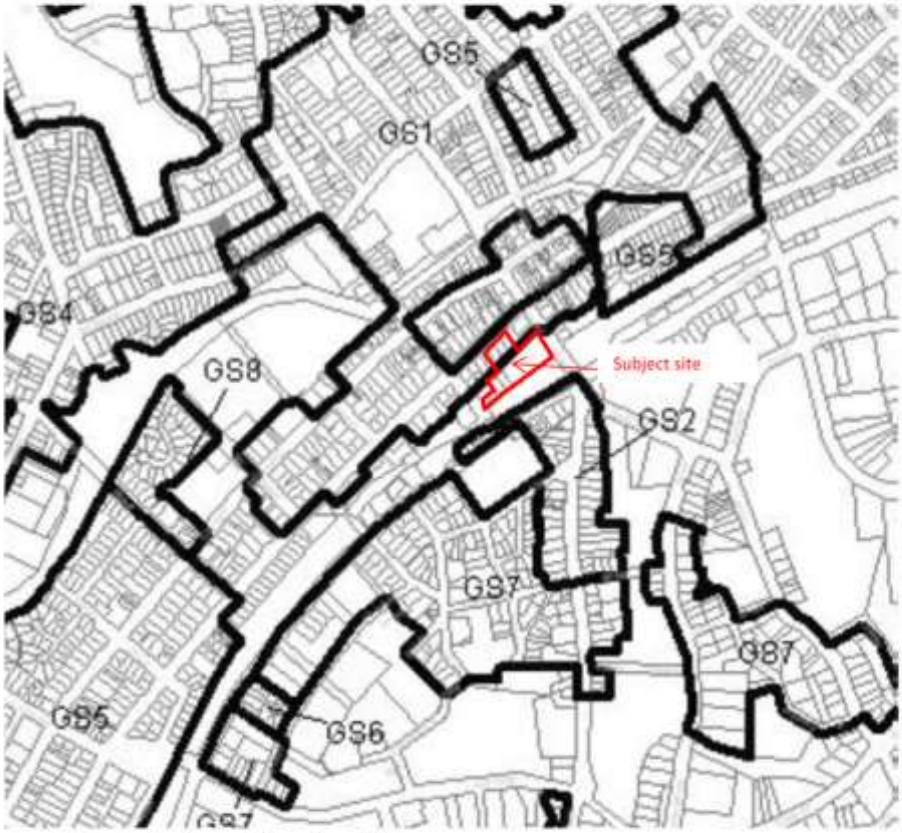
The policy sets out a series of objectives and suggested design responses for new development. Whilst some of the objectives and design responses would be appropriate for new medium density development along Panton Street, other aspects of the policy would be likely to conflict with such development. These include the following:

- an objective to maintain and strengthen the established garden settings of the dwellings;
- a suggested design response to set buildings back from one side boundary by at least 2 metres, preferably both;
- a suggested design response to respect the predominant building height in street, including maintaining single storey building heights at front of dwelling if applicable.

It is recommended that the lots fronting Panton Street should be removed from the Golden Square Residential Character Policy to allow the new planning provisions prepared as part of this report to operate without conflict or confusion.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Figure 10 Golden Square Residental Character Policy map (from Clause 22.15)



Source: Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme, Clause 22.15

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Neighbourhood Character Overlay

The overlay applies to one lot on Panton Street (CA16) that is currently vacant and forms part of the sports ground. The location and extent of the overlay are shown in Figure 4. This lot is the only part of the Panton Street frontage of the site that is not affected by the Heritage Overlay.

This overlay identifies and protects the 'Bendigo Early Settlement Residential Character' area. It aims to:

- *ensure that new buildings and works reflect the preferred character of the surrounding area;*
- *encourage the retention of existing pre-World War I and inter-war dwellings;*
- *ensure that new buildings and works meet the objectives and design guidelines contained in the relevant Precinct Brochure of the City of Greater Bendigo Residential Character Study 2001.*

The overlay requires a permit to demolish or remove a building. It modifies ResCode standards for garages, carports and front fence heights. It is also recommended that the overlay should be removed from this land for the same reasons that the residential character policy in Clause 22.15 should not apply, as explained previously. This will allow the new planning provisions prepared as part of this report to operate without conflict or confusion.

Key findings

- State Planning Policy strongly advocates the concept of building up existing activity centres for new development, including residential development at higher densities with a range of diverse housing types.
- State Planning Policy recognises and promotes the important role that major regional cities such as Bendigo should play in providing employment and housing growth.
- State Planning Policy requires high quality urban design outcomes that consider character and heritage qualities.
- The Golden Square Residential Character Policy and Neighbourhood Character Overlay contain some policy that is relevant to the future development of the precinct, but other policy that would conflict with the recommended future planning framework for the land.

Recommendations

- Remove the land fronting Panton Street from the Golden Square Residential Character Policy.
- Remove the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO1) from Crown Allotment 16, Section15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst, as shown in Figure 12.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

14 PROPOSED ZONE PROVISIONS

Zones are the main tool for regulating land use in the Victorian planning system. This section of the report provides a discussion of potential future uses of the subject site and the options for zones.

Potential uses

The main school building has potential for a wide range of different uses. Some of these can be readily identified, however, others may only emerge in time. Potential uses may include:

- conversion to residential apartments;
- residential building such as short term-accommodation;
- specialist accommodation such as a retirement or nursing home;
- office spaces, either single or multiple occupants;
- recreation or place of assembly;
- an institutional or community use;
- a combination of the above uses.

The remainder of the site also has potential to be used and developed for a number of the uses listed above, however, its size and vacant nature are likely to make it more appealing for a residential development. The land former drill hall has potential to be used for car parking in associated with other uses both over the short and longer term. Parts of the site may also be used for different 'interim uses' prior to ultimately being re-developed for a more permanent use.

Zone options

The underlying zone of the surrounding area is considered to be residential, having regard to the pattern of zoning and uses in the surrounding area (refer to Section 6). There is significant strategic support in the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme for more intensive infill development on the subject site, as discussed in Section 11 of this report. On this basis, there are considered to be two residential zone options for the site:

- Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)
- General Residential Zone (GRZ)

Table 2 shows a summary of the two zones, with a focus on their purpose and how they operate. The table shows that both zones can be tailored to local circumstances. The key differences relate to zone purpose and default building heights, both of which are designed to promote higher density outcomes in the Residential Growth Zone. The Residential Growth Zone also has more flexible provisions for non-residential uses, although this information has not been included in the table. Other zones, such as the Mixed Use Zone and commercial zones are not considered to be appropriate for the site because they allow for some commercial and industrial uses that would not be compatible with the surrounding area.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Table 2 Overview and analysis of Residential Growth Zone and General Residential Zone

Zone	Purpose	Likely application	Principles derived from zone purpose	Particular features
Residential Growth Zone **RGZ**	Enables new housing growth and diversity in appropriate locations	In appropriate locations near activities centres, town centres, train stations and other areas suitable for increased housing activity such as smaller strategic redevelopment sites	• Locations offering good access to services, transport and other infrastructure • Areas which provide a transition between areas of more intensive use and development and areas of restricted housing growth • Areas where there is mature market demand for higher density outcomes	• A specific zone purpose to provide housing at increased densities in buildings up to and including four storey buildings. • Default maximum building height of 13.5 metres. • Schedule to the zone that can introduce area-specific modifications to a range of built form matters, including building heights, setbacks and site coverage.
General Residential Zone **GRZ**	Respects and preserves neighbourhood character while allowing moderate housing growth and diversity	In most residential areas where moderate growth and diversity of housing that is consistent with existing neighbourhood character is to be provided	• Areas with a diversity of housing stock, diversity of lot sizes and a more varied neighbourhood character • Areas where moderate housing growth and housing diversity is encouraged	• 11 metre maximum building height, with some exceptions. • Schedule to the zone that can introduce area-specific modifications to a range of built form matters, including building heights, setbacks and site coverage.

Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, 2015, 4, compiled and expanded upon by Centrum Town Planning, 2018

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Proposed zone

A detailed analysis of the residential zone options has been undertaken and is provided as a background document. This analysis concludes that the General Residential Zone would be the most suitable zone for the main school building area and that either the General Residential Zone or Residential Growth Zone could be used for the remainder of the site.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has indicated that zones must follow title boundaries, and there is no proposal to re-subdivide the existing title boundaries on the site. Therefore, one zone must apply to the entire site. On balance, it is considered that the General Residential Zone would be appropriate for the entire site given the presence of the Heritage Overlay and sensitivity of the land in the front setback of the main school building.

In order to allow for development of up to 3-4 storeys or 13.5 metres in height in the central part of the site, the schedule to the General Residential Zone must be modified to allow this outcome. Height controls are further discussed in Section 15 of this report.

Any non-residential uses that are prohibited for the main school building under the General Residential Zone could be considered under the proposed new schedule to the Heritage Overlay, which proposes to allow prohibited uses subject to planning approval, as discussed in Section 16 of this report. This will allow any prohibited use to be tested on its merits against the criteria that the use must not adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.

Recommendations

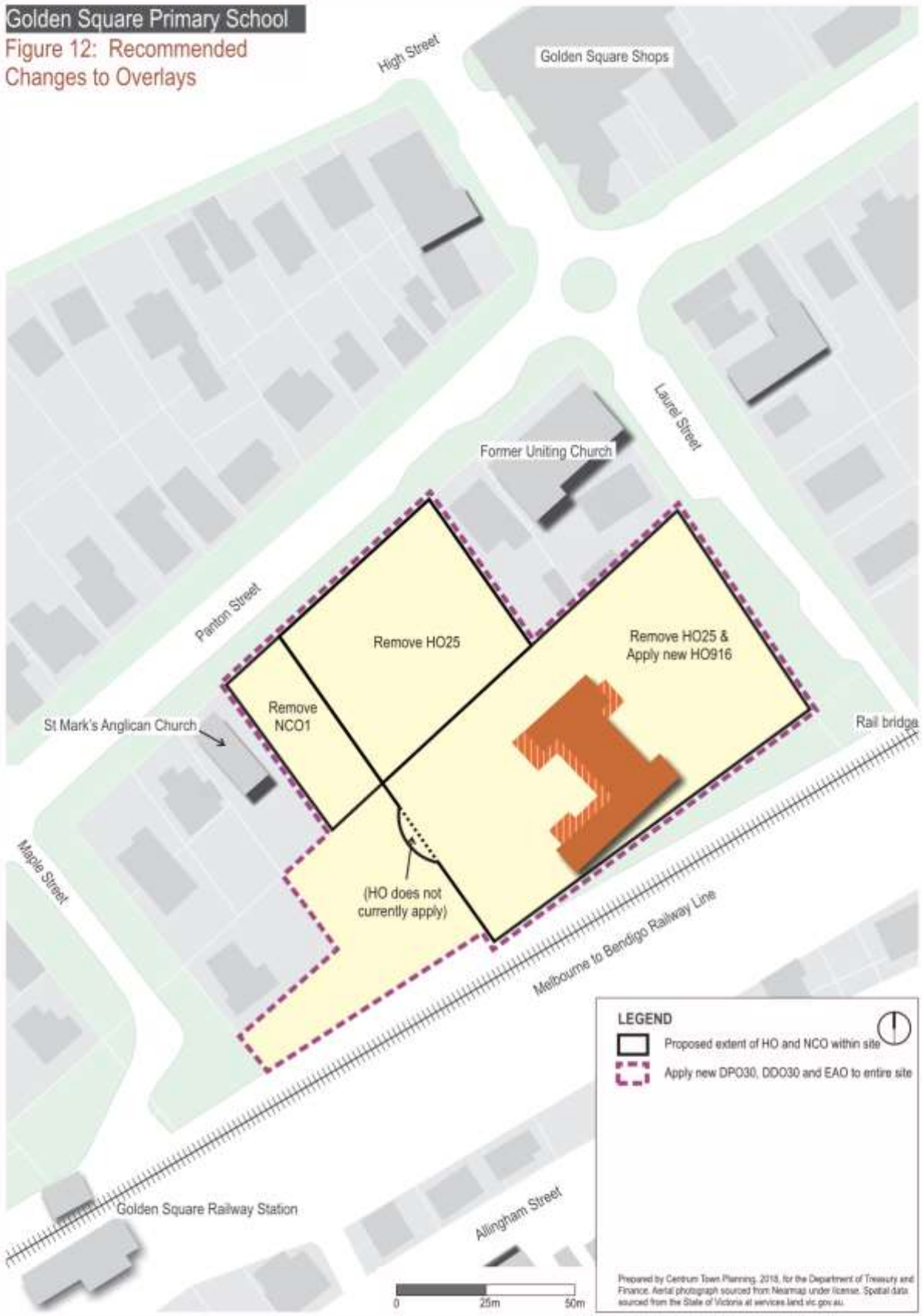
- Rezone the entire site to the General Residential Zone (GRZ), as per Figure 11.
- Introduce a new schedule to the General Residential Zone (GRZ2) to allow for a 13.5 metre maximum building height for the central part of the site.

A new Schedule 2 to the General Residential Zone has been provided with the proposed planning provisions that have been prepared for the site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

15 PROPOSED DESIGN GUIDELINES

The site presents some clear opportunities for the re-use of existing buildings and the development of vacant spaces for new buildings. This section of the report discusses the key implications and challenges arising from the site analysis for different parts of the site and makes recommendations for appropriate design guidelines for inclusion in the new planning provisions for the site.

Central and southern areas including main school building

The central and southern parts of the site, including the area to the rear of the main school building, present opportunities for the highest building forms due to their greater setbacks from adjoining land. Building heights of up to 13.5 metres are considered to be appropriate in these areas as this would allow for 3-4 storey development, as supported by Clause 21.05 of the MSS. Within these areas, the size of the site would allow for a high degree of flexibility in terms of where building footprints and accessways could be located.

From a heritage perspective, a curtilage of 5 metres around the side and rear of the building has been identified and is reflected in the proposed schedule to the Development Plan Overlay. This will protect the significant walls, eaves and windows of the former school building, without unreasonably restricting future development. Nevertheless, high building forms of up to 13.5 metres in height at the rear of the building are considered to be appropriate to provide a physical and visual connection between the main school building and substantial new building forms that have the greatest potential to ensure its long term integrity.

The two historic peppercorn trees on the site present both a constraint and an opportunity in the future layout of the site; they contribute significant amenity value to the central part of the site, but also present potential challenges for the site layout and the future maintenance and the installation and maintenance of underground services. Only the large tree to the south west of the main school building is considered to be worth of long term heritage protection, as discussed previously.

Land adjoining Panton Street & adjacent dwellings

The land fronting Panton Street and the land on the perimeter of the site near Panton Street have a higher degree of sensitivity than the central and southern parts of the site. This is due to the existing character and heritage significance of adjoining built form, presence of private open spaces associated with adjoining dwellings and the close visual relationship to Panton Street. Whilst these spaces could be developed for multiple dwellings at reasonably high densities, particular consideration of front and side setbacks to adjoining land and building heights is required.

The new provisions should seek to ensure graduated building forms that have an acceptable impact on adjoining properties in terms of appearance, overlooking and overshadowing. Maximum building heights of 11 metres are recommended to allow for three storey buildings with pitched roofs. A general requirement for upper floor setbacks for built form over two storeys in height will ensure that buildings are of an appropriate scale for the streetscape. Minimum side setbacks of five metres for new buildings are considered to be necessary in these areas. This will also encourage accessways to be developed in these areas with minimal impacts on the historic Dutch elm street trees in Panton Street.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

On Panton Street, the setbacks of the Uniting and Anglican churches nearby provide appropriate reference points for the front setbacks of new development along Panton Street. Along Panton Street, new buildings on the site could have no or minimal side setbacks, as long as design is of high quality and facades are suitably articulated.

The design guidelines described above are shown visually in Figure 13.

Former playground / drill ground

The former playground in front of the main school building on Laurel Street is a complex space for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is the space that provides the main school building with its identity in that it is the only place where the full scale and detail of the building and its facade, including the name of the school, can be appreciated. Secondly, the space and the native landscaping associated with it have some amenity value and are associated with the historical development of the school, although are not of heritage significance. Thirdly, from a practical perspective the playground is likely to be an important place for parking and access for the main school building, irrespective of the nature of its future use. It could also provide opportunities for periodic uses and activities that may be associated with other uses on the site, or be quite separate.

For these reasons, this area is likely to have limited potential for the development of new buildings, however, new buildings should not necessarily be prohibited, but should be subject to a rigorous series of tests that ensure an appropriate outcome. For example, a potential user of the site may wish to construct a building or structure in front of part of the old school building. This outcome may be appropriate if the design is of particularly high quality and can preserve a large viewline to the main school building through glass or other means. Under such a scenario, it is likely that the new building would also need to be closely tied to the old school building from both a functional and ownership perspective to ensure that the viewlines are maintained and that vegetation and fences do not obstruct views.

Recommendations

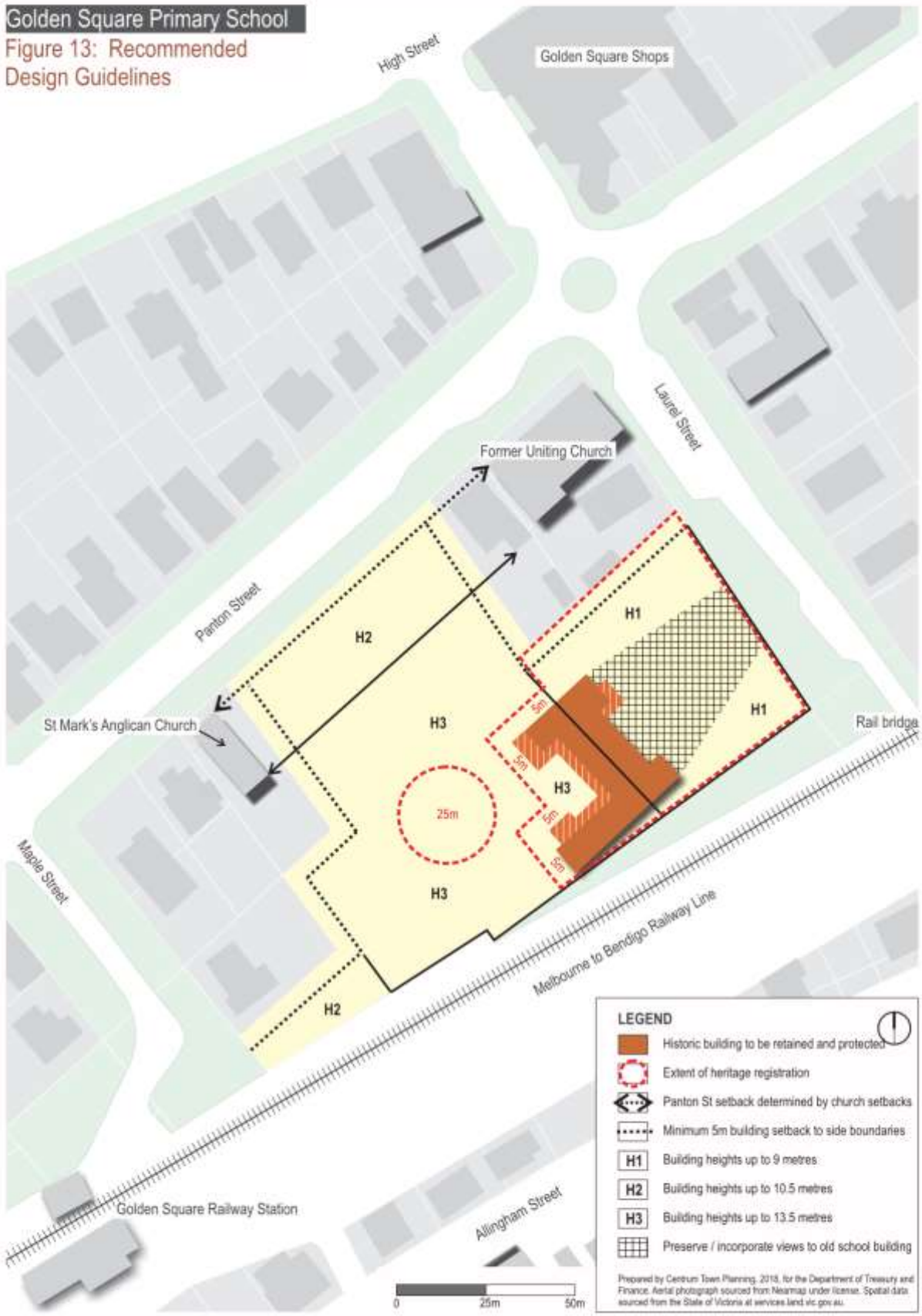
- Apply new Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay to protect the important features and amenity of the site and surrounds and ensure that new development is of high quality. The new schedule should address the following matters:
  - historic features of the site from a design perspective
  - views of the main school building from Laurel Street
  - treatment of the main school building including extensions
  - building form, height and scale for new buildings
  - front and side building setbacks at ground level and upper floor setbacks
  - detailed design matters including articulation, building style, windows and entries and plant;
  - noise levels in habitable rooms from the railway line and non-residential uses.
  - access & car parking

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

– pedestrian and road connections through the site;

A new Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay has been included in the proposed planning provisions that have been prepared for the site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

16 RISKS AND THREATS

Despite its development potential and attractive attributes, the site faces a number of threats and risks. These relate mainly to the future use and ownership of the main school building. This section of the report discusses these threats and risks and identifies potential ways that they can be minimized through planning provisions.

Land configuration

If the site is sold as a whole, a potential purchaser may seek to dispose of parts of the site in order to fund new development or for other reasons. This may be a reasonable outcome from some perspectives, however, under such a scenario, there is a risk that the main school building could be separated from the vacant parts of the site that are simpler and more profitable to develop. If this occurs, the main school building could lose a key potential source of revenue that would contribute to its long-term physical integrity, maintenance, or conversion to other uses. It may limit also the opportunities for vehicle and pedestrian linkages through the site.

For these reasons, it is recommended that the existing lot be consolidated and the main school building not subdivided from the remainder of the land until it can be demonstrated that a sound, long-term use of the main school building exists. It would also be preferable that a proper maintenance and management plan is in place. These matters should be managed through the objectives of the Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay. It is considered that some discretion will be necessary in applying this requirement, so general rather than specific requirements are considered to be appropriate.

Under this scenario, it will be important to ensure that individual dwelling lots or buildings can be progressively subdivided from the main parcel to provide a source of revenue for the development and ensure that this can contribute to the preservation of the main school building. Similarly, the subdivision of sections of the main school building may be acceptable under certain circumstances where an appropriate management regime is in place for the long-term maintenance of the building. Again, a general statement in the Development Plan Overlay can appropriately manage this issue at the discretion of Council.

Potential future use

Old former school buildings in Bendigo and other regional towns have a mixed history of conversion to other uses. Some, such as the former Long Gully Primary School in Upper California Road, Long Gully (HO545), have been successfully converted to office uses. Others, such as the former East Bendigo Primary School (HO891), have been unused for many years and are not being maintained in a way that will necessarily ensure their long-term survival.

A wide variety of factors are likely to influence the main school building's prospects for re-use. The factors will vary depending on the particular needs of the use. Similarly, it is difficult to know when a future use may emerge and how this may influence the overall development of the site. Given these uncertainties, it is considered important to ensure that a wide range of uses can be considered for the site and that the appropriateness of each use be assessed on its merits. The Schedule to the Heritage Overlay can be modified to allow uses that are otherwise prohibited in a zone, subject to two conditions:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- *the use will not adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.*
- *the benefits obtained from the use can be demonstrably applied towards the conservation of the heritage place*

These conditions are considered provide an appropriate framework for the consideration of prohibited uses on the site. Allowing prohibited uses is supported by the Heritage Assessment that has been prepared for the site.

Under-development

To date, medium density housing in Bendigo has mainly taken the form of multi-unit sites on lots of 200-400m2, where dwellings have primarily been small, detached or semi-detached houses. This form of housing has been successfully developed throughout urban Bendigo. This view is supported by research undertaken as part of the Greater Bendigo Residential Strategy, which found that lots of less than 300m2 consistently made up between 10% and 20% of suburban style lots that were created between 2008 and 2013 (City of Greater Bendigo, 2014, 26). In a small number of areas, townhouses or terrace style houses have been developed at higher lot densities of 100-200 square metres. A small number of shop top apartments have also been developed in the Bendigo CBD.

The property market for higher density living in Bendigo is small and is just beginning to emerge. For example, a small number of recent mixed use developments in the CBD have included apartments. This market is, however, relatively small and immature. The relatively low cost of land in Bendigo compared with metropolitan property markets means that apartment type living is likely to be a niche residential housing type for the foreseeable future. It is also likely to be confined to certain locations in the CBD or other major attractions such as the Bendigo Hospital. This observation is supported by the City of Greater Bendigo's strategic planning vision, as described in Section 11.

Having regard to these factors, there is a risk that the most cost-effective form of development form a market perspective may be a subdivision or development of land at densities greater than 200 square metres. Town planning policies have traditionally not intervened in a meaningful way to require certain lot densities or yields; it has been left 'to the market' to determine the optimum lot and dwelling size.

For the subject site, it is not considered appropriate to specify a maximum lot size in an attempt to guide a certain form of development, although there is a risk that the planning framework could become redundant if it rigidly promotes higher densities that cannot be sustained by the property market. This is difficult to address in a meaningful way at this time, however, the issue should be investigated through regular reviews of the planning scheme, as required by the Planning and Environment Act, or other strategic processes undertaken by the City of Greater Bendigo.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Notice requirements

The Planning & Environment Act requires responsible authorities to give notice of a planning permit application to adjoining owners and occupiers of allotments or lots adjoining the land to which the application applies unless the responsible authority is satisfied that the grant of the permit would not cause material detriment (Section 52, Planning and Environment Act, 1987).

The Victoria Planning Provisions provide opportunities to exempt permit applications from these notice requirements in certain situations, which also exclude rights of appeal to VCAT. This is considered to be worthy of consideration for this site for the following reasons:

- there is significant strategic support in the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme for higher density outcomes in activity centres such as Golden Square, as described in Section 11 of this report;
- the proposed new schedules to the Heritage Overlay and Development Plan Overlay will establish a strong and clear statutory framework for the future development of the different parts of the site;
- the proposed new schedule to the Development Plan Overlay will provide appropriate protection for setbacks to adjoining residential land;
- the planning scheme amendment process to introduce the new provisions will provide Council and the community with a full and formal opportunity to provide comment on the new provisions; and
- there is a high likelihood that multiple, even many, planning permit applications will be required to the site's final re-development; this has the potential to lead to significant delays and costs if notice of every planning permit application is given, particularly for similar types of development.

On balance, and having regard to the need to balance the different objectives of planning as set out under the Planning and Environment Act, it is considered appropriate to exempt planning permit applications from third party notice and review rights. This exemption should, however, be applied on the condition that the community is able to provide comment on the broader development vision for the site and main design parameters.

In this case, a Development Plan Overlay is considered to be the most appropriate tool to use to achieve this objective. The Development Plan Overlay requires that a plan be prepared to co-ordinate use and development before permits can be granted under the zone. This overlay has various other attributes that are discussed in the Planning Practice Note No.23 for Applying the Incorporated Plan and Development Plan Overlays (November, 2018).

One of the guidelines in the Practice Note is that the Development Plan Overlay should not be used on self-contained sites with few landowners, near existing residential areas (DELWP, 2018, 3). On face value, this would discourage the use of the Development Plan Overlay in this situation, however, this guidance needs to be considered having regard to the complexity of the subject site, the other planning provisions that will apply and the high likelihood of a large number of planning applications that consider similar matters over many years.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

It is understood that the City of Greater Bendigo has developed an internal policy for the preparation of development plans. This includes a notice process to neighbours that allows them to understand the purpose of the plan and provides them with an opportunity to be involved in the process.

Once a Development Plan has been prepared and approved, planning permit applications can be considered by the City of Greater Bendigo without notice. It is considered that the City of Greater Bendigo has sufficient expertise and resources to give full and rigorous consideration of planning permit applications, particularly in relation to design and heritage.

It is noted that the Development Plan Overlay has been applied to a number of surplus government land sites considered by the Government Land Planning Service.

Contamination

The environmental assessment work that has been carried out has identified a sufficient level of contamination to warrant more detailed assessment work until a sensitive use commences. In response, the Department of Treasury and Finance has accepted that an Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) should be applied to the land. This overlay triggers the need for a statutory audit under Section IXD of the Environment Protection Act 1970, prior to the use or development of land for a sensitive use.

This control will enable proper testing and management of the site conditions in the context of a new development proposal. It will also allow proper testing of hardstand and building areas that are difficult to access without some form of demolition or removal. The requirements of the EAO do not apply to commercial development.

Recommendations

- Allow prohibited uses to be considered for the main school building and its curtilage in the new Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (HO916).
- Apply the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) to the entire site.
- Apply a new Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay to the entire site, with requirements for:
  - a site and context plan;
  - concept plans for the layout of the site;
  - traffic management report;
  - arboricultural assessment of any significant vegetation; and
  - indicative landscape plan;
  - subdivision design requirements.

A new Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay has been provided with the proposed new planning provisions.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

17 CONCLUSION

The former Golden Square Primary School is an ideal site for an intensive residential development or other uses that can capitalise on its strategic location and size. It has a significant area of vacant land at the rear of the main school building that could be re-developed for a variety of new building forms, with potential for buildings of two to four storeys in height.

The intensive re-development of major infill sites close to activity centres is a strong theme in the City of Greater Bendigo's Strategic vision for Bendigo, as expressed in the Municipal Strategic Statement and recent planning strategies. Golden Square is expected to accommodate an additional 1,700 people and 750 households over the next 20 years. Given its size and close proximity to the Golden Square neighbourood activity centre, the subject site has the potential to play an important role in delivering upon this vision in the context of Golden Square.

For a suburban location, the site has outstanding access to shops, services and transport infrastructure. The site is within walking distance of essential shops and services in the nearby Golden Square neighbourhood activity centre, including recreation facilities, supermarket and medical facilities. It has good access links to nearby areas of employment in Golden Square and has good access to the Bendigo CBD and other destinations via road and bus transport. The road network in the immediate area can accommodate the additional traffic that would be generated by the site, even in a high yield development scenario. The site is therefore ideally suited to higher density residential outcomes and a new schedule to the General Residential Zone with a Development Plan Overlay should be applied to the entire site to facilitate these forms of development.

The most sensitive areas of the site are the main school building, which is of local heritage significance, and the land fronting Laurel and Panton Streets. The amenity and privacy of adjoining dwellings also requires careful consideration the future development of the site. This report has found that the future development of these areas can be appropriately managed through the application of overlay provisions in the planning scheme that address the design, development, heritage and amenity related issues.

There are a range of risks and threats relating to the future development of the site that can also be adequately managed through new overlay provisions, including soil contamination. Some development related risks relating to the future integrity of the main school building can also be addressed to some degree through new planning provisions.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

18 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Local policy

- Remove the land fronting Panton Street from the Golden Square Residential Character Policy.

Zones

- Rezone the entire site to a new Schedule 2 to the General Residential Zone, as shown in Figure 11.

Overlays

- Remove the existing Laurel Street Heritage Precinct, HO25 from the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, as it extends to the original State School Reserve.
- Remove the Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO1) from Crown Allotment 16, Section15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst.
- Apply a new individual Heritage Overlay (HO916) over the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, over the original State School Reserve and extended to include the rear mature Peppercorn tree (Schinus molle), with tree controls to protect this Peppercorn tree.
- Allow prohibited uses on the site in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for the main school building.
- Apply a new Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay to the entire site to guide development and protect the important features of the site and its surrounds.
- Apply the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) to the entire site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 2 - Development Plan Overlay Schedule 30

--/--/---
Proposed C241

SCHEDULE 30 TO CLAUSE 43.04 DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERLAY

Shown on the planning scheme map as **DPO30**

FORMER GOLDEN SQUARE PRIMARY SCHOOL

6 Laurel Street, Golden Square

1.0 Objectives

--/--/---
Proposed C241

In preparing a development plan or an amendment to a development plan, the following objectives must be achieved:

- To preserve and maintain the heritage features of the main school building and its associated features and encourage adaptive re-use while allowing for significant redevelopment on the remainder of the site.
- To encourage contemporary new development of high quality and higher density on the land fronting Laurel Street and Panton Street while protecting the amenity of adjacent dwellings.
- To ensure that subdivision does not compromise the long-term integrity of the main school building and other features of heritage significance.
- To establish a vehicle, cycle and pedestrian network within the site that connects to and integrates with the local street system.

2.0 Requirements before a permit is granted

A permit may be granted before a development plan has been prepared provided the responsible authority is satisfied that it will not prejudice the future use and development of the land and is consistent with the development plan objectives in Section 1.0 of this Schedule.

3.0 Conditions and requirements for permits

--/--/---
Proposed C241

None specified

4.0 Requirements for development plan

--/--/---
Proposed C241

The development plan must be prepared for the whole site to the satisfaction of the responsible authority and generally in accordance with Plan 1 below and the following requirements.

Development plan components

A development plan must include the following components, as appropriate:

- Existing conditions and site analysis plans, which show:
  - Surrounding land uses and development.
  - Access points.
  - Adjoining roads.
  - Pedestrian and cycling links.
  - Public transport routes.
  - Noise sources.
  - Topography.
  - Existing canopy trees.
  - Soil conditions.

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Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Vegetation.

- Concept plans for the layout of the site, *which may include non-residential uses, must be* generally in accordance with Figure 1 and show:
  - The location of proposed uses.
  - The location of existing and proposed buildings.
  - Three dimensional building envelopes for new buildings including indicative building heights, the separation distances between buildings, the relationship to surrounding sites and the setback from the street frontages.
  - Garden areas and locations of private and public open space.
  - Proposed lot and road layouts.
  - Areas set aside for car parking and bicycle parking.
  - Vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian access locations.
  - Waste storage and collection points, including any areas set aside for loading / unloading.
  - Stormwater and drainage management treatments including any water sensitive design, or integrated water management elements.
  - Indicative staging / sequence of development.
- A traffic management report outlining:
  - The existing capacity within the surrounding road network.
  - Likely car and bicycle parking demand and traffic generation.
  - Indicative access arrangements for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.
  - Recommendations for any traffic management measures.
- An arboricultural assessment of the effects of the development on any significant vegetation on the land including tree protection zones around trees of significance.
- An indicative landscape concept plan for the site.
- A report demonstrating how the development plan will achieve the development plan objectives and development plan requirements in this clause.

Development plan requirements

A development plan must include and address the following requirements to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority:

Design requirements (all areas)

- Building forms must be well-proportioned and feature high quality details.
- Reproduction of heritage building forms and detailing must be avoided.
- Plant and services must be integrated with the building and must be located and screened so as to not be substantially visible from streets, public open spaces and secluded private open space areas.
- Residential development immediately adjoining the Bendigo-Melbourne Railway Line must be designed and located to limit noise levels in habitable rooms.
- Uses that include noise sources, such as mechanical plant, must include appropriate noise attenuation measures to minimise amenity impacts on residential uses.

Car parking & movement

- Vehicle access points to new development fronting Panton and Laurel Streets must be minimised to protect street trees and maintain the character of the frontage.
- Car parking associated with new buildings should not be visually prominent and should be located at the rear of new buildings or dwellings, or in a basement or under croft section of a development.

- New development should create public pedestrian connections through the site to link Laurel Street, Panton Street and Maple Street and include the opportunity to provide access to a future railway station for Golden Square.
- Loading and service vehicle access must be located and designed to avoid conflict with pedestrians and other vehicles, and to minimise visibility from the street.

Building height

The development plan must show the applicable preferred building height specified in Table 1 below and shown in Figure 1.

Table 1 Building height

Area	Preferred maximum height	Purpose
H1	9 metres	To facilitate development that is lower in height and less visually dominant than the main school building.
H2	11 metres	To facilitate 2-3 storey residential development.
H3	13.5 metres	To facilitate 3-4 storey residential development.

The development plan may vary the preferred maximum building height in Areas H1 and H2. Proposals to exceed the preferred maximum building height must be accompanied by a site analysis plan and a written urban context report documenting how the development plan will achieve the development plan objectives in this clause.

Setbacks

- Front setbacks to Panton Street must be determined by the setbacks of the nearby church buildings, as shown in Figure 1.
- Buildings must be setback a minimum of five metres to side boundaries, as shown in Figure 1.
- Buildings taller than two storeys must incorporate upper level side and front setbacks in order to reduce bulk and reduce amenity impacts.

Building frontages

- Buildings with long continuous side and front facades exceeding 10 metres must be divided into smaller vertical sections using variation in wall articulation, openings and windows, blank wall areas, materials and colours, or other techniques.
- On corner sites, buildings must address both street frontages with either openings and/or windows at street level.

Design requirements (in areas affected by Heritage Overlay - Schedule 916 only)

- A Conservation Management Plan must be prepared prior to the commencement of any works.
- The historic features of the site, as described in the Statement of Significance for the site must be preserved, including but not limited to the main school building and large peppercorn tree.
- Disruption to the original 1873 fabric of the main school building must be avoided unless for essential services or as an essential part of the adaptive re-use of the building.
- Extensions to the main school building must provide a clear separation between the old and new structure.

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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- New development in the front setback of the building to Laurel Street (former playground / drill ground) must preserve or incorporate a significant vista of the main school building from Laurel Street as shown indicatively in Figure 1.
- New development in the front setback of the building to Laurel Street (former playground / drill ground) must not cover more than 30% of the front setback area and must include a landscaped space.
- The materials and colours of any buildings and structures must be compatible with the surrounding cultural heritage landscape.

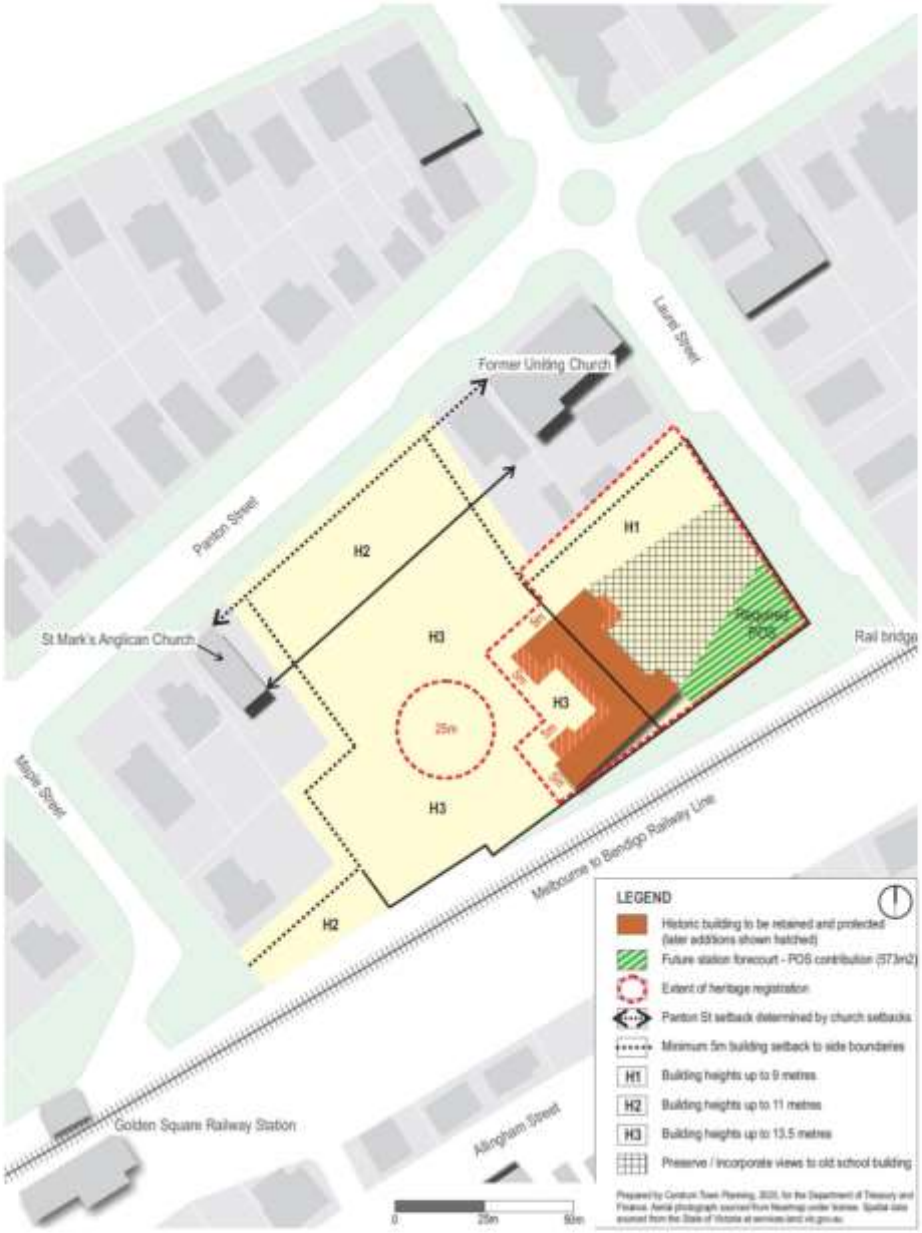
Public open space contribution

- Public open space to allow for future access to the Golden Square Station, as shown in Figure 1, which will represent the total public open space contribution for the site.

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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Figure 1 of Schedule 30 to Clause 43.04 - Indicative Framework Plan



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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 3 - Heritage Assessment and Statement of Significance



Former Golden Square Primary School No 1189 (photo 2016)



Laurie Burchell, photographer (ca. 1970- ca. 1999), State Library of Victoria

THE FORMER GOLDEN SQUARE PRIMARY SCHOOL

6 LAUREL STREET, GOLDEN SQUARE, BENDIGO, VIC, 3555

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT
AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

PREPARED BY

AMANDA JEAN, ARCHITECT/HERITAGE CONSULTANT

FOR

THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE, VICTORIA

OCTOBER 2018

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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

CONTENTS

Summary Of Report Findings And Recommendations	5
1.1 Background and Brief	10
1.2 Reasons to Amend	10
1.3 Background to the Amendment	10
1.4 Methodology	11
1.5 Planning Status	14
2.1. Statement of Significance	16
2.2 Recommendations	18
2.3 History	21
2.4 Description	26
3.1 Assessment Criteria	38
3.2 Comparative Analysis	40
4.1 Appendix A: Laurel Street Heritage Street Statement Of Significance	44
4.2 Appendix B: Heritage Overlay	48

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

LIST OF FIGURES AND DIAGRAMS

Figure 1: Recommended Changes to the Heritage Overlay HO25	8
Figure 2: Recommended Design Guidelines	9
Figure 3: Site Plan	11
Figure 4: Planning Status Zones	14
Figure 5: Planning Status Heritage Overlay	14
Figure 6: Planning Status Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity	15
Figure 7: 1852 Map (State Library of Victoria)	16
Figure 8: Recommended Design Guidelines	20
Figure 9: Site Map in 2015	26
Figure 10: Survey Drawing of the Layout of the School in 2018	27
Figure 11: 1873 Standard Design by W.H. Ellerker, Architect, (1840-1891)	28
Figure 12: Aerial Photo of Site/Diagram by Centrum Planning, 2016	36
Figure 13: 1884 Map of the Distribution Victorian State Schools	42
Figure 14: Heritage Overlay of Laurel Street Heritage Precinct	44
Figure 15: Golden Square Precinct Bengido & Eaglehawk Heritage Study	47

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

SUMMARY OF REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Heritage Assessment Report of the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, at 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square, was commissioned by Centrum Town Planning on behalf of the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance. The purpose of the report is to assess the level of cultural heritage significance of the former primary school and grounds and recommend heritage and conservation controls if required.

The findings of this Report are that:

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, has individual cultural heritage significance to the City of Bendigo at a local level as well as contributory significance to the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct, Golden Square. It is in good condition and has a high level of integrity both externally and internally.

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, dates to the discovery of gold in the Golden Square area in 1852. The school had an early beginning as a denominational tent school established as part of the Wesleyan Church mission in 1853. The construction of the present school building started in 1873 and opened for teaching in 1874. It is associated with the Education Act 1872. It was designed to accommodate a school population of 700 pupils which increased to 1000 pupils by1890.

The front façade and setting of the bi-chrome red and cream brick Gothic Revival style school building and the dominating slate roof, tall decorative chimneys and ventilators provide character and are visually impressive. The layout and construction of the school building is robust and innovative. It is an example of a Junior Cadet military school that was established in the early 20th century. The front playground became the military drill parade ground and a Junior Cadet Barracks Room was added to the front entrance. Students who volunteered to fight and died serving in the First World War are remembered by the Schools Honour Board.

The two large mature Peppercorn trees (*Schinus molle*) mark the earlier western boundary of the former 1873 State School Reserve. The graceful weeping habit and aromatic pinnate leaves of the large fifteen metres tall trees are over a hundred years old. Commonly associated with school yards and railway stations and mostly planted during the 19th century, Peppercorn Trees are important identity markers of school playgrounds. These trees are now reaching maturity and are disappearing from the landscape.

The Peppercorn tree (*Schinus molle*) at the rear of the main building is an exceptional specimen of a school yard shade tree and has local historical significance. Whereas the other Peppercorn tree (*Schinus molle*) of similar age is for various reasons displaying signs of senescence. There are no recommendations for heritage protection of the latter tree.

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is of historical, social and aesthetic significance as an excellent representative example of its type at the local level to the City of Greater Bendigo.

It has historic, aesthetic and representative/architectural significance as an excellent example of a government school built as a direct result of the 1872 Education Act. It has social significance

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

for providing state sponsored education to local children for over 144 years until its closure in 2015.

The school expansion programme that was undertaken in the 1940s and 1950s with acquisition of additional land to accommodate portable classrooms, sports grounds and facilities, are not contributory to the primary school's heritage significance. The former church hall (c 1960s), which was used as the indoor sports facilities, has low heritage significance.

The recommendations of this Report are that:

The existing Laurel Street Heritage Precinct, HO25 be removed from the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, to the extent of the original State School Reserve and replaced by an individual heritage overlay.

Recommendation for the application of a new individual Heritage Overlay over the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, extending over the original State School Reserve and extended to include the rear mature Peppercorn trees (*Schinus molle*).

Justifications for the recommendation include the following heritage matters: -

- The heritage significance of the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, has been formerly recognised by its inclusion in the heritage overlay of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme at HO25, Laurel Street Heritage Precinct.
- The statement of significance for the Precinct lists contributory buildings that reflect the Statement of Significance.
- The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is included in this latter list.
- It is identified as a key feature and contributory historic place in the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct (Eaglehawk & Bendigo Heritage Study 1993). It contributes to the visual cohesion of the precinct.
- It is one of a group of key civic buildings in the precinct that are distinctive for their polychrome red and cream brick Gothic Revival architectural style and are associated with the former Wesleyan Church in the area. It contributes to the high degree of integrity of the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct.
- Except for the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, other key heritage buildings within the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct were previously listed separately as individual heritage places. The recommendations are correcting an omission.

It is recommended and as advised by the Victorian Planning Practice Note 1 Applying the Heritage Overlay, 2018, a specific curtilage be identified around the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, in order to protect the heritage structure from future development.

- Recommendation for the creation of a view corridor that extends from Laurel Street to the front façade of the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189. This will ensure the continued contribution of the heritage place to the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct. It will ensure that the historic view is retained. If development does occur on either side of the view corridor further design controls are recommended.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- On either side of the view corridor it is recommended that a Height Control (H1) of 9 metres be introduced for all new development.

- Recommendation for a 5 metres curtilage around the side and rear elevations of the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189.

- A five metres will provide sufficient space to act as a buffer to protect the significant walls, eaves and windows, without constituting too much of an impediment on future development.

- Recommendation for a Height Control (H3) of 13.5 metres height control for future development at the rear of the former state primary school. The roof ridge height of the existing school is exceptionally high. The rear of the building does not have the level of integrity and authenticity as the front façade. The rear of the school can accommodate a greater degree of change than the front elevation without adversely impacting upon the heritage values and integrity of the place.

- The Peppercorn Tree (*Schinus molle*) inclusive of a 25 metres diameter root protection zone (no-development curtilage), located at the rear of the Main School Building be included in the new individual Heritage Overlay for Tree Controls for the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189. Tree controls are specific to the Peppercorn Tree (*Schinus molle*).

Recommendation to introduce conservation controls to the new individual Heritage Overlay for the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189. These include the following: Paint Controls and Prohibited Use Controls.

Recommendation that the former primary school sports playing fields, Lots 1-3 Title Plan 951463, Crown Allotments 15 Section 15A Parish of Sandhurst, to be removed from the Heritage Overlay HO25, Laurel Street Heritage Precinct. This is because there is no significant fabric and the land no longer reaches the threshold of local heritage significance.

It is recommended that Council consider as a future amendment adding Tree Controls within the HO25 Laurel Street Heritage Precinct in order to protect the entire Avenue of Dutch Elm trees (*Ulmus spp.*) on both sides of Panton Street. This is recommended by the Bendigo and Eaglehawk Heritage Study, 1993, statement of significance for the Golden Square Heritage Precinct.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

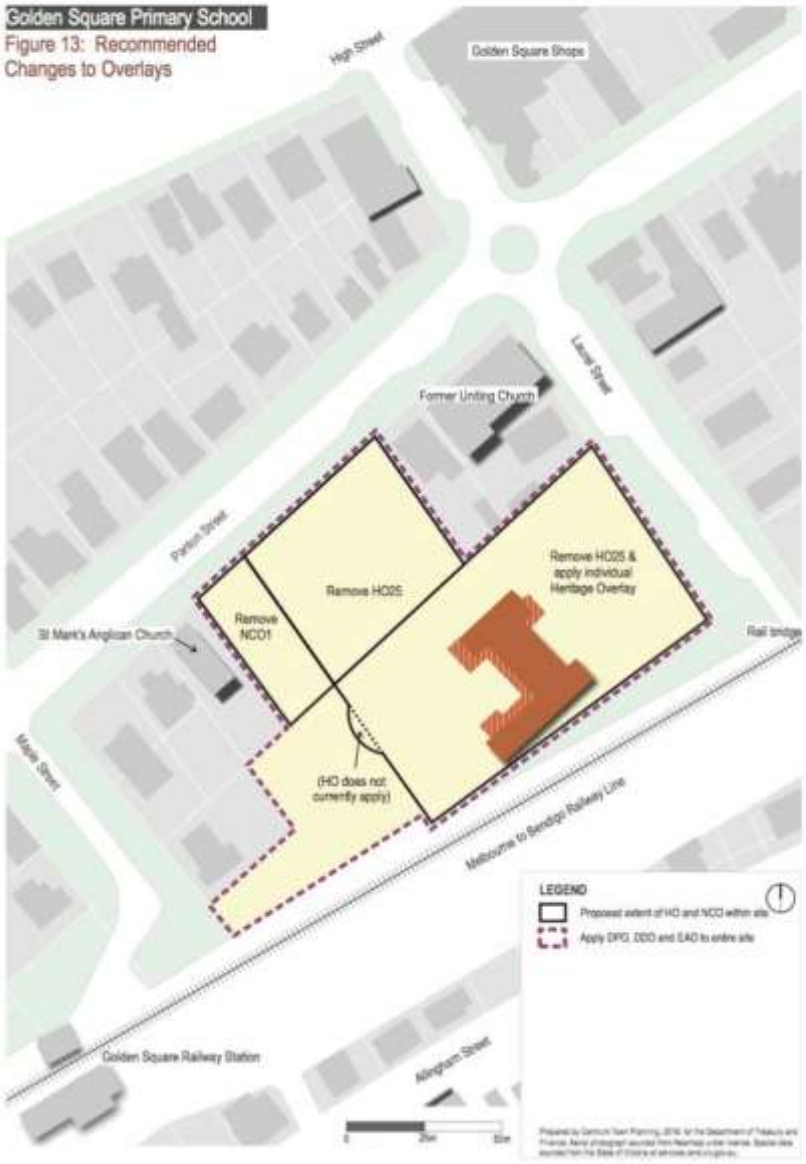


Figure 1: Recommended new Heritage Overlays for the former Golden Square Primary School No 1189 and the Peppercorn Tree (*Schinus molle*) with curtilage areas. Recommended changes to the Heritage Overlay HO25

(Map prepared by Raph Krelle, 2018).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

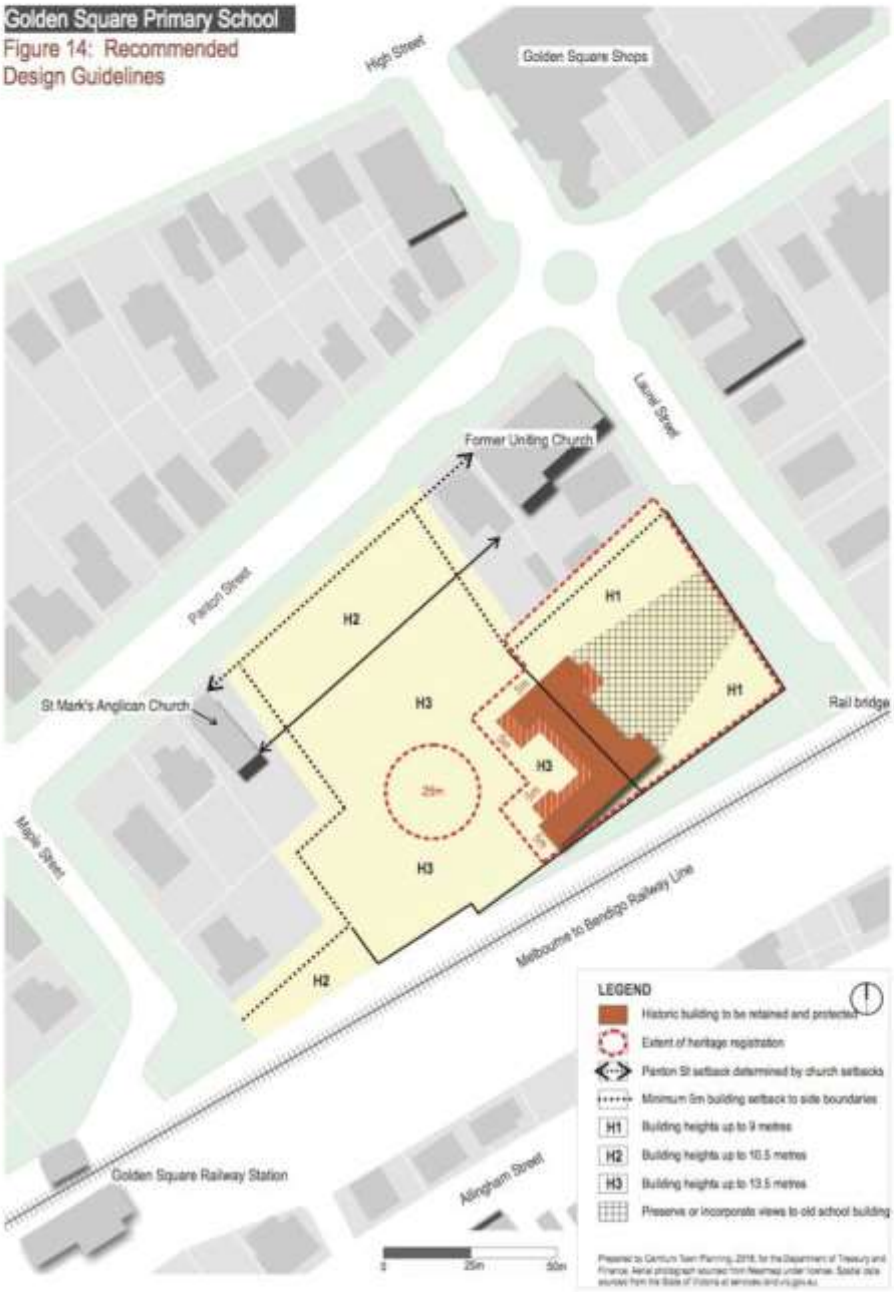


Figure 2: Recommended Design Guidelines

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1.1 BACKGROUND AND BRIEF

The Heritage Assessment Report of the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square, was commissioned by Centrum Town Planning for the Department of Treasury and Finance. The purpose of this report is to assess the level of significance and following, prepare a statement of cultural heritage significance for the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, with conservation controls if necessary.

1.2 REASONS TO AMEND

When the former state primary school closed in June 2015, the Department of Education and Training declared it surplus to government operating requirements. Centrum Town Planning was engaged by the Department of Treasury and Finance to make recommendations for the planning provisions that should apply to the former school land. This Heritage Assessment Report is one of three supporting documents that informs the recommendations to rezone the former Golden Square Primary School (the site) from Public Use zone to a non-public use zone.

The significance of this place has been recognised by its inclusion in the heritage overlay of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme at HO25 as a key feature and contributory historic place in the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct (Eaglehawk & Bendigo Heritage Study (1993). It is, however, an early listing.

The format of the statement of significance for Laurel Street Heritage Precinct was prepared in 1993. The statement of significance does not include all the heritage values sought to be protected and managed for this site under the Planning Scheme. Additional values are attributed to the historical importance of the early school's development, its architectural style, its setting, curtilage, former playground and military parade ground, and mature peppercorn tree.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE AMENDMENT

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is located at 6 Laurel Street, Township of Golden Square, Bendigo. It comprises an area of approximately 1.3 hectares. The area is made up of 9 parcels of land, being a mix of Crown land and freehold title. It includes the following parcels of land as shown on the diagram below, Crown Allotment 3A, Section 15A, Parish of Sandhurst, State School Reserve (Crown Land) and Lots 1-3 Title Plan 951463, Crown Allotments 15 & 16 Section 15A Parish of Sandhurst, and Lots1-3 Title Plan 812382.

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is part of the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct HO25, Bendigo Planning Scheme. There is one Lot on the western side of the school sports field, and three on the southern boundary, which are not included in the Heritage Overlay Laurel Street Precinct HO25. These include the three Lots TP812382 along the railway line and Lot 16 TP951463, adjacent the Church.

As part of this Heritage Assessment Report the potential significance of post Second World War school development of the former Golden Square Primary School was examined.

The 1940s and 1950s was a time of great experimentation in education design led by the Victorian Public Works Department Chief Architect, Percy Everett. He introduced the hexagonal classroom schools in 1946 and also the Bristol prefabricated classrooms between 1952 and 1954. This programme was managed under the private architectural firm of Roy Grounds. However, examples of these buildings have since been removed from the primary school site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Figure 3: Site Plan. The area marked with a pale red background on the plan above is Crown Land associated with the establishment of the 1873 State School Reserve. The remaining parcels of land were acquired at a later date by the Education Department.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a system of principles that govern the way in which information and data is gathered and analysed for research assessment. The report is based on the following recommended methodologies in accordance with requirements for a Planning Scheme Amendment: -

- **VPP Practice Notes "*Applying the Heritage Overlay*" revised January 2018**, which provides guidance on what should be included in heritage overlays and heritage precincts or significant areas and such matters as 'How are individual buildings, trees or properties of significance located within significant areas treated? **'and** 'What are recognised heritage criteria?' and 'Writing Statements of Significance'.

- **The *Burra Charter*, revised 2013, Australia ICOMOS** (International Council on Monuments and Sites), which is recognised Australia-wide in the identification, assessment and conservation of heritage places. Cultural significance is defined in the *Burra Charter* as being, '... embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects'.

- **Heritage Victoria's *Model Consultants Brief for Heritage Studies*** (January 2010).

- **City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Studies** including the following:
  Bendigo & Eaglehawk Heritage Study – Significant Sites 1993;
  City of Greater Bendigo: Thematic Environmental History, 2013;
  The State Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Framework of the City;
  of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme;
  Miles Lewis, Australian Architectural Index;
  http://www.mileslewis.net/australianarchitectural. html;

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Victorian Heritage Database, http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au.

1.4.1 Collection of information

The history of the site was researched and documented using both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources, including historic maps and photographs, newspapers, land records, *Sands & McDougall* directories, rate books and other Council records, were used to establish the date of construction and early occupation of buildings and to provide further details about the use and development of individual structures.

Newspapers and visual material were accessed through the State Library of Victoria, the National Library of Australia's Trove website, Land Victoria, and the Public Record Office Victoria. Council building registers and rate books and rates indexes were also researched at the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre and Goldfields Research Centre.

Secondary sources referenced the *City of Greater Bendigo: Thematic Environmental History*, 2013, as well as published local social histories and personal memoirs about the history of Golden Square Bendigo. The list of 'References' at the end of the citations provides more detail as to the specific references used in the preparation of the property history.

Site visits and fieldwork were conducted between July and August 2016. Inspections were undertaken from both the public domain, on site and inside the school building. The survey included consideration of the condition and extent of original fabric and relative intactness. Mapping, site surveys and recording of buildings, spatial arrangements, functions and genealogy were combined with photography to prepare a written description of the site and its wider context. It included aspects about the history and character of the setting, landscape and space such as evidence of school gardens, playgrounds, sporting fields and the like.

1.4.2 Analysis of information

Heritage assessment includes narrative inquiry that is an investigation of the ability of a place to reveal its story. Different types of stories about the former Golden Square Primary School are linked to historic themes set out in the *Greater Bendigo Thematic Environmental History*, the *Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study* and the *Statement of Significance of Greater Bendigo*.

A comparative analysis against Bendigo's historic themes has revealed how the Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, interprets key historical periods in the development of education in Bendigo. The degree of legibility of the historic themes on site provides important visual anchors for the place.[1] Different heritage assets were measured against key stages in the wider development of the Victorian educational system throughout the 20th century.

These stories describe the process of the site's production, evolution and public consumption that is how the site was used. It includes an analysis of different philosophical approaches to teaching (pedagogy). Pedagogy refers to the theory, practices and principles of the profession of teaching.

Teaching is a spatial practice. Different methods of teaching result in different types of buildings, arrangements of structures, design of interior and exterior spaces, including attitudes towards vegetation. The changing approach to teaching relates to shifting notions of community identity, cultural and social values.

[1] Lowenthal , D. (1985). *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Tengberg, Anna et el, (2012) *Cultural Ecosystems Services Provided By Landscapes: Assessment Of Heritage Values And Identity*, Ecosystem Services 2 (2012) 14-20.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1.4.3 Assessment of information

Heritage assessment has an evaluative dimension that determines how the past should be recalled and valued in the present. The methodologies listed above give guidance about how this evaluation should be undertaken. Standard heritage criteria are applied to determine the relative degree of significance of the site and its' assets. The criteria are as follows:

- *Criterion A:* Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural or natural history (historical importance).
- *Criterion B:* Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural or natural history (rarity).
- *Criterion C:* Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Greater Bendigo's cultural or natural history (research potential).
- *Criterion D*: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
- *Criterion E:* Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics in the context of the municipality (aesthetic significance).
- *Criterion F:* Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).
- *Criterion G:* Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of the place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).
- *Criterion H:* Special association with life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Greater Bendigo's history (associative significance).

Based on these recommendations a cultural heritage statement of significance and citation has been prepared for an individual heritage listing of the former primary school in the Planning Scheme as part of a proposed Planning Amendment.

The information is as follows:

- a statement of significance;
- a summary of the history;
- list of references;
- a description of the structures;
- recommendation for inclusion/exclusion in the Heritage Overlay;
- recommendations relating to specific identification of elements of significance;
- a recent aerial a map identifying the location and extent of the Heritage Overlay;
- assessment against heritage criteria;
- an indication of intactness and condition;
- a comparative analysis and associated historical themes.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1.5 PLANNING STATUS

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is made up of 9 lots. They include Crown Allotment 3A, Section 15A at B3ndigo Parish of Sandhurst (Crown land), Lot1-3 title Plan 951463, Crown Allotment 15 & 16, Section 15A at Bendigo, Parish of Sandhurst, Lot 1-3 title Plan 812382.



Figure 4: Planning Status. The majority of former Golden Square Primary School is currently zoned Public Use 2- Education except for the 4 lots along the western boundary, which are zoned General Residential Zone 1.

1.5.1 Statutory Heritage Controls

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is a contributory heritage place in the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct listed under HO 25 of the Heritage Overlay Schedules of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. Copies of relevant heritage citations are included at Appendix A.



Figure 5: Planning Status Heritage Overlay

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

1.5.2 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity Aboriginal Heritage

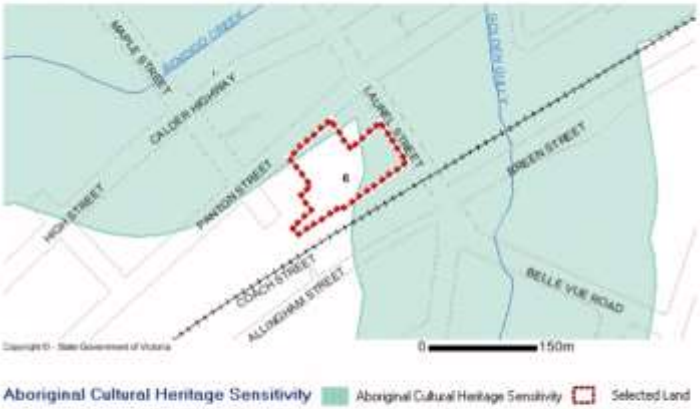


Figure 6: Planning Status Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity



Figure 7: 1852 Map (State Library of Victoria)

Early involvement by Aboriginal people in the discovery and collection of gold and colonial administration of the area has been recorded on plan by an early gold digger in 1852. There are few remnant artefacts that record the first Government Camp and Native Troopers Camp in the vicinity of the Golden Square Primary School No 1189, except for this 1852 map drawn by an early gold digger.

The map clearly shows the topography of the area, the deep string of ponds that made up Bendigo Creek and the dry ephemeral Golden Gully waterway. The site of the Golden Square Primary School No 1189 is marked on the lower left side of the diagram.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

2.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Name
Former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189,
Address 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square VIC 3550
Property No:

Reference

Map Reference

Building Type: Former state primary school, red brick 1874 single storey school and a Peppercorn Tree, *Schinus molle.*

Survey date
August 2016 (external and internal inspection)

Current Heritage Status: The Former State Primary School and grounds are included within the Heritage Overlay, HO25. No tree controls.

Recommendation
Include the Former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, red brick main building and a Peppercorn Tree, *Schinus molle,* in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay as a place of individual heritage and contributory to the Laurel Street heritage precinct HO25.

Laurel Street Precinct HO25

Hermes Number



Designer/Architect W.H. Ellerker Department of Public Instruction in 1873 under HR Bastow.

Architectural Style Gothic Revival

Heritage Studies
Bendigo and Eaglehawk Heritage Study 1993 Graeme Butler

Heritage Assessment Report 2016/2018, Mandy Jean

Significance The 1874 Former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is of local historical, social and representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Bendigo. The Peppercorn trees, (*Schinus molle)*, is of historic significance to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

What Is Significant?

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, including the former 1874 school, a single storey polychrome brick building with blue stone foundations and base course, the slate roof configuration of decorative chimneys and raised ventilators, the front former school playground and military parade ground and single mature Peppercorn tree, *Schinus molle*, at the rear of the building. The rear cloakroom additions built in early 1904-1911 associated with Schools Inspector, Frank Tate's reforms, are of contributory significance. The recent verandah additions at the rear of the school building and circa 1960s prefabricated classroom, which is attached to the red brick school by a small covered walkway link, former 1960s church hall and other outbuilding and garden structures, fences and vegetation are not significant.

History

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, had an early beginning in 1853, as a Wesleyan nomadic tent school based in Golden Square. The school tent, which was originally managed under the auspice of the Wesleyan Church developed into one of the largest primary schools in Bendigo by 1874. A permanent Denominational Wesleyan School formally opened in 1855 with the construction of a small timber school building and teacher's house. Shortly after the abolition of the Denominational School Board in 1862 by the Victorian government, the school became known as the Commons School, No 279.

Following the Education Act of 1872, the school, its teachers and pupils, were transferred to the present site at 6 Laurel Street, Golden Square adjacent the Uniting Church (former Wesleyan Church, 1870-1873). The school was known as the Golden Square Primary School, No 1189. The first school building on site consisted of a large timber hall, 60 feet by 18 feet, with a shingle roof, and 12 feet wide galleries at each end. By August of that year there were 500 pupils at the school.

The Victorian Education Department set up its own Architecture Branch under H.R. Bastow in 1873, largely in response to the increase in population generated by the gold rush. The construction of new substantial brick and slate roof single storey school building that commenced on site in 1873 and officially opened in April 1874 is associated with a massive public school building programme initiated by the Education Department.

The Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, was built for 700 pupils. The cost of the building was 3,472.10.0 pounds, built by local contractor, John Cowper, the builder who also constructed the Long Gully State School. The population of the school rapidly rose to 1041 pupils by 1895. The school closed in 2015.

Description

The design of the Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is in the Gothic Revival architectural style. It is one of several typical school designs that were built under the direction of HR Bastow, resulting from an architectural competition. The winning entries were published in the Australian Sketcher in 1873. The architect, W. H. Ellerker, won first prize for his design in the third division of schools that were designed to accommodate 500-700 pupils.

His standard symmetrical model plan for 500 pupils became the basis for at least sixteen schools including, Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, as well as schools at Buninyong, Creswick, Castlemaine and Maldon. There are several variations to the architectural design which include

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

different window arrangements, brick patterning, the shape of the bell turret and the inclusion or omission of porches.

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, remains one of the more intact examples of its type. There have been only minimal alterations and additions at the rear associated with educational reform initiated by Frank Tate's administration as Director of Education, in the early 1900s. This included the removal of the stepped classroom floors and installation of series of roof vents for cooling. Other minor additions took place at the rear of the main school building in the mid 20th century. Major school expansion occurred in 1940s and 1950s. These portable classrooms have since been removed from the site.

The front yard of the Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, was used as the school playground and military parade ground until 1959, when land was purchased facing Panton Street and the existing dwellings demolished to make room for a sports field. At the time the school acquired the use of the church hall for an indoor sports hall. A number of trees are located on the school site, including two mature Peppercorn trees, *Schinus molle*, which grow along the original school western boundary dating to the 19th century. Additional Eucalyptus trees were planted in the 1970s and a row of Lemon-scented Eucalyptus trees that mark the new boundary of the school planted along Panton Street. The Peppercorn Tree, *Schinus molle*, at the rear of the school building is an exceptionally fine example of a mature tree.

How is it significant?

The former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, is of historical, social and aesthetic significance as an excellent representative example of its type at the local level to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Why is it significant?

The former Golden Square Primary School, No.1189, building is of historic significance as one of the oldest schools in Bendigo opening in 1874 and also one of the wealthiest. The evolution of the school illustrates the changing philosophy to public education in Victoria. (Criterion A)

The former Golden Square Primary School, No.1189, is socially significant for providing education to the local population continuously for over 160 years prior to its closure in 2015. It is an unusual early example of a Junior Cadet School with onsite military training for students in the front drill parade ground. (Criterion H)

The mature Peppercorn tree, *Schinus molle*, at the rear of the primary school has historic significance as an exceptionally fine example of a school yard shade tree, which is over a hundred years old. (Criterion A)

The former Golden Square Primary School, No.1189, has aesthetic significance as an excellent representative example of a colonial school based on the influential Buninyong Competition School Plan designed by architect, WH Ellerker, under the direction of HR Bastow, the Education Department's Chief Architect. The building's design has an aesthetically pleasing bi-chrome red and cream brick Gothic Revival composition that has a high level of integrity. (Criteria E and D)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion A
Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D
Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion H
Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning Status
Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place which contributes to the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct HO25.

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal controls	No
Tree controls	Yes
Outbuildings and fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-3	No
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Heritage Act 1995	No
Prohibited uses permitted	Yes
Name of Incorporated Plan under Clause 43.01-2	-
Aboriginal Heritage place	-

Conservation Policy: Recommended Design Guidelines

1. The existing Laurel Street Heritage Precinct, HO25, be removed from the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, as it extends to the original State School Reserve.

2. Recommendation for the application of a new individual Heritage Overlay over the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, over the original State School Reserve and extended to include the rear mature Peppercorn trees (*Schinus molle*).

3. A curtilage be introduced for the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, heritage place in order to protect the heritage structure from future development as follows: -

    - Recommendation for the creation of a view corridor that extends from Laurel Street to the front façade of the former Golden Square Primary School No 1189. This will ensure the continued contribution of the heritage place to the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct.

    - On either side of the view corridor it is recommended that a Height Control (H1) of 9 metres be introduced for all new development.

    - Recommendation for a 5 metres curtilage around the side and rear elevations of the former Golden Square Primary School, No 1189.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- A five metres will provide sufficient space to act as a buffer to protect the significant walls, eaves and windows, without constituting too much of an impediment on future development.

- Recommendation for a Height Control (H3) of 13.5 metres height control for future development at the rear of the former state primary school. The rear of the school can accommodate a greater degree of change than the front elevation without adversely impacting upon the heritage values and integrity of the place. This is because the roof ridge height of the existing school is exceptionally high, and the rear of the building does not have the same level of integrity and authenticity as the front façade.

- The Peppercorn Tree (*Schinus molle*) located at the rear of the Main School Building be included in the new individual Heritage Overlay for Tree Controls for the former Golden Square Primary School No 1189. Tree controls are specific to the Peppercorn Tree (*Schinus molle*) and include a no development curtilage of 25 metres diameter root protection zone around the tree.

- Recommendation that the former primary school sports playing fields, Lots 1-3 Title Plan 951463, Crown Allotments 15 Section 15A Parish of Sandhurst, be removed from the Heritage Overlay HO25, Laurel Street Heritage Precinct. This is because there is no significant fabric and the land no longer reaches the threshold of local heritage significance.



Figure 8: Recommended Design Guidelines

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

2.3 HISTORY

Golden Square is a suburb of Bendigo located two kilometres west of the city centre at the confluence of Bendigo Creek and its tributary, Golden Gully. It was in this vicinity in 1852 that gold was discovered, leading to the establishment of the Sandhurst (Bendigo) goldfields. The township of Golden Square was surveyed in 1854. The Wesleyan Church under the Wesleyan Church Association School established a tent school in the area in 1853. The Church still occupies the original site at the corner of Laurel and High Streets.

The wealth won from the nearby gold mines resulted in a fairly well-paid workforce in the locality, which clustered around several substantial civic buildings. These include among others the Uniting Church, the former Methodist Church (1873), the Manse, the Wesleyan Sunday School and the Anglican Church (1881). The need for a school in Golden Square was predominately to educate the children of those parents working on the deep lead mines located to the north and south of Golden Gully.

The initial provision of schools in Victoria from 1837 to 1862 was by private groups formalized in 1848 under the National Board of Education and the Port Phillip Denominational Board. Victoria had inherited the New South Wales schools' system (Campbell and Proctor, 2014:42). In 1862, the Board of Education was established under the Common Schools Act, and proceeded to control school plans and regulations, still generally in accordance with English prototypes.

In 1862 the Denominational School Boards were abolished, and the Golden Square Wesleyan School became Common School, No 279. There was pressure from the communities on the goldfields for secular non-denominational 'common schools' to support the growing number of children in the area.

Options for private venture education existed, but for the majority on the goldfields education was initially supplied by often nomadic competitive denominational tent schools (Campbell and Proctor, 2014:60). The Victorian Education Act of 1872 followed the example of the English Education Act of 1870 and introduced a revolutionary approach to schooling.

Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, replaced the Golden Square Common School No 279, located nearby in Golden Square which was established by the Wesleyan Authorities under the Denomination Board on the 1st February 1853 (Munari 1973). The first headmaster was William McClure and the enrolment was 60 pupils. Schools Inspector Thomas toured the school in 1854 and reported there was a nominal enrolment of 101, but that the makeshift school followed the nomadic movement of the miners. It was only in 1857 that Rev Joseph Dare forwarded plans to the Denominational Board and a sum of $356 to match a government grant of $150 for the construction of the building (Munari 1973). The first school building was timber with a metal roof and complete with a detached teachers' residence. The buildings were built on the Wesleyan Chapel Reserve on the corner of Laurel and High Streets, Golden Square.

2.3.1 The 1872 Education Act

The Golden Square Primary School was built as a direct result of the 1872 Education Act (Blake, 1973:757). The District Inspector of Schools, Archibald Gilchrist, selected the site of the school reserve adjacent the Wesleyan Church (the Uniting Church) on the corner of Panton and Laurel Streets in Golden Square in 1873. Local builder, Robert Wilkinson, was awarded the contract (250.10.0 pounds) to build the first government school. This was a timber building, 60 feet by 18 feet, with a shingle roof, with 12 feet wide galleries at each end and porches at each end of the building. By August 1873 there were 500 pupils at the school.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The Government was petitioned to provide adequate accommodation. At the end of November 1873, John Cowper, a local builder, who also constructed Long Gully State School, won the contract for 3,472.10.0 pounds for the erection of a very substantial brick building to accommodate 700 pupils (Munari, 1973). The first timber school continued to be used on the site until the 1920s.By 1874, a night school commenced to accommodate the growing numbers of pupils. By 1895 enrolment had reached 1041 pupils (Munari 1973).

The Golden Square Primary School Centenary 1873-1973 publication by the organising committee of the Centenary Celebrations written by D. J. Munari, states that the school opened on 17 August 1874 and the head master was Mr. Richards. There were several other schools in the area, a municipal school that operated from the Methodist Hall, another located near the site of St Mark's Anglican Church in Panton Street conducted by Mr. Jenkins and known initially as a Presbyterian School and another school at the corner of Laurel and Allingham Streets managed by Miss O'Sullivan and described as a Roman Catholic School (*1932-33 Back to Golden Square Souvenir Booklet, 1933*).

With the passing of the Education Act in 1872, the Government became responsible for the provision of all schools. The new Education Department set up its own Architecture Branch under H.R. Bastow. During the following three years almost one third of the total number of schools provided by the Education Department in the 19th century were built. School sizes increased from a maximum of three hundred to one thousand pupils. The schools generally included attached teachers' residences.

Victoria's Education Act 1872 broke new ground. Government, on behalf of the community, took responsibility for educating all children and young people. The largest education building program ever seen in this country began in 1872 when education was proclaimed free, secular and compulsory. The 1872 legislation required all children aged 6-15 years to attend school unless they had a reasonable excuse. Parents who did not send their children to school were liable for fines up to five shillings for a first offence, with the penalty increasing to 20 shillings for each repeat offence. In the five years following the 1872 Act, 600 schools were built around Victoria, either remodelled from existing structures or built from new.

The Golden Square Primary School was based on a generic public school design by the architect W.H. Ellerker that had been prepared for a design competition held by the new Department of Public Instruction in 1873 under HR Bastow. Built during 1873 and completed in 1874 the Gothic Revival style of the school was substantial and impressive. The school was innovative and modern with water connected in 1877, sewerage in 1930, and reticulated water in 1973.

The physical environment is important to effective teaching and learning and Bastow's designs reflected current practice in the 1800s. Effective learning was believed to occur with repetition and practice, and by keeping attention on the group rather than the individual student. During this era class sizes were large, and rooms were cavernous. The layout of the interior of the Golden Square Primary School reflects this legacy. The rooms are exceedingly large, many have internal temporary partitions but remain substantially intact. The interior plan clearly demonstrates early teaching philosophy with very few later modifications.

2.3.2 Early 20th Century Evolution of the School

Subsequently features in teaching aids were incorporated into the interior. By 1904 the original stepped floor feature of the classrooms, designed to improve sightlines from pupil to teacher, were now considered dangerous. The floors were made flat with teacher's platforms. The New Education Department Building Regulations in 1911 were the impetus for enlarging the

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

windows of many earlier schools with changes occurring from 1899 to 1923. There is no evidence of these changes at Golden Square Primary School.

However, it was during this period that the school was fitted with the distinctive conical roof ventilators to improve cooling during the hot summers and a series of small annexes were constructed in the rear courtyard. The tall elaborate barley twisted chimney's and fireplace remained to warm the rooms during winter. Early use of portable classrooms came into vogue by 1912 as cheap, portable, open-air pavilion classrooms were developed, although there is no evidence of these structures on site.

In 1910 school committees replaced the original Board of Advice set up under the Education Act 1872. The Golden Square Primary School committee was established in 1911. It was a statutory body receiving its powers under the Education Act. The Golden Square School with in excess of 500 pupils was classified as a 'Special Class' and was entitled to twelve members on the school committee. In addition to the committee there was a Mother's Club formed in 1924 that was very active in fund raising to provide for the new library, books, desks and such like equipment.

These committees working with the staff were instrumental in promoting the school, and its many innovative programmes, Empire commemorative occasions, Arbor Days, Wattle Days and Honour Books, in commemoration of former members of the school who fought and died in the wars, scholarships, all helped to create a particular identity for the place. The war effort was promoted with donation of large sums of money to the Education Department War Fund. As a Junior Cadet School with onsite military training for students, graduates were entitled to volunteer during the First World War in the office ranks. The Golden Square Primary School No 1189 Honour Board was donated to the Bendigo RSL Museum Hall in 2015.

2.3.3 Post Second World War Expansion

It was only after the Second World War when pupil numbers started to increase again that there was renewed interest in pre-fabricated classrooms. Schools became the agents of modernisation and community building. In 1950 prefabricated aluminium two-classroom 'Bristol' units were imported from England. The Bristol aluminium classroom was a prefabricated classroom unit manufactured by the Bristol Aeroplane Company and imported into Victoria in 1951 and other states. In total 782 of these were ordered into Australia as an attempt to solve the accommodation and education crisis.

The notion that school facilities could be used as community centres in non-school hours was fostered by educational leaders in the 1940s in Australia. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) began publication of a series of books on the importance of good design. It illustrated the benefits of consolidating the one room school houses into modern-purpose built schools.

In 1952, the Public Works Department under Chief Architect Percy Everett, developed the Light Timber Construction (LTC) design, which became the dominant school building for the next twenty years. In 1961 a new portable classroom was developed and the current concept of providing a core school design for new schools, with flexibility provided by the addition or removal of portable classrooms, was established. School design became an experimental ground for unusual innovative methods of building technology (The Designing Australian Schools Research Group, Classroom to Campus 2013).

In 1948 the Golden School Primary School submitted a request for additional classroom space. In1952, a 'Bristol building' housing two classrooms was erected for 1,300 pounds, which became the Rural School. In 1961 the first two Light Timber Construction (LTC) design, were

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

erected off Maple Street. In 1964 this was increased to three additional LTC prefabricated classrooms. It was followed in 1966 with another classroom for 3,844 pounds and a further classroom added to the Maple Street section in 1969 for 5,778 pounds. In 1965 the Nieman property on Panton Street was purchased and demolished to provide for extra playground space. In 1966 a further prefabricated classroom was built at Maple Street followed by a further classroom in 1969. The nearby 1960s church hall was converted as an indoor sports facility.

The layout and spatial arrangement of the school, its play grounds and playing fields demonstrates changing attitudes towards corporeal education. The front yard remained the main playground and drill ground for the school for the majority of its existence. The west side of the rear courtyard was planted with a Peppercorn tree, *Schinus molle*, and another planted on the west elevation of the school.

These trees mark the earlier western boundary and former 1873 School Reserve of the Golden Square Primary School No 1189. The graceful weeping habit and dark green aromatic pinnate leaves of the large 15 metres tall trees are commonly associated with school yards and railway stations. They may have been planted in the late 1890s. There are a number of Peppercorn trees, *Schinus molle*, surrounding the adjacent Golden Square railway station.

The 1950s and 1960s prefabricated units were arranged at the rear of the school in two rows leading towards the railway station, in a design to replicate a village atmosphere. At the same time the School sold off an earlier school pine plantation to provide funds to purchase properties facing Panton Street to create grass sports playing fields. A shelter shed was erected at Laurel Street front playground.

2.3.4 Late 1970s Development

In the 1970s the school expanded to include a new Library at Laurel Street, which was opened by the Hon. L. Thompson, Minister for Education in 1971. Further works included a new Sick Bay and automatic watering system. The majority of these 1940s and 1950s prefabricated units have been removed from site due to structural and safety reasons including the use of asbestos in the early building material.

In 1973 trees commemorating the schools' centenary were purchased and planted, 48 Maple trees planted along the southern boundary and six Maple trees planted along the railway line. There is no evidence of the Maple trees today. But a large 'bush garden' was planted at the front of the school along the west boundary. The large semi-mature Manna Gum planted during the centenary celebrations in 1973 in the 'bush garden' at the front of the school, along Laurel Street benchmarks changing attitudes towards the design of school gardens. It stands for recognition within school education about the aesthetic value of the Australian environment. Advocated by leading Australian landscape environmental designers 'bush gardens' became distinctly Australian created with exclusively native plants during the 1970s.

It illustrates the popularity and longevity of the State School Nursery, Department of Education, the Victorian State Schools Horticultural Society, supported by the Australian Native Association founded by CE Isaac, Supervisor of School Gardens in 1909. It is the only evidence together with the front playground, drill ground and Junior Cadet Barracks Room, of the strong patriot dimension of school gardening and corporeal education, an important facet to the history of education in Australia.

The school was awarded the Australian Native Association (A.N.A.) prize for the most improved gardens and grounds in the Bendigo inspectorate in 1973. The introduction of an Australian bush garden at the front of the school is recognized as an historic theme in the history

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

of Bendigo. However, this is not a particularly good example of such a school garden in the area as a range of plants have been miscellaneously added over the last thirty years.

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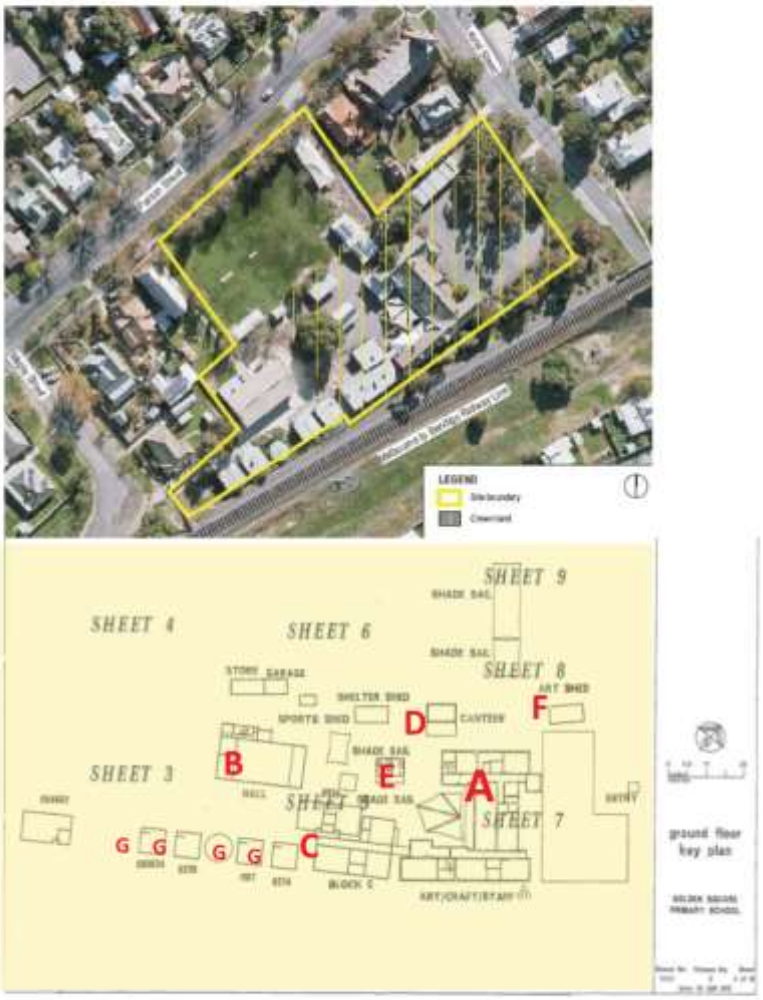
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2.3.6 Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes

8.0 Building community life
8.2 Educating people

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

2.4 DESCRIPTION



A	MAIN SCHOOL BLOCK	1873 Government designed Gothic Revival 'I' shaped red brick school
B	HALL BLOCK	1950s Brick with high clerestory windows.
C	BLOCK	1960s Light Timber Construction
D	CANTEEN	1970s Light Timber Construction
E	TOILET BLOCK	1990s Red brick toilet block
F	ART SHED	Post 1970 Metal all other sheds and garages, are metal frame and clad
G	BRISTOL CLASSROOMS	1952 Bristol Single classroom prefabricated structures aluminium some later Australian made timber external cladding.

Figure 9: Site Map c 2015

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

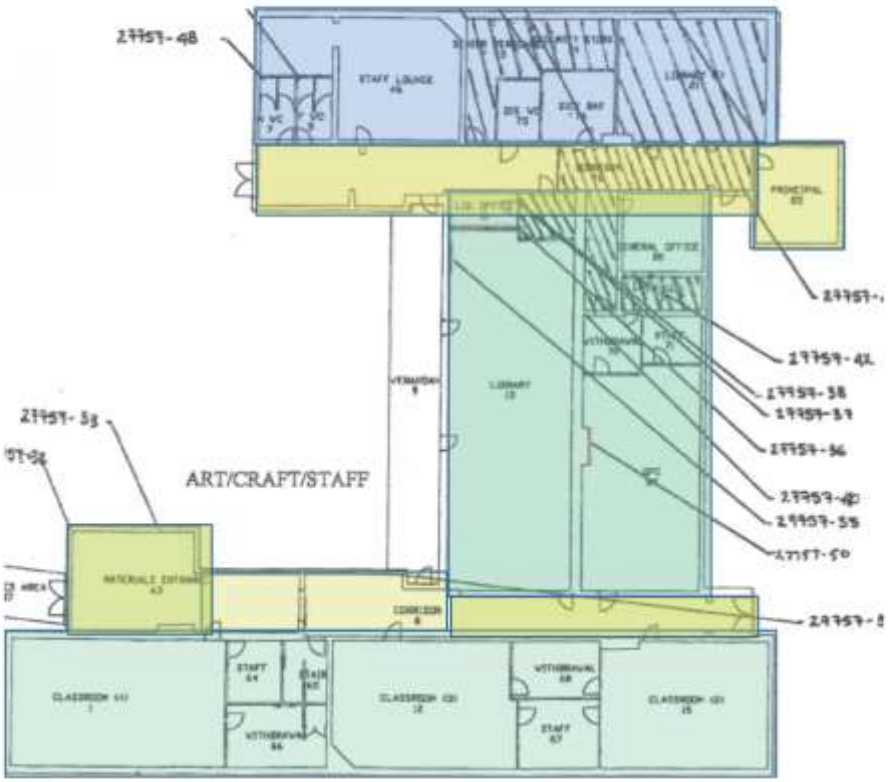


Figure 10: Survey drawing of the layout of the Golden Square Primary School, No.1189, in 2018

2.4.1 Main Building

The Main School Building is very substantial and robust. Designed as a bi-chrome red brick building in 1873 by the architect W.H. Ellerker. The design had been prepared for a design competition held by the new Department of Public Instruction in 1873 under HR Bastow, for the State Schools Division. Two years later, HR Bastow became the Senior Architect of the Public Works Department. At the end of November 1873, local builder, John Cowper, who also constructed Long Gully State School, won the contract (3,472.10.0 pounds) for the erection of a brick building to accommodate 700 pupils.

The building is typical of the Gothic Revival type, designed in an "I' shape with central section bookmarked by two end wings. Projecting gables break up the long horizontal central facade. The building has a substantial blue stone rusticated base course, with banks of triple double hung timber sash windows interspersed with single four pane timber double sash windows.
The rear of the building has an original open verandah which is infilled in sections.

The small annex located beside the front entrance was formerly the Junior Cadet cloakroom. The interiors are simple but cavernous, somewhat plain, generally intact to their original nineteenth century configuration. The entrance lobby and corridors are a little more decorative with timber architraves. The internal layout has not altered over the years.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

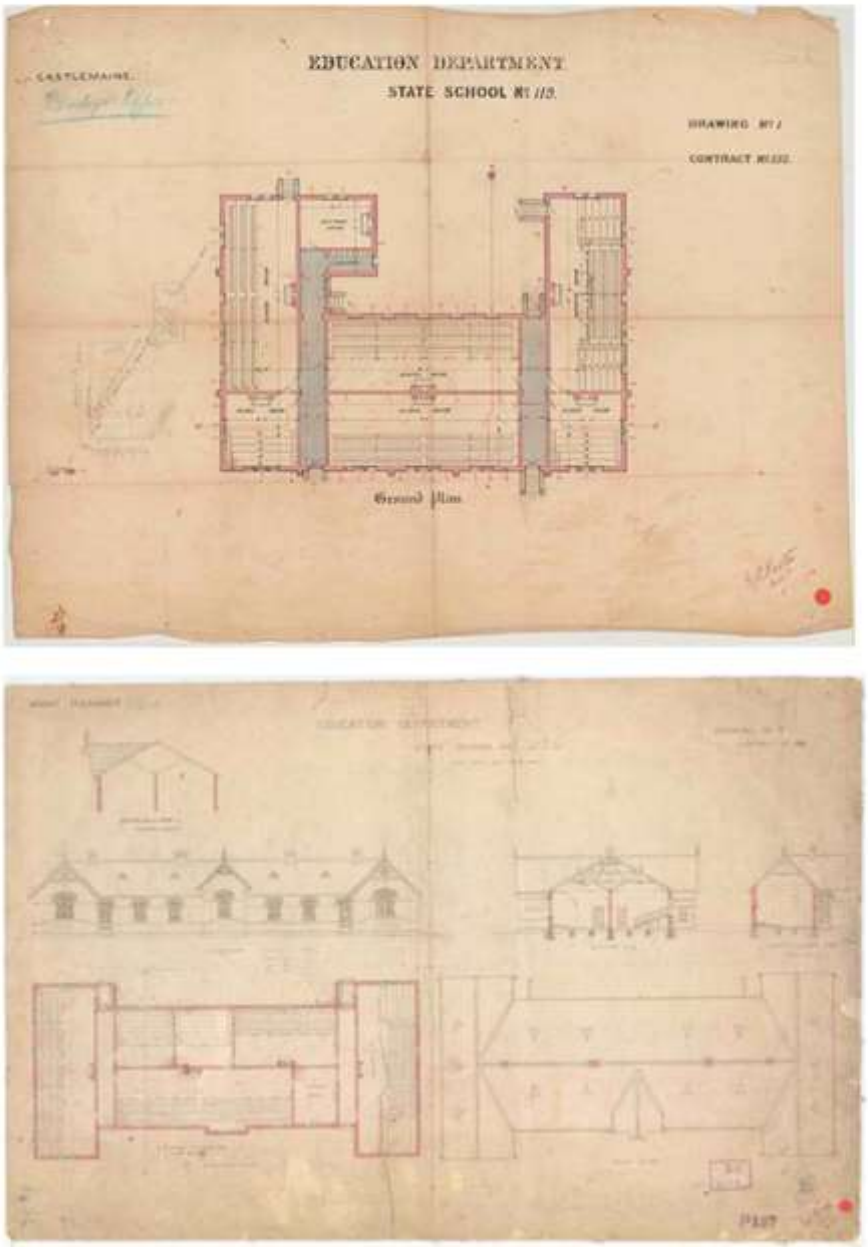


Figure 11: Standard design for the W.H. Ellerker, architect, (1840-1891), designed State Schools based on the influential Buninyong Competition School Plan under the direction of HR Bastow, the Education Department's Chief Architect.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021




Front façade facing Laurel Street.




Details of the front façade showing the new Junior Cadet Barracks Room




The west elevation and 20th century rear addition.




The West and East rear wings have later small annexes which rap around into the rear courtyard, some of these date to the early 20th century, but have had substantial internal changes.

View of the rear semi enclosed courtyard with late 20th century construction of a small open verandah and enclosed annexes used for cloakrooms and art/wet facilities.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021




View of the series of annexes on the East wing courtyard side of the 1874 school building.




The interior side wings are one room deep, followed by a corridor running the length of the building.




The central section has two classrooms back to back with the rear rooms.

2.4.2 Description of Post WWII Development

One of the few people to experiment with educational space in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s was the Victorian Public Works Department Chief Architect, Percy Everett. He introduced the hexagonal classroom schools in 1946 and also the Bristol prefabricated classrooms between 1952 and 1954. This programme was managed under the private architectural firm of Roy Grounds.
The Bristol aluminium classroom was a prefabricated classroom unit manufactured by the Bristol Aeroplane Company and imported into Victoria in 1951 and other states. Two aviation companies, Bristol and Hawksley were commissioned to despatch to Victoria 128 aluminium prefabricated classroom units in 1950 with another 200 the following year, (Argus 20.1.1950).

In 1948 the Golden School Primary School submitted a request for additional classroom space. In 1950 prefabricated aluminium two-classroom 'Bristol' units were imported from England. In 1952, a 'Bristol building' housing two classrooms was erected for 1,300 pounds, which became

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

the Rural School at Golden Square Primary School. The programme was discontinued by the mid-1950s.

Later aluminium classrooms were designed by the architect, Hugh Peck from 1954. At the same time the Public Works Department developed a timber frame classroom known as the LTC (Light Timber Construction). In 1961 the first two Light Timber Construction (LTC) design classrooms were erected off Maple Street at Golden Square Primary School, No 1189. In 1964 this was increased to three additional LTC prefabricated classrooms. In the 1960s local suppliers included AV Jennings, which went onto manufacture over a thousand units over the next decade.



Examples of a cluster of Light Timber Construction (LTC) design units at golden Square School since removed due to poor structural conditions and potential asbestos contamination.



In 1961 a new portable classroom was developed and the current concept of providing a core school design for new schools, with flexibility provided by the addition or removal of portable classrooms, was established. Between 1950s and 1960s over 700 primary secondary and technical schools were built in Victoria using the LTC system.

The Light Timber Construction (LTC) design became the dominant educational architecture for the next twenty years in both primary and secondary levels. Hugh Peck, the school architect, also suggested the "Queensland type" blinds be fitted externally to achieve appropriate sun control.

Example of this type of development, the Light Timber Construction (LTC) design, was erected at the rear of the 1874 brick school off Maple Street (see above). In 1964 the cluster of LTC units were increased to three prefabricated classrooms. It was followed in 1966 with another classroom for 3,844 pounds and a further classroom added to the Maple Street section in 1969 for 5,778 pounds. These buildings have now been removed from the site.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Prefabricated buildings have long been used on the goldfields as immigrants brought building materials package from London, Glasgow, Singapore and Hong Kong to be reassembled here in the 19th century. Illustrated pattern books allowed settlers to order at distance.

The majority of these buildings were manufactured off shore, apart from the extensive Victorian Justice Department prefabricated building timberyards based in Richmond, Melbourne, which produced portable gaols, police accommodation and courthouses.

The next great emergency in building demand occurred in 1940s and 1950s and 1960s when rapid population growth, shortages in material and labour following the World Wars initiated industrial scaled mass production of prefabricated buildings.

School design during the 1940s and 1950s became a leader in innovative architectural practices. From 1946, after the Second World War, prefabricated buildings were used to relieve the housing, material and labour shortage in England and Australia.



Bristol Prefabricated Classroom un its at the former Golden Square Primary School in 2016



Bristol prefabricated single class rooms, showing typical view of the interiors which are all the same. These buildings have now been removed from the site

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

2.4.3 Description of Post 1960s Development



Hall simple rectangular light brick masonry wall structure with high clerestory windows.

After a period of low public interest perceptions about prefabricated buildings and innovative design are now changing in Australia. The possibilities afforded by computer aided design, computer numerical control and building information modelling have transformed Japanese and European prefabricated building manufacture and these capabilities are now impacting on the Australian market.



Canteen



Art shed

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021




Storage sheds and garage




Brick toilet block
View of the two mature Peppercorn trees that mark the former western boundary of the school.




Brick toilet block

By the 1970s referencing the pedagogy and spatial practices of Paulo Friere, together with innovative school principals and architects the design and expansion of schools' buildings were arranged like a town with spatial connections in and out of a central courtyard resembling lanes and streets. A series of clerestory lit barn like basic units or pods had mezzanine levels introduced into the main volumes, with withdrawal or breakaway spaces.

Structures were utilitarian in concept bare brick walls, metal sheds, services, unadorned concrete and industrialised windows. These design themes of open/closed public/shared became part of an unpretentious architectural language that was a low-tech approach with simple makeshift sheds resembling a domestic back yard.

Demountable school classrooms of the 1950s and 1960s are the precursor to an emerging change in architecture driven by the development of new materials such as proprietary insulated lightweight

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

sandwich panels for walls, floors and roofs and other materials such as ceramic coated metal cladding, and prefabricated modular service pods. The new structural system afforded by interlocking panels rather than frames allow for easy transport.

The former Golden Square Primary School had four portable prefabricated Bristol classrooms and a cluster of LTC prefabricated classrooms. Other structures such as the canteen and art room were an assortment of different structures and construction types. The 1950s and 1960s prefabricated units have recently been removed from site due to aging structural support systems, aluminium cladding, lack of insulation and potential asbestos risk.



Aerial View of the Site and Landscape in 2015.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



1 Peppercorn trees

2 Manna Gum trees in bush garden

3 Iron Bark Street trees

4 Lemon Scented Gum trees planted along fence line.

5 Avenue of Elm trees listed in heritage precinct.

6 Maple trees/eucalyptus trees some mature other planted in 1973.

7 Shrubs aaginst the front facade

Figure 12 : Aerial Photograph of the Site Diagram by Centrum Planning, Bendigo, 2016.

2.4.4 Description of the Vegetation





Peppercorn Trees *Schinus molle,* associated with waste mining land railway stations and school yards, growing along the original western boundary of the school, also found along the railwayline.





Avenue of Dutch Elm trees, *Ulmus Xholiandica,* along Panton Street was planted during the 19th century and is associated with the 'city beautiful' movemnent. The row of Lemon Scented Gum, *Corymbia citriodora* growing along the sports field boundary with Panton Street tree planting programme undertaken in the 1970s. The row of Red Ironbarks, *Eucalyptus sideroxylon,* on the verge in Laurel Street at the front of the school are part of the City of Bendigo Street Tree programme.





Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021





Miscellaneous shrubs planted along the 1874 school building wall.
It is recorded that 42 Maple trees were planted along the railway line eastern boundary. However, the Maple trees do not appear to have survuved and were planted outisde the school boundary .





View of the Avenue of Dutch Elm trees, *Ulmus Xholiandica,* growing along Panton Street on the new western boundary of the school playing fields.



The front yard of the School has been the main playground and drill ground for the school for the majority of its existence. The large area gives some idea of the space required to accommodate 700 pupils in the practice of drill, parades and flag raising ceremonies, which were important in the early life of the school. Later the space was used for physical education such as the netball and other sports.



The front yard is historically important as the site for school drill, military training and other junior cadet training practices. In 1910 the Defence Act made it compulsory for boys aged 12-14 years to enrol in the junior cadetship programme. The programme was abandoned in 1929. In the early 1900s a Junior Cadet Barracks room was constructed at the main entrance to the school to house the uniforms and rifles of the junior cadets (seen in the photograph to the left).

Between 1880 and 1905 numerous Public Instruction Acts designed to improve education provision were gazetted. Forms of physical training, marching, rifle drill, bands, gymnastics and corporeal education became an important part of school philosophy to engender a sense of national

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021





The front 'bush garden' including several Manna Gums created in 1973 was awarded the prize for the ANA Most Improved School Garden Award in Victoria.

identity, provide unity, and produce healthy literate citizens who could contribute to development of a 'new' nation. Physical education was funded in primary schools, specifically military drill was the most popular form of physical activity until the 1940s.

Military marching and parades were an essential part of school curriculum. The promotion of nationalism was an important part of the education system. It took many of different forms such as the development of school gardens, tree planting days for Empire Day, Imperial Day, Wattle Day, and just the establishment of tree plantations. The sale of the school tree plantation enabled the purchase of land to develop the sports fields. George Brown, founder of school garden movement in Victoria from 1902 under the direction of Schools Inspector Frank Tate. He worked under the Minister for Mines and Education, Peacock, and Cyril E. Isaac, Supervisor of School Gardens. The school garden movement's longevity in Victoria is due in part to the formation of the Victorian State Schools Nursery and Horticultural Society, Department of Education. By 1909 they were supported by the Australian Natives Society. Tate's motto for school gardens was 'agriculture, colour, beauty and imperialism.'

3.1 ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

Criterion A *Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history*
The former Golden Square Primary School has a long history dating to the beginning of the gold rush in Golden Square. It demonstrates the changing educational philosophy and approach of the first colonial and later state government philosophy and educational policies as they changed and adapted to new circumstances and philosophy.

1. The former Golden Square Primary School No 1189 is the successor of the Wesleyan Common School No 279, Golden Square that was originally established by the Wesleyan Authorities under the Denomination Board on the 1st February 1853. Schools Inspector Thomas toured the school in 1854 and reported the makeshift school followed the nomadic movement of the miners.

2. It was in 1857 that Rev Joseph Dare forwarded plans to the Denominational Board and a sum of $356 to match a government grant of $150 for the construction of the building. The first school building was timber with a metal roof and complete with a detached teachers' residence was built on the Wesleyan Chapel Reserve on the corner of Laurel and High Streets, Golden Square. In 1862 the Denominational School Boards were abolished, and the school became the Common School, No 279.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

3. The Golden Square Primary School in its present location was built as a direct result of the 1872 Education Act. The District Inspector of Schools, Archibald Gilchrist, selected the site adjacent the Wesleyan Church on the corner of Panton and Laurel Streets in Golden Square. There were two schools built. In 1873 the first school building was built by local builder Robert Wilkinson for a contract of 250.10.0 pounds. This was the timber building 60 feet by 18 feet, with a shingle roof, with 12 feet wide galleries at each end and porches at each end of the building.

4. By August 1873 there were 500 pupils at the school and a second more substantial school building was built at the end of November 1873, John Cowper, the builder, won the contract for 3,472.10.0 pounds. The school building accommodated 700 pupils with the school population rising to over 1,000 pupils in early. 1890s.

5. Further expansion of school facilities was halted until the 1950s after the Second World War when to accommodate the 'baby boom' generation new buildings were relocated to the site initially as prefabricated Bristol classrooms for teacher training then for additional classrooms. The Public Works Department prefabricated timber frame classrooms known as the LTC (Light Timber Construction) were used.

6. The school campus, including buildings and landscape have been part of local community life and a prominent local landmark for nearly150 years. The complex forms a significant part of the townscape of Golden Square. Its longevity is evidence of the continued rich gold mining in the area.

7. A number of trees are located on the school site, including two mature Peppercorn trees, planted along the original school western boundary dating to the 19th century. There is in addition a 1970s 'bush garden' and Manna Gum stand, as well as a row of Lemon Scented Eucalyptus trees planted along the western boundary with Panton Street.

Criterion B *Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.NA*

Criterion C *Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.NA*

Criterion D *Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.*

1. As discussed above there were several comparable WH Ellerker architect designed large schools built in 1873/1874 catering for between 700-1000 students on the goldfields constructed under Hr Bastow's administration in Victoria in the nineteenth century. The Minister of Public Instruction, James Wilber-Stephen at the time wanted Bastow to design buildings that had a strong visual presence. He wanted education to dominate the landscape; to be a symbol of Government supremacy.

2. Bendigo is home to what might possibly be HR Bastow's most impressive neo-Gothic architectural school creations. The former Golden Square Primary School is one of a collection of impressive Gothic Revival schools in Bendigo.

3. The Main School Building at the former Golden Square Primary School was originally designed by WH Ellerker, architect, in 1873. It forms an impressive group of architects designed buildings in Golden Square designed in the high Victorian Gothic revival

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

polychrome brick architectural style, inclusive of the former Wesleyan Church now the Uniting Church, the Manse, Teachers Residence, former Wesleyan Commons School.

4. The mature Peppercorn tree, *Schinus molle*, at the rear of the primary school has historic significance as an exceptionally fine example of a school yard shade tree, which is over a hundred years old. (Criterion A)

5. The front 'bush garden' including several Manna Gums created in 1973 was awarded the prize for the ANA Most Improved School Garden Award in Victoria. It marks changing attitudes towards the design of school gardens. Advocated by leading Australian landscape environmental designers 'bush gardens' became distinctly Australian created with exclusively native plants during the 1970s. This garden was suplemented by additional plantings over time and other plantings have been removed.
6.

Criterion E *Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*

1. The former Golden Square Primary School has aesthetic significance as an excellent representative example of a colonial school based on the influential Buninyong Competition School Plan designed by architect, WH Ellerker, under the direction of HR Bastow, the Education Department's Chief Architect. The building's design has an aesthetically pleasing bi-chrome red and cream brick Gothic Revival composition that has a high level of integrity.

Criterion G *Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.*

1. The former Golden Square, Primary School, No 1189, history of development provides important evidence of the intense mining activity in golden square, the site of the first gold discovery and subsequent the site of some of the richest mines in Bendigo and location of massive mine engineering factories and foundries. It demonstrates the extent of wealth generated by the nearby mines in a large, regional goldfields' centre.

2. The former Golden Square Primary School No.1189 is socially significant for providing education to the local population continuously for nearly 165 years prior to its closure in 2015. It is an unusual early example of a Junior Cadet School with onsite military training for students in the front drill parade ground. (Criterion H)

3.2 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Golden Square Primary School, No 1189, design is based on the Mount Pleasant State School No.1436, Ballarat, design both planned in 1873 and built the following year. They are one of HR Bastow's Education Department's earliest architectural designed schools. The design was based on the winning entry by WH Ellerker, architect, and became one of several large schools that catered for between 700-1000 students on the goldfields. HR Bastow used the Ellerker design as a base, then varied the patterned brickwork, window arrangements and the design and placement of bell turrets.

The 'free, secular and compulsory' *Education Act 1872* cast primary education in a mould that would last for over 100 years. It created a department of education under a Minister of the Crown, withdrew effective power from local authorities and parents, withdrew state aid from church schools, centralised recruitment, training and dispersal of teachers, separated secular from religious

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

instruction, abolished fees and mandated attendance for children between the ages of 6 and 15. Under the Education Act of 1872 the government had full responsibility for the design and construction of all new school buildings.

The challenging job of designing and constructing hundreds of new schools throughout the state was made significantly easier for the Department of Education by the employment of Henry Robert Bastow as Chief Architect and Surveyor. Through his vision and leadership, 615 schools were built in just five years. He achieved this by creating templates for various sized buildings and adapting each to meet the specific environmental needs of the individual schools.

The new Education Department recognised the inadequacy of the buildings currently in use and the urgent need for more and bigger urban schools, capable of accommodating 800 to 1000 students. With only plans received from the London School Board to serve as a guide and estimates from the Public Works Department which were much too high, the then Minister, James Wilberforce Stephen, decided to appoint his own architect, Henry Robert Bastow. Since Bastow himself had no experience of designing school buildings, local architects were invited to submit competitive designs for schools falling into three categories — a single storey building for 1000 students, a building for 1000 students over two floors and a school to accommodate 500 students. A particularly significant design was developed in response to the climate of north-west Victoria, incorporating deep verandahs and hooded high level windows.

Early in May 1873, and shortly after the Departmental Architect, Mr. Bastow, had been appointed, the Hon. J. W. Stephen, then Minister of' Public Instruction, decided to advertise for competitive plans for certain large town schools. The Chief Architect, Bastow, was assisted in his task by the provision of a number of designs through a competition for local architects. "The employment of all the gentlemen named (with no exception) was the result of this competition, Messrs. Wharton and Vickers, Schneider, Ellerker, and Crouch being selected competitors, and Messrs. Terry and Webb having assisted in adjudicating over the competition." (Parliamentary Papers 1882).

These were subsequently re-used and modified on a number of different sites. In addition, 230 portable schools were supplied to sites throughout the State, and a new type of pre- fabricated school was produced and exhibited in the 1880 Royal Exhibition. In 1882 the Royal Commission into Education transferred responsibility for the design and construction of schools to the Public Works Department. Bastow became architect for the State Schools Division, and two years later, Senior Architect of the Public Works Department. The following years were marked by the large number of additions to existing schools, the provision of detached residences, and the building of a number of architecturally impressive large urban schools.

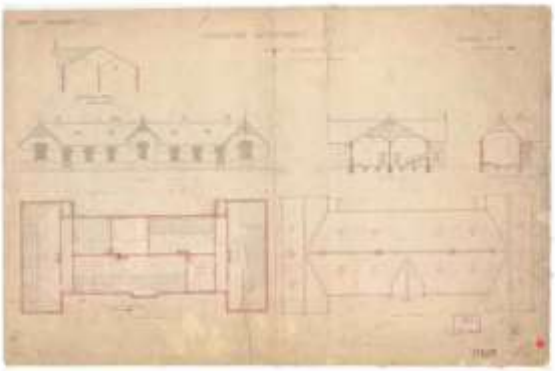
The depression of the 1890s left the teaching service demoralised. Buildings deteriorated, and the curriculum stagnated until 1902 when Frank Tate was appointed Victoria's first Director of Education, charged with implementing the recommendations of the 1899 Fink Royal Commission to modernise the system. Tate introduced kindergarten methods into the Infant Departments and broadening the primary curriculum to include the manual arts, elementary science, music, literature, history and physical education. Tate's innovations set the pattern for state education until the 1950s.

Existing schools were remodelled to provide smaller teaching spaces, each of which would be presided over by an individual teacher. New schools were surrounded by larger grounds, allowing for a greater variety of children's play, and infant departments were formalised, with an infant mistress placed in charge of the first three of the nine years of primary education.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



1884 map of Victoria showing the distribution of state schools after the first 12 years of state education, 1884: National Library of Australia.



Mount Pleasant State School No.1436: Photographs of State School Buildings. Department of Education: VPRS SSO1436-3.

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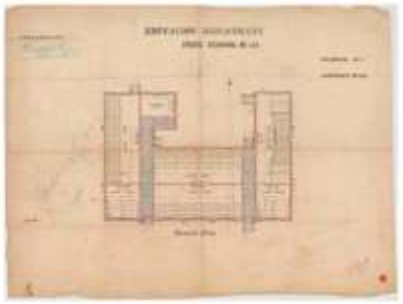
Maldon State School No.1254, 1873: Department of Education: PRS 1396-p0-4: Heritage Victoria.

Figure 13: 1884 Map of the distribution Victorian State Schools

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Maryborough State School No.404, in 1874: Photographs of State School Buildings. Department of Education: VPRS 1396-p0-4: Reproduced with permission of the keeper of public records, Public Records Office of Victoria.



Architectural plan for Castlemaine State School No.119, 1875 showing school rooms, galleries and infant room: VPRS SSO119-3: Reproduced with permission of the keeper of public records, Public Records Office of Victoria.



Gravel Hill State School No.1566, 1875: Photographs of State School Buildings. Department of Education: VPRS 1396-p0-4: Reproduced with permission of the keeper of public records, Public Records Office of Victoria.



Long Gully State School No.2120, 1879: Photographs of State School Buildings. Department of Education: VPRS 1396-p0-4: Reproduced with permission of the keeper of public records, Public Records Office of Victoria.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

4.1 APPENDIX A

Bendigo and Eaglehawk Heritage Study Statement of Significance

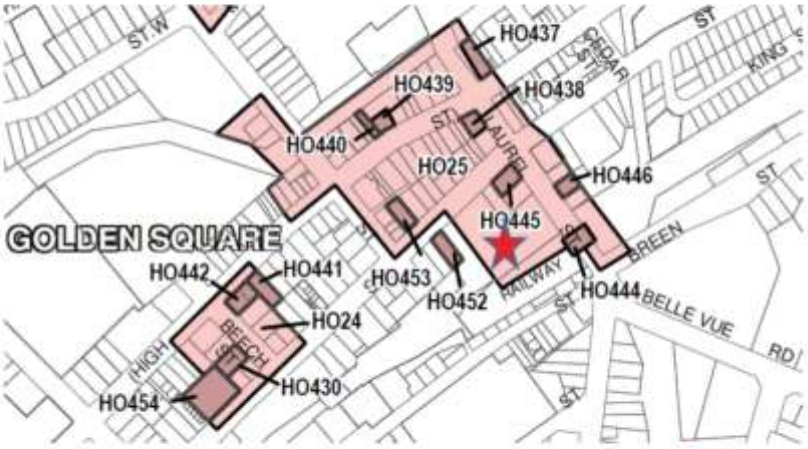


Figure 14 : Heritage Overlay of Laurel Street Heritage Precinct The site ★

Golden Square Heritage Precinct identified in the Bendigo and Eaglehawk Heritage Study, 1993, has been divided into two parts, namely Laurel Street Precinct, HO25, and Beech Street Precinct, HO24. Laurel Street Heritage Precinct is adjacent the site of the first gold discovery in 1852 that initiated the gold rush to the Sandhurst gold mining field (Bendigo). It comprises a cluster of individually heritage listed sites as well as many contributory buildings to the precinct.

Heritage Overlay HO 25 Statement Of Significance For Laurel Street Heritage Precinct (*Eaglehawk And Bendigo Heritage Study*).

Contributory Streets

Beech, Edwardian, timber
High, Edwardian, timber
Laurel, Victorian, Edwardian, timber, brick
Panton, Victorian, timber, brick

Golden Square has long been a separate entity, perhaps since the gold prospects found by Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Farrell at Golden Point in October, 1851.[1] As a result the 'Hamlet' of Golden Square was surveyed by 1854 and allotments sold over the next few years.[2]

Caire's 1875 view of Golden Square centres on the former Methodist Church (1873-), which was one of the earliest spires to rise over Bendigo. A product in part of the financial and other contributions of local mine managers, the church stood for the Cornish devotion to Methodism.

Behind it was the Golden Square School, itself a product of the Methodist zeal. A Methodist school existed near here from 1853 and was replaced, soon after (c1857-9), by a new timber church- school, initiated by the Rev. Joseph Dare.[1] The site was at the corner of Laurel and High Streets, with a detached teacher's residence, where the former Sunday School still stands (313 High Street). The present school site was gazetted in May, 1873, and builder, Robert Wilkinson, proceeded to erect a new schoolroom there. However, with an average attendance of 500, spread over the old and new schools, the community sought government aid, resulting in John Cowper building a more substantial brick school on the site 1873-4. The north wing opened August, 1874.[2] Nearby, there was also St. Marks Anglican Church which opened, in 1881, at Panton Street.[3]

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

This growth in the number of civic buildings reflected Golden Square's family population and paralleled the growth of the rest of the district, benefiting from established highly capitalized mines with a salaried work force.[4] To serve this industry, a crusher was set up by Young in 1856, to serve mines in the area.[5] Andrew Harkness & Co. (See 255 Mackenzie Street) had commenced their Victorian foundry as early as 1858 at Golden Square and well past 1900.[6] He was well located, with the dense peppering of mine shafts which followed the rich New Chum line of reef, occupying sites in Panton, Breen and Rose Streets. (Shenandoah, New Chum Railway, Eureka Extended, Shamrock, Old Chum, Young Chum and Craven's shafts).[7]

The church and miners, however, did not always agree - with the Rev. Nish vying with a Mr. Richards in 1872 over a site in Maple Street; one wanting a church site, the other wanting gold.[8]

Another early sign of community needs is the Golden Square Police Station at the Beech Street corner of High Street (363). Further north is the Salvation Army Hall (former) at 319, located next to the old Methodist Sunday School and, next again, to the more recent Golden Square Post Office (321). The Golden Square railway station is another.

Golden Square was to be served by a house tram in 1887, linking it with Bendigo, Lake Weeroona and Eaglehawk.[1] Trees were to be planted in large numbers (70) at the Golden Square Recreation Reserve in Laurel Street, during mid-1890, under the supervision of the municipal head gardener, Gadd.[2] This did not stop those at Golden Square demanding better picnic facilities at Rosalind Park, now that tram travel was available.[3]

Individual sites in the area include mine manager, David Lanyon's, house at 6 Beech Street, also a product of the noted architect, William Beebe.[4] The former Golden Square Hotel and nearby Hibernian Hotel (opposite the police station) served the Golden Square hamlet over a long period, as did the more distant Foundry Arms, located nearer to the Victoria Foundry. Thomas Howe's fruit shop survives on the Maple Street corner of High Street (330).

Panton street commences with the church as the focus of a small community which consists mainly of residential with some commercial uses along High Street. The main residential streetscape is 28-34 Panton Street and 93 another at the Beech Street intersection. Otherwise the development is patchy, with different eras represented, some intrusive, others supportive of the overall character. Elm trees provide for some visual continuity along Panton Street and the civic use of the school, church and notable bridge nearby reinforce this part of the precinct's village centre role.

Significance

Golden Square's historic identity springs from the first gold finds in the district at Golden Point and the subsequent development of a rich mining industry, along with some of the area's most important foundries. Although parts of the old hamlet have altered beyond recognition, it still possesses a core of civic buildings which allow recognition of its former self- contained status. The housing stock is both expressive of the boom-era in mining and, in some cases, the aspirations of mine owners and their chosen architects. It is close or adjoins to significant mine sites such as the New Chum Railway and Eureka Extended Mines and possesses elm plantings from the Victorian era in Panton and Maple Streets.

Golden Square was one of the best known of the mining areas of nineteenth century Bendigo. While few remnants of the early alluvial phase of mining survive the present road patterns, street patterns and several buildings still include elements which suggest different phases in the history of Bendigo both before and after alluvial mining.



Laurel Street Heritage Precinct predominant architectural style of the historic buildings is bi or polychrome brick, Gothic Revival dating to 1870-1880s

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

4.1.2 APPENDIX A Architectural Description and Summary

The former Wesleyan Church (Uniting Church) at Golden Square is a landmark building in Golden Square. It was very popular amongst hat local Cornish miners and their families. The building, its manse and setting, have state heritage listing and are inscribed on the Victorian Heritage Register. It is the second biggest Church in Bendigo and one of the oldest churches in Bendigo, designed to seat 1,200 people. The organ was built by R. Mackenzie & Co., of Melbourne, at a cost of 520 pounds. The building was finally completed in 1873. At the time, it was the most imposing church on the Bendigo goldfields.

The former Golden Square Primary School is contemporary to the church, being built in 1873/74. And like the Church is a large Gothic Revival style building in bi-chromatic brick with a slate roof.

The Gothic Revival polychrome brick architectural style of the former Wesleyan Church and the Golden Square Primary School influenced the form, character and appearance of subsequent local buildings which include the Manse, the Wesleyan School Hall, the former Salvation Army Hall, the former Post Office and several nearby wealthy miners' villas.

The red brick high Victorian style is a predominant architectural style of Golden Square heritage precinct. It provides visual cohesion between different features and buildings of the former mining hamlet together.



View of heritage places in the Laurel Street Heritage Precinct

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

4.1.3 APPENDIX A Summary of Early 1850s - 1890s Historic Features of Golden Square

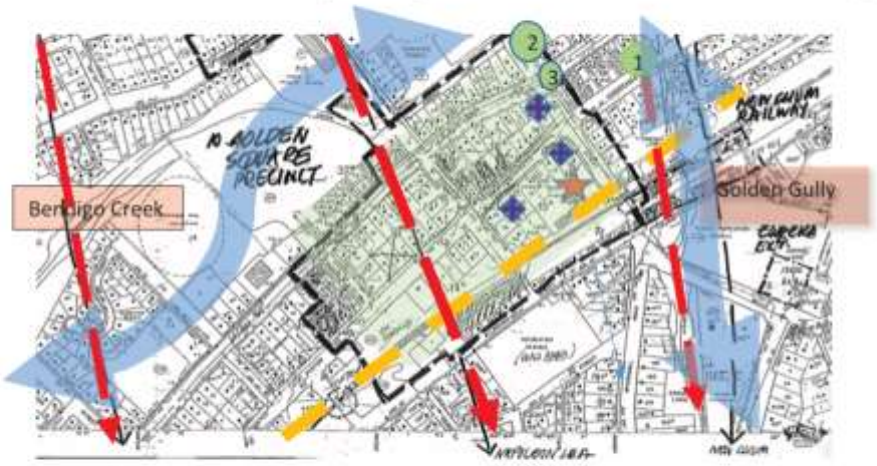


Figure 15: Golden Square Heritage Precinct Bengido and Eaglehawk Heritage Study 1993

1: Sites of metal foundries such as Andrew Harkness Foundry;
2: Golden Point where gold was first discovered;
3: Civic core of Golden Point hamlet

Lines of gold reef, the site of a series of large quartz gold mining companies;

Subject site and the location of the early Government Camp

Churches

Bendigo Creek and Golden Gully, the location of early alluvial gold mining Identified as being areas of potential Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance.

Cluster of Peppercorn trees growing along the railway line.

Diagram of the former Golden Square Primary School within Laurel Street Heritage Precinct, showing the civic core of Golden Square, the location of churches and schools, important historic lines of gold reef, clusters of wealthy quartz mines and shafts, the location of Chinese market gardens and clusters of Peppercorn trees. Early alluvial gold mining areas were found along Golden Gully and Bendigo Creek, later site of Chinese market gardens and by the mid 20th century housing commission estates.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

4.2 APPENDIX B: HERITAGE OVERLAY CLAUSE 43.01

The Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme sets out the vision statement for identifying, protecting, maintaining and promoting its cultural heritage. The aspirational goals of cultural heritage are linked to social interaction and to ideas of cultural identity and cohesion.

The total complex of buildings, infrastructure, urban spaces and natural resources represent the most significant asset and resource in central Victoria. Heritage is an important part of the economy of the municipality due to its role in attracting tourists, renovators and new residents who bring economic development initiatives and assets '(Clause 21.06 Planning Scheme)

According to the Greater Bendigo Incorporated Plan the definition of:

Contributory place: A contributory place contributes to the significance of a heritage precinct (note due to the limitations of the *Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study*, 1993 all buildings located within a heritage precinct in this study which were constructed prior to 1960 are considered to be contributory).

Individual place Heritage Overlay: is a single heritage place that has cultural heritage significance additional to its context. These places may also contribute to the significance of a heritage precinct. Significant places will usually have a separate citation and statement of significance. In some instances, a significant place may be considered non-contributory within a precinct. For example, an important Modernist house within a Victorian era precinct.

Significant feature/element: A significant feature or element is any feature (building, tree, structure etc.) that the relevant heritage study identifies as contributing to the significance of a heritage place.

Significant place: A significant place is a single heritage place that has cultural heritage significance independent of its context. These places may also contribute to the significance of a precinct. Significant places will usually have a separate citation and statement of significance.

VPP Practice Notes "*Applying the Heritage Overlay*" January 2018

How are individual buildings, trees or properties of significance located within significant areas treated?

> The provisions applying to individual buildings and structures are the same as the provisions applying to areas, so there is no need to separately schedule and map a significant building, feature or property located within a significant area.
>
> The only instance where an individual property within a significant area should be scheduled and mapped is where it is proposed that a different requirement should apply. For example, external painting controls may be justified for an individual building of significance but not over the heritage precinct surrounding the building.
>
> Alternatively, tree controls may be justified for a specific tree or property within a significant precinct but not over the whole precinct. In such situations the individual property or tree should be both scheduled and mapped.

Significant buildings or structures within a significant precinct can be identified through a local planning policy.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Places Of Individual Heritage Significance Within The Laurel Street Heritage Precinct

HO24	Beech Street, Golden Square Beech Street Precinct	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No
HO25	Laurel Street, Golden Square Laurel Street Precinct	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No
HO444	Laurel Street, Golden Square Railway Bridge	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No
HO437	302 High Street, Golden Square Building	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No
HO438	311-313 High Street, Golden Square Methodist Sunday School	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No
HO439	320 High Street, Golden Square Building	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No
HO440	322 High Street, Golden Square Building	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No
HO445	2A Laurel Street , Golden Square Uniting Church	-	-	-	-	Yes Ref No H1371	No		No
HO446	7 Laurel Street, Golden Square Building	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes – Greater Bendigo Heritage Incorporated Plan – Permit Exemptions, August 2015	No

No Tree Controls have been identified in the schedule of the heritage overlay. However, the 19th century avenue of mature Dutch Elm trees along Panton Street are identified as contributing to the significance of the heritage precinct in the Bendigo and Eaglehawk Heritage Study, 1993.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Municipal Strategic Statement Clause 21.08

Greater Bendigo has a large number of significant heritage assets of local, state and national significance. There is a need to find a balance between protecting our heritage places for current and future generations and the vibrancy of our City, but also to allow for sensitive and innovative development.

Objectives:

- To identify and protect heritage places with Aboriginal and historic cultural value as well as natural value.
- To protect and enhance the municipality's heritage for future generations.
- To encourage the appropriate reuse of heritage buildings.
- To encourage compatible development adjacent to heritage places and features.

Greater Bendigo Thematic Environment History: Heritage Statement of Significance

Greater Bendigo's heritage is of outstanding historical, social, aesthetic, architectural, and scientific significance according to the Statement of Significance in the *Greater Bendigo Thematic Environmental History*, 2013.

Historical and social significance:

Greater Bendigo was the location of one of Victoria's earliest alluvial gold rushes, followed by the establishment and expansion of quartz mining. The Bendigo-Eaglehawk field was one of the world's great nineteenth century quartz mining centres (the largest in eastern Australia and the second largest in Australia after Kalgoorlie). The colossal output helped sustain global financial systems and trade and was a significant contributor to the development of Melbourne. The mining activity initiated significant innovations and developments in commerce, manufacturing and technology. Examples include the first mining stock exchange in Australia (in the Beehive Building on Pall Mall), one of the largest railway workshops in Australia, and the foundation of Bendigo Bank and the Myer retail empire. Construction of a reliable water supply in the Coliban Water reservoir system also influenced historical development, including the location and viability of settlements and horticulture. Trans-national immigration associated with gold mining brought a diversity of traditions and cultural practice. In particular the Cornish, German and Chinese miners have made significant and ongoing contributions to the culture and development of Greater Bendigo.

Aesthetic and architectural significance:

German immigrant architects designed buildings which are now regarded as some of the most significant in regional Victoria, helping to make the municipality of aesthetic/architectural significance. Bendigo city has one of the highest concentrations of Victorian Heritage Registered properties in the State, and two of regional Australia's most architecturally distinguished boulevards in Pall Mall and View Street. Bendigo has an outstanding collection of historic civic buildings, complemented by more modest collections of civic buildings in other towns. Significant structures in Greater Bendigo include those associated with industry, public utilities, mining, transport, agriculture, engineering and manufacturing. Boom style homes and gardens built by mining speculators contrast with an extensive collection of modest German and Cornish miners' cottages.

Many small settlements also retain buildings associated with gold rushes. In addition, there are significant buildings that represent a diverse vernacular tradition. There are also fine examples of 19th century town planning layouts and botanic gardens, public parks and avenues of trees. Extensive natural areas, including Box-Ironbark forests, rivers, hills and valleys of cultural and aesthetic significance provide a contrast to the urban centres and agricultural landscapes.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Scientific significance:
The municipality's heritage is of scientific significance. Numerous historical and archaeological sites associated with different phases and types of gold mining and processing survive and demonstrate aspects of mining technology. There are also outstanding examples of manufacturing industry associated with restructuring of the mining industry, in particular foundries and engineering works for defence and agriculture, where advances in technology were also made. There are in addition natural sites of significance throughout the municipality, including geological and geomorphological sites.

These include the Big Hill ridge which marks the southern gateway to Bendigo. Important Aboriginal cultural heritage values also exist in the City of Greater Bendigo. The Jaara people are the traditional inhabitants of the Greater Bendigo region, and have contributed significant Aboriginal heritage assets that are recognized as being vital features of the environment and are irreplaceable records of cultural development. All Aboriginal places, sites and objects, whether identified or unrecorded, are important for the continued development of the community, and are protected by State and Commonwealth legislation. Protection applies equally on Crown and freehold land.

Further strategic work
Complete the recommendations for future heritage studies identified in the *Greater Bendigo Thematic Environmental History*, 2013, including:

- Bendigo CBD.
- Urban areas of the former Shire of Strathfieldsaye.
- Former Shire of Huntly.
- Review of the Eaglehawk and Bendigo Heritage Study.
- Twentieth century development.
- Industrial heritage places.
- Aboriginal heritage places

Local Policy Framework Clause 22.06

The specific heritage polcies, strategic directions and recommended implementation action plans that apply to the Golden Square Primary School No 1189 as follows:-

Heritage Policy
This policy applies to all applications in the Heritage Overlay.

Policy basis
This policy builds on the Municipal Strategic Statement objectives identified in Clause 21.08. The MSS recognises the extensive and significant range of heritage assets in the municipality which provide benefits to the local community and future generations.

The MSS identifies the need for a heritage policy to guide decisions on demolition and development of heritage places. This policy seeks to maintain and enhance the significance of heritage places while accommodating the needs of residents to adapt and develop such places.

Objectives
- To retain heritage assets for the enjoyment, education and experience of residents, visitors and future generations of the municipality.
- To ensure that new development is sympathetic with the appearance and character and maintains the significance of heritage places, including surrounding precincts.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- To encourage the preservation, maintenance, restoration and where appropriate, reconstruction of heritage places.
- To encourage the sympathetic re-use and adaptation of heritage places so that such places are maintained and enhanced.

Policy

It is policy to- among other things:

Subdivision

- Ensure that subdivision does not adversely affect the significance of the heritage place.
- Ensure that appropriate settings and elements for heritage places are maintained including the retention of any original garden areas, large trees and other features which contribute to the significance of the place.
- Ensure that development which may result from the subdivision of heritage places does not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place.
- Ensure that the subdivision of heritage places retains the existing built form pattern where such pattern contributes to the significance of the heritage place.

Demolition

- Encourage the retention of a significant or contributory heritage building or place unless it is structurally unsound and beyond repair.
- Encourage the retention of original elements that contribute to the significance of a heritage place including but not limited to windows, doors, chimneys, verandahs, shopfronts, fences, outbuildings and trees.
- Allow the demolition of non-contributory buildings in heritage precincts provided the replacement building does not adversely affect the heritage significance of the precinct.

Infill development/New Buildings

- Encourage new buildings that do not adversely affect the significance, character or appearance of the heritage precinct, and are visually recessive.
- Ensure that the design of new buildings responds to the context of the heritage precinct and nearby contributory buildings including scale, height, mass, form, siting, setbacks and materials.
- Encourage new development within a heritage precinct that is contemporary in appearance and that does not mimic historic styles or details.

Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme Clause 82

This incorporated plan sets out the permit exemptions from the provisions of the Heritage Overlay in accordance with Clause 43.01-2 of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. This incorporated plan applies to all precincts or places in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01).

The Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme places great emphasis on protecting, maintaining and managing adjoining or nearby heritage places in the assessment of proposed changes to the built environment.

Greater Bendigo Thematic Environmental History

8.2 Educating people (147)

By the mid-1850s, school reserves were set aside during surveys of goldfields townships. As well as government schools, religious institutions were also allocated land for educational purposes, including in Sandhurst the Free Presbyterian School in 1856; Church of England School in 1861; and Evangelical Lutheran School prior to 1859.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

By 1860, the Wesleyans had constructed nine schools in Sandhurst, and were loaning three of them to the Presbyterians. By 1859, the Denominational Board had fifty large tents on the goldfields being used as churches and schools and housing a total enrolment of 3,326.

Early churches also reflect the relative strength or presence of the different ethnic groups on the goldfields. Methodists were prominent in the early goldfields, especially in the western gullies. According to Serle, trained lay members could take up preaching and pastoral work, form a congregation, start a Sunday School and build a church even if suitably qualified clergy were not available. The multiple small Methodist churches across the municipality stand as testament to their success.

Following the *Education Act* of 1872, there was a rush of school building activity throughout the municipality from Sandhurst to Wild Duck Creek. Many of these were simple, one room common schools but standard plans for classrooms/schools, based on English models had been available since 1866. Standard plans were frequently altered to suit local conditions and available materials. Some schools were built by prominent architects.

Key places identified in the Thematic History That have the potential to be of significance to the heritage of Greater Bendigo.	***Golden Square Primary School Key features that are of heritage significance.***
Early goldfields school buildings and teaching facilities	*The School had its origins in the Wesleyan Church association early tent school of 1853.*
School reserves	*The School was initially erected on the Wesleyan Church Reserve then transferred in 1873 to Education School Reserve.*
Schools established under the 1860s and 1870s legislation	*The School was established under the Denominational Board, then operated as a Commons School before the transferring to the Education Department in 1873/1874 when the main school building was completed.*
Properties associated with various private, religious and finishing schools	*The history of the School encompasses both religious and government management systems.*
Early high/secondary schools, Technical schools, Mechanics Institutes	*NA*
Buildings associated with various adult-education groups and programs	*The School opened a night school in the 1880s to accommodate teaching all ages.*
School of Mines facilities	*NA*
Tertiary education facilities	*The School opened the two 1950s Bristol classrooms for Teacher Training in Rural Schools.*

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

17. WELLBEING AND FAIRNESS

17.1. Draft Malone Park Master Plan

Author	Fraser Neele, Recreation and Open Space Strategic Planner
Responsible Director	Vicky Mason, Director Health and Wellbeing

Purpose

To present the draft Malone Park Master Plan to Council seeking a public exhibition period.

Summary

This report seeks Council endorsement of the Draft Malone Park Master Plan (the Draft) and seeks to proceed to public exhibition for a period of >21 days.

The Draft:

- Provides a service and infrastructure footprint that will serve as the key public open space in a future Marong of 8,000 residents;
- Identifies critical barriers to the better utilisation of the reserve, namely the area occupied by the Marong Light Harness Club and the age and condition of the buildings and facilities on the reserve;
- Provides for a facility that services a much larger user base including a new multi-purpose central pavilion, additional netball/tennis courts, a large, potentially illuminated, multi-purpose irrigated area that could serve many different sporting and community needs flexibly and in step with emerging needs;
- Identifies a relationship with future reserves and open spaces developed through the Marong Structure Plan;
- Continues and perpetuates the unique and contradictory nature of the reserve as a facility that is both nested within the bush and centrally located within a growing urban area;
- Retain flexibility to accommodate future users through the changing demographics and growth of Marong whilst continuing to service the existing user groups as appropriate.

Support from Council will enable exhibition in September/October in anticipation of presenting a final plan for adoption in December.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve the draft Malone Park Master Plan being released for public exhibition;
2. Seek community feedback on the draft;
3. Receive a further report summarising feedback and a final version of the Master Plan.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Policy Context

The Draft aligns with Goals 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the Bendigo Community Plan by planning for a growing population in a way that provides good quality public facilities. The Draft endeavours to encourage participation, promoting wellbeing and connectivity for residents of Marong and Surrounding areas.

The Draft's recommendations and outcomes are innovative and responsible and have been developed through consultation with users and the broader community.

Great focus has been put on existing Strategies and Plans through the development of the Draft. Key relevant documents considered are the Marong Structure Plan, The Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan and the Active Living Census. Other plans such as the Environment Strategy, the Municipal Strategic Statement and peak and sporting body plans and strategies have also been considered.

Background Information

The previous master plan for Malone Park was developed in 2006 and due to many changes at this reserve, it is not possible to deliver the plan.

Council resolved to assume Committee of Management for this reserve in November 2015 and since this time has undertaken many improvements at the site including cricket training nets, netball/tennis courts and essential safety improvements. With the Marong township continuing to grow and demand pressures, Greater Bendigo City Council allocated funding to support a Master Plan for this reserve. Last year, Insight Leisure Planning was appointed to prepare a Master Plan for Malone Park, the premier open space within Marong. This plan is intended to identify a service and infrastructure footprint that will provide for an eventual Marong population of 8,000 in line with the Marong Structure Plan.

An Issues and Opportunities Report was prepared as an internal working document and allowed officers, consultants and the community to flesh out constraints and options in order to identify challenges and test initial ideas before developing into the draft plan.

Report

Through the development of the Issues and Opportunities paper and the consultation process, it was identified that the dramatic future growth of Marong will increase usage rates and challenge the existing infrastructure. The Draft utilises the current higher than average participation rates and the demographic profile of Marong to recommend expansion options.

The demand assessment shows that there is need for at least one additional oval in the short term with long term needs likely to require a third oval, as well as space that can be used for non-traditional sports such as touch-football and other flexible uses including community events, festivals and carnivals. As such the Draft identifies the need to relocate the Light Harness Club to alternative sites which are more appropriate for this activity.

Key outcomes of the Draft include:

- The development of a single multi-purpose pavilion and community building to service all users;
- Relocation of Marong Light Harness Club;

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Redevelopment of the existing harness track into a green playing surface that is equivalent to two ovals;
- Development of two additional netball and tennis courts near the pavilion;
- Improved walking and cycling connections through the site and connecting Discover Marong (estate) to the Marong School and Town Centre via the existing bridge over Bullock Creek;
- Future relocation of other community facilities such as the existing playground into the reserve to increase activation and access by the community;
- Preservation of the natural amenity and enhancement of passive recreation assets.

Consultation/Communication

The Draft has been generated through extensive internal and external consultation. This included:

- One on One meetings between the consultant and key stakeholder groups,
- Widespread surveying of the Marong community with 268 responses,
- Workshop with stakeholders once the Issues and Opportunities Paper was prepared.

Internal consultation was undertaken at project inception including one on one engagement with internal stakeholders at an officer and coordinator level.

The Public Space Committee was consulted in the development of the Issues and Opportunities Paper and had the opportunity to discuss the Issues and Opportunities in a meeting and provide a response.

Internal officer groups undertook workshops on the refinement of the Issues and Opportunities Paper into the Draft Plan.

Lockwood Ward Councillors were briefed on 15 April 2021 to outline the key issues and opportunities this master plan process has identified and likely outcomes within a draft master plan.

Resource Implications

The implementation plan has been constructed in a way which identifies key actions which will arise as part of ongoing renewal programs and aspirational items which will only occur if opportunities (for example: external grants) arise. The plan is broken down into pre-planning, short, medium and long term priorities in order to clearly articulate which actions are a priority and what pre-planning is necessary to deliver higher priority actions within a suitable timeframe for the growth of Marong.

Costs included in the plan are indicative and should only be utilised as a reference. Actual costs will be identified as part of the detailed planning and design stages of implementation

Attachments

1. Draft Malone Park Master Plan

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - Draft Malone Park Master Plan



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

INSIGHT Leisure Planning

fitzgerald frisby landscape architecture

Contents

1.	**Introduction**	**3**
	Project Aim	3
	Project Objectives	3
	Background	4
2.	**Existing Conditions**	**5**
	Land Use Planning Zones	6
	Planning Overlays	6
	History	7
3.	**Strategic Context**	**8**
	Background Documents	8
4.	**Population and Demographic Characteristics**	**15**
	Physical Characteristics	15
	Population Implications	15
	Physical Activity Participation	16
	Tenant Club Participation	16
5.	**Asset Audit Table**	**17**
	Asset Audit Table	17
6.	**Demand Assessment**	**18**
	Planned Future Provision	18
	Common Industry Ratio's	18
	Implications for Master Plan	18
7.	**Community Consultation Summary**	**19**
	Respondent Profile	19
8.	**Issues and Opportunities**	**20**
9.	**Master Plan**	**21**
	The Master Plan	21
	The Recreation Precinct	21
10.	**Implementation**	**23**
	Short Term Directions	23
	Medium Term Directions	23
	Long Term Directions	23
	Appendix A: Community Consultation	**24**
	Initial stakeholder Consultation	24

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



1. Introduction

Project Aim

The project aim is to undertake a strategic assessment of Malone Park Recreation Reserve to produce a Master Plan to guide development, maintenance and management of the reserve for the long term.

Project Objectives

The purpose of this project is to undertake a strategic review of use and assets at the reserve and surrounding township to determine a future development strategy for Malone Park.

The plan will enable more people to participate in physical activity at Malone Park and in Marong generally. Objectives include:

- Develop a long term plan that allows Malone Park to grow and adapt with the township of Marong through coming decades to service a population of 8,000 people;
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of facilities based on evidence of current and future use;
- Set a realistic and achievable strategic improvement program;
- Identify opportunities and recommendations based on needs of the community who have been well engaged in the process with clear support for the master plan;
- Ensure the community is aware that the master plan is a long term vision for the reserve which guides decision making and phasing of work but is not a design for the facilities; and
- Assist the community in identifying ways in which it can contribute to implementing the master plan actions by managing, maintaining or contributing expertise and/or funding.

The master plan will guide investment priorities at Malone Park to help facilitate opportunities for more people to be more physically active more often at the reserve.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Background

Malone Park Recreation Reserve is a Crown Land Reserve with the City of Greater Bendigo as the Committee of Management. Malone Park is in a forested setting a short distance from the Marong town centre, primary school, golf course and other facilities.

Malone Park is identified within the City of Greater Bendigo's Public Space Plan (PSP) as Marong's primary, central open space. The reserve covers an area of 43Ha with the majority (40.5Ha) south of the railway reserve. The site fronts onto the Calder Highway, Marong High Street and Calder Alternate Highway and is dissected by an active railway line and a dry creek line.

The site includes a mixture of Active Recreation and formalised sporting facilities on the northern portion and lower intensity passive and unorganised active recreation spaces to the south.

The following Strategic Context has been drawn from the recently completed Marong Township Structure Plan (Sept. 2020):

Marong is located on the western edge of the City of Greater Bendigo, approximately 15 kilometres from the centre of Bendigo. The original one-mile square township is centred at the intersection of the Calder, and Calder Alternative Highways. The town retains a number of important historic buildings, many with a civic and community function, such as the former Marong Shire offices.

Marong has always served a larger catchment than the township itself. Its various functions and services such as the primary school, hotel, doctor's clinic, and Malone Park support the wider region of western Bendigo. Bullock Creek, which flows from Ravenswood south east of Marong into the Pyramid Creek west of Leitchville near the Murray River traverses much of the town. It flows south-north and forms an important feature of the town. The reserve along Bullock Creek has contributed to the valuable network of public space in the town and has provided a habitat for the iconic large river red gums that create a sense of arrival into Marong. Areas surrounding the creek are subject to severe flooding.

The long-term vision for Marong is a satellite township of 8,000 people built around a vibrant community town centre and civic focus with a well serviced railway station and an outstanding public space network.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



2. Existing Conditions

The site includes a mixture of Active Recreation and formalised sporting facilities on the northern portion and lower intensity, passive and unorganised active recreation spaces to the south.

Facilities on-site include:
- irrigation infrastructure
- sundry access and drainage infrastructure

The reserve hosts junior and senior AFL and netball, as well as senior cricket and junior cricket training. The effort of local clubs and community in developing and maintaining the facilities is acknowledged.

While dated, the buildings are structurally sound and have been extended and renovated in recent decades. Despite these renovations, their fitness-for-purpose requires assessment given changing use and expectations (for example female football). Available power supply is a significant barrier to upgrading facilities and the provision of air conditioning in the main pavilion.

For the purposes of this master plan, the Malone Park Recreation Reserve is a standard facility in accordance with the AFL Victoria Preferred Facilities Guidelines and the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy (2017). It is also a 'Local' scale facility in accordance with the Cricket Victoria Facilities Guidelines and a "Township" facility under the City of Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan.

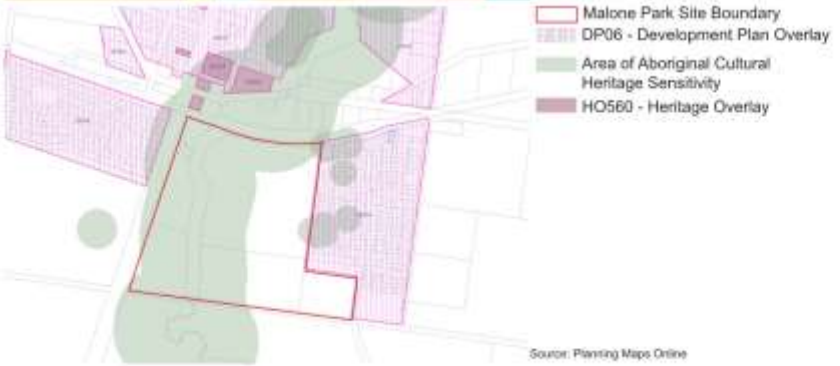
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Land Use Planning Zones



Planning Overlays





Source: Planning Maps Online

Zoning Ordinance

Malone Park comprises of four different land use zones. It's primarily Public Park zoning, which includes all of the current sporting facilities and ovals. Special Use zoning covers much of the bushland vegetation area along the south-western section converging with the Commercial zone in the north-west, which includes the current public toilet and playground. The Public Use Zone (6) covers Bullock Creek as public land use for Local Government.

Environment and Landscape

Environment and Landscape overlays seek to protect vegetation or landscape features of an area and are used to recognise areas of environmental or landscape significance. The ESO1 running through Malone Park is a water course protection overlay to ensure development is compatible with identified environmemntal values and objectives associated with Bullock Creek.

Heritage and Built Form

Majority of Malone Park is an area of cultural heritage sensitivity. These areas are defined under the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 and require a 'cultural heritage management plan' to be prepared where a listed 'high impact activity' is proposed.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



History

Prior to European Settlement, the original inhabitants of the City of Greater Bendigo area, which includes Marong, are the Dja Dja Wurrung (Jarra) people. From the 1830's, it was primarily an agricultural and pastoral area until the discovery of gold in the municipal area in the early 1850's. This generated a rapid period of growth and development. Marong was consolidated as a gold washing site due to its proximity to permanent water from Bullock Creek before becoming a Shire in 1964.

Marong, believed to have derived from the aboriginal word meaning a native or Murray pine tree, is located at the junction of the Calder Hwy (A79) and the Calder Alternate Hwy (A790) and is 17 kilometres west of Bendigo and 157 kilometres north-west of Melbourne.

Malone Park, named after the Malone family (who were well known residents of the area), is a Crown Land site divided by Bullock Creek. It was established for the Marong Football Club in the 1960's, but went into a hiatus before being reactivated along with the Marong Cricket Club in the 1970's. During the hiatus, the Marong Light Harness Club took over the site and developed a harness track around the oval. Since that time more users including the Marong Bowls Club, Bendigo and District Family Equine Group and Marong Tenis Club have established at the site.



Marong Village c.1950
(source: National Library of Victoria)



Marong pastoralists posing with their wheat stack c.1925
(source: Museum Victoria)



Marong Shire Hall, prior to WWI
(source: 'Moving Forward, Looking Back - The History of Marong Shire, Ruth Hopkins)



Bullock Creek channel diverting from the Loddon River c.1892 (source: State Library of Victoria)

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

3. Strategic Context

Background Documents

Below is a summary of key background documents and existing strategies that may influence future directions and priorities for the master plan



Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-21

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The Community Plan, formally known as the Council Plan, was renamed by Council to emphasise it is a plan for the community.
- The a vision for Greater Bendigo is to be the world's most liveable community.
  - 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.
- Six key goals (strategic objectives):
  - Lead and govern for all.
  - Wellbeing and fairness.
  - Strengthening the economy.
  - Presentation and managing growth.
  - Environmental sustainability.
  - Embracing our culture and heritage.
- Key Challenges include:
  - Population growth.
  - Rate capping.
  - Environmental management and climate change.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Support initiatives that increase access, improve health and learning opportunities, community connections and quality of life for all.
- Support infrastructure that increases liveability and pride of place.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment, conserve resources and increase resilience to a changing climate.
- Consider opportunities to recognise and celebrate the sites history and cultural values.
- Establish agreed priorities for infrastructure improvements based on evidence of demand and community needs to guide future resource allocation.



Greater Bendigo Health & Wellbeing Plan 2017-21

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- Goal 1: Healthy and well - The Greater Bendigo community has good physical and mental health supported by healthy lifestyles.
- Goal 2: Safe and secure - The Greater Bendigo community lives free from violence and abuse, is protected from environmental risks and is supported to live affordably.
- Goal 3: Able to participate - The Greater Bendigo community has the capability to participate and contribute to the local economy and community life.
- Goal 4: Connected to culture and community - The Greater Bendigo community is socially engaged and inclusive and is a place where people can safely identify and connect with their culture and identity.
- Goal 5: Liveable - The Greater Bendigo community is adaptable and resilient and has access to sustainable natural, built, social and economic environments that support and enhance health and wellbeing.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Reinforce / develop facilities, infrastructure and community structures that support healthy lifestyles through physical activity participation and harm reduction.
- Support facilities that increase community safety and connection.
- Support community participation, physical activity and capacity building (i.e. sport and physical activity participation, club sustainability and volunteer opportunities).
- Acknowledge and celebrate cultural heritage of the site.
- Support community inclusion (i.e. through sporting clubs).
- Support protection and connection to the natural environment.
- Facilitate supportive built and natural environments.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Marong Township Structure Plan, September 2020

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- Acknowledgment of Country:
  Marong is on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.
  The City of Greater Bendigo would like to acknowledge and extend appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land where Marong is today.
  Today, we pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples.
  We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.
- The long-term vision for Marong is a satellite township of 8,000 people built around a vibrant community town centre and civic focus with a well serviced railway station and an outstanding public space network.
- As Marong grows, improved facilities, and new parks and play spaces will be needed in appropriate locations. With an expected population of 8,000 by 2045, Malone Park will not meet the needs of the community. There is also poor connection with the park and the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Upgraded existing neighbourhood park to township level (i.e. play space adjacent to public swimming pool). Included in DCP.
- The Structure Plan identifies a site for possible future additional Active Open Space (two ovals) adjacent to future primary school site west of Malone Park. Included in DCP allowance for purchase of land and construction of ovals, courts, pavilion, play space, skate park, car parking and other associated infrastructure (medium term).

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Include Acknowledgment of Country.
- Consider infrastructure assessment based on an ultimate population of approximately 8,000 people (by 2045).
- The existing play space adjacent to the swimming pool is earmarked for upgrade to Township level – consider implications for possible other play spaces within the reserve.
- Reinforce Malone Park as the primary/main active recreation reserve in Marong – any possible future active open space west of Malone Park (co-located with future school) is to be considered a secondary site and/or cater for alternative sporting activities.



Public Space Plan, 2019

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The Plan reviews Open Space provision across the City and seeks to establish a 'big picture' strategy; a guiding and working document to which the City, other organisations and the wider community commit to implementing collaboratively over time. In broad terms, the Plan aims to do three things:
  - Set out a conceptual vision for public space in Greater Bendigo.
  - Provide strategic guidance for planning and provision, uses and management, funding and investment, major policy issues and implementation priorities.
  - Establish a framework of standards for access, quality, maintenance and design.
- Marong strategic findings include:
  - Malone Park provides the major public space resource for the local community and is a very good example of how a diversity of pubic space functions can be successfully combined.
  - Additional space for active recreation is needed to support the growing township and is proposed to be provided in conjunction with a new primary school.
  - Additional local public open spaces will also be needed, particularly to the east where the main focus for growth is planned. There are various local landscape features that can be incorporated to shape the form and character of these spaces.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Address the Malone Park specific recommendations, i.e.:
  - Recognise the significance of the reserve as the township's primary, central open space.
  - Optimise available space for provision of facilities to support organised sport.
  - Retain areas of dedicated passive space as part of the reserve.
  - Improve walking and cycling connections to and from the reserve with the planning and development of the local public space corridors network.
  - Recognise the importance of the creek corridor as a crucial natural and recreational asset of the township and its anchoring public space corridor.
  - Upgrade the creek corridor to support passive recreational use and improve environmental values.
- Review and update the Malone Park Master Plan 2006.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Healthy Heart of Victoria 2019 Active Living Census (ALC).

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The 2019 Healthy Heart of Victoria Active Living Census was conducted to help with planning for health and recreation services and allow a better understanding of people's activity levels and preferences. Highline data of relevance include:
  - 2 in every 3 adults in Greater Bendigo are overweight or obese.
  - People who are overweight or obese are more likely to report fair or poor general health and lower life satisfaction.
  - 57.3% of Greater Bendigo residents meet the physical activity guidelines.
  - For both males and females, physical activity levels decline with age.
  - Two in every three people who meet physical activity guidelines report good to excellent general health and wellbeing.
  - Barriers to participation – Time, Cost, Health, Lack of Social Support and Safety.
  - Around 90% of people reported using open spaces, with 60% using open spaces weekly or more often.
  - Footpaths rated as the highest used facility with 87.9% of people reporting using footpaths.
- Most common suggested improvements that would encourage more regular use of public facilities and open spaces:
  - Walking tracks / footpaths 21.4%
  - Bicycle tracks / lanes and skate facilities 14.5%
  - Exercise equipment / facilities 14.2%
  - Toilets / change rooms 13.5%
  - Lighting 13.0%
  - Safety measures / restrictions 10.2%
- Marong Rural West specific:
  - 57.6% of residents use open spaces once a week or more.
  - Despite 65% of Adults meeting physical activity guidelines (the highest in the Region), 53.9% of residents want to be more active more often.
  - Public facilities and open spaces - rate of use:
    - Footpaths 78.4%
    - Parks 76.0%
    - Off-road walking and cycling tracks 67.8%
    - Sports grounds, ovals and clubrooms 65.5%
    - Swimming pools / splash parks 58.6%
    - Hard courts (e.g. netball / tennis) 46.0%
    - Playgrounds 35.6%
  - Barriers to being more active:
    - Time poor 57%
    - Personal reasons 25%
    - Cost 22%
    - Safety 19%
    - Lack of social support 16%
    - Poor health / disability 16%

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Ongoing investment in sport, recreation and open space facilities at Malone Park will help support physical activity participation and health outcomes for residents.
- Existing open space and facilities in Malone Park are well used by the majority of Marong residents. Facility improvements are required to cater for current and increasing levels of demand as well as address ageing infrastructure renewal.
- More contemporary facilities are required to meet community needs and levels of use.
- Walking is the most popular physical activity – improvements to walking paths and trails will be critical to supporting participation.
- Master plan initiatives will address the common suggested improvements, specifically:
  - Walking tracks / footpaths
  - Bicycle tracks / lanes and skate facilities
  - Exercise equipment / facilities
  - Toilets / change rooms
  - Lighting (sport and amenity)
  - Safety measures / restrictions



Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy (2016-21)

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy will contribute to achieving outcomes that provide the local community with clean air, water and a healthy natural environment.
- It is based on an internationally-recognised benchmarking format One Planet, which supports sustainable living. It is based on the following objectives:
  - Zero carbon emissions
  - Zero waste
  - Improved shared or low-carbon transport options
  - Increased use of sustainable building materials
  - Supporting local and sustainable food production and community sharing
  - Long term sustainable water security
  - Thriving landscapes and ecosystems
  - Diverse cultures and communities celebrating connection to nature and sustainable living
  - Equitable and sustainable local economy
  - Improved overall health and happiness of the community
- The action plan says what Council will do to help everyone in our community have a good life. The plan says what we will do to make health and wellbeing better for children, young people, people with a disability and older people.
- The plan outlines five goals:
  - Our community is healthy and well.
  - Everyone feels safe and secure.
  - Everyone can be a part of what we do.
  - Everyone is part of our community.
  - Everyone can live well in our city.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Consider opportunities to embed Environmentally Sensitive Design (ESD) principles in the master plan, including vegetation management, resource use and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



All Ages All Abilities Action Plan 2019

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The action plan says what Council will do to help everyone in our community have a good life. The plan says what we will do to make health and wellbeing better for children, young people, people with a disability and older people.
- The plan outlines five goals:
  - Our community is healthy and well.
  - Everyone feels safe and secure.
  - Everyone can be a part of what we do.
  - Everyone is part of our community.
  - Everyone can live well in our city.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Master plan initiatives will consider the needs of all population groups, ages and abilities.
- Design and infrastructure improvements will seek to maximise participation and accessibility for all groups.



Walking and Cycling Strategy 2019

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The plan outlines the benefits of participation and a Vision: Greater Bendigo, Australia's regional walking and cycling capital – making everyday walking and cycling easier for all ages and abilities.
- Walking and Cycling are the most popular ways residents get physical activity in Greater Bendigo (Active Living Census).
- All Ages and Abilities Walking and cycling infrastructure creates more options for independent travel for children and people who have a disability.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Explore options to support walking and cycling infrastructure, including shared paths and connections throughout the reserve.



AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy 2017

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy provides the principles and strategic framework to support the future development, governance and growth of football and netball throughout the Central Victoria Region. It also provides key regional strategic directions and recommendations, as well as identifying critical priorities and actions for AFL Central Victoria, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, AFL Central Victoria Leagues, Clubs and Netball Associations and project partner LGAs (including the City of Greater Bendigo).
- The Key Findings Report was completed in December 2016.
- PRIORITY 1: EXISTING FACILITIES - Increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities.
- PRIORITY 2: NEW FACILITIES AND TALENT PATHWAYS - Plan and develop new facilities in key growth areas across the Region, considering regional needs and talent pathways, program and competitions at key locations.
- PRIORITY 3: BUILD CAPACITY - Support the capacity building of clubs, their people and culture.
- PRIORITY 4: ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS - Continue to enhance the relationship between football, netball and government in the planning, provision and funding of facilities and programs.
- Malone Park is classified as a Local Standard venue. The following facility gaps were identified:
  - Change Rooms
  - Umpire Rooms
  - Football oval lighting
- Facility condition ratings highlighted deficiencies (i.e. very poor score) in relation to:
  - Change Rooms.
  - Umpire Rooms.
  - Oval drainage, irrigation, profile, fencing and lighting.
  - Reserve perimeter fencing.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Master Plan to address identified facility gaps and asset deficiencies, including change rooms, umpire Rooms, oval drainage, irrigation, profile, fencing and lighting, and reserve perimeter fencing
- Scope and standard of improvements to meet minimum AFL Preferred Facility Standards for a Local Standard venue (i.e. AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines & Netball Victoria Facilities Manual).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



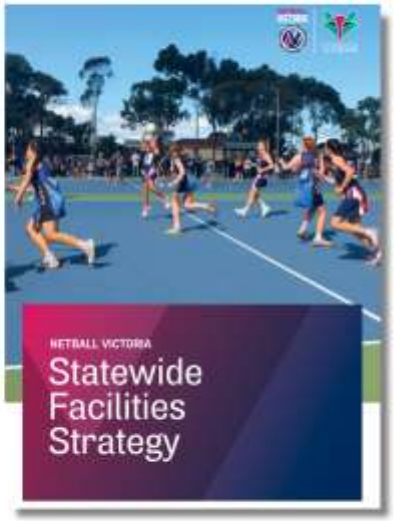
Victorian Cricket Infrastructure Strategy, 2018-2028

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The strategy established the following key Pillars for action:
  - Maximise the capacity and activation of grounds and facilities
  - Improve access to cricket programs, pathways and development services
  - Supporting diversity through inclusive facilities
  - Providing welcoming, safe, flexible and accessible community facilities
  - Catering for change and maximise partnerships
- The City of Greater Bendigo falls within the CV 'Northern Rivers Region'.
- From an infrastructure planning and development perspective, the Region's current ground to population ratio of 1: 1,641 is above the Country Region average of 1:1,860 (ground to player ratio of 1:30 is also below average indicating that at a regional level, grounds are not at full capacity and have potential for greater use) which on face value would suggest no short-mid term need for additional grounds across the Region.
- However, forecast to be the second fastest growing Region across Country Victoria (behind South East Country which includes the LGA areas of Frankston and Mornington Peninsula) will place increased pressure on the carrying capacity of existing fields and supporting infrastructure and furthermore the need to develop additional playing fields (particularly those with synthetic pitches as current provision ratio below Country Region average). Planning for this future growth and ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with localised population hot spots (58% of the Region's population will reside within the LGA areas of Bendigo and Mitchell by 2031) will be important for future growth and sustainability of cricket across the Region.
- Key infrastructure related priorities for the Northern Rivers Region include
  - Training nets identified as presenting potential safety issues.
  - Playing fields with change room facility provision.
  - Average playing field condition rating.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- The master plan will address the following identified priorities:
  - Maximise the capacity and activation of grounds and facilities.
  - Supporting diversity through inclusive facilities. Increase provision of inclusive facilities with a focus on female friendly design.
  - Providing welcoming, safe, flexible and accessible community facilities.
  - Playing fields with access to adequate change room facilities.
  - Improve the 'Average' playing field condition rating.
- Standard of facilities to reflect Cricket Australia Facilities Guide.



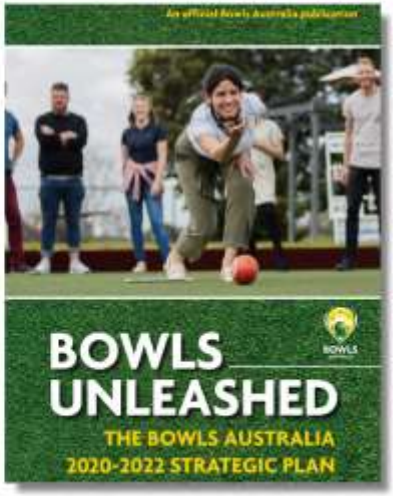
Netball Victoria's Statewide Facilities Strategy (2016 - 2026)

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- In 2015, there were 47,600 Netball Victoria members in Rural & Regional Victoria – a membership rate of 3.2%. The City of Greater Bendigo falls within the Loddon Mallee South NV region, which has a slightly higher participation rate of 3.4% of the population.
- The report identifies a deficit of outdoor lit courts in the Greater Bendigo region by 2031 to cater for future population growth, however, does not specifically mention Marong.
- The Facilities Strategy is accompanied by a Facilities Guide which sets out recommended standards and infrastructure requirements for netball venues.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- The three tennis/netball courts in Malone Park have recently been upgraded and resurfaced. However adequate access to appropriate change rooms, amenities and support facilities is required.



Bowls Unleashed 2020-2022 Strategic Plan

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- Bowls Unleashed builds on the previous strategic plan to identify priority focus areas for Bowls Vic. Specifically:
  - Business Model – governance, leadership, management.
  - More Play – connecting communities, participation, supporting clubs/volunteers and facility improvements (particularly addressing ageing infrastructure).
  - Winning Teams - performance pathways and athlete development.
  - Fan Experience – welcoming environments.
  - Innovation and Change – research, technology and environmental sustainability.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- The master plan will consider initiatives that support the sustainability of the Bowls Club, address ageing infrastructure and requirements for contemporary facility standards.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



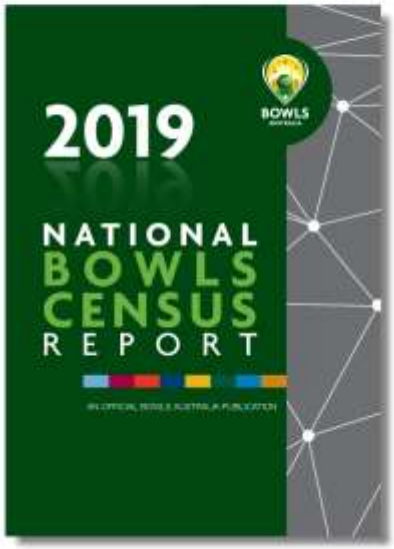
Bowls Victoria Strategic Plan 2018-22

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- The strategic plan establishes a vision for Bowls Victoria to define itself as a vibrant and committed State Sporting Association dedicated to further developing the sport through strengthened connections with the wider community.
- The report identifies three key Goals:
  - Create and implement initiatives that grow participation in bowls inclusive of all.
  - Develop strong viable Clubs through employing best practice governance and supporting an engaged volunteer network.
  - Enhance our community profile through effective communication, positive media presence and commercial growth.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- The master plan will consider initiatives that support the sustainability of the Bowls Club, address ageing infrastructure and requirements for contemporary facility standards.



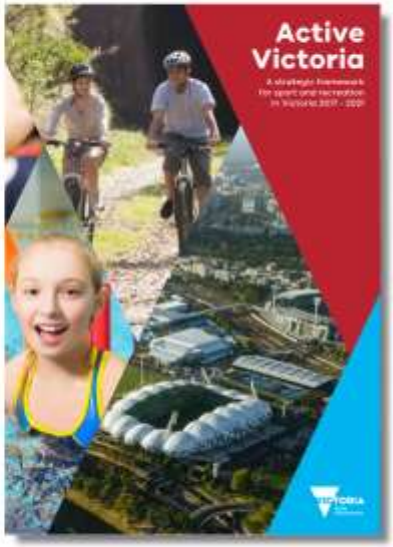
Bowls Australia, 2019 National Bowls Census Report

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- Ninth National Bowls Census.
- Formal (i.e. registered playing member) participation in Bowls has been declining for over 30 years at a rate of around 3.4% p.a., however this was reduced to 1.8% between 2017-2019.
- Declines in formal membership have been off-set by increases in social membership and participation. Overall, regular participation in Bowls has increased by 3.3% from 2010-2019.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Initiatives that support social / informal participation in Bowls are more likely to help increase overall participation. This highlights the importance of adequate support facilities, amenities, shade, social areas etc. in addition to the playing greens.



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

Extracts/ Key Findings:

- Vision: More active - An increased proportion of Victorians participate in sport and active recreation.
- Strategic directions:
  - Meeting damand – increasing capacity.
  - Broader and more inclusive participation – Universal Design, gender equity.
  - Additional focus on active recreation – support formal sport.
  - Build system resilience and capacity – volunteer and governance support.
  - Connect investment in events, high performance and infrastructure.
  - Work together for shared outcomes.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- Master plan improvements to focus on maximising multi-use infrastructure, increasing capacity and supporting a range of active and passive recreation opportunities.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Malone Park Master Plan (2006)

A Master Plan was developed for Malone Park in 2006 to guide future investment and improvement priorities. The Master Plan was based on retaining all existing user groups – including football, netball, tennis, lawn bowls, light harness club and 'family' equestrian activities – whilst increasing opportunities for informal community recreation, amenity and maintenance improvements.

Key 'high' priorities identified in the 2006 Master Plan included:

- Improving the main oval surface through top-dressing, conversion to drought tolerant grass, water reticulation and perimeter irrigation.
- Construction of three new tennis courts, with two available for netball.
- New playground adjacent to new courts.
- Public toilet refurbishment/upgrade.
- Additional horse stalls, stands and fencing upgrades.
- New meeting room / extension to Light Harness Clubrooms for shared use with Family Equestrian.

Medium priorities included:

- Development of a new passive recreation / picnic area in the north east corner of the site – including removal of disused and surplus infrastructure (i.e. shelter, concrete seats, etc).
- • Additional two lights on the western side of the main oval for sports training.
- • Football/cricket club room refurbishment, including amenities.
- Additional seating around main oval.
- Power and lighting upgrade to family equestrian area.
- Reserve road access and signage improvements.
- Development of three cricket practice nets.
- Extension to Bowls Pavilion (amenities upgrade).
- Shade and shelter facilities to service Lawn Bowls.
- Establishment of junior cricket oval inside harness track.
- Establishment of a large dressage arena (20m x 60m) inside the harness track.

Possible implications for Master Plan:

- As at June 2021, a number of priority improvements have been implemented – most notably construction of three new tennis/netball courts, establishment of the junior cricket oval, new cricket training nets and improvements to the main oval. However, the majority of critical recommendations are yet to be implemented, including toilets, amenities and club room improvements across the site. Furthermore, several key developments – specifically netball/ tennis courts and cricket nets – have been constructed in areas different to what was identified in the Master Plan.

- Given these changes and changing population profile of Marong, it is timely that this current master planning exercise review previous priorities to provide a framework for future improvements across the site, including opportunities for shared use, consolidation of built form, sustainable asset management and addressing current and future

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

4. Population and Demographic Characteristics

Population Characteristics

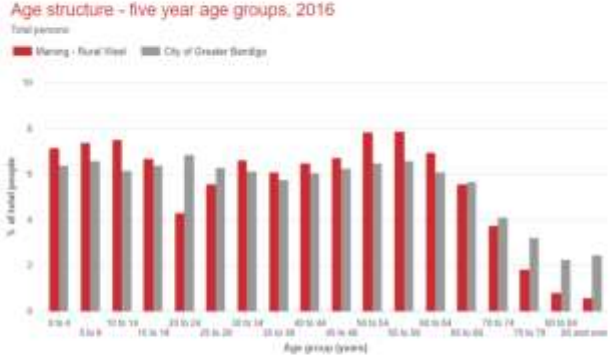
The City of Greater Bendigo is located in north-central Victoria, about 150 kilometres north-west of the Melbourne CBD. The City of Greater Bendigo Estimated Resident Population for 2019 was 118,093 people. The ABS Estimated Resident Population of Marong – Rural West in 2019 was 4,928 people. However, as outlined in the Marong Township Structure Plan (2020), the ultimate population of the town is expected reach around 8,000 people.

In 2016, Marong - Rural West had higher proportion of children (under 18) and a lower proportion of persons aged 60 or older than City of Greater Bendigo.

Overall, 22.1% of the population was aged between 0 and 15, and 12.6% were aged 65 years and over, compared with 19.2% and 17.8% respectively for City of Greater Bendigo.

The major differences between the age structure of Marong - Rural West and City of Greater Bendigo were:
- A smaller percentage of persons aged 20 to 24 (4.3% compared to 6.9%)
- A smaller percentage of persons aged 85 and over (0.6% compared to 2.5%)
- A smaller percentage of persons aged 80 to 84 (0.8% compared to 2.3%)
- A smaller percentage of persons aged 75 to 79 (1.9% compared to 3.2%)

Age structure - five year age groups, 2016



From 2011 to 2016, Marong - Rural West's population increased by 657 people (17.1%). This represents an average annual population change of 3.21% per year over the period.

The largest changes in age structure in the area between 2011 and 2016 were in the age groups:
- 30 to 34 (+113 persons)
- 25 to 29 (+112 persons)
- 0 to 4 (+87 persons)
- 65 to 69 (+71 persons)

In 2016, 6.5% of people in Marong - Rural West were born overseas, compared with 8.0% in City of Greater Bendigo.

Population Implications

The population characteristics indicate considerable population growth over a sustained period, which is set to continue into the foreseeable future, ultimately almost doubling the current population to reach around 8,000 people by 2045.

Population growth continues to reinforce Marong as a destination for young families, this is particularly evident in the high number of people aged 25-34 years moving to the region between the 2011-2016 Census periods. This reinforces the relatively 'young' age profile of the community which already has a lower proportion of people aged over 75 years compared to Greater Bendigo.

The young – and growing – population will influence demand for appropriate sport and recreation opportunities. However, equally important will be providing opportunities for all ages – children, youth, adults and families. Opportunities for older adults (75+years) will also become increasingly important over the longer term to help support healthy active living through all life stages.

Whilst demand for participation in traditional formal sports undertaken at the reserve (e.g. cricket, football, tennis, netball, bowls and to a lessor extent Pony Club/Equestrian) can be expected to experience growth associated with population changes, demand for informal, non-club based leisure opportunities can also be expected to increase associated with the physical activity participation preferences of the community (i.e. walking, cycling, jogging).

The collective impact from sustained population growth will continue to drive demand for access to appropriate contemporary facilities and infrastructure in order to improve capacity and effective asset management at the reserve.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Physical Activity Participation

The City of Greater Bendigo Active Living Census (ALC) confirmed the most popular physical activities undertaken by residents are dominated by informal / no-club based activities such as walking, swimming, gym, active play, cycling, hiking, jogging and other fitness activities such as yoga, Pilates etc.

The graphic below highlights the most popular physical activities undertaken by Marong-Rural West residents.



The master plan will therefore seek to maximise opportunities for informal physical activity participation through improved paths, trails, connections, play facilities and spaces for informal active recreation. There may also be opportunities to utilise improved pavilion facilities for community programming when not in use by sporting clubs.

The results also highlight the relative popularity of 'traditional' sports such as football, netball and tennis, and hence the importance of appropriate facilities to support such activities. In terms of existing formal sports undertaken at the reserve, the table below provides a high-level summary of participation trends.

Tenant Club Participation

Activity	Team/ members	Active Living Census	Aust. Play data 2017 (15+ yrs)	Comments	Implications
Football (Aussie Rules)	Junior x 6 Senior x 2 Auskick x 80	6.2%	2.5%	Highest participation rate in CoGB (3.1%)	Very high participation despite no women's / girls team as yet. Auskick has doubled in recent years. Demand for minimum two ovals plus adequate amenities.
Netball	Junior x 4 Senior x 4 Net Set Go – TBC	4.5%	3.1%	CoGB 2.6%	Very high participation. Existing three courts are adequate. Master plan to focus on appropriate support facilities / amenities
Cricket	TBC	1.3% CoGB	2.7%	TBC	Retain capacity for two cricket ovals.
Tennis	TBC	3.9%	4.6%	TBC	Existing three courts are adequate. Master plan to focus on appropriate support facilities / amenities.
Bowls	77 members	N/A	1.3%	Membership up from 45 two-three yrs ago. Average member age approx. 40 years old.	Participation expected to increase associated with population growth, broader sport promotion and young age profile of the club. Existing two greens can cater for additional use (up to approx. 100 members).
Family Equestrian Group	65-70 members	N/A	Pony Club Less than 1%	Activity reflects rural character of the town. All ages activity.	Participation expected to remain stable or growing associated with population growth.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

5. Asset Audit

The table summarises asset condition information for a selection of core assets within the reserve based on Council's Asset Management data. This list does not include infrastructure assets such as roads and drainage. The final column provides an indication of implications for the Master Plan having regard to the site assessment and comparison to contemporary industry standards undertaken as part of this project.

Asset Audit Table

Council's condition assessment ratings utilise the following scale: 0 = Brand New to 10 = Completely Failed.

The table lists assets based on year of creation from oldest to newest.

Ref	Asset ID		Approx. Year Created	Age as at 2021	Condition Rating	Comment / Implications
1.	149580	Bowling Club Shed	1956	65yrs	3.7	Explore opportunities to demolish and consolidate function into proposed new pavilion.
2.	158061	Bowling Club Store	1956	65yrs	3.9	Explore opportunities to demolish and consolidate function into proposed new pavilion.
3.	158068	Bowling Club Tank Store Shed	1956	65yrs	3	Explore opportunities to demolish and consolidate function into proposed new pavilion.
4.	158062	Oval Coaches Boxes x 2	1956	65yrs	3.7	Retain and replace at end of life.
5.	158064	Football Broadcast Box/Scoreboard	1956	65yrs	8.4	Demolish and replace with new scoreboard.
6.	158063	Football Ticket Box	1956	65yrs	7.4	Demolish and replace at eastern 'main' entrance.
7.	149572	Oval Curator and Storage Sheds	1956	65yrs	7	Explore opportunities to demolish and consolidate function into proposed new pavilion.
8.	149578	Stables – shed/shelter	1956	65yrs	4.9	Retain and replace at end of life.
9.	149577	Storage Shed (equestrian)	1956	65yrs	7.7	Demolish, replace if required.
10.	715200	Trotting Track - Four Tier Grandstand (Old)	1956 (TBC)	65yrs	5.9	Demolish and remove.
11.	158065	Trotting Track Broadcast Box	1956	65yrs	7.2	Demolish and remove.
12.	158058	Trotting Track Canteen-Pony Club shed	1956	65yrs	5.9	Explore opportunities to demolish and consolidate function into proposed new pavilion.
13.	158059	Trotting Track Kiosk	1956	65yrs	7.2	Demolish and remove.
14.	158060	Trotting Track Shed	1956	65yrs	6.6	Demolish and remove.
15.	149576	Viewing Box (Trotting)	1956	65yrs	6.8	Demolish and remove.
16.	149571	Frankel Pavilion (Football/Cricket)	1975	46yrs	4	Demolish and replace with new multi-use pavilion.
17.	149574	Toilet Block	1975	46yrs	5.7	Demolish and replace with new multi-use pavilion.
18.	149570	Bowling Pavilion	1980	41yrs	4.7	Demolish and replace with new multi-use pavilion.
19.	655096	Trotting Track Store Shed	1990	31yrs	4	Retain and replace at end of life if required.
20.	98748	Oval 1: Turf Oval	1996	25yrs	N/A	Retain, upgrade / refurbish surface as required.
21.	627315	Oval Irrigation	2013	8yrs	N/A	Retain.
22.	684076 684077	Cricket Practice Nets	2016	5yrs	2	Retain.
23.	684080 684081 684082	Netball Tennis Courts	2016	5yrs	2	Retain.
24.	664657	Netball Tennis Court - Sports Lighting	2016	5yrs	N/A	Retain.
25.	663812	Netball Spectator Shelter 1	2016	5yrs	0	Retain.
26.	663813	Netball Spectator Shelter 2	2016	5yrs		Retain.
27.	687080	Malone Park Playspace (near Pool)	2017	4yrs	2.4	Retain.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

6. Demand Assessment

The following section presents a summary strategic analysis of likely future demand for core sporting fields/ courts within Marong based on an ultimate population of 8,000 people. The results confirm demand for additional playing fields – including for activities yet uncatered for, such as soccer. The Marong Structure Plan outlines proposed future public open space acquisition to help address potential future gaps in active playing fields, however there are a number of options as to how opportunities could be provided across the town.

Planned Future Provision (Marong Structure Plan)

The Structure Plan outlines future provision for a 'Neighbourhood sports facility, including township park' adjacent to the proposed Primary School site. A 12-hectare open space site is proposed. Future uses of the site are yet to be determined, however a site of this size could accommodate two full size ovals (e.g. Football/ Cricket); three full size soccer pitches; or a combination thereof.
Analysis of the provision ratios and existing participation levels suggests that there is likely to be future demand for the following playing fields to cater for an ultimate population of 8,000 people:

- 1 oval (Football/Cricket);
- 2 netball courts; and
- 2 soccer pitches.

Common Industry Ratio's

Activity	Current Provision	Common Planning Ratio	Theoretical Gap (pop. 8,000)	Current Ratio (2019 pop. 4,928)	Comment
Football	1 x snr Oval 1 x jnr Oval	1:4,500	2 ovals rqd. No Gap.	1:2,464	Football participation in Marong-Rural West is double the Bendigo average. Hence demand for playing fields will be higher than industry averages. Access to an additional (third) oval is likely to be required to maintain comparable levels of provision.
Netball	3 courts	1:5,000	2 courts rqd. No Gap.	1:1,642	Netball participation in Marong-Rural West is also significantly higher than the Bendigo average. Hence demand for courts will be higher than industry averages. A total of 5 courts would be required to maintain comparable levels of provision (i.e. 2 additional courts).
Cricket	1 x snr Oval 1 x jnr Oval	1:3,000	Gap = 1 oval Total of 3 ovals rqd.	1:2,464	There is a potential future gap of 1-oval.
Tennis	1 x 3 courts (Malone Pk) 1 x 4 courts (Torrens St)	1:2000	4 courts rqd. No Gap	1:704	No additional courts required.
Bowls	2 greens	1:10,000	1 green rqd. No Gap	1:2,464	No additional greens required.
Soccer	Nil	1:5,000	Gap = 2 pitches rqd.	Nil	Two pitches likely to be required.

Implications for Master Plan

The Demand Assessment offers three main options for Council/Steering Committee consideration and direction to help inform the Master Plan for Malone Park. The options are:

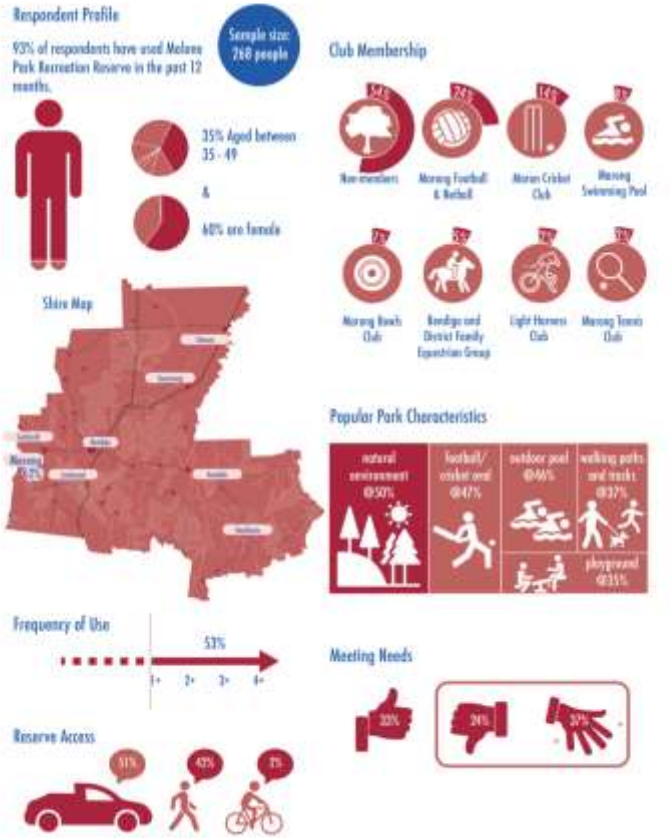
1. Consolidate existing sporting uses/activities at Malone Park, exploring options for possible additional playing field provision (i.e. 1 additional oval (third) and potential for 2 additional netball courts).
   - NB: Requires relocation of the Light Harness Club and repurposing the trotting track area.
2. Plan for/designate the proposed Neighbourhood Active Open Space as a site for soccer provision (e.g., Rural West soccer hub with 3-pitches – preferred model for club sustainability).
   - NB: There is potential to incorporate a soccer pitch as an interim measure at Malone Park (i.e., to help establish a participation base for soccer and support club formation) before ultimately relocating to the proposed New Neighbourhood Active Open Space.
3. Explore a mix of provision at both sites.
   - Options pending confirmation of Harness Club/Trotting Track at Malone Park.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

7. Community Consultation Summary

Consultations occured with key stakeholders as part of the background research phase for the masterplan project in August 2020. Staff workshops and interviews were conducted with members from the City of Greater Bendigo, who raised issues pertaining to City planning, City partnerships, City Engineering and general facility use versus growth. The Malone Park User Group consists of existing tenant clubs at the reserve, including sporting clubs, the Bowls Club, Bendigo Family Equestrian Group and the Light Harness Trotting Club.

The representatives advocated improvements and recommentations outlined in the User Group Submission, which was documented in early 2019. These user groups highlighted problems and opportunities within the reserve specific to their needs, which included mutually shared suggestions for the draft Master Plan proposal. There was also a group opposed to major changes associated to the trotting track, preferring to advocate for upgraded and shared facilities. A summary of key comments, issues or priorities is identified in Appendix A.





Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

8. Issues and Opportunities

The following is a summary of issues and opportunities identified during the preliminary consultation and site investigation phase.

Key Considerations:
Malone Park will be reinforced as the main Active Recreation Reserve servicing Marong and the Rural West region. Key considerations for Malone Park include:

- Primary base for sporting activity in the Town including Australian Rules Football, Cricket, Netball, Tennis, Lawn Bowls and Equestrian
- Enhance broader community health and amenity by reinforcing the landscape character

Reserve Uses and Changing Urban Context

1. The population of Marong is expected to almost double by 2045 (approx.). Recent residential development directly borders the reserve – leading to increased informal use and increasing conflicts with current uses (i.e. Trotting Track).
2. Potential future Active Open Space (located off site) should be used to cater for future demands (e.g. soccer) and not dilute the sustainability of clubs at Malone Park.
3. Consolidate playing fields and courts at Malone Park – helping to support overall club sustainability and community connection and maximise opportunities for multi-use and shared use of facilities.

Community Activation & Safety

4. There is growing demand for participation in a range of informal physical activities in addition to formal sports. Opportunity to improve walking paths, informal and active play, trails and connections throughout the reserve. Use of the trotting track and Harness Club membership/active participation remains very low.
5. There are increasing conflicts between informal reserve users (e.g. walking, dogs, children) and current activities in the reserve. Opportunity to relocate the Harness Club to another location and re-purpose the area occupied by the Trotting Track.
6. Review road layout and car parking to improve safety, amenity and vehicle control (including speed).
7. Consider lighting requirements throughout the reserve, in particular key destinations, to improve safety and security. Opportunity to consider solar lights and 'smart' furniture.

Playing Fields/Courts

8. Upgrade the second oval to improve use, capacity and safety. Explore options for provision of one soccer field (shared use with cricket/football) as an interim measure. Soccer ultimately to be provided for at the proposed new active open Space in Town.
9. Explore opportunities for a third oval at Malone Park.
10. Identify options for future provision of two additional netball courts (NB: spatial identification only, future provision subject to confirmation of population growth and demand – i.e. by 2045).

Landscape and Environment

11. The reserve is home to a selection of significant trees and remnant vegetation, which should be conserved and protected
12. The reserve is dominated by a 'bushland/rural' character, which should be reinforced
13. Large parts of the reserve (i.e. along Bullock Creek, netball courts and main oval) are subject to flooding and inundation. Consider opportunities for relocation of built assets outside of the primary flood zone and/or remediation actions as required
14. The adjacent Golf Course has been identified in the Structure Plan as a potential Bushfire Relief area.

Possible Staging / Priorities

15. Additional playing field provision is dependent on relocation of the Harness Club and repurposing the area occupied by the Trotting Track.

Key Assets

16. The majority of existing assets, including major infrastructure (i.e. sports pavilion, bowls club, public toilets) area are outdated and fail to comply with contemporary sport facility standards or guidelines (including female friendly facilities). Opportunity to consolidate and update facilities and infrastructure to current standards
17. The netball / tennis courts are not adequately serviced by support facilities (i.e. amenities, change rooms, shelter, kitchenette or storage). Opportunity to establish facilitates to support netball and tennis clubs and users.
18. The majority of ancillary infrastructure, fencing, shedding, roads, paths network and car parking, all require renewal, replacement or rationalization
19. Opportunities to either improve existing core facilities (i.e. Sports pavilion and Bowls Club) requiring substantial rennovation to each, or demolish and replace with a consolidated shared use community sporting hub facility to service all reserve users.
20. A new multi-use facility is recommended as it is likely to be more cost effective to deliver and provide an asset that will service the community for the next fifty years.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

9. Master Plan

The Master Plan

Following presentation of the initial Situation Analysis, Issues and Opportunities to the project Steering Committee and Reserve Reference Group, the following Draft Master Plan has been developed which incorporates changes or suggestions from the aforementioned consultation.

The Master Plan is based on consolidating existing sporting uses/activities at Malone Park and ear-marking the proposed future Active Open Space in Marong for alternative sporting activities (e.g. Rural West Soccer Hub with potential for three full size pitches). The future site will be located adjacent to a proposed new Primary School and provide opportunities for a mix of education, community and sporting facilities in addition to those at Malone Park.

Establishment of an overarching "Marong Sports Club" is recommended for Malone Park which brings all existing clubs together under a collective governance model to help oversee implementation of the Master Plan and future management of proposed shared use facilities (i.e. new multi-use pavilion).

The Light Harness Club activities will be phased out of Malone Park and relocated to a more suitable location elsewhere in the municipality. Council will work closely with the Light Harness Club and other relevant stakeholders to explore options for a sustainable future for public harness activities across the City.

The Recreation Precinct

One of the high priority action items proposed as part of the Malone Park Master Plan is the provision of a new recreation precinct. This precinct is proposed to include a 'Township Standard' playground, fitness stations, a multi-purpose half court/ hit up wall, shelter, picnic facilities, seating and a new toilet block. This precinct is intended to cater to people of all ages and abilities and be used by local residents, visitors and the sporting groups that use the reserve.

The images below outline some of the key facilities and materials proposed for the space including fitness equipment, multi-purpose half court, playground equipment (including swings, slides, accessible equipment, and nature play elements), shelters, paths and furniture.







The fitness hub is intended to create a focus for individual exercise, but may also be used by sporting clubs. (Image examples: Tumawul Park Fitness Hub, Sydney)



A multi-purpose half court and hit up wall will provide additional recreation and fitness activities as well as provide for older aged children.





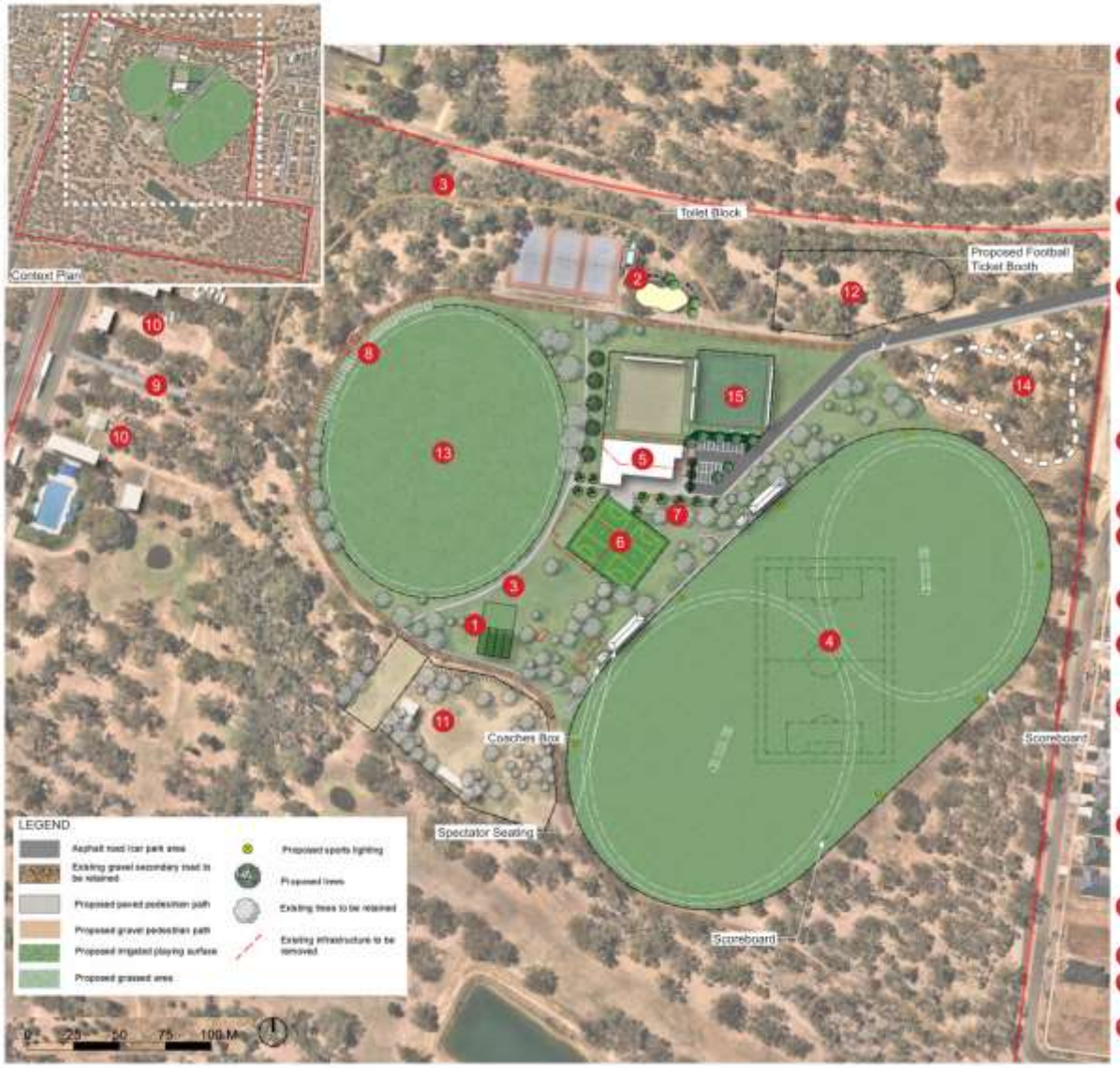

The playground will cater to the needs of all ages and abilities and provide a variety of play experiences through the provision of traditional play equipment as well as nature based play elements.





The recreation precinct is intended to be a combination of natural areas to compliment the surroundings as well as facilities that allow people to engage with this site (including paths, seats and shelter).

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Malone Park
Master Plan

1. Retain existing cricket nets and provide a safety net/fence barrier.
2. Construct a new recreation precinct including 'Township Standard' playground, fitness station, multi-purpose half court/hit up wall, shelter, picnic facilities and toilet block. The toilet block will service the play space, informal users and the adjacent tennis/netball courts.
3. Provide a network of pedestrian paths throughout the reserve to connect existing and proposed facilities as well as provide recreational opportunities and improved access.
4. Provide a multi-use irrigated sports field with the capacity for 2x Australian Football League ovals (e.g. a senior oval 165m x 135m and a junior oval 135m x 110m) with the flexibility to provide line marking for soccer as required. Scoreboards, coaches boxes and spectator seating to be provided at both ends of the field, as well as sports lighting around the perimeter to support training and multi-use of the space.
5. Construct a multi-use pavilion to service the needs of all the clubs using the reserve. Pavilion works to include upgraded asphalt carpark and pedestrian forecourt.
6. Provide 2x dedicated fenced netball courts.
7. Landscape the central area around the pavilion, forecourt and car park area to provide vehicle control and improve pedestrian amenity.
8. Better define / formalise car parking spaces around the main oval.
9. Downgrade existing road and provide vehicle exclusion infrastructure to prevent through traffic whilst retaining pedestrian and emergency vehicle access.
10. Modify the existing car park, pedestrian and vehicle access, and landscaping at the western entrance to the reserve to continue to support the use and access of Men's shed, pool, playground and wayside stop. Existing playground, toilet block and pool forecourt area to be retained.
11. Construct a sand profile dressage arena (ideally 20m x 60m, subject to detailed design and site constraints i.e. trees and topography). Existing access, stables and stalls to be retained and upgraded as required.
12. Create a dedicated fenced dog off-lead area with signage, dog waste bags and dog waste disposal bins.
13. Upgrade and refurbish existing main oval as required.
14. Potential area for future BMX track subject to detailed design and vegetation considerations.
15. Consider upgrading an existing bowling green to a synthetic surface with lighting subject to future demand assessment.

22

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

10. Implementation Plan

The tables below outline the high, medium and low priorities for implementation. The order of priorities considers logistical construction sequencing, community needs and the operational capacity of Council and key stakeholders to implement actions. Priorities are provided as a guide only and will be subject to Council's annual budget considerations, competing resource demands and the capacity to attract external funding which could promote or downgrade individual actions as opportunities arise. The plan provides a framework for staged implementation within an indicative ten-year timeframe.

Prior to implementation of several key items, a number of pre-planning activities need to occur as outlined below. These items should be actioned as soon as possible to support implementation of the Master Plan.

ID	Action Item	Indicative Cost
PRE - PLANNING PRIORITIES		
i	**Club Governance:** Council to facilitate stakeholders to establish a Sports Club Governance Model and Operational Plan for the proposed new pavilion.	No cost. Complete within existing Council operational resources.
ii	**Multi-use Pavilion:** Facilitate pavilion design and tender documentation in consultation with sporting clubs. (NB: I and ii to be undertaken concurrently).	$40,000 - $50,000
iii	**Trotting Track:** Prior to modification of the existing trotting track, the City of Greater Bendigo to investigate options for relocation of the Harness Club and the future long-term provision for public harness / trotting activities across the City.	$30,000 - $50,000
iv	**Multi-purpose sports ground:** Prior to the construction of the multi-purpose sports ground, undertake design and documentation as required to ensure the space maximises future use flexibility and incorporates appropriate support infrastructure (e.g. drainage, irrigation, sports lighting, coaches boxes, etc).	$50,000 - $60,000
v	**Power supply:** Investigate and upgrade power supply/capacity to reserve	$5,000 - $10,000

High Priorities
High priorities focus on amenity improvements to encourage broader community use and appeal of the reserve, including the proposed new recreation precinct and shared path network. Establishment of the multi-use sports grounds also aims to enhance the capacity of the reserve and address community demand for playing fields. High priorities should be considered for implementation within 1-3 years from adoption.

ID	Action Item	Indicative Cost
HIGH PRIORITY		
1	**Cricket:** Retain existing cricket nets and provide a safety net/fence barrier.	$1,000 - $2,000
2	**Recreation Precinct**: Construct a new recreation precinct including 'Township Standard' playground, fitness station, multi-purpose half court/hit up wall, shelter, picnic facilities and toilet block. The toilet block will service the play space, informal users and the adjacent tennis/netball courts.	$400,000 - $500,000
3	**Path Network:** Provide a network of pedestrian paths throughout the reserve to connect existing and proposed facilities as well as provide recreational opportunities and improved access.	$500,000 - $600,000
4	**Multi-use Sports Ground:** Provide a multi-use irrigated sports field with the capacity for 2x Australian Football League ovals (e.g. a senior oval 165m x 135m and a junior oval 135m x 110m) with the flexibility to provide line marking for soccer as required. Scoreboards, coaches boxes and spectator seating to be provided at both ends of the field, as well as sports lighting around the perimeter to support training and multi-use of the space.	$2M - $2.5M

Medium Priorities
Medium priorities focus on improving facilities to support sporting clubs and increasing participation opportunities, including dedicated netball courts, equestrian dressage arena and new shared-use community sport pavilion. Medium priorities should be considered for implementation within 4-6 years from adoption, however access to external funding may influence implementation timing.

ID	Action Item	Indicative Cost
MEDIUM PRIORITY		
5	**Multi-use Pavilion:** Construct a multi-use pavilion to service the needs of all the clubs using the reserve. Pavilion works to include upgraded asphalt carpark and pedestrian forecourt.	$4M - $4.5M
6	**Netball:** Provide 2x dedicated fenced netball courts. NB: Detailed designs to consider site conditions including topography and location of existing power infrastructure. Ensure adequate circulation space and spectator amenity in addition to player/official shelters, etc.	$200,000 - $250,000
7	**Landscaping:** Landscape the central area around the pavilion, forecourt and car park area to provide vehicle control and improve pedestrian amenity.	$25,000 - $50,000
8	**Car Parking:** Better define / formalise car parking spaces around the main oval.	$5,000 - $7,500
9	**Western Entrance Access:** Downgrade existing road and provide vehicle exclusion infrastructure to prevent through traffic whilst retaining pedestrian and emergency vehicle access.	$20,000 - $30,000
10	**Existing facilities:** Modify the existing car park, pedestrian and vehicle access, and landscaping at the western entrance to the reserve to continue to support the use and access of Men's shed, pool, playground and wayside stop. Existing playground, toilet block and pool forecourt area to be retained.	$50,000 - $75,000
11	**Equestrian Facilities:** Construct a sand profile dressage arena (ideally 20m x 60m, subject to detailed design and site constraints i.e. trees and topography). Existing access, stables and stalls to be retained and upgraded as required.	$80,000 - $100,000
12	**Dog Off-lead Area:** Create a dedicated fenced dog off-lead area with signage, dog waste bags and dog waste disposal bins.	$10,000 - $20,000

Low Priorities
Low priorities reflect longer-term aspirations, including potential conversion of an existing turf bowling green to synthetic, main oval resurfacing and development of a formal BMX track. Low priorities should be considered for implementation within 7-10 years from adoption.

ID	Action Item	Indicative Cost
LOW PRIORITY		
13	**Main Oval:** Upgrade and refurbish existing main oval as required.	$250,000 - $350,000
14	**BMX:** Potential area for future BMX track subject to detailed design and vegetation considerations.	$20,000 - $30,000
15	**Bowls:** Consider upgrading an existing bowling green to a synthetic surface with lighting subject to future demand assessment.	$150,000 - $180,000

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Appendix A: Community Consultation

Initial Stakeholder Consultation

The following table provides a summary of key findings, comments or suggestions from initial consultation with key stakeholders as part of the master plan project.

Group/ Club	Summary of comments, issues or suggestions	Implications for the Master Plan
CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO		
Staff Workshop & Interviews (19/8/20)	• Council took over Crown Land Committee of Management responsibilities approx. two years ago. • Main clubrooms need upgrading or replacing. Consider shared use, new community hub space. • Council is aware of increasing safety conflicts with the harness / trotting activity – i.e. horses, people, dogs etc. This will be exacerbated by increasing residential population adjacent to the reserve. • Junior football is restricted to one oval due to the poor condition of the 2nd oval inside trotting track. This is limiting participation. • The tennis/netball courts are not adequately serviced by amenities/club room. (NB: there are other tennis courts/club in Town). • There is increasing passive use of the reserve. • The Bowls Club has been growing participation and has a young member age profile. • There is limited provision for soccer west of Bendigo. • Review water and power supply security / capacity to service the reserve. • Improve way-finding, traffic management safety and functionality. City Planning: • Ultimate township population of around 8,000 people by approx. 2045. • Structure Plan outlines future open space acquisition for additional active recreation adjacent to proposed new primary school. • Future of the Golf Club is uncertain, sustainability is questionable. Future land use is uncertain. • Support walking and cycling connections. City Partnerships: • Support community hub facility models – not just catering for sport. • Potentially consolidate buildings within the reserve. • Low demand and high conflict with Trotting activity, consider possible relocation to Sebastian Reserve. • Men's Shed currently adjacent to the reserve, however would like additional space. Consider interface with the reserve. • Community Hall in Town will be retained for community use. City Engineering: • The reserve plays an important role in flood management, however the railway embankment helps limit impacts. • The current traffic/pedestrian bridge over Bullock Creek is to be retained, however could be downgraded as a thorough fare. Closure to through traffic could be considered. • Support improved shared path connections to/from the swimming pool and residential areas. Some planning has already been completed. • Any impact on significant trees will trigger off-set requirements. • The tennis/netball courts are within the flood zone, this will impact any new buildings / amenities if developed in this zone.	• Improve path safety, security, lighting, connections and opportunities for passive recreation. • Consider long-term options for soccer provision at the Reserve, or possibly at the future open space site adjacent to the Primary School. • Address asset renewal requirements. • Consider Flood Zone impacts on any proposed infrastructure. • Retain access to two ovals. Improve the condition of the 2nd oval. • Review the compatibility of uses across the site, consolidate shared use facilities - possible community hub - where appropriate. • Ensure allowance for appropriate service upgrades as required. • Low demand and high conflict with Trotting activity, consider possible relocation to Sebastian Reserve. • The traffic/pedestrian bridge over Bullock Creek is to be retained, however could be downgraded as a thorough fare. Closure to through traffic could be considered. • Improve way-finding, traffic management safety and functionality.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Group/ Club	Summary of comments, issues or suggestions	Implications for the Master Plan
SPORTS CLUBS / GROUPS		

Malone Park User Group (representative Jacquie, 19/8/20)	• The Malone Park User Group consists of representatives from the Marong Football and Netball Club, Marong Bowls Club, Marong Cricket Club, Marong Tennis Club, Marong Light Harness Club, and the Bendigo and District Family Equestrian Group.
	• The Group documented a submission to Council approximately 18months ago outlining key needs, issues and recommendations for improvement. These largely remain relevant and are therefore summarised below:
	• Redevelopment of clubhouse facilities to be inclusive of all groups within the park including:
	  • Disabled access and facilities (disabled access and toilets)
	  • Female Friendly sporting facilities (increased female change rooms)
	  • Facilities for sporting officials (changing facilities for umpires)
	• Installation of solar power across the facility to address power issues.
	• Development of a new football ground/cricket pitch.
	• Improved lighting of existing football ground/cricket pitch.
	• Installation of shelter for people watching netball.
	• Installation of nets on the northern end goals of the football ground.
	• Resurfacing the Trotting track over the next 12-14 months.
	• Development of an undercover Equestrian arena with sand base.
	• New Playground and exercise park facilities within the park.
	• Replace all fencing across the park.
	• Increased storage facilities for all users within the park to support universal use.
	• Sealing of roads and parking areas.
	• Consideration of new sporting facilities such as a soccer ground and/or basketball courts.
	• Introduction of an Energy Efficient environment across the park including a sustainable water management plan for sporting fields and greens.
	• New shade infrastructure over bowling greens.
	• Move the existing lighting within the bowls club to meet club requirements.
		• Consider options to address the recommended actions and improvement suggestions outlined in the User Group submission – as listed in the adjacent column.
		• NB: Options with and without the Trotting track may need to be considered.

Bowls Club	• Club has successfully increased participation in recent years, largely driven by a younger age profile – which reflects the character of the town. • Membership has increased from 45 to 77 members. The average age is approx. 40 years – considerably younger than most Bowls Clubs. • The club has members of all ages, including juniors and females. • The two greens are adequate for up to 100 members. • However, the pavilion is old and poor standard. It lacks adequate change rooms, disabled access and social facilities. • Green-side shade structures require upgrade and green lighting replaced with contemporary lighting. • The Bowls club is open to moving into a shared use facility, potentially managed under an overarching 'sports club' model.	• Consider options to consolidate sports club pavilion facilities into a consolidated new venue for all groups. • Retain existing bowls greens. • Upgrade support infrastructure as required, e.g. shade structures, outdoor social areas.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Group/ Club	Summary of comments, issues or suggestions	Implications for the Master Plan
Bendigo Family Equestrian Group	• Approx. 65-70 members. • Usual activities are dressage, show-jumping and trail riding. The former Cross-Country course in the reserve is not used. • The Club meets once per month for activities. • The Club has not hosted a major event (i.e. 100+ competitors) for several years due in part to the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure. • Priorities for the club include a new large sand-based dressage area (i.e. 3 x 60m dressage areas) and access to shed/kitchen/toilet facilities. • Retain existing holding yards and drop-off area. • Support increasing use of the reserve to help casual surveillance and security. • Reserve Governance (i.e. Council and Reserve Committee) works well, however the Equestrian Group is concerned about a lack of security of tenure over facilities.	• Explore options to establish a new secure dressage area/s. • Consider options for access to appropriate shedding, kitchen and toilet facilities. • Define horse trails within the reserve. • Remove former cross-country trail jumps and infrastructure. • Retain existing holding yards and drop-off area. • Improve fencing and security throughout the reserve.

Light Harness Trotting Club	• Trotting activities have occurred on site since 1978.
	• Total membership is around 15-20, however only 3-5 are active or regular users of the reserve.
	• Members pay an annual fee of approx. $50p.a. to the club.
	• Formal use of the track by the club is limited to a few hours on Thursday's in summer only.
	• Use may involve up to 5-18 horses.
	• Casual use may occur outside these times.
	• Suggest the track in-field is too hard (unsuitable) for sports oval, however it could be an off-leash dog area.
	• Suggested priorities:
	  • Ongoing track fencing replacement.
	  • New/replace existing shed/club facility.
	  • Better traffic management – close norther vehicle exit.
	  • Leave us alone.
		• Review the compatibility of uses across the site.
		• There is low demand and high conflicts associated with the trotting activity, consider possible relocation to Sebastian Reserve.
		• Consolidate shared use facilities - possible community hub - where appropriate.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

18. STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY

18.1. Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment

Author	Michael Terrett, Major Projects - Project Manager and Jessica Bridgfoot, Director Bendigo Art Gallery
Responsible Director	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present Council with, and seek endorsement of, the Business Case for the Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment (*Preferred Option*) noting that this project has previously been identified as a Tier 1 investment priority. This report also outlines the advocacy and investment strategy for the project and discusses the allocation of future Council funds to the project.

Summary

The Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment project is a Tier 1 investment priority for the City and with an estimated Project Budget of up to $28 million. This is required to deliver on the high-level project requirements and this budget will cover all construction costs, consultant fees, authority fees and contingencies for the duration of the project. The budget includes a provisional allocation of $3 million for design contingency and escalation costs.

Currently it is anticipated that investment will come via several sources as documented in the City's current *Investment Prospectus (Priority Projects for Government Investment)* and includes State and Federal government, the Bendigo Art Gallery, philanthropic sources and the City.

The City has already received $280,000 investment from the State Government's Enabling Tourism Fund to progress the Concept and Schematic Designs and to enable the Project to be in a position to potentially attract State Government and other Funds for redevelopment in FY 2022/23.

To progress the project to an investment-ready stage, a detailed Business Case was undertaken. This Business Case considered a range of redevelopment options against broad socioeconomic factors. The *Preferred Option* was modelled on an increase in visitation of 30% over a 20 year timeframe. This showed a Net Present Value of $3.02M and Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.13, meaning the project benefits outweigh its costs by a factor of 1.13.

The *Preferred Option* is also considered to provide $20M in direct local economic stimulus during construction, just under 100 full time jobs, and $41M in new regional income. Combined with the existing gallery operations, the net outcome is expected to deliver up to 95 fulltime equivalent jobs in the local economy and to generate upwards of $15M in regional income.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Recommendation

That Council:

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

Policy Context

Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

Goal 2: Wellbeing and Fairness – '2.3 Promote community connection' '2.4 Support participation and development for residents of all ages and abilities'

Goal 3: Strengthening the economy – '3.3 Ensure Greater Bendigo is a welcoming place for new businesses and industries and supports creativity and innovation and visitor attraction'

Goal 4: Presentation and Managing Growth – '4.4 Keep Greater Bendigo attractive with good quality public facilities and places'

Goal 6: Embracing our culture and Heritage – '6.3 Offer and support a diverse rance of events that attract and connect people' '6.5 Advance reconciliation'

Strategic Alignment & Reference

Council Policy Reference: Procurement Policy

Background Information

The Bendigo Art Gallery has a vision to be one of Australia's leading galleries, recognised for its work both domestically and internationally, and to continue to contribute to Greater Bendigo and the Victorian Community (creatively, culturally, socially, and economically).

Due to the physical constraints of the space in which it operates, the Gallery's redevelopment has been identified by the City of Greater Bendigo and the Bendigo Art Gallery Board as a priority Project to be delivered within the next four years.

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

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The goals of the Bendigo Art Gallery in the coming years include:

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

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

Report

The strategic need for this redevelopment project is underpinned by the need to secure the medium and long-term viability of the Bendigo Art Gallery, to enable it to grow with the City and to maintain its position as the leading Regional Art Gallery in Australia. In addition, this project will:

- Enhance Visitor Attraction, Engagement & Experience
- Improve financial sustainability
- Improve community engagement, enabled by an ability to expand the cultural collection
- Improve environmental outcomes

The redevelopment will also provide a much-needed boost to tourism and regional visitation with dedicated blockbuster exhibition space and improved access to the permanent collection; allowing the Gallery to cement its position as a regional destination. A diversified program offer will also allow the Gallery to tap into new markets and audiences to the benefit of the broader Bendigo region.

The proposed investment will make a major positive contribution and provide much needed support to the local and regional economy and recovery from the effects of COVID. The Gallery will be elevated to maximize its ability to enhance social capital, provide meaningful cultural engagement opportunities, and support the growth of creative and cultural industries in Greater Bendigo.

The Gallery redevelopment is also in alignment with both Victorian & Commonwealth policy contributions in addition to the City's Community Plan Goals outlined above.

<u>The Business Case</u>

To assess the redevelopment project in its inception phase, the City commissioned a Business Case which identifies the social, cultural, and economic benefits of the Bendigo Art Gallery Redevelopment Project. The Business Case has recently been endorsed by the Bendigo Art Gallery Board and now forms a key part of the project context and planning for the next stages of the projects lifecycle.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

The key audiences for the business case include the primary investors (The City of Greater Bendigo, the Bendigo Art Gallery Board plus Victorian State and Commonwealth funding agencies and investor Partners / Donors) along with broader stakeholders including the Traditional Owners and service delivery partners.

The Business Case is attached to this report as Attachment 1.

In summary, the Business Case is structured into five main sections, including:

1. **Introduction** outlines the context and the Gallery's vision and overriding principles
2. **Case for Change** identifies the overarching problems that investment at the Bendigo Art Gallery aims to address, the benefits anticipated from this investment, and the interventions that investment must incorporate
3. **Preferred Investment Description** which describes the final investment option that was endorsed for further development. Functional scope and plans, architectural drawings, and capital costs are also provided
4. **Investment performance** which outlines how the preferred investment option performs in comparison to the business as usual scenario from strategic, visitation, financial and socio-economic perspectives, and
5. **Implementation Plan** outlines key implementation milestones and timelines for delivery of the preferred investment option

For the Business Case, three redevelopment options were initially considered to cover a range of development scenarios of different scales. The options initially considered are summarised in Appendix 3 of the Business Case, and include: (not exhaustive):

- **Option 1**: *Modest Upgrade*: $15M indicative cost, 8 galleries, 8 galleries, 2,140m2, 950m2 blockbuster exhibition space, 600m2 Learning space, 160m2 retail space, outdoor terrace, improved DDA access, new lifts and a rooftop bar and restaurant.
- **Option 2**: *Moderate Upgrade*: $20M indicative cost, 8-9 galleries, 2,170m2, 1,510m2 blockbuster exhibition space, 600m2 Learning space, 160m2 retail space, outdoor terrace, improved DDA access, new lifts and a rooftop bar and restaurant.
- **Option 3**: *Integrated experience*: $25M indicative cost, 9-10 galleries, 2,900m2 – 3,365m2, up to 1,760m2 blockbuster exhibition space, 125m2-160m2 flexible space on first floor, 600m2 Learning space, 125m2 retail space, outdoor terrace, improved DDA access, new lifts and a rooftop bar and restaurant, New Dja Dja Warrung cultural object keeping place, learning landscape and ceremony place, Forecourt and Civic Square, new art storage, racking and first floor foyer space.

Each of the above Options was considered further for scope, cost and best value. Upon review, a modified Option was identified as the most viable – Option 4 (**The *Preferred Option***).

Note: Option 3 does present as the most integrated experience for the project, however due to subsequent cost modelling and review of the scope of works, this was considered as too expensive, hence a *the* ***Preferred Option*** was developed, which does retain the important gallery and cultural elements, as follows:

- New dedicated Dja Dja Wurrung cultural collection Place of Keeping.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- A dedicated and flexible first floor large sized blockbuster exhibition space.
- New learning centre with flexible learning spaces and a dedicated children's/families gallery.
- 6 - 7 gallery spaces for free and collection based exhibitions, which will expand the existing gallery footprint by between 700m2 – 800m2
- New retail space.
- A new forecourt / landscaping to View Street including public seating for informal gathering, events, and Dja Dja Wurrung cultural learning.
- A new or refurbished ground floor café opening onto the Rosalind Park, servicing both park and gallery users.
- New and or refurbished office, boardroom spaces and new front desk and cloaking facilities.
- New amenities including lifts and accessible bathroom facilities.
- The separation of unpaid exhibition spaces at ground floor from paid first floor exhibition spaces.
- New high efficiency, sustainable solution mechanical plant system to significantly reduce energy footprint and on-going running costs.

Further detailed review of the *Preferred Option* will be undertaken as the project moves through the detailed design phase. This will include further assessment of environmental performance and opportunities of the redevelopment and the building as a whole (to achieve as high level of environmental performance as practically possible given the redevelopment nature of the project), materials used including recycled and low carbon impact material opportunities, and addressing the issues associated with previous as needs-basis expansion works over time. Additionally, the detailed design phase will consider options to future proof the building such as design considerations for expanded event spaces, loading dock and back-of-house facilities, dining facilities and/or roof top spaces.

The *Preferred Option* was evaluated through the Business Case and included an investment performance evaluation over a 20 year period (as compared to continuing the Gallery in its current format), and also considered a range of investment appraisals such as enhanced visitor attraction and experiences, financial and environmental sustainability, community engagement and cultural connection, and assessments to Local, State and Federal government policy.

In terms of visitation numbers, the Business Case modelled an increase in visitation of 30% under the *Preferred Option* (increasing over current numbers by 60,000 people per annum), On a financial front, the Preferred Option was modelled (operating costs and revenue) over the 20 year timeframe and included 3 yearly blockbuster exhibition revenues in its assessment, and this showed a net improving financial (profit) position.

When considering a range of financial and socioeconomic factors – which provides a more holistic assessment of the project's performance – the redevelopment project exhibits a Net Present Value of $3.02M and Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.13. These results mean that the project benefits outweigh its costs by a factor of 1.13. Given the inherent social, community and

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

cultural focus of the project and the Gallery itself, this is considered a solid outcome for the project.

More broadly, the redevelopment project (as standalone), under the *Preferred Option*, is considered to provide $20M in direct local economic stimulus during construction, just under 100 fulltime jobs, and $41M in new regional income. Following redevelopment, the project is expected to provide $1 – 3M in direct economic stimulus, up to 30 ongoing jobs, and $2.5M in additional regional income. When coupled with the Gallery's existing operations, the net result is expected to be up 95 fulltime equivalent jobs in the local economy and up to $15M in regional income.

For further detailed information about the *Preferred Option* please refer to the attached Business Case.

Next Steps

Following consideration of this report by Council, the project will continue in the advocacy phase which will include the development of the Advocacy Plan, ongoing meetings with key stakeholders and Partners and community engagement, and also into concept and schematic design. The project team are also pursuing ways the project can be considered as a State significant project which would assist with planning and project timelines.

Consultation/Communication

The following provides an outline of the consultation and engagement processes going forward.

Communications Plan (operational, underway): This Plan articulates the key stakeholders, partners, project risks and mitigation measures, key messages, communication tools and milestones for the project. The key communication tools that will be utilised include (but not limited to) Frequently Asked Questions, Community bulletins, Media releases, Weekly e-newsletter update, Bendigo Art Gallery e-newsletter update, GB Magazine, Social media platforms, Project page on Gallery and City websites, Site signage, TV screens in City offices and libraries, Project Videos (eg. Construction progress)

Advocacy Plan: This will be prepared to provide a structured approach to advocacy to key stakeholders and potential project partners, to secure project support and funding.

The indicative communications timeline for the project at present (subject to consideration of this report by Council) commences in October 2022 (media releases, etc), into early 2022 (community information and feedback sessions to inform the design outcomes, etc), and further information as the project progresses. The intent is to engage widely with our community, Traditional Owners, key stakeholders and partners through the life cycle of this project. The ultimate success of the project will be determined by successful engagement, feedback and dialogue with our community and stakeholders.

Resource Implications

The project is currently being administered under a Project Governance Structure which includes a Project Control Group (PCG) with members including City officers, State Government, the Bendigo Art Gallery Board and Project Working Groups. The PCG meets on a regular basis and enables the project to proceed with appropriate governance and processes in place.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

It is currently anticipated that the lifecycle of the project will run through years 2021 to 2024 (subject to the confirmed timing of funding), on the assumption of a 14 to 16 month design period followed by a 16 to 18 month construction period, i.e. an overall design and construction program of between 30 to 36 months. Detailed cashflows for the project will be prepared as the project progresses and timelines become clearer with external investment. At this stage it is expected that the project will proceed (subject to approvals) over the following timelines:

Year	Project Stage
1 (2021/22)	Design
2 (2022/23)	Design + commence construction
3 (2023/24)	Construction completion

To date, the City has received a separate $280,000 from the Victorian Government's Enabling Tourism Fund to progress the Concept and Schematic Designs to enable the project to be investment-ready. The terms of this funding require a matched investment of $280,000, either from the City, an alternate investor, or through the successful outcome of another Victorian Government grant, the Fast Track fund. If the Fast Track application is unsuccessful, the City will cover the $280,000 matched funding. If it is successful, terms of the Fast Track funding stipulate the City must contribute at least $70,000. This funding allocation from the City, if required, can be considered as part of the total investment for the project by the City.

The overall cost expectation for the project, as per the City's current *Investment Prospectus (Priority Projects for Government Investment) is:*

Investment Source	Contribution	Comments
City of Greater Bendigo	$3 million*	**As per this report, total investment * Subject to securing external funding**
Bendigo Art Gallery Board	$2.5 million	Committed
Philanthropic	to $1.5 million	Opportunities / Partners identified
Government Funding (State and Federal)	to $21 million	Further advocacy to be undertaken
Total Investment	**$28 million**	**(including contingencies)**

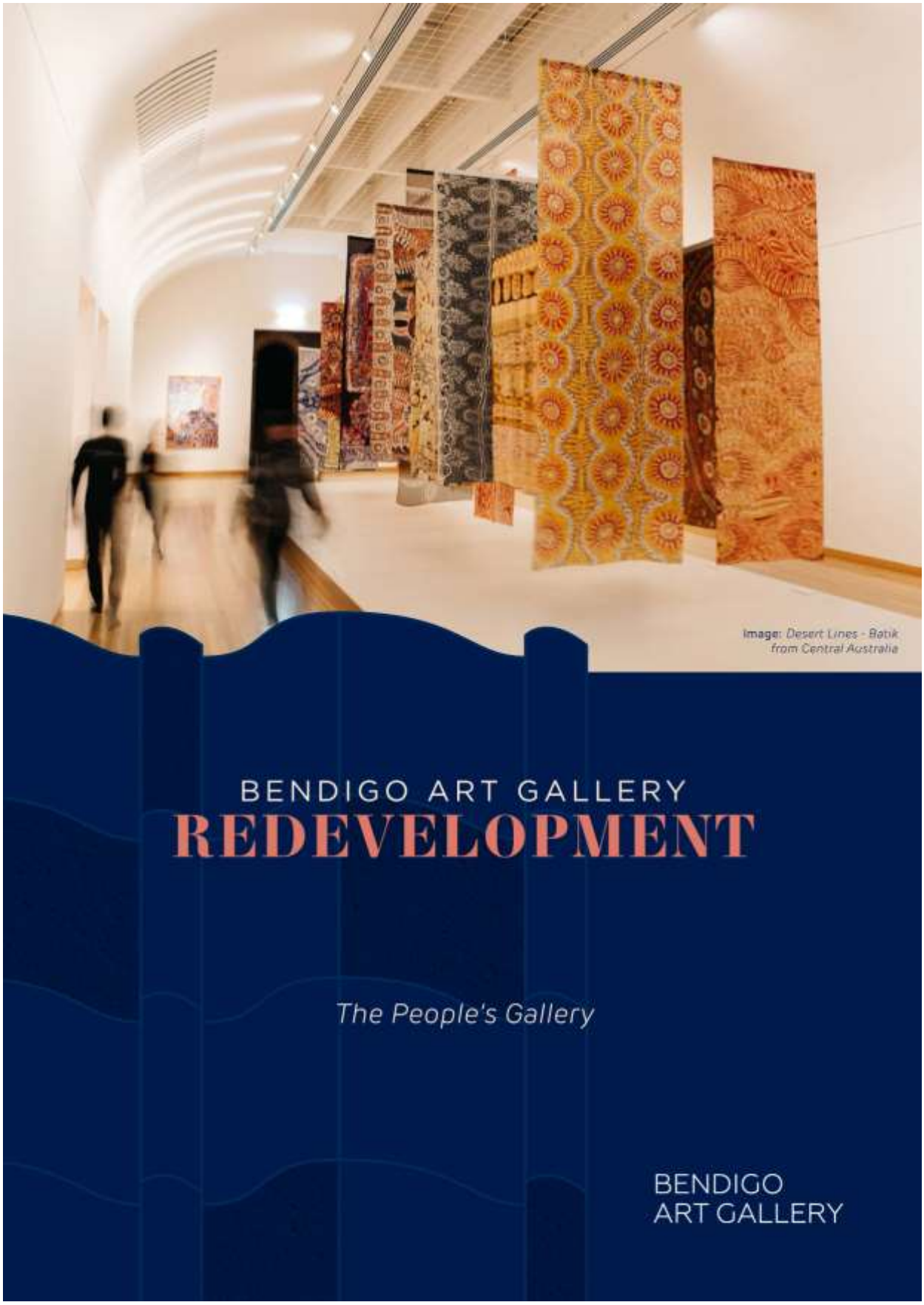
Note: progress beyond the current financial year (2021/22) would require securing external funds for the project and Council consideration of allocated funds via normal budget processes.

Attachments

1. Redevelopment Prospectus
2. Business Case Summary

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 1 - Redevelopment Prospectus



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Bendigo Art Gallery is poised for a revolutionary transformation that will set it on par with its national and international contempories, and also be a place for all people.

Leading art institutions around the world are renowned for offering dynamic, vibrant and engaging spaces that celebrate and accentuate their standing as critical creative, cultural and social touchstones.

The world-class building is designed to cement the Gallery's reputation as a place to be inspired, to learn, to connect to our history, to be challenged, and to drive continued economic success for Greater Bendigo and the state of Victoria.

The redevelopment will deliver a People's Gallery that empowers the community through Traditional Owner recognition, access, education and economic benefits.





Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

OUR VISION



Bendigo Art Gallery has a vision to be one of Australia's leading galleries, recognised nationally and internationally for its creative, cultural, social and economic success.

Culture and creativity have a significant role in enhancing the vibrancy and liveability of Greater Bendigo and the wider region. The Gallery is also a triumph for tourism, enhancing the accommodation, hospitality and retail sectors.

The Gallery's celebrated success has caused it to outgrow its current facilities. A redevelopment of the entire site will deliver a multi-storey building that will enhance its capacity for major exhibitions, visitor attraction, and provide indoor and outdoor community spaces for people to enjoy.







Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



Image: (Right) Desert Lines - Basik from Central Australia



The redevelopment will deliver:

1. **Enhanced gallery spaces**
   - Large, second level blockbuster exhibition space
   - Expanded access to free and collection-based exhibitions and displays
2. **Innovative learning centre**
   - Purpose-built learning centre and workshop space for students, families and community
   - Interactive children's gallery accessible seven days a week to community
3. **Traditional Owner recognition via placemaking landscaping and Place of Keeping for the Dja Dja Wurrung collection**
4. **World-class retail and hospitality offerings**
   - Redeveloped restaurant with a City of Gastronomy offering
   - Expanded commercial opportunities via an enhanced Gallery shop featuring local artisans and pop up blockbuster retail
5. **Accessible amenities and expanded public spaces**

The project will deliver fundamental change to the Gallery's entrance and interface with surrounding streets and parkland. It will also enhance the building's operational functionality and greatly improve its environmental sustainability.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

ECONOMIC IMPACT

A business case has been prepared to evaluate the strategic, financial, social and economic benefits of the redevelopment.

Strategic evaluation

The redevelopment will maximize investment in the regional community and generate job creation in the COVID-19 economic recovery phase. The project also strongly contributes to:

- Victorian Government Creative State, Education State and Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy objectives
- Australian Government regional, cultural and tourism development objectives
- City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan

Financial evaluation

The redevelopment project represents an investment of $25M in capital works and $3M in contingency.

- The project will not impact on the City of Greater Bendigo's operating budget for the Gallery. Annual revenue growth is forecast to match annual cost growth, largely attributable to 30% uplift in forecast visitation and ticketing income

Funding breakdown – total project cost, $28M

- Victorian/Australian Government – $18M - $21M (shared cost)
- Bendigo Art Gallery Board – $2.5M ✓
- City of Greater Bendigo – $3M
- Philanthropic – $1.5M



Economic impact analysis

The project will deliver:

- Approximately 100 full time equivalent jobs during the peak of construction
- Once operational, it will deliver up to 95 full time equivalent jobs in the local economy (predominately in accommodation and food services, retail and broader services industries)
- Generate upwards of $15M in spending in the local economy
- Lift local GRP by $7M each year

Social evaluation

For every dollar invested in the project, $1.13 of benefits would be generated as well as a multitude of social benefits.

The Australian Council of the Arts notes "experiencing arts and culture connects us with ideas, emotions and stories, and sparks pleasure, meaning, imagination and empathy. In doing so, it builds social cohesion."

This redevelopment will improve:

- First People's reconciliation and healing
- Civic pride
- Regional and rural access to culture and learning
- Community health and wellbeing
- Gallery staff satisfaction and retention
- Building efficiency and environmental sustainability

Sensitivity analysis

The business case is inherently conservative. For example, should visitation increase by 40% instead of 30%, then the project will deliver $15.53M in net benefits to the community over its life cycle. Therefore, for every dollar invested, $1.46 of benefits would be generated.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



ABOUT
BENDIGO ART GALLERY

Founded in 1887 on the motto 'Art for the People', audiences come from around the country to see the Gallery's innovative international exhibitions, public programs and events.

The Gallery has a significant historic collection of European and Australian Art from the 1850s to the present day, including paintings, sculptures and decorative arts. Over recent decades the Gallery has focused on building its contemporary collection of Australian and First Nations art and design, and has recently developed the largest global collection of contemporary Indigenous Australian fashion.

The Gallery has established relationships with leading global arts institutions, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; National Portrait Gallery, London; Fashion Institute of Design Merchandising, Los Angeles; and Design Museum, Helsinki.

Over the past 10 years the Gallery has averaged 150,000 visitors a year but this number has been in excess of 200,000 when major exhibitions have been staged.

BENDIGO
ART GALLERY

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Attachment 2 - Business Case Summary

SGS Economics & Planning

BENDIGO ART GALLERY REDEVELOPMENT - BUSINESS CASE (SUMMARY DOCUMENT)

FINAL REPORT
07 SEPT 2021

Prepared for
City of Greater Bendigo & Bendigo Art Gallery Board

Independent insight.

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Edition Office

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Offices in Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, and Sydney, on Ngunnawal, muwinina, Wurundjeri, and Gadigal Country

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Background

Bendigo Art Gallery was founded in 1887. In the late 1880s, distinguished Bendigo architect WC Vahland supervised the conversion of the former Bendigo Volunteer Rifle's orderly room in View Street into a home for the BAG's growing collection. The revamped BAG was opened in 1890 and occupied the building now called Bolton Court. The BAG space grew with the collection, spreading into the adjacent Drury Court in 1897 and then Abbott Court eight years later in 1905.

The BAG building remained largely unchanged until 1962, when a modern cream-brick entrance to View Street was added, which included new offices and three new galleries: the Scott and Sonnenberg Courts, and the BS Andrew Gallery.

A major redevelopment was undertaken in 2010 that culminated in the launch of a new contemporary wing of galleries providing an additional 600 sqm of gallery space in March 2014, bringing the BAG up to have 2,200 sqm of exhibition space. Funding for that redevelopment was provided by: The City of Greater Bendigo ($3.5M); the Victorian State Government ($3.5M) and Philanthropic Donations ($1.3M).

The Vision

> The Bendigo Art Gallery (BAG) has a vision to be one of Australia's leading galleries, recognised for its work both domestically and overseas and to continue to contribute to Greater Bendigo and the Victorian Community (creatively, culturally, socially, and economically).

As a result of its resounding historical success, the Gallery is facing challenges due to the physical constraints of the space in which it operates. The current facilities constrain:

- The exhibition and program offer, limiting the attraction, engagement and development of diverse audience groups at the Gallery
- Retail, hospitality and membership revenues, diminishing the Gallery's financial sustainability
- Efficient collection storage and access solutions, which compromise the community's future cultural engagement opportunities with the growing cultural collection.

> If better facilities are provided, the Gallery will be much better placed to attract, engage and develop a wide diversity of audiences. The Gallery will also become more financially sustainable and will improve community engagement opportunities with the expanding cultural collection.

The Gallery's development has been identified by the City of Greater Bendigo and the Bendigo Art Gallery Board as a priority within the next five years. This business case presents the case for investment in redeveloping the Bendigo Art Gallery so that it can sustainably deliver on its vision and generate social and economic benefits for the wider community.

The key audiences for this business case include the primary investors – the City of Greater Bendigo, the Bendigo Art Gallery Board plus Victorian State and Commonwealth funding agencies – along with broader stakeholders including the Traditional Owners, service delivery partners and the local community.

Guiding principles

The focus of the BAG team over the coming years (as outlined in its current Operational Strategic Plan) is to:

- Continue to build a vibrant contemporary arts hub that is recognised nationally and internationally for its innovative programming; that celebrates Art, creativity and

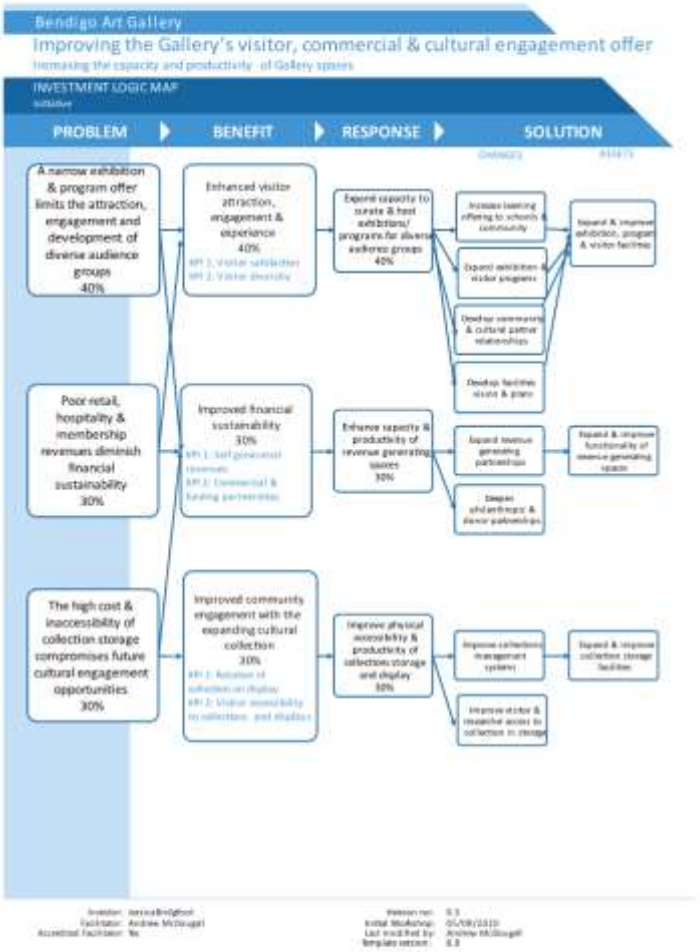
Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

culture and engages a diverse audience from the local and regional community and beyond

- Provide opportunities for families and people of all ages to connect, engage, explore and learn through the arts; support Indigenous recognition, self-determination and reconciliation, and provide opportunities for diverse communities to see and share their identity and stories
- Consolidate the BAG's position as an iconic contemporary arts destination and help drive cultural tourism and economic activity, and
- Build an innovative and sustainable organisation that is seen in the Arts Sector as being an employer of choice.

The Case for Change

The redevelopment of BAG seeks to address some overarching challenges at the gallery, which have inhibited the gallery's growth potential, visitation and offering. The below logic map outlines these problems and articulates the response and benefits which were further explored in the business case.



Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

In summary, the below expands on the key elements of the logic map:

- **A narrow exhibition & program offer limits the attraction, engagement, and development of diverse audience groups.** BAG's ability to leverage this success and achieve core aspects of its vision are impeded by a range of physical constraints within which it operates, reducing the capacity to lead with cutting edge content, broaden its demographic appeal, and to engage with a diverse audience from the local and regional community and beyond. This is reflected in BAG's attendance numbers over the past 5 years, which have remained relatively unchanged, with some fluctuations linked to large paid exhibitions (for example *Marylin Monroe* in 2015 – 16). Additionally, BAG already has inclusion goals in place with specific targets for greater participation of First Nations, culturally diverse artists and audiences and persons with a disability. Developed alongside Diversity Arts Australia, these measures, to be met by 2023 including an increase of 30 per cent in organisational partnerships with CALD, First Nations, Disability and LGBQTI groups, and a 10 per cent increase in youth and people at risk programs. A key barrier to BAG achieving these measures includes dedicated and fit for purpose spaces for education, community, and First Nations workshops.
- **Poor retail and hospitality revenues diminish financial sustainability .** BAG's ability to generate commercial revenue is severely compromised by a constrained retail and food and beverage offer, both of which are limited by the available space, and also the lack of a flexible auditorium and lecture space. When compared to the scale of BAG's large blockbuster exhibitions, the retail floorspace is small and unable to maximise sales in line with BAG's growing attendance. This is reflected in the net revenue of the retail shop in recent years not being commensurate with a total annual attendance. BAG's café seats around 70 guests across the internal space and mezzanine, and has access to an additional 100 guests in an adjoining outdoor area. For example, During the BAG's major exhibitions, the food and beverage spaces are generally over capacity. In 2015 – 16, the running capacity was 300 lunches per day over the 16-week duration of the major international exhibition, *Marylin Monroe*. Sales over the exhibition period generated over $700,000 for the tenant, despite being a relatively new tenancy.
- **The high cost and inaccessibility of collection storage compromises future cultural engagement opportunities.** A collecting institution since 1887, BAG has an extensive (and growing) collection, featuring 19th century European art and Australian art from the 1800's. BAG also holds a diverse and growing collection of contemporary Australian art. The collection is currently valued at just over $80 million. In the 2019 – 20, only 3.3 per cent of this permanent collection was on show to the public. With the proposed redevelopment the Gallery will achieve closer to 10% of its permanent collection on display – higher than the average art gallery or museum. Capacity constraints mean BAG can no longer accommodate large bequests or large individual works without utilising offsite storage. Additionally, BAG's ability to attract national and international travelling exhibitions will continue to be compromised given its poor infrastructure such as the height of BAG's ceilings, quarantine space, access doors, floor and wall strength already impact BAG's ability to successfully deliver certain exhibitions and meet their specific requirements for object display.

Investigating investment options

Three redevelopment options (Modest Upgrade, Moderate Upgrade and Integrated Experience) that responded to the Gallery's challenges were considered by project stakeholders, after concept descriptions, plans and costs were developed. The consideration of these options followed a structured approach, ensuring that the envisaged operational and socioeconomic benefits of redevelopment were appropriately weighed with delivery costs and risk considerations. The initial options are outlined below:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Option 1: Modest Upgrade: $15M indicative cost, 8 galleries, 8 galleries, 2,140m2, 950m2 blockbuster exhibition space, 600m2 Learning space, 160m2 retail space, outdoor terrace, improved DDA access, new lifts and a rooftop bar and restaurant.
- Option 2: Moderate Upgrade: $20M indicative cost, 8-9 galleries, 2,170m2, 1,510m2 blockbuster exhibition space, 600m2 Learning space, 160m2 retail space, outdoor terrace, improved DDA access, new lifts and a rooftop bar and restaurant.
- Option 3: Integrated experience: $25M indicative cost, 9-10 galleries, 2,900m2 – 3,365m2, up to 1,760m2 blockbuster exhibition space, 125m2-160m2 flexible space on first floor, 600m2 Learning space, 125m2 retail space, outdoor terrace, improved DDA access, new lifts and a rooftop bar and restaurant, New Dja Dja Warrung cultural object keeping place, learning landscape and ceremony place, Forecourt and Civic Square, new art storage, racking and first floor foyer space.

The **Preferred Option** that emerged from this process was then further developed and is described and evaluated in detail in this business case. The Preferred Option sits between the Moderate and Integrated Options that were initially investigated and was considered to provide the best value for the City, Community and Region whilst retaining cultural and user experience aspects.

The Preferred Option: Investment scope, floor area & costs

Functional scope summary

The proposed investment is framed around the incorporation of a new central foyer space which aligns BAG with the public realm facilities as equivalent benchmark galleries. This new central foyer space provides a fully accessible entrance to both View Street and Rosalind Park, and functions as an internal street, directly connecting the BAG to the broader arts, sports, and educational precincts.

In addition to this transformational entrance and foyer space, the Preferred Option investment includes:

- 6 - 7 galleries, with a total flexible gallery area which expands the existing gallery footprint by 700m^2 (minimum) for collection exhibitions.
- A dedicated and flexible first floor 1,200m^2 (minimum)blockbuster exhibition space. This area is included in the total gallery area noted above and enables separation of unpaid exhibition spaces at ground floor from paid first floor exhibition spaces.
- New learning centre and multi-purpose space with after-hours access.
- New retail space dedicated to permanent retail plus new flexible first floor space for small exhibition or pop up blockbuster retail and ticketing.
- A new place-making grand facade.
- A ground floor café opening onto the Rosalind Park, servicing both park and gallery users.
- New front desk and cloaking facilities; dedicated registration space; accessible bathroom facilities.
- New first floor BOH space to provide infrastructure and service space for bump in/bump out of blockbuster exhibition.
- Split vertical transportation and more efficient services provision to significantly reduce energy footprint and on-going running costs.
- Refurbishment of existing buildings to generate major environmental efficiencies including new renewable energy efficient plant.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Capital cost summary

Construction costs have a budget envelope of $25 million, comprising:

- $20 million for construction, and
- $5 million for design fees and external works.

This budget envelope does not include $3 million for design contingency and anticipated escalation costs not intended to be spent on the project unless absolutely required.

The financial, socioeconomic and regional economic impact modelling assumes a capital cost of $25 million.

Preferred Option Investment performance

The performance of the proposed investment has been evaluated over a 20 year period in comparison the base case of continuing BAG operations without investment.

The investment performance considers strategic, financial and socioeconomic perspectives, with each perspective reported sequentially in the following subsections.

Strategic appraisal

From a strategic perspective, the proposed redevelopment delivers the envisaged benefits from investment, as well as broader policy objectives of Council, State and Commonwealth Government.

TABLE 1 INVESTMENT CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC & POLICY OBJECTIVES

Envisaged benefits	Investment contribution
Enhanced visitor attraction, engagement & experience	The proposed investment will enable BAG to advance confidently with cutting edge content and programs which broaden its demographic appeal and underwrite its reputation as a premier regional destination. This investment will have an unprecedented impact on BAG's capacity for deeper engagement with the local community and beyond. The proposed investment achieves this with a civic approach, substantial new exhibition space and strategic improvements throughout the Gallery which transform permeability. Digital integration will allow BAG to future proof its offer further. Additionally, and the Gallery will be able to run the adjunct public and education programs essential for enhancing engagement.
Improved financial and environmental sustainability	The proposed investment will improve financial sustainability on multiple fronts, i.e. by increasing ticket sales, shop sales, and food & beverage rents. The destination effect of the redeveloped building, combined with the additional gallery & program floorspace, the new rooftop restaurant, and reconfigured retail and café spaces will drive this improved financial performance. Improved commercial sponsorships, and community & philanthropic donations are also upside financial benefits. BAG will also see new environmental efficiencies with a new high efficiency, sustainable solution mechanical plant system to significantly reduce energy and on-going running costs (per square metre of floorspace). It is worth noting BAG is currently the second highest consumer of energy of any Council building, second only to Bendigo's Aquatic Centre.
Improved community engagement with the expanding cultural collection	The proposed investment will provide a far greater diversity in programming spaces for BAG, opening up unprecedented opportunities for community engagement with the expanding cultural collection. This will be in the form of superior display options, and the removal of disruption from the bump-in and bump-out of exhibitions; enabling a step change continuity of access and service throughout the year.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

	BAG will also now have the space and flexibility to expand its collection with additional back of house storage and facilities; enabling the safe storage and preserving the integrity of the collection for decades to come. A dedicated Dja Dja Wurrung cultural objects keeping place, learning landscape and ceremony place will help BAG achieve aspirations for deep and ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners culture in Bendigo.
Broader policy objectives	
City of Greater Bendigo policy contributions	The proposed investment will make a major contribution towards achieving CoGB's vision to be a diverse community. BAG will be elevated to maximise its ability to enhance social capital, provide meaningful cultural engagement opportunities, and support the growth of creative and cultural industries in Greater Bendigo. The delivery of the proposed investment will provide a much needed boost to tourism with dedicated blockbuster exhibition space and improved access to the permanent collection; allowing BAG to cement its position as a regional destination. A diversified program offer will allow BAG to tap into new markets and audiences to the benefit of the broader Bendigo region.
Victorian Government policy contributions	The proposed investment will allow Bendigo to complement and support key city shaping investments such as the $90 million GovHub. The proposed investment aligns with key State Government policies such as: • *Creative State* which highlights the importance of the creative industries for job creation and industry innovation. • *Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy* which acknowledges the role of cultural activities in positioning Victoria as a preferred destination for international visitors; and the role activated cultural precincts play in visitor attraction. The introduction of new education space as part of the preferred option will contribute to outcomes sought for students in *Education State*. Education State makes a commitment to helping students achieve excellence in reading, maths, science, critical and creative thinking, and the arts. The proposed investment will also meet State Policy objectives for creative spaces and precincts[1]. Creative precincts are understood to be one of Victoria's competitive strengths that bring together a critical mass of creative and cultural activity to generate significant benefits for cities and regions. Furthermore, creative precincts are well recognised for "enlivening the community, allowing new ideas, collaborations and opportunities to flourish, attracting visitation and simulating commercial and communal activities".
Commonwealth Government policy contributions	The proposed investment provides the enabling infrastructure required to deliver a significant enhancement to amenity in Bendigo in line with key recommendations made to Commonwealth Government in recent years. This investment aligns with a growing recognition of the role of social infrastructure to grow social and community capital and to support regional development. Furthermore, this is an investment that will not only grow a stronger regional community but elevate BAG as a globally competitive cultural destination. This is well aligned with the Commonwealth's national approach to tourism recovery and will fortify Bendigo and Victoria's tourism offer by attracting important domestic tourism in the short to medium term.

Source: SGS Economics & Planning

[1] For Further information see DJPR, Creative Spaces and Precincts. Available online: https://engage.vic.gov.au/creative-strategy/creative-spaces-and-precincts

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Visitation forecasts

The proposed investment will enable BAG to advance confidently with cutting edge content and a diverse program which broadens its demographic appeal and underwrites its reputation as a premier regional gallery. This investment will have an unprecedented impact on BAG's capacity for deeper engagement with the local and regional community and beyond.

Key strategic interventions and improvements throughout the gallery will significantly enhance BAG's brand and reputational pull. The interface with the street will be improved with a civic gesture that introduces a grand double height covered arrival atrium opening into a new, flat, and fully accessible public square to Bendigo's View Street. For the first time in its long history, BAG will be able to present itself to the street and take up its rightful position as a key anchor institution.

A superior ease of connection will be provided at entry and the gallery's interface with the surrounding streets and parks will also be improved. Such improvements will make a substantial contribution to the vitality and functionality of Bendigo's surrounding cultural precinct. This includes positive flow on effects for the surrounding businesses.

The dedicated public area (for events and markets) and public seating at the entry will also build social capital for Bendigo. The new public space will also provide an opportunity for a major First Nations commissioned public work. This could form part of the Dja Dja Wurrung learning, yarning and ceremony spaces and closely with achieving BAG's inclusion goals and targets. For example, to increase organisational partnerships with CALD and First Nations by 30 per cent.

The proposed investment will offer transformational permeability and navigability throughout the gallery. At the heart of this improvement is an internal street to introduce new ways of moving through the gallery. BAG will be equipped to better meet the access requirements of its guests, ensuring the space is welcoming and inclusive to all.

The civic approach of the redevelopment will flow through to the rear of the gallery, culminating in a new Rosalind Park outdoor terrace and kiosk/café. This public interface between the gallery terrace, park and surrounding environment will also provide another entrance and interaction point for the community.

Another noteworthy contribution to visitor engagement and experience will be the introduction of a much-needed separation between the unpaid exhibition spaces at ground floor from paid first floor exhibition space. A convenient pop-up blockbuster ticketing space will also be added to the first floor. The separation of the two offers will provide improved operational efficiency for BAG and its staff.

New exhibition space and infrastructure will allow for the level of digital integration required for BAG to future proof its offer and deliver immersive contemporary experiences to audiences. This will have important repercussions for reaching younger audiences and families. Furthermore, with the introduction of new learning and auditorium space (with after-hours access), BAG will finally be able to run the adjunct programs essential to the enhancement of interaction and participation. This is particularly crucial when it comes to expanding BAG's fast growing education offer.

In summary, BAG will be equipped to meet the needs of its key stakeholder groups, the broader community and beyond well into the future. Collectively, these improvements will allow BAG to meet the standards set by international cultural institutions and progress from an exemplar regional gallery to a leading national institution.

An underlying performance driver is the visitation levels that will be achieved through the Gallery's redevelopment. This business case assumes that after redevelopment:

- Annual visitation to the Gallery will increase by approximately 30% (a conservative estimate) with the fluctuating pattern of visitation, peaking every three years with the hosting of blockbuster exhibitions, continuing.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- The composition of visitation remains steady in terms of the split between paid (44%) versus unpaid visitors (56%), and between local (15%) versus inter-regional, interstate & international visitors (85%).

In short visitation is expected to increase by approximately 60,000 per annum following the reopening of the redeveloped Gallery, up from its historic average of between 150,000 to 200,000 visitors per annum.

Financial appraisal

The financial appraisal has assessed how the operating costs and revenues trend after redevelopment.

The financial appraisal assesses how the project performs from the BAG's financial perspective; contrasting financial costs and revenues out to 2040.

The financial appraisal covers the following items:

- **Capital costs** – The costs of delivering the capital works described in Section 3.
- **Operating costs** – Annual operating costs incurred at the BAG.
- **Operating revenues** – Annual operating revenues generated by the BAG.

When compared to BAG base case operations, the redeveloped BAG:

- Annual revenue is forecast to increase by between $150,000 and $1,100,000 post construction, with the large increases during the blockbuster exhibitions every 3 years. (Note - during periods when blockbuster exhibitions are more frequent higher revenue increases can, and are expected to be achieved).
- Annual expenditure is anticipated to increase by between $20,000 and $400,000 following a similar trajectory as revenues.

This collective change generates an annual net financial saving of between $30,000 and $900,000 per year. Reduced operating losses are projected to result in a net financial saving of $5.1 million over the 20 year evaluation period.

Discounted cashflow results

The discounted cashflow analysis overlays the redevelopment's capital costs with the Gallery's forecast incremental operating costs and revenues, before converting forecast future values to present day values.

The discounted cashflow analysis of the proposed redevelopment was undertaken and, as anticipated for a community focussed facility, it reports a Net Present Value of negative $18.96 million. This is not unexpected and forms only part of the overall cost benefit assessment for a project of this type and offering. This is explained further below when socioeconomic factors are also considered.

Socioeconomic appraisal

The socioeconomic appraisal (holistic cost benefit analysis) adds social and economic benefits into the financial appraisal, including tourism yields and the value derived by community users and non-users of the redeveloped Gallery.

The socioeconomic appraisal adds the following incremental socioeconomic (non-financial) benefits onto the incremental financial appraisal results generated in Section 4.3

as they service increased tourist visitor spending stemming from the BAG's enhanced tourism appeal.

- **Visitor benefits** – The direct benefits enjoyed by regional visitors to the BAG that are not captured in entry fees. That is, the value that visitors gain from the experience of attending non-paid exhibitions, programs and events.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- **Non-visitor benefits** – The benefits enjoyed by regional community members, who do not visit the BAG, reflecting the value they place on both their option to visit in future and the improved cultural opportunities availed to other community members.

A range of other socioeconomic benefits will also be generated, including:

- The indirect benefits that local visitors enjoy such as improved cultural appreciation, greater feelings of belonging, heightened social cohesion, and improved wellbeing
- First Nations cultural preservation and development, and reconciliation opportunities
- Regional artist 'content' and 'business' development opportunities
- Public space activation in and around the BAG's environs,
- Opportunities to generate hands on participation in arts and cultural activities which hold tangible and proven benefits for mental health and wellbeing, and
- BAG staff satisfaction and engagement.

These additional socioeconomic benefits have not been included in the quantitative analysis given the inherent difficulties in quantifying them or their partial inclusion in the quantification methods utilised.

The socioeconomic appraisal of the proposed redevelopment is summarised below. It reports a Net Present Value of positive $3.02 million and a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.13. This means that the project's benefits outweigh it costs by a factor of 1.13 when broader economic and social benefits are incorporated into the analysis. For a facility of this nature, this is considered a solid outcome.

TABLE 2 BAG REDEVELOPMENT – SOCIOECONOMIC COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS RESULTS

	Present value ($m)
Capital costs	**24.05**
Financial operating savings	5.1
Tourism yields	19.96
Use benefits	0.67
Non-use benefits	1.34
Total benefits	**27.06**
Net Present Value (NPV)	**3.02**
Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	**1.13**

Note: a nominal discount rate of 5% has been used to convert the 20 year cashflows to present day values.
Source: SGS Economics & Planning

Income, value added and job generation (Regional Economic Impact)

The regional economic impact statement for the redevelopment estimates how the project's implementation lifts economic impact levels in the Bendigo region, i.e. over the course of its redevelopment and ongoing operations.

The regional economic impact statement identifies how the project directly stimulates or 'shocks' the regional economy through incremental:

- Capital expenditures (in the construction industry)
- BAG operating expenditures (in the arts & culture industry), and
- Offsite regional tourism expenditures stemming from BAG visitation (spread across retail, accommodation & food services & other industries).

It then estimates how this direct 'shock' generates indirect impacts through the multiple rounds of buyer/ supplier transactions that are subsequently triggered. These transactions include both:

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Production-induced transactions with suppliers in the BAG's supply chain, plus
- Consumption induced transactions made by employees in the BAG's supply chain.

The estimation of how these indirect impacts accumulate has been informed by SGS's inhouse economic (input output) modelling capabilities, with the outputs being specified in terms of regional value added[2] and regional employment.

The various economic impacts are presented below.

Construction economic impacts

TABLE 3 BAG REDEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION ECONOMIC IMPACT

Year	1	2	3	4	5	10	20
Direct regional stimulus ($m)	5.0	20.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total regional income ($m)	10.3	41.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total regional value added ($m)	3.5	14.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total regional jobs (FTE)	24.6	98.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: SGS Economics & Planning

Operating economic impacts

TABLE 4 BAG REDEVELOPMENT, OPERATING EXPENDITURE IMPACT

Year	1	2	3[3]	4	5	10	20
Direct regional stimulus ($m)	n/a	n/a	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3
Total regional income ($m)	n/a	n/a	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5
Total regional value added ($m)	n/a	n/a	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
Total regional jobs (FTE)	n/a	n/a	0.0	2.6	2.6	4.1	3.3

Source: SGS Economics & Planning

Tourism economic impacts

TABLE 5 BAG REDEVELOPMENT, TOURISM EXPENDITURE IMPACT

Year	1	2	3	4	5	10	20
Direct regional stimulus ($m)	n/a	n/a	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.5	2.5
Total regional income ($m)	n/a	n/a	1.4	1.2	2.0	2.4	4.6
Total regional value added ($m)	n/a	n/a	0.6	0.6	0.9	1.0	2.1
Total regional jobs (FTE)	n/a	n/a	7.0	6.3	10.2	15.0	23.9

Source: SGS Economics & Planning

Considering the factors above, if the proposed redevelopment goes ahead, it will generate income, value added and jobs in the local economy. These variables are summarised below.

[2] Regional value added is the value of goods and services produced by the region's industries, after deducting the cost of goods and services used in the process of production. Regional value added also broadly equates with the value of industry profits and wages paid in a region.
[3] While the museum is operational in the third year, project case operating costs actually fall below those of the base case.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

TABLE 6 BAG REDEVELOPMENT ECONOMIC IMPACT (PREFERRED OPTION)

Year	1	2	3	4	5	10	20
Direct regional stimulus ($m)	5.0	20.0	0.8	0.9	1.3	1.9	2.8
Total regional income ($m)	10.3	41.0	1.4	1.6	2.4	3.0	5.1
Total regional value added ($m)	3.5	14.0	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.2	2.2
Total regional jobs (FTE)	24.6	98.4	7.0	8.9	12.8	19.1	27.2

Source: SGS Economics & Planning
Note: Regional value added equates with local business profits and wages paid on Regional income.

Essentially the results show that:

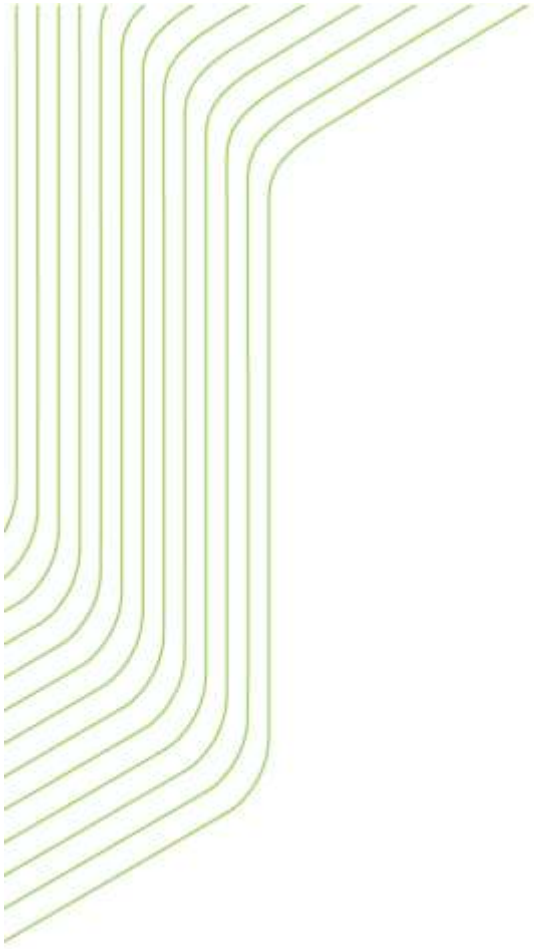
- During the peak of construction in Year 2, $20 million in direct stimulus is introduced to the local economy. This ultimately leads to just under 100 full time equivalent jobs being created in Bendigo, with $41 million in regional income and $14 million in local value added being generated in the process.
- After redevelopment, about $1 to $3 million in direct stimulus is introduced to the local economy each year. This ultimately leads to about 10 to 30 full time equivalent jobs being supported in Bendigo on an ongoing basis, with $2.5 million in regional income and $1 million in local value added being generated each year on average.

The above results, when combined with the Gallery's existing economic impacts, support approximately 80-95 full time equivalent jobs in the local economy on an ongoing basis, generating upwards of $15 million in regional income from which more than $7 million in local value added is derived each year.

Sensitivity analysis

All of the above results invoke a range of assumptions. Throughout the business case, the analysis has been inherently conservative. There is plenty of upside in the project's potential performance. For example, if visitation lifts by 40% rather than 30% as currently assumed, then the project will deliver $15.53 million in net benefits to the community over its lifecycle, generating a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.46.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021



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Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

18.2. Bendigo Airport Lease of Lot L3

Author	Vicki Bayliss, Bendigo Airport Manager
Responsible Director	Steve Hamilton, Director Strategy and Growth

Purpose

Council officers are seeking approval to commence the procedures for the proposed grant of a lease of Lot L3, of Lot 3 on Plan PS 422204F, being land at Bendigo Airport (premises) to Darren and Kristy Milgate (lease proposal).

Summary

Darren and Kristy Milgate are current tenants who would like to take out another lease on Lot L3 at the Bendigo Airport. They would like a lease term of ten (10) years with three (3) 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 $1,705.00 per annum, plus GST.

Recommendation

That Council:

1.
    a. Resolves that the procedure 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 L3 at the Bendigo Airport situated on 35 Victa Road, East Bendigo, (Land) for the purposes of an airport hangar (Lease Proposal);
    b. Directs that the public notice calling for submissions on the Lease Proposal be given in the Bendigo Advertiser;
    c. Authorises the Manager Economic Development to undertake the steps to give effect to item b);
    d. Directs that any submissions received will be considered by the Council at a future 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 if they make this request.

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 - https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/About/Document-Library/bendigo-airport-strategic-plan
Strategic Direction 2: Effectively Manage and Maintain Bendigo Airport Assets
Council Policy Reference (include weblink as applicable):

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Background Information

Darren and Kristy Milgate are current tenants at the Bendigo Airport and are looking for a long-term lease to construct another hangar on.

Four new long-term leases were advertised in 2021 for leases at the Bendigo Airport. These leases are now executed or 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 three (3) 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.

Darren and Kristy Milgate are seeking another lease on a part of the Land at the airport which is known as Lot L3 at the airport. Lot L3 is approximately 216 square metres and based on the current market rental will be leased for $1,705.00 per annum plus GST.

Darren and Kristy Milgate propose to use the Premises for the purposes of an airport hangar over a lease term of ten (10) years with three (3) 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 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 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 Economic Development Unit operational budget. There will not be an increase in ongoing maintenance or operational expenses as a result of this lease.

If Darren and Kristy Milgate's lease is approved an additional $1,705.00 per annum, plus GST revenue will be made.

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

Attachments

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

19. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

20. EMBRACING OUR CULTURE AND HERITAGE

20.1. Bendigo Historical Society Relocation

Author	Deb Simpson, Coordinator Strong Communities
Responsible Director	Vicky Mason, Director Health and Wellbeing

Purpose

To outline the challenges and risks associated with Bendigo Historical Society's (BHS) operations centre and collection repository remaining at the Bendigo Regional Archive Centre (BRAC).

To seek Council approval of a proposed BHS relocation support package.

Summary

BHS requires both an operations centre and a collection repository to be able to function effectively. These are currently located at BRAC. BHS's ideal is to also have a 'shop front' and community museum space however this is a lesser priority. BHS was occupying Bendigo TAFE's Specimen Cottage as its shop front until July 2020, when it was required to vacate due to the site forming part of the Bendigo Law Courts Redevelopment project scope.

BHS's collection includes items that are paper-based (e.g. documents) and non paper-based (e.g. clothing, framed pictures). The volume of BHS's collection now far exceeds BRAC's capacity.

Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) has identified a range of risks relating to BHS's ongoing use of BRAC and also made a series of recommendations. PROV has advised that failure to implement its recommendations will result in health and safety risks and also place at risk BRAC's accreditation as a Class A Place of Deposit (POD) for the storage of public records.

The City of Greater Bendigo (City) has been consulting with BHS about potential alternative accommodation options since mid-2020. Detailed analysis of five options has been undertaken. The City's recommended option is Option 1: Relocate BHS's operations centre and collection repository to Bendigo TAFE's Building A North under a long-term lease arrangement. (The proposed lease terms are Commercial in Confidence and were detailed in the 11 October 2021 Councillor briefing). Under this option, BHS would no longer require access to BRAC.

BHS has conditionally agreed to Option 1 subject to Council approving the proposed relocation support package and there being nothing untoward in Bendigo TAFE's lease. The proposed relocation support package includes assistance with:

- Lease fees;
- Relocation costs;
- Building fit out;
- Development of a strategic plan in 2022;

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Assessment of floor loading capacity;
- Investigation of rising damp causes;
- Development of existing floor plan design and elevations to support future floor plan design and building fit out requirements; and
- Project / logistics management, including technology transition advice.

The proposed relocation support package would require an unbudgeted 2021-22 allocation of approximately $65,450, inclusive of one-off relocation and building fit out costs. This figure does not reflect City staff time that would be entailed in project / logistics management.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the proposed Bendigo Historical Society (BHS) relocation support package, conditional upon:

a. BHS being the party that enters into the lease with Bendigo TAFE; and
b. BHS committing to developing a strategic plan in 2022 and to the plan's subsequent implementation.

Policy Context

- Public Records Act 1973

Primary Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 6 Embracing our culture and heritage

Secondary Community Plan Reference(s):

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 1 Lead and govern for all

Background Information

BHS was first formed in 1938 and became incorporated in 1990. BHS seeks to *'encourage and facilitate the study of the history of Bendigo and district. BHS shall acquire, research, preserve, conserve, interpret and exhibit material which illustrates this history.'*

Specimen Cottage

Specimen Cottage is situated within Bendigo TAFE's Central Business District (CBD) campus. It was used as BHS's shop front' between July 2013 and July 2020.

BRAC

BRAC is an accredited Class A POD under the Public Records Act 1973. To attain and maintain this accreditation, the facility must comply with strict storage standards.

Report

In 2011 the City and BHS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) providing BHS with access to a BRAC repository area (for the storage of paper-based collection items only) and a BRAC work room. This MOU does not require BHS to pay any BRAC hire fees or contribute to BRAC's operating costs. The pre-cursor to this MOU was a

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

2009 MOU between the City, Bendigo Senior Secondary College and BHS which reflects that BHS was required to relocate to enable Ulumbarra Theatre's development.

Since 2011 four shipping containers have also been installed at the BRAC site to assist with the storage of BHS's non paper-based collection items and the sheer volume of BHS's collection. It is anticipated 18 months to 2 years of concerted sorting effort would be required to progressively decant and remove the shipping containers.

BHS has outlined its accommodation needs as being a space or spaces that could support:

- Storage of its voluminous collection (paper and non paper-based items);
- Workspaces for collection management and documentation;
- A shop front;
- A public research space; and
- A community museum.

A Project Control Group (PCG) identified that responding to BHS's accommodation needs would likely entail:

- A sizeable space or spaces;
- Some initial fit-out costs;
- Significant rent and operational cost increases; and
- Removalist fees.

BHS considers Bendigo TAFE's Building A North can support all of its accommodation needs with the exception of a shop front and community museum.

Priority/Importance:

In November 2020 PROV advised the City that BHS's ongoing use of BRAC was placing BRAC's Class A POD accreditation at risk.

Options/Alternatives:

The four other potential accommodation options the City has undertaken detailed analysis of are:

- Option 2: Relocate BHS's operations centre and collection repository to Bendigo TAFE's Building A South under a long-term lease arrangement. Under this option, BHS would no longer require access to BRAC.
- Option 3: Purchase and install four additional non-refrigerated shipping containers (fitted with reverse city air conditioning) at the BRAC site to accommodate more of BHS's collection. This option would not be appropriate for the long-term storage of BHS's collection as temperature and humidity cannot be guaranteed, however it would offer the same conditions as the four other shipping containers BHS is already using at the BRAC site. Under this option, BHS would still require access to BRAC's work room as its operations centre.
- Option 4: Contract Grace Information Management (GIM) to relocate and store BHS's non-paper based collection only at GIM's Eaglehawk-based building. Under this option, BHS would still require access to BRAC's work room as its operations centre.

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

- Option 5: Contract GIM to relocate and store all BHS's collection at GIM's Eaglehawk-based building. Under this option, BHS would still require access to BRAC's work room as its operations centre.

The other options initially identified but then excluded from detailed analysis due to being incompatible with BHS's accommodation needs were:

- The Mews (former Maternal and Child Health Centre): 1 Sidney Myer Place, Bendigo;
- Bendigo Heritage Attractions: various localities;
- The BeeHive (Bendigo Mining Exchange): 18 – 26 Pall Mall, Bendigo; and
- Office space / house: 18 Forest Street, Bendigo.

Timelines:

PROV initially indicated it would withdraw BRAC's Class A POD accreditation if the risks it had identified were not remediated prior to October 2021. PROV is now offering some timeline flexibility provided the City can demonstrate it is continuing to make progress towards BHS's relocation.

Progress:

BHS has conditionally agreed to Option 1 subject to Council approving a proposed relocation support package and there being nothing untoward in the Bendigo TAFE lease.

Risk Analysis:

PROV has identified a range of risks relating to BHS's ongoing use of BRAC and also made a series of recommendations. PROV has advised that failure to implement its recommendations will result in health and safety risks and also place at risk BRAC's accreditation as a Class A Place of Deposit (POD) for the storage of public records.

Consultation/Communication

Internal Consultation:

In 2020 the City established a Project Control Group (PCG) with multi-directorate representation.

In August 2021 the City's Executive Management Team provided in-principle approval for staff to negotiate with BHS regarding Option 1.

External Consultation:

The City has been consulting with BHS about potential alternative accommodation options since mid-2020. City staff have also been working with BHS to establish collection retention and disposal principles and procedures, and to sort through the voluminous collection. For example, it was identified that BHS was in breach of the Firearms Act due to not securely storing vintage firearms in its possession. The subject firearms have now been sold.

Resource Implications

Previous Council Support:

In 2011 the City and BHS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) providing BHS with access to a BRAC repository area (for the storage of paper-based collection

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

items only) and a BRAC work room. This MOU does not require BHS to pay any BRAC hire fees or contribute to BRAC's operating costs. The pre-cursor to this MOU was a 2009 MOU between the City, Bendigo Senior Secondary College and BHS which reflects that BHS was required to relocate to enable Ulumbarra Theatre's development.

The City was leasing Specimen Cottage from Bendigo TAFE for $7,000 per annum then sub-leasing it to BHS for $2,500 per annum, resulting in total annual lease costs to the City of $4,500.

Any known or anticipated variance to budget:

The proposed relocation support package would require an unbudgeted 2021-22 allocation of approximately $65,450, inclusive of one-off relocation and building fit out costs. This figure does not reflect City staff time that would be entailed in project / logistics management.

Projected costs for future financial years:

The proposed lease terms are Commercial in Confidence and were detailed in the 11 October 2021 Councillor briefing. Lease fee assistance constitutes the projected costs for future financial years.

Attachments

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

21. LEAD AND GOVERN FOR ALL

21.1. Mayoral Term Length

Author	Geoff Fallon, Governance Coordinator
Responsible Director	Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

The purpose of this report is for Council to formally resolve the length of the Mayoral term for the 2021/2022 term (one or two years). Confirmation of the length of the term is required prior to the Council Meeting to elect Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2021/2022 term which is scheduled for 9 November 2021.

Summary

The Local Government Act 2020 states at Part 2 Section 26 that:

(3) Before the election of the Mayor, a Council, other than the Greater Geelong City Council, must determine by resolution whether the Mayor is to be elected for a 1 year or a 2 year term.

Recommendation

That Council approves to set the Mayoral term for 2021/22 for one year.

Policy Context

- Goal 1 Lead and govern for all

Background Information

The term for all previous City of Greater Bendigo Council Mayors has been for one-year.

Report

Options/Alternatives:

The Council may alternatively resolve to elect the Mayor for a two year term.

Risk Analysis:

There are no identified additional risks with either option.

Consultation/Communication

N/A

Resource Implications

N/A

Attachments

Nil

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

21.2. Council Meeting date to elect Mayor and Deputy Mayor and December 2021

Author	April Hinton, Governance Officer
Responsible Director	Andrew Cooney, Director Corporate Performance

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to set the date for the meeting to Elect Mayor and Deputy Mayor and set the date for the final Council meeting of 2021 in December.

Summary

At the conclusion of each Mayoral term, the date for the meeting to Elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor is required to be set.

The Council meeting dates for 2021 were set at the commencement of the Term and based on the Mayoral term. Therefore, a date for December 2021 Council meeting date was not set.

Council Meeting dates for 2022 are due to be considered at the Council meeting in December 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Endorse Tuesday, November 9, 2021, as the Council Meeting to Elect Mayor and Deputy Mayor commencing at 6:00pm at the Bendigo Town Hall (or via online platform subject to Public Health advice) and publicly advertise the date.
2. Endorse Monday December 13, 2021, as the final Council Meeting for the Greater Bendigo City Council for the 2021 calendar year commencing at 6:00pm at the Bendigo Town Hall (or via online platform subject to Public Health advice) and publicly advertise the date.

Policy Context

Primary Community Plan Reference:

City of Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021:

- Goal 1 Lead and govern for all

Background Information

Previous Council Decision(s) Date(s): December 14, 2020.

Report

Each year the timelines to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are reviewed and nominate a Council meeting date to elect Mayor and Deputy Mayor (previously referred to as a 'Special meeting') is nominated and set. It is proposed that the Council meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be held 6pm Tuesday, November 9, 2021.

Council meeting dates for 2021 were set as per the Mayoral term, not the calendar year. Therefore a meeting date in December 2021 was not nominated. It is proposed that the final Council Meeting for the Greater Bendigo City Council for the 2021 calendar year be

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

held on Monday December 13, 2021 commencing at 6:00pm at the Bendigo Town Hall (or via online platform subject to Public Health advice).

2022 Council meeting dates and frequency will be reviewed and a further report be considered by Council at the December Council meeting, setting the dates for 2022.

Consultation/Communication

Consultation with Councillors and senior staff has occurred and determined the dates outlined in this report as appropriate.

Resource Implications

Advertising of Council Meetings can be accommodated within existing budget allocations.

Attachments

Nil

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

22. URGENT BUSINESS

23. NOTICES OF MOTION

24. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

25. MAYOR'S REPORT

26. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

27. CONFIDENTIAL (SECTION 66) REPORTS

27.1. Confidential report pursuant to Section 66(2)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020 to consider a report relating to personal information

RECOMMENDATION

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

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021

Document Set ID: 4643365
Version: 4, Version Date: 14/10/2021