

Imagine
GREATER BENDIGO

Stage 2 Engagement report

June 2021



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

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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.

This is the new Community Vision for Greater Bendigo, as crafted by 61 residents selected specially to form a community panel and represent the views of the community.

The Community Vision is supported by five values; transparency, sustainability, inclusion, innovation and equity, which underpin the vision and future Council decision making.

This work was undertaken as part of the Imagine Greater Bendigo project and the requirement under the new *Local Government Act (2020)* for all Councils to deliberately engage with their communities to develop a Community Vision.

This report summarises the process and outcomes of stage 2 engagement and the deliberative community panels.

For more information about the community engagement approach and findings of stage 1, see the [Let's Talk Greater Bendigo website](#).



Based on the feedback provided in stage 1, we wanted to understand more about your priorities when it comes to current Council services and programs, and what Council should invest in for the future. We collected your feedback through targeted interviews with key stakeholders and the community panel.

Targeted interviews with key stakeholders

We asked a broad range of stakeholders (Diagram 1) to review the results of stage 1 and to identify their top 3-5 priorities (existing or new) that they wanted shared with the community engagement panelists. Stakeholders were targeted to fill identified gaps from stage 1, for example the LGBTQIA+ community who had been under-represented, and with Traditional Owners to ensure their priorities were accurately reflected.

Diagram 1: Stakeholders



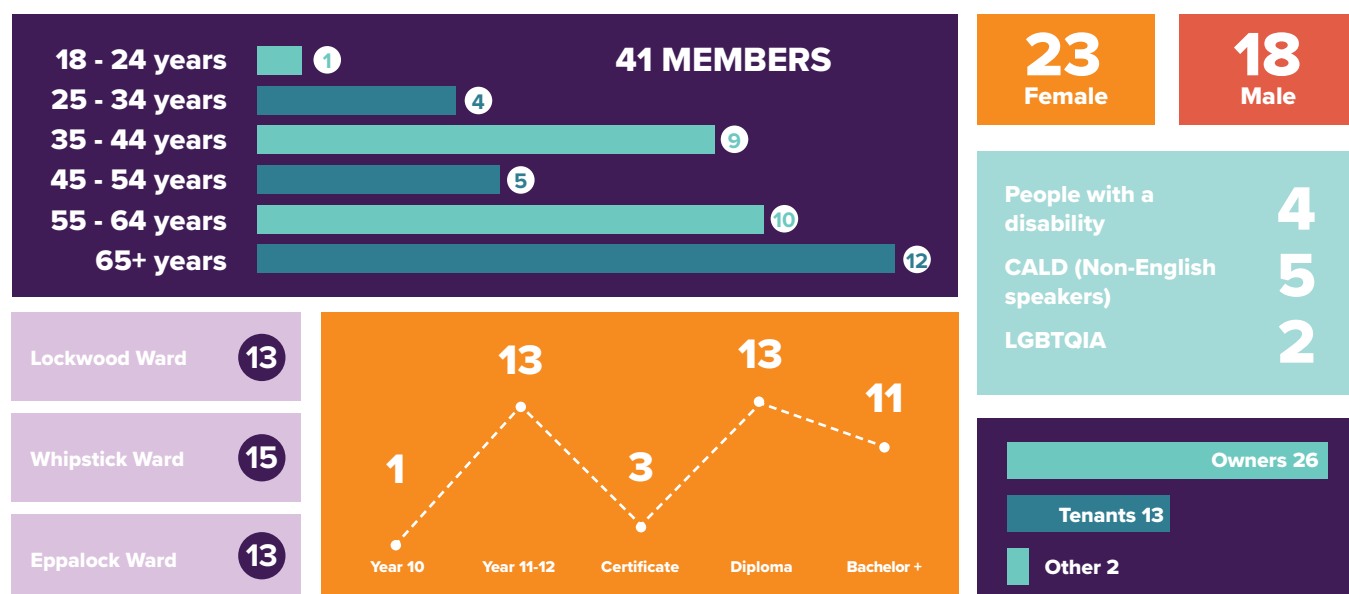
Community panels

The City of Greater Bendigo (the City) invited residents to join a community panel to complete a 'deliberative engagement' process, which is defined as engaging with a select group of participants on a defined issue, weighing up options and providing recommendations to decision-makers.

In May 2021, the City hosted concurrent community panels to help develop the Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan, and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. One panel was for adult residents aged over 18 years, the other for younger residents, aged between 14 and 25 years. The Adult Panel had 41 members, and the younger person panel had 20 members. The two panels came together to deliberate on the future of Greater Bendigo.

Adult panel

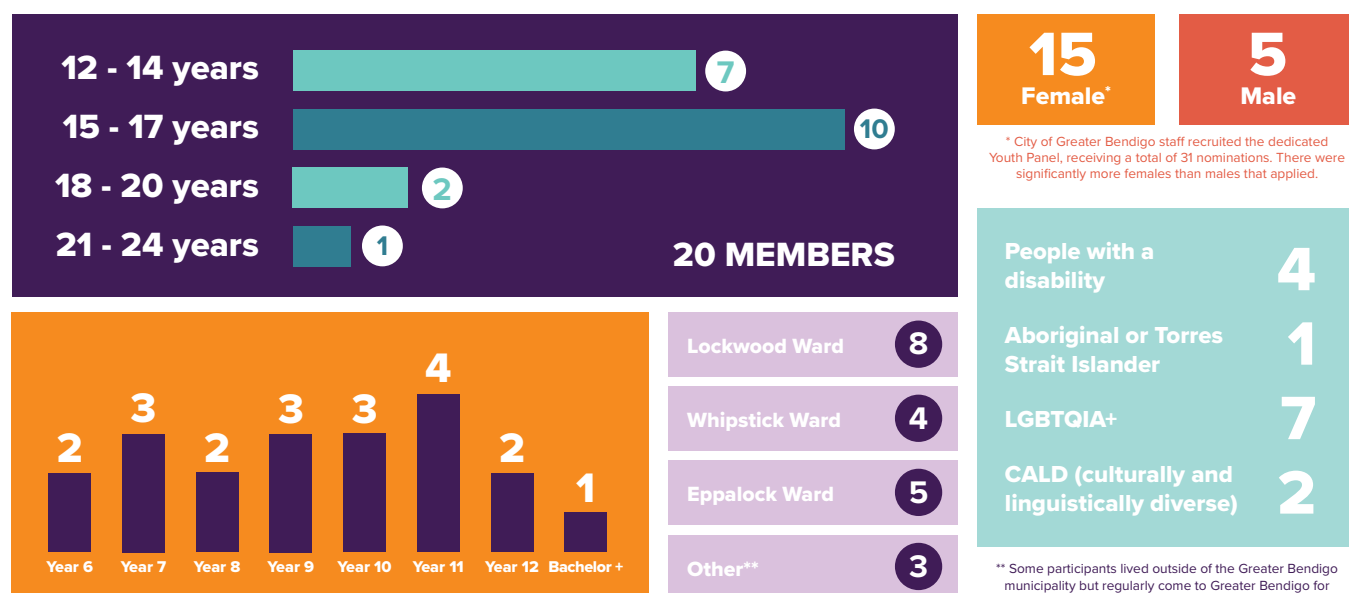
To select the adult panel participants, we wrote to 15,000 random households inviting residents aged 18 years and over to express an interest in being on the community panel. An independent specialist managed the entire process and selected 41 adults that were representative of Greater Bendigo's diverse population.



Recruitment and stratification undertaken by Deliberately Engaging

Youth panel

Recruitment for the Youth Community Panel was done internally by the City's Engaged Communities Youth Team. An expression of interest process was advertised through the YO Bendigo website, social media platforms and external network partners. Expressions of interest were received from 31 young people aged between 12 and 24 and of these, 20 were selected to participate. The young people chosen for the panel represented our diverse community and included people who identify as living with a disability, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQIA+, and culturally and linguistically diverse.



Recruitment undertaken by the City of Greater Bendigo

The deliberative engagement process, facilitated by independent experts, was held over the weekend of May 14 – 16, 2021. City staff were present to support the facilitators and panelists when required to provide expert knowledge.

The two panels participated in the following sessions:

Orientation – May 14, 2021: to provide panel members with the information they needed to participate, including background information, agenda, overview of key tools and rules of engagement.

Day 1 – May 15, 2021: to share the findings of the Stage 1 public engagement, create a draft Community Vision and explore decision-making values and considerations.

Day 2 – May 16, 2022: to finalise the Community Vision, confirm decision-making values, identify strategic priorities and identify measures of success.

Discussions were largely centred around seven themes:

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

To our knowledge, in a Victorian Local Government context, this was the first time a youth and adult panel had been combined. The Youth Panel participants provided strong insights and ideas for what could improve Greater Bendigo in the future. They were encouraged to share these views and ideas in front of the whole group, as well as through youth-based activities.

‘Vision and Value Champions’ were identified based on their ability to participate, listen to others and understand the process. There was an initial mix of four people from both panels on day 1 and this increased to seven people from across the two panels on day 2. Their role was to take the panel’s contributions and ideas and draft the Community Vision and values. This process worked well, and the group were highly supportive and respectful of each other, achieving their intended outcomes of a Community Vision and values.

Interactive software, Mentimeter, was used to obtain live feedback and quantify levels of support. The use of technology was only a minor distraction to the group, and support and infrastructure was provided to those who needed it. By using this tool, it was established that an overwhelming majority, 86 per cent, of panelists found the newly developed Community Vision and values acceptable. Council will now develop a Council Plan to deliver on the vision and values.

The facilitators also asked the panelists to prioritise feedback received during stage 1 consultation.

Areas that were identified as a priority for Council to focus on included walking and cycling, access to green, connected spaces, a youth hub for teens, support for local and existing businesses (including young people to start creative careers), places to learn about Aboriginal culture and heritage, continued greening of Greater Bendigo, sustainability in building and planning, activation of public spaces, continued emphasis on gender equity and inclusion, and prioritise investment in suburban and rural areas.

This information will help guide Council as it develops its Council Plan and 10-Year Financial Plan, which once drafted will be available for review on the Let’s Talk website in August 2021.

Short videos capturing the panels in action were produced and you can view them [here](#).

- It was taken with good faith that the information participants provided in their Expression of Interest forms about their demographics was true
- Participants came from a range of different backgrounds and had varying degrees of knowledge regarding the role of Local Government and the City of Greater Bendigo. Therefore, their ability to understand and interpret information varied
- Significant effort was made to ensure that all participants understood the information presented, and that they had opportunities to ask questions and request further information. However, factors including English not being a first language and professional experience may have meant some participants understood the information better than others
- The Adult Panel members were selected to represent the demographic profile of the City of Greater Bendigo. However, the final membership is not necessarily a statistically accurate sample of the whole population due to people dropping out or lack of registrations for some demographic categories. Therefore, while the Adult Panel did deliver a strong cross-section of views across the municipality, it cannot be guaranteed that the complete set of views in the community were represented. The City is conducting a Gender Impact Assessment to evaluate if and to what extent gender played a role in community participation on the deliberative engagement. A Gender Impact Assessment is a requirement of the *Gender Equity Act (2020)* and is defined as a process of examining how what we do affects people of different genders in different ways to avoid reinforcing inequality. This will allow us to continuously improve how we do deliberative engagement

An evaluation and learning document has been drafted to identify opportunities for improvement for future deliberative engagement processes.

This report summarises the process and outcomes of the Imagine Greater Bendigo stage 2 engagement. The deliberative engagement panel was provided the outcomes of stage 1 community engagement, stage 2 stakeholder engagement and engagement with children to help them develop a Community Vision and values and suggest priority areas for the City's strategic planning. Council will now develop a Council Plan and other strategic plans to deliver on the Community Vision and values and suggested priority areas.

These documents will be available for review on the Let's Talk website in August 2021.

Theme 1: Healthy, liveable spaces and places		
Stage 1 priorities	Stage 2 stakeholder priorities	Community panel priorities (ranked)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cool, shady and green streets with accessible parks and play spaces 2. Walking and cycling paths for people of all ages and abilities 3. Better access to public transport and walking and cycling paths to move around 4. Growing more food locally in schools, community gardens and on farms 5. Access to cheap healthy food 6. Environmental sustainability 7. Community facilities – sport and recreation 8. Affordable, safe and secure housing 9. Better access to healthcare for older (and other) residents 10. Social inclusion and connection 11. Education, training and employment 12. Planning and urban sprawl, density, walkable neighbourhoods 13. More support for rural areas and smaller communities of Greater Bendigo 	<p>From engagement with 210 children (aged 3-12) as part of the VicHealth Local Government grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Eating • Natural play spaces • More/improved playgrounds • More/improved bike/walking paths • More sporting grounds <p>From Emergency Management Planning Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that residents of Greater Bendigo are well-prepared for emergencies, including but not only, fires, flash flooding and extreme heat events. This is even more important given the impacts of climate change that are already apparent • Support for groups that face challenges / vulnerabilities in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies and dealing with climate impacts such as extreme heat • Planning and infrastructure issues (e.g. water supply and pressure) • Ensuring an adequate supply of volunteers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking and cycling 2. Access green, connected spaces 3. Affordable housing 4. Safety accessibility 5. Public transport 6. Healthy food 7. Emergency planning

Theme 2: Strong, inclusive and sustainable economy		
Stage 1 priorities	Stage 2 stakeholder priorities	Community panel priorities (ranked)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for local artists and businesses, particularly after COVID-19 2. An economy that addresses disadvantage 3. More job opportunities for young people and people with a disability 4. More opportunities for young people to go to university or TAFE so they can stay in Greater Bendigo 5. An economy that attracts visitors 6. Promote and sell a wide variety of local produce in the community 7. An economy that is sustainable 	<p>From Farming and Agribusiness Advisory Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bendigo as an agricultural tech/ education hub • Protecting the right to farm • Planning for transport networks that support the transport of grain, livestock <p>From Bendigo Manufacturing Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for manufacturing within the region through strong political connections that generate tangible support • Attract support and investment to enable growth of regional manufacturing to drive regional prosperity. A key factor in this is an adequate supply of industrial land • Foster connections between schools, training, higher education, skills and local employment • Promote manufacturing through a coordinated approach that showcases local skills and innovation <p>From Youth Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting our economy through education, training and collaborating with local employers and committees, we aim to increase employability in Bendigo <p>Cultural and creative industries advisory group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading a strong creative industry (more than recognition but a focus on the breadth of creative businesses that create a wonderful Bendigo region to live in but also offer to broader state/national initiatives) that enable creatives to make viable ongoing sustainable livings from their practice <p>From engagement with 210 children as part of the VicHealth Local Government grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Zoo 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth hub for teens 2. Support for local and existing businesses 3. Transform and revitalise our city centre 4. Invest in building our higher education and skills training 5. Creating an accessible place/CBD 6. Incentives for industries to locate in smaller townships 7. Initiatives to address climate due to economic impact 8. A contemporary city with heritage 9. Industrial land 10. Capitalise on the opportunities presented by our new gold rush

Theme 3: Aboriginal reconciliation		
Stage 1 priorities	Stage 2 stakeholder priorities	Community panel priorities (ranked)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeing more examples of Aboriginal culture and history across Greater Bendigo 2. Increasing community understanding of the cultural practices and values of Traditional Owners 3. Working together to build a welcoming city by addressing racism 4. Seeing the goals of Traditional Owners reflected in long-term plans for Greater Bendigo 5. Better job opportunities, procurement and improved economic outcomes for Aboriginal people 6. Aboriginal families and children being supported to connect to their culture 	<p>From Dja Dja Wurrung:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>From Taungurung:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heal and strengthen knowledge and practice and, through its application, heal Taungurung culture and Country <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act</i> (2006, Vic) and <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act</i> (2010, Vic). Supporting development and revision of government legislation, regulations, local laws, plans, strategies, policies and procedures, in partnership <p>From Water Sensitive Greater Bendigo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing more examples of Aboriginal culture and history 	<p>*The overarching priority in the table discussion (as reported back to the panelists) was that we should be prioritising based on consultation with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal residents of Greater Bendigo and their organisations.</p> <p>Panelist priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need for a place where the wider community can learn about Aboriginal history and culture 2. Knowledge of traditional food and access to it 3. Better education about truth in schools at all levels 4. Paid opportunities for cultural knowledge holders + in higher management roles at Council 5. Connecting young Aboriginal people to their culture and community 6. Accessible and affordable spaces for Aboriginal community members

Theme 4: A climate-resilient built and natural environment		
Stage 1 priorities	Stage 2 stakeholder priorities	Community panel priorities (ranked)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create well-designed spaces that are mindful of our future climate 2. Minimise impacts to local wildlife, plants and trees as Greater Bendigo grows 3. Protect existing trees, improve habitats and support conservation 4. Plant more indigenous plants 5. More trees/greening/green spaces/shade 6. Focus on water 7. Create a more climate-resilient built environment (planning controls, incentives, retrofits, solar, access to green space) 8. Do more to promote uptake of renewables 9. Recognise Traditional Owners' connection to the land and local knowledge 10. Strengthen connection and relationship between farmers/producers, schools and the general community 11. Create a circular economy/more recycling 12. Stronger Council leadership on climate change and sustainability 13. Urgency of doing more on climate change/climate emergency/drastic emissions reduction 14. Use the COVID-19 recovery as an opportunity to invest in projects that have positive impacts on the environment (e.g. improve energy efficiency of housing and buildings) 	<p>From Water Sensitive Greater Bendigo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool, shady and green streets and spaces • Create well-designed spaces that are mindful of our future climate • Protect existing trees, improve habitats and support conservation • Secure diverse sources of water to have a thriving future • Implement Reimagining Bendigo Creek <p>From Youth Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Sustainability. Sustainability issues are a huge concern for the youth of Bendigo. We aim to encourage and promote sustainable practices. <p>From Dja Dja Wurrung:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>From engagement with 210 children as part of the VicHealth Local Government grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental sustainability - ban single use plastic 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainability in building and planning 2. Greening Greater Bendigo 3. Bendigo Creek 4. Community education 5. Climate Action Plan 6. Drawdown Alliance

Theme 5: A vibrant, creative community		
Stage 1 priorities	Stage 2 stakeholder priorities	Community panel priorities (ranked)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognition of the importance and benefits of creativity 2. Activation of public and private creative spaces 3. Opportunities for connection and collaboration with artists and the wider community 4. Support and opportunities for local artists and their initiatives 5. Inclusion of culturally diverse people in local arts and creative industries 6. Opportunities to grow networks that are supportive and inclusive 7. Greater understanding and representation of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and creative practices 8. Inclusive spaces/infrastructure to support community creativity 	<p>From Cultural and Creative Industries Advisory Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of public and private creative spaces • Opportunities for connection and collaboration with artists and the wider community • Leading a strong creative industry (a focus on the breadth of creative businesses that create a wonderful Greater Bendigo region to live in and also broader state/national initiatives) that enable creatives to make viable ongoing sustainable livings from their practice • Celebrating and supporting the diversity of abilities, creative activities and businesses • Support localised art/creativity that is available to all (including all abilities) – not only a plan for bringing people to Bendigo towns but accessible to many people in different locations <p>From engagement with 210 children as part of the VicHealth Local Government grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural activities – Celebration of culture <p>Heritage Advisory Committee, National Trust and the Bendigo Historical Society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a museum feasibility study • Ensure that projects, works or activities that have strong community support have appropriate funding to carry out detailed studies, investigation and feasibility planning • Provide regular, publicly-accessible progress reports about how the identified themes from Imagine Greater Bendigo are being investigated and assessed • 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) • Revitalisation Plan for Pall Mall • Increased residential living around city centre • Protecting important local sites and significant trees • Preserving historic collections and artefacts and supporting the groups doing this work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That more public spaces are activated 2. That young people are offered support to build creative careers 3. That there is recognition for indigenous cultures in the creative space 4. That there are partnerships and relationship building between artists, community and the Council 5. That art opportunities are linked across the region e.g. food and art 6. That there are education, workshops and knowledge sharing opportunities available in arts to different age groups 7. That art opportunities are widely communicated 8. Ensuring access to arts 9. That there are more designated spaces for art

Theme 6: A safe, welcoming and fair community

Stage 1 priorities	Stage 2 stakeholder priorities	Community panel priorities (ranked)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support for community sport, recreation and community groups to increase social connection after COVID-19 Working together to make Greater Bendigo feel safe and welcoming for all and preventing family violence Working together to address loneliness and social isolation Improving support and services for mental health, homelessness and financial stress Family-friendly events and activities for people from different generations Improving internet access, especially for rural residents and households with no internet The way the community has banded together during COVID-19 <p>Originally included in Theme 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working together to build a welcoming city by addressing racism Working together to meet the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum 	<p>From Thorne Harbour relating to LGBTQIA+:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriately sensitive healthcare, including access to HRT and gender reassignment surgery Timely and appropriate access to mental healthcare Education and awareness raising in schools, services and the community, e.g. more visibility of Pride month, to improve health literacy and the community's ability to provide safe spaces Protecting the safe spaces that do exist and fostering new ones so that bars and clubs are not the only options Inclusion/equity/protection for rural LGBTQIA+ communities <p>From Youth Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that young voices are involved in decisions that affect them and their voices are listened to Encourage young people to look after their physical and mental health and provide resources to assist them in doing so <p>From Bendigo Safe Community Forum and Greater Bendigo Against Family Violence Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address homelessness and lack of affordable housing and rental options Prevention of family violence with a focus on gender equity, including LGBTQIA+ A higher-level focus on addressing the causes of anti-social behaviour Increase safety and connectivity of cycling/bike lanes and walking tracks More inclusive job opportunities for people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities More university and TAFE opportunities Working together to build a welcoming city by addressing racism Safety of LGBTQIA+ community <p>From Inclusive Communities Working Group – Bendigo Community Health Services and Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services were included in this conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More inclusive job opportunities More uni and TAFE opportunities Working together to build a welcoming city by addressing racism Working together to make Greater Bendigo feel safe, welcoming and inclusive for all Increasing community understanding of the cultural practices and values of Traditional Owners Support and opportunities for local artists and their initiatives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote opportunities to support positive ageing (includes action to develop co-ordinated approach to supporting older adults in the community with an increased number participating in projects that improve health and wellbeing and increase social connection) Promote inclusion and participation in the community for people of all ages and abilities To see evidence of change in individual attitudes and behaviours towards personal commitment to gender equity and prevention of violence Engage with young people to ensure their needs and opinions are heard and valued Improved and increased volunteer support Partner in community safety initiatives (includes action to work with Victoria Police and community to improve safety in Hargreaves Mall) The City of Greater Bendigo is a leading organisation for cultural inclusion

Theme 7: Lead and govern for all		
Stage 1 priorities	Stage 2 stakeholder priorities	Community panel priorities (ranked)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better long-term scoping, planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects (to avoid cost overruns and to help prioritisation) Prioritise health and wellbeing/ equity Prioritise climate risk/ Environmentally Sustainable Design (to address climate change and save on energy/renewal costs) Reduce operating costs and improve productivity/efficiency More regular informed community consultation on prioritisation Find more ways to generate income Prioritise investment in rural/ suburban areas/outside the city centre and Hargreaves Mall Advocate for more state and federal funding Co-management/co-investment of facilities with community 	<p>This theme relates to the City of Greater Bendigo's internal governance and external accountability, and was generated as a new theme as a result of the feedback received in stage 1.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing on the sustainability of our infrastructure, improve our renewal and maintenance of current assets Prioritise investment in rural/ suburban areas/outside the city centre Ensure broader community can be more involved in co-management/ co-investment of facilities, gardens and spaces Clear plans and engagement to give options to community for rationalising services and assets Developing digital tools and technology to improve service delivery and customer experience Promoting and improving the understanding of City services, achievements and plans to be accessible (communicated) for all Better long-term scoping, planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects Plan for appropriate community consultation to enhance decision making of Council