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# Draft Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25

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Municipal Public Health and  
Wellbeing Plan

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City of Greater Bendigo

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August 2021
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#### 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.

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INTRODUCTION

The Greater Bendigo Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (the Plan) will guide the City of Greater Bendigo (the City) and its partners in working 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 over the next 18 months.

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, 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

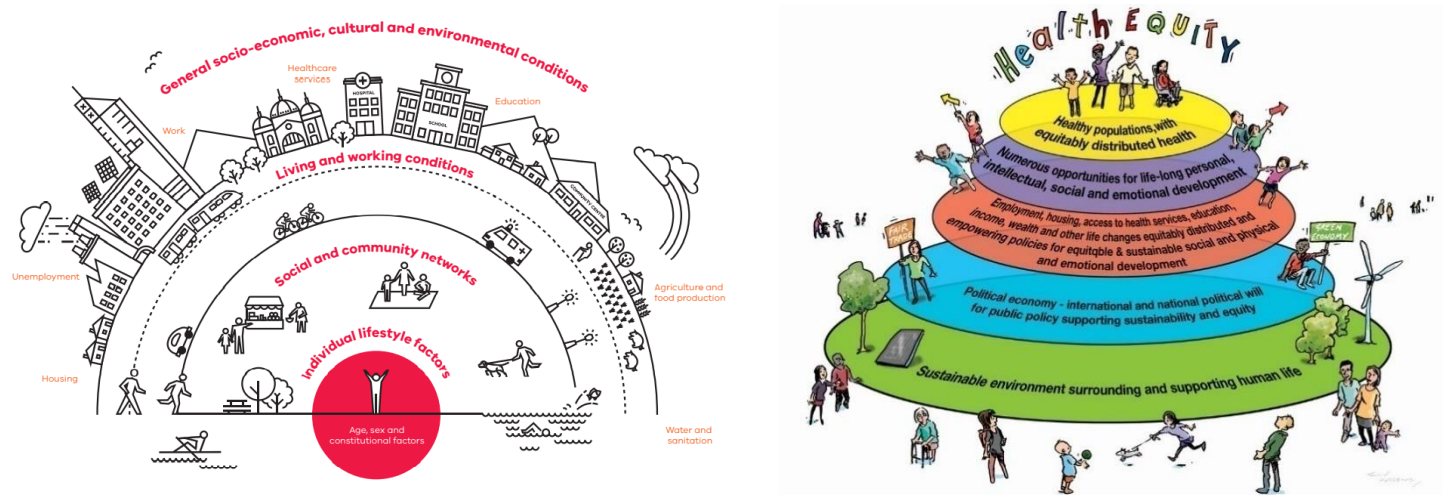


Figure 1 Source- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-23 (Adapted from Dahlgren & Whitehead 2018)

Figure 2: By Simon Kneebone in Baum (2020) The New Public Health

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*

Local Governments is well placed to lead and partner with a wide range of local and State and Federal government stakeholders to create the conditions for health equity, recognising that we all have different areas of influence:

Socio-ecological approach				Behavioural approach		Medical approach
Program development and evaluation	Healthy public policy: creating environments and settings that support health and wellbeing	Built environment: creating environments and settings that support wellbeing and health promotion	Community action for social and environmental change	Health education and health literacy	Health information and social marketing	Immunisation, screening, risk assessment and surveillance
Examples of local action:						
Specific programs require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social research</li><li>• Designing and implementing action plans</li><li>• Monitoring and evaluating actions and outcomes and applying the lessons to future work</li></ul>	Developing healthy and equitable public policy – in legislation, policy, strategic planning and decision-making frameworks.  Advocacy for healthy and equitable public policy at other levels of government	Creating communities that support people to live their lives to the fullest. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land use and public space planning</li><li>• Urban design</li><li>• Climate adaptation</li><li>• Walking and cycling tracks and trails</li><li>• Libraries</li></ul>	Creating a community that is empowered, socially connected, fair and inclusive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access and inclusion programs</li><li>• Community grants</li><li>• Community events</li><li>• Community emergency management</li></ul>	Health protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing health, financial and digital literacy</li><li>• Food safety</li><li>• Control of infectious disease</li><li>• Environmental health</li></ul>	Influencing social values and building community-wide knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural safety</li><li>• Gender equity</li><li>• Aboriginal reconciliation</li><li>• Climate action</li><li>• Waste management</li></ul>	Quality and evidence-informed service provision, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maternal and child health</li><li>• Immunisations</li><li>• Community aged care services</li><li>• Childcare</li></ul>

BACKGROUND

Under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#) (the Act) Local Government has a responsibility 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 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. 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. Other 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 will continue 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: <i>Victorians are healthy and well</i>	Domain 2: <i>Victorians are safe and secure</i>	Domain 3: <i>Victorians have the capabilities to participate</i>	Domain 4: <i>Victorians are connected to culture and community</i>	Domain 5: <i>Victoria is liveable</i>
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 draft Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan 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 strengthening our work together. 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 final proposed governance structure to steward the plan over the next four years. Once finalised it is the City’s intention to publish this plan digitally so additional resources and ideas can be added as we learn together. A summary Plan on a Page will be available for hard copy printing.

**DRAFT GREATER BENDIGO HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tobacco</li> <li>Alcohol</li> <li>Other drugs</li> <li>Gambling</li> </ul>	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  Strengthening the voice of community in policy, planning and programs	Access and inclusion for people who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are culturally diverse</li> <li>Have a disability</li> <li>Identify as LGBTQIA+</li> </ul> Aboriginal reconciliation  Social connection and reduction of loneliness	Zero carbon Circular economy Sustainable and active transport Water Sensitive Bendigo Thriving landscapes and ecosystems Heat health Access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and community services</li> <li>Integrated community facilities</li> <li>Affordable safe and secure housing</li> <li>Quality public open space</li> </ul> Access to technology and information and connectivity

**FRAMEWORK FOR STRENGTHENING OUR WORK TOGETHER**

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 and cultures		Incorporate universal design
Approach	Systems thinking		Collective impact		Place making		Strengths-based		Risk management		Monitoring, evaluation and learning
Supports	Shared leadership and governance		Capability building		Community contributions		Financing and resource allocation		Media and communications		Data, evidence and learnings from others

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## **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
- Recent community engagement, including the Imagine Greater Bendigo project
- 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 and 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 framework for our work together. 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 Integrated Emergency Management Plan 2017
- Northern Victorian Emergency Management Cluster Heatwave Plan 2019
- All Ages All Abilities Action Plan 2019
- Community Volunteering Strategy 2019-2023
- Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy 2016-2021
- 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
- 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
- DRAFT Affordable Housing Action Plan
- Managed Growth Strategy (in development)



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- Community Hub Strategy (in development)
- DRAFT Community Buildings Policy

The importance of implementing these plans, strengthening collaboration, and 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 image a 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

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## ***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>

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## Targeted engagement with 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

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## 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 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 Environment Strategy. The priorities identified from the work for this strategy will also be 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

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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.

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

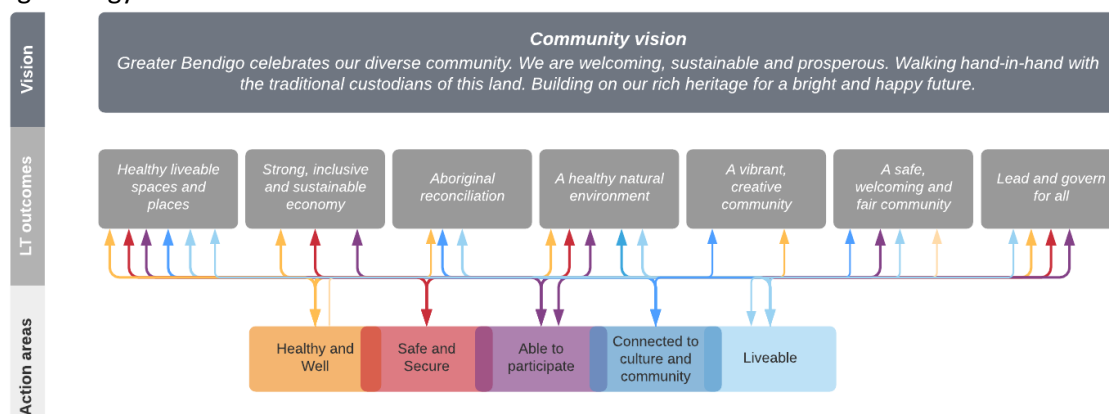
A further key influence for the plan is the [Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023](#). It outlines a vision, 10 action areas and four priority focus areas (in bold), as set out below:

*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 Health and Wellbeing Plan. The Council Plan outcomes and strategic directions reflect community engagement priorities and existing strategy:



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## **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

Feedback also provided ideas for action planning and implementation.

## **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

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- 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.

## **Areas for Action**

### **Outcome 1: Healthy and well**

*The Greater Bendigo community has good physical and mental health.*

## **Areas for action**

### ***Healthy eating and food security***

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.<sup>i</sup>

- *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% 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

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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.

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**

Mental wellbeing has been defined as 'a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her 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% in 2014 to 36% in 2017. Diagnosed conditions are more common for women than men. The proportion of



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people reporting high or very high levels of psychological distress has also increased from 8.7% in 2017 to 20.3% 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.

### ***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% of residents smoke compared to 16.7% 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% of residents engage in binge drinking (four or more standard drinks in a day) at least once a year, compared to 41.8% 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.

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## **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.

#### **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.

#### ***Community safety***

##### ***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***

The incidence 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.

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## **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% of Greater Bendigo prep-aged children are vulnerable in one or more areas (Victoria 19.9%) whilst 12.5% 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% of 20 – 24-year olds have completed year 12 or equivalent, a measure of future life success. This is compared with 74.4% for Victoria.

### ***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 with English as a second language.

### ***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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

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## Youth empowerment

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.

### **Strengthening the voice of community in policy, planning and programs**

Ensuring community voices are heard when developing policy, planning and programs leads to more appropriate and effective services for everyone. It can lead to better outcomes in health and social change, leading to increased life satisfaction and feelings of being valued by society.

### **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. Cultural safety is achieved 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 LGBTQIA+ community experiences higher rates of discrimination and social exclusion, particularly young people who experience poorer physical and mental health outcomes within our community. The LGBTQIA+ 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.

### ***Build community resilience***

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- *Strengthen 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.

- *Increase social connection and reduce 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.

## **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.

### ***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.

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## ***Thriving landscapes and ecosystems***

The Greater Bendigo region covers an area of 3,048km<sup>2</sup> 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.

## ***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 place that are valued by the community.

- ***Transport***

Access to transport is important to people's health and wellbeing and their ability to participate in society. Diverse transport options are required in diverse communities like Greater Bendigo. Modes of transport like walking, riding, catching the bus or train can significantly improve our health and wellbeing, and can improve the environment and road safety. Affordable and accessible transport options are particularly important for young people, the elderly, people with a disability and people on low incomes.

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- *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.

- *Technology and information*

Technology and information provide connection with friends and family and sharing of information. Access to technology and information are not evenly distributed across Greater Bendigo, with availability and cost preventing some in the community from accessing it.

## 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 outline below and a definition is proposed that builds on this:

	Community panel description	Proposed definition
Transparency	<i>Encapsulates honesty and accountability, integrity and clarity of language to make sure that we are using understandable, clear and concise language</i>	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. <sup>ii</sup>
Sustainability	<i>With a focus on our built and natural environment, our health, our economy and our heritage</i>	Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs <sup>iii</sup>
Inclusion	<i>Capturing our cultural and community diversity. Anything that sets one person or group apart.</i>	Creating access to opportunity, addressing structural inequalities, tackling unconscious bias and developing inclusive organisations <sup>iv</sup>
Equity	<i>To help provide support and to give that opportunity to all to be part of this community.</i>	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

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	Community panel description	Proposed definition
		potential. In short, equity creates a path from hope to change <sup>v</sup> Societies who experience higher levels of inequity (a steeper social gradient) also experience higher levels of poor health and wellbeing <sup>vi</sup>
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 <sup>vii</sup>

## 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.

### 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 and cultures:

- 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.

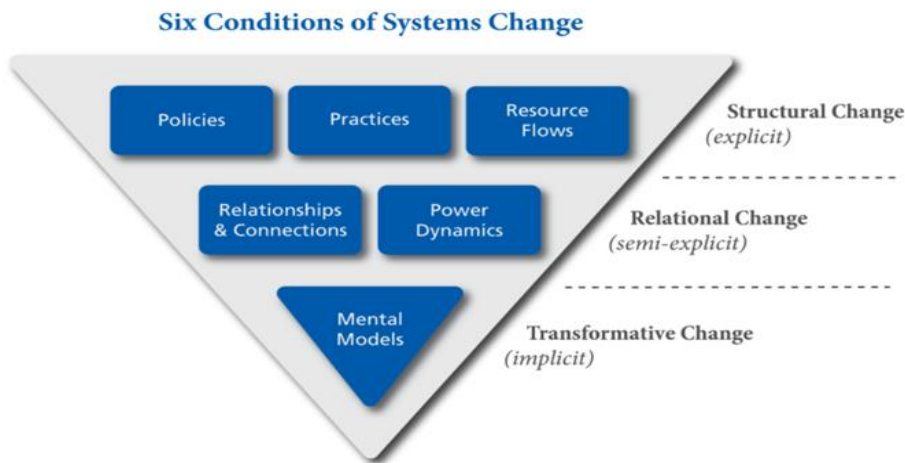


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## Approach

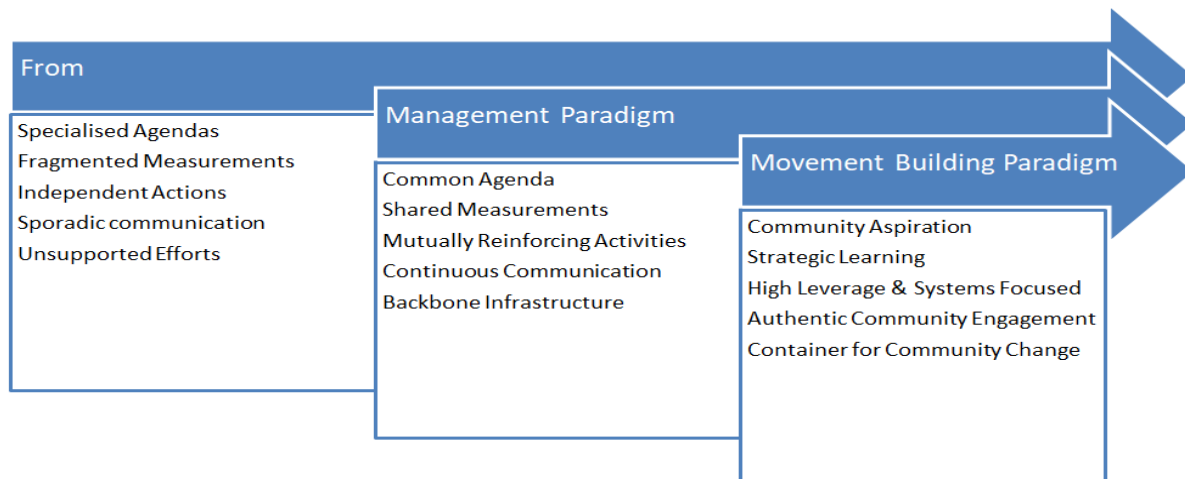
### Systems thinking:

- 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.



### 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:



### Placemaking:

- An approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces that draws on a local community's assets, inspiration and potential to create good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness and wellbeing

### 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.

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## 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 strategic thinking
- Community groups and organisations
- Financing and resource allocation
- Media and communications
- Learning and development

## MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

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 questions:

1. How well does the plan fit with and add value to what is already in place?
2. How well are we upholding our principles?
3. How well are we reflecting our community values?
4. To what extent are the approaches impacting our action areas?
5. What are the impacts, positive and negative; intended and unintended; direct and indirect produced by the plan on people, place and / or planet?

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 Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Governance Group. They will meet quarterly to share the outcomes of initiatives, identify opportunities for collaboration, build our collective capability, and discuss new and emerging issues.

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<sup>i</sup> Christina Zorbas, Kathryn Backholer and Anna Peeters 'To address social inequities in obesity, let's focus on housing and education' [The Conversation](#)

<sup>ii</sup> 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.

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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](#)

vii [OECD Definition of Social Innovation](#)