

**ALL AGES ALL ABILITIES
CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO**

**ACTION PLAN
OCTOBER 2019**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

We acknowledge and extend our appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land the City exists on today.

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

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 City of Greater Bendigo (the City) has a vision to *create the world's most liveable community*. One of the ways we do this is through improving and promoting health and wellbeing within our community.

The All Ages All Abilities Action Plan outlines the strategic direction and commitment to improving health and wellbeing outcomes across the lifespan for all community members in Greater Bendigo.

It is based on community engagement, research and analysis to identify and understand the range of issues that impact the community.

The action plan updates and combines the:

- Community Access and Inclusion Plan (2015-2018)
- Municipal Early Years Plan (2014-2017)
- Positive Ageing Strategy (2011-2014), and
- Acknowledges the Youth Strategy (2017-2021)

It will be a short-term plan that aligns with the timeframes of the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan (2017 – 2021) and therefore will have fewer actions than previous plans. The action plan will commence in October 2019 and conclude October 2021.

The All Ages All Abilities Action Plan outlines actions the City will undertake in relation to the health and wellbeing of children, young people, people with disability and older adults in Greater Bendigo. Except where specific groups are mentioned, all actions will be implemented for people of all ages and abilities. Implementation will be monitored, with progress reports made on an annual basis.

The actions included in this plan are Council responsibilities. However, the size and range of challenges we face as a community require joint action from all levels of government, businesses, schools, workplaces, communities and individuals.

We need to work together to create change locally and make a difference across the lifespan.

Every community faces unique health challenges. A one-size-fits-all approach is not always effective. The All Ages All Abilities plan recognises the key role local governments have in improving local health and wellbeing.

GREATER BENDIGO COMMUNITY PROFILE

Greater Bendigo's residential population is 116,045ⁱ.

At the time of the 2016 Census there were 1,846 (1.7%) community members who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 8% of our population were born outside of Australiaⁱⁱ.

Many Greater Bendigo households are lone person households (26.3%). This is followed closely by couples with children (26.1%) and couples without children (25.3%). The number of older lone person households (10.8%) is higher than the Victorian average. ⁱⁱⁱ

Socio-economic outcomes vary across the Greater Bendigo community with more than 14% living under the poverty line. Poverty means not having enough available income to afford life's necessities. ^{iv}

Currently 11,524 Greater Bendigo residents (12.9%) provide unpaid care to family members or others because of a disability or illness and 6,546 (5.9%) of residents report they needed assistance in their day-to-day lives due to disability, long-term health condition or old age. ^v

By 2036 it is predicted the population will increase by 41.3%, with an additional 5,798 children aged up to 9 years, 7,758 young people aged 10 to 24 years, 11,082 aged over 65 years, and 3,100 people with a disability. ^{vi}

GREATER BENDIGO HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN

The Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan (2017-2021) outlines the health and wellbeing priorities for the community. It meets the requirements of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

In preparation for the All Ages All Abilities Action Plan the City developed an All Ages All Abilities Issues and Opportunities Report that summarised feedback received from community engagement, research and data analysis including policy context.

The Action Plan responds to the Issues and Opportunities Report by taking a whole of community approach to activating the priorities identified in the Health and Wellbeing Plan across the age spectrum. A process illustrating how the plans integrate is right.

In the Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities are identified under five domains. This report is aligned to those domains (figure 2).

FIGURE 1: INTEGRATED PLANS PROCESS

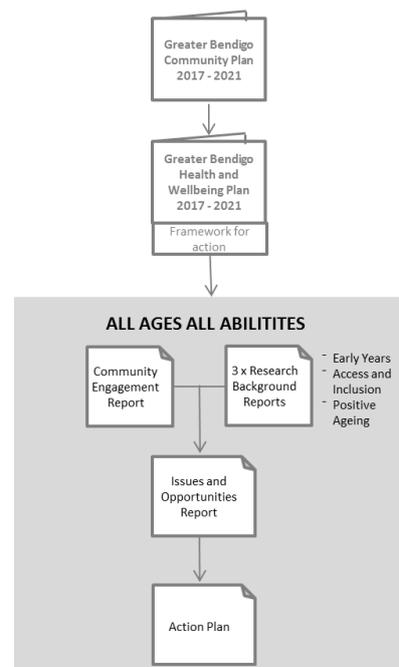


FIGURE 2: GREATER BENDIGO HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN DOMAINS



HEALTHY AND WELL

Eating well and being physically active is important to maintain and protect the longevity of good health and wellbeing.

Promote healthy food and drink consumption

- Support Greater Bendigo Primary Schools and Early Learning Centres to introduce healthy school breakfast and food education programs by advocating to State Government for funding.
- Help community members make better and healthier food choices by working with local sporting clubs and organisations to promote the Victorian Government Healthy Choices guidelines and ensure catering at all City-led community events follow these guidelines.
- Continue to support the development of a healthy local food system by developing a **Greater Bendigo Food Systems Strategy**, providing ongoing support for the development of the Food Hub and Bendigo Food Share, and supporting Greater Bendigo's bid to become a City of Gastronomy.
- Continue to ensure city-led community events and children's play spaces are drug, alcohol and smoke free.

Encourage increased physical activity rates

- Continue **Healthy Heart of Victoria**, an initiative of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership that aims to improve health outcomes for residents living in central Victoria.
- Promote opportunities for people with disability to have access to sports facilities to increase levels of physical activity.
- Increase children's physical activity by sharing information with families on play spaces and accessible features via Community and Neighbourhood Houses, playgroups, early years services and libraries.
- Expand the shared path network and link existing pathways to create an overall cycling and walking path network that is accessible for all abilities through the **Walk Cycle Greater Bendigo Strategy**.
- Coordinate the Walk to School initiative across Greater Bendigo with 70% or more schools involved.

Mental health and wellbeing

- Identify ways to promote mental health awareness and education through the development of an Issues and Opportunities paper and by defining the role of Local Government in supporting mental health initiatives.
- Enable the **Youth Council** to continue participating in local initiatives that promote the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

SAFE AND SECURE

People's sense of safety is influenced by factors including gender, age, ethnicity and physical ability. The time of day or night, the presence and behaviour of others and the appearance of the area are also important.

Partner in community safety initiatives

- Contribute to a reenergised city centre through the **City Centre Activation Plan** by working with Victoria Police and community to improve safety in Hargreaves Mall. This will include increasing the number of events held in the Mall and exploring partnerships and opportunities that enhance and utilise empty shop spaces.
- Conduct family violence assessments on 100% of clients who use the **Maternal and Child Health Services** and the **Commonwealth Home Support Program**, to identify mothers, children, older adults and families at risk of family violence and as needed, complete safety plans and referrals to family violence services.
- Raise awareness of elder abuse by participating in local networks that support family violence awareness.
- Increase the number of initiatives aimed at preventing violence against women and creating more gender balanced workplaces through participation in the **Greater Bendigo Gender Equity Coalition**.
- Collaborate with key organisations to provide training for carers, support workers, people working with older adults and people with disability to increase awareness and understanding of family violence issues.
- Provide and support the provision of community based emergency management planning with vulnerable groups.

Promote spaces that are safe, inclusive and welcoming for all the community

- Promote Neighbourhood and Community Houses, social support groups, libraries and the City's parks and gardens as safe, welcoming and inclusive places where community members, including the vulnerable, are connected and supported.
- Advocate for the promotion of community spaces and community hubs as safe places to meet through the **Community Buildings Policy**.

Reduce barriers for people to obtain and maintain affordable housing

- Ensure services are provided to older adults through the **Commonwealth Home Support Program** enabling them to stay in their own home for longer. All community members eligible to receive services are assessed and referred to appropriate support within 10-21 days.
- Develop partnerships and support community programs that raise awareness of housing affordability, including homelessness.
- Develop an **Affordable Housing Action Plan** that includes understanding the role of Local Government in supporting affordable housing.

ABLE TO PARTICIPATE

Feeling connected to the community regardless of age, gender, cultural background, abilities or income is important in ensuring an engaged and healthy community. This includes feeling valued for the contribution made to the community.

Reduce barriers to persons seeking and maintaining employment

- Develop a targeted approach to increase the number of work experience, traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities at the City for people with disability, youth and those over 50 years of age.
- Lead the National Disability Insurance Agency funded **Champions for Change** project in 2019/20 to increase employment opportunities for people with lived experience of disability in Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander and Loddon, and seek funding to continue the program.
- Continue working with local businesses to increase accessible environments and employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Through **the Greater Bendigo Economic Development Strategy** create local education, training and employment pathways for school-leavers and unskilled workers.

Promote opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to develop new skills

- Work with partners to promote the importance of language and literacy skills for children and increase awareness of language and literacy programs delivered in the community.
- Support the Victorian Government baby bundle program through **Maternal and Child Health Services** to ensure all first time parents receive a baby bundle including four picture books.
- Partner with Women with Disabilities Victoria to deliver the Enabling Women Program. Ten graduates increase their leadership skills and ability to advocate on community issues important to them.
- Through the **Youth Council** improve young people's knowledge of local government and their skills in advocacy, decision making, public speaking and representing the interests and needs of all local young people.
- Support **Youth Council** members to participate in skills training sessions, have supportive connections with elected Councillors and deliver a program of activities that respond to their priorities for youth employability, youth engagement and youth support.

Promote opportunities to support positive ageing

- Develop a coordinated approach to supporting older adults in the community with an increased number participating in projects that improve health and wellbeing and increase social connection.
- Explore opportunities for new funding to employ a support officer focused on delivering projects that support positive ageing.

CONNECTED TO CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

Being connected and included are key factors for an engaged, healthy and resilient community. Access to services and resources improve wellbeing and enable people to live full lives.

Promote inclusion and participation in the community for people of all ages and abilities

- Ensure all City events and activities promote accessible features with marketing materials that include toilets; accessible parking and drop off/pick up points.
- Continue to improve communication accessibility across City services and venues in order to satisfy requirements to gain the Communication Access Symbol.
- Showcase and create connections between local services for people with disability and older people by securing funding to host an Expo.
- Seek funding to host an annual workshop for children under 12 that connect them with the work undertaken by the Council.

Promote people of all ages and all abilities as valuable citizens who make a positive contribution to the community

- Develop a targeted approach to support and acknowledge the valuable contribution made by Carers in the community.
- Ensure all future Council plans and strategies recognise and respond to the accessibility and inclusion needs of the community.
- Enable community members to participate in advisory groups:
 - **Disability Inclusion Reference Committee**
 - **Positive Ageing Advisory Committee**
 - **Youth Council.**
- Listen to the voice of the child during planning and development that is relevant to them, with the City continuing to be a signatory to the United Nations Child Friendly Cities Charter.
- Encourage more opportunities for people to volunteer across all ages, abilities and backgrounds through the draft **Community Volunteering Strategy**.

Support opportunities that build social networks and community connections

- Ensure the delivery of inclusive, accessible events and programs for people of all ages and all abilities including children's events Funloong Family Fun Day and Splash into Fun.
- Build capacity in community groups by supporting the planning and implementation of
 - Neighbourhood family fun days
 - Seniors Week events
 - Children's book week events
 - NAIDOC Children's Day, and
 - The recognition of International Day for People with Disability.
- Increase professional development and networking opportunities for Early Years providers through the establishment of a Greater Bendigo Early Years Community of Practice.

- Coordinate and leverage Seniors Week activities to link older adults to relevant community groups and programs including the **Commonwealth Home Support** social support program.
- Young people, including those living with disability, have increased opportunities to attend live music and other events with the support of a volunteer network established through the Vichealth funded **Bandmates Project**.
- Encourage intergenerational links in the community by exploring opportunities to introduce a program for older adults to participate in activities that pass on skills and knowledge to children and young people, build relationships and increases social connection.
- Build connections and champion creativity in our community for people of all ages and abilities through the **Greater Creative Bendigo Strategy**.

LIVEABLE

The City of Greater Bendigo is a growing community and as we grow it is important to continue to ensure plans and services are designed to enhance the health of everyone.

Accessible facilities and built environments

- Promote awareness and increase opportunities for community to use accessible toilets and change facilities. The **Marveloo** is available at all major events and the **Changing Place** is open at the Hargreaves Mall multi-storey car park.
- Provide, upgrade and maintain Early Years infrastructure.
- Develop an **Early Years Infrastructure Plan** to assist in long term planning including the delivery of three-year-old kindergarten.
- Review play space guidelines to ensure that play spaces are accessible for all ages and all abilities, and where appropriate include features such as:
 - Shade, fencing, seating and water fountains
 - Outdoor fitness equipment, and
 - Accessibility features such as liberty swings.
- Identify areas for tree planting and greening projects through **Greening Greater Bendigo** and **Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan** to protect trees and green spaces valued by the community.
- Review and assess Council owned Early Years facilities for potential plantings and urban forestation.
- Identify priority areas for new or improved footpath networks.

Improving accessibility to information

- Support people of all ages and abilities to increase their knowledge and ability to navigate support services, businesses and public spaces by developing a website portal that provides easy access to information and resources.
- Greater Bendigo is promoted as an accessible tourism destination with a website developed that provides information on accessible towns, businesses and venues in the region.

Improving accessibility to health and community services

- Continue the delivery of universal **Maternal and Child Health Services** with key age, stage and home visits for new babies; **Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services** for vulnerable families and support families accessing playgroups and kindergarten.
- Continue to work with carers to ensure that children living in Out of Home Care have access to services such as Maternal and Child Health (universal and enhanced services), kindergarten and other relevant services.
- Continue to promote and provide an **Immunisation Program** to families.
- Continue to deliver the **Commonwealth Home Support Program**.

Improved accessibility to transport

- Advocate to State Government for better transport links throughout the municipality, with consideration for affordable and accessible travel.

REFERENCES

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- ⁱ Profile id, Greater Bendigo Profile, 2018
 - ⁱⁱ Profile id, Greater Bendigo Profile, 2016
 - ⁱⁱⁱ Profile id, Greater Bendigo Profile, 2016
 - ^{iv} Victorian Council of Social Service, *Every suburb every town poverty in Victoria*, 2018
 - ^v Profile id, Greater Bendigo Profile, 2016
 - ^{vi} Forecast id, Greater Bendigo Profile, 2016

For more information contact the All Ages All Abilities Project team on

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