

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES



6:00 pm on Monday March 16, 2026

Livestreaming at <https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings#live-stream>
Broadcast live on Phoenix FM 106.7 ***

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NEXT MEETING:

6.00 pm Monday 20 April 2026



COMMUNITY VISION 2021–2031

*Greater Bendigo celebrates and respects our diverse and growing community.
We aim to be welcoming, sustainable and flourishing.
Walking hand-in-hand with our First Nations communities.
Building on our heritage for a safe and happy future.*

COUNCIL PLAN *MIR WIMBUL*

The [Council Plan](#) *Mir wimbul* has four themes and 12 goals for our community.

1. Responsible
 - 1.1. The City is efficient and sustainable
 - 1.2. The City connects and delivers
 - 1.3. The City works in partnership
 2. Healthy
 - 2.1. We care for land, water and air
 - 2.2. We take action for a healthier climate
 - 2.3. We are safe, happy and healthy
 3. Thriving
 - 3.1. Our economy is strong
 - 3.2. Our city and towns are vibrant and liveable
 - 3.3. Our housing meets different needs
 4. Welcoming
 - 4.1. Our community celebrates together
 - 4.2. Our community cares
 - 4.3. Our children and young people thrive
-

STAFF VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

The City of Greater Bendigo's [values and behaviours](#) describe how Councillors and staff will work together to be the best we can for our community.

They are aligned to our strategic documents, such as the Council Plan, which ensure they are meaningful for Council and the organisation.

A shared commitment to living our values and behaviours will help us to build the type of culture we need to be able to work together and support each other to deliver the best possible outcomes for the community.

This Council Meeting is conducted in accordance with the

- Local Government Act 2020
- [Governance Rules](#)



Collaborate



Accountable



Respect



Evolve

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND OPENING STATEMENT

We acknowledge that the City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country.

We would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are standing on today.

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 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.

Bangek Koorarook Bunjil Dja Dja Wurrung
William Talle tallingingorak wirrmbool bunjil

I honour the wisdom of the Dja Dja Wurrung.
We will speak words of truth and listen to your wisdom

2. ATTENDANCE, APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Attendance

- Mayor Cr Thomas Prince
 - Deputy Mayor Cr Karen Corr
 - Cr Abhishek Awasthi
 - Cr Shivali Chatley
 - Cr Owen Cosgriff
 - Cr Damien Hurrell
 - Cr Andrea Metcalf
 - Cr Aaron Spong
-
- Andrew Cooney, Chief Executive Officer
 - Angela Hays, Director Corporate Performance
 - Brian Westley, Director Presentation and Assets
 - Jessica Howard, Director Healthy Communities and Environments
 - Rachel Lee, Director Strategy and Growth
 - Danz McClure, Acting Manager Governance and Performance

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Cr Shivali Chatley has requested a Leave of Absence for April 2026 Council Meeting.

RESOLUTION

Grant a Leave of Absence for Cr Shivali Chatley for the April 20, 2026 Council Meeting.

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf
Seconded: Cr Karen Corr

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-164

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

3.1. Public Question Time Guidelines

Council allows up to 30 minutes for question time on any matter except for specific planning applications or anything that is defamatory, otherwise inappropriate or outside the scope of Council.

If your question is about routine or operational Council requests, you should instead make a request through our [Customer Request system](#).

[Pre registering questions](#) is recommended as this provides more time for a more detailed response to be provided to you at question time. Pre registered questions will also be given priority in accordance with the Governance rules. If a question is asked on the night and we don't have the answer immediately available we may need to take it on notice, please ensure you leave your contact details with the Governance officer so a response can be provided to you.

Regardless, any member of the community may ask a question in person. The preferred format is to state your name, suburb and briefly identify your topic (ie parking or Lake Weeroona Playspace, etc). Then, without preamble or statements, please ask one relevant question only.

To ensure fairness, given time constraints, only one question per community member will be accepted each month, inclusive of pre-registered questions, and questions on the night.

Public Question time is only one of many ways the community is able to communicate with Council, other options include:

- [Customer Request system](#)
- [Let's Talk Greater Bendigo](#)
- [Feedback and complaints process](#)
- [Petitions and joint letters](#)
- [Invitations to the Mayor](#) (and other Councillors)
- [Presentations to Councillors](#)
- Councillor Ward Engagements events, generally held monthly
- Councillor attendance at many and varied events across the Municipality and over the year
- [Councillor committee membership](#)
- Various methods of contacting the [City](#) and individual [Councillors](#)

Public Question Time is not a requirement of Council under the Local Government Act. This Council has provided for Public Question Time in the Governance Rules adopted by the Council to ensure greater public transparency and accountability. The Council asks that the opportunity to ask a question of the Council in this forum is treated respectfully and within these rules.

3.2. Pre-Registered Questions

Question 1:

From: Chloe of Bendigo

Topic: Community Safety and Youth Behaviour

Question:

What proactive measures is the City of Greater Bendigo currently implementing to address rising youth aggression, and are there plans to introduce early intervention or education programs focused on emotional regulation and respectful behaviour within schools and community settings?

Answer:

The City of Greater Bendigo recognises these community concerns and is actively working with our partners to respond. Guided by the Council Plan - particularly Goal 4.3: Our children and young people thrive and Goal 2.3: We are safe, happy and healthy - we are taking a proactive and multi-layered approach that focuses on safety, support, early intervention and creating positive pathways for young people.

The City works closely with Victoria Police, youth services, schools and community organisations to identify and respond to localised issues early. This includes sharing information, coordinating supports, and ensuring young people and their families can access assistance when it is needed.

The City provides a youth space (Yo Bendigo) and programs that are designed to be inclusive, supportive and safe. These environments help young people build positive relationships, feel connected and access guidance and mentoring. The City partners with schools, training providers, community groups and employers to provide and promote:

- mentoring opportunities
- leadership development
- pathways to work

While the City does not run school-based curriculum directly, we actively collaborate with youth services, education providers, and community agencies to strengthen early intervention and emotional wellbeing initiatives.

Question 2:

From: Adrian of Strathfieldsaye

Topic: Communication

Question:

Do our councillors receive all correspondence sent to them or is it screened through the Corporate Governance Team or staff department?

Answer:

Yes, Councillors receive all correspondence. Correspondence received via the mailroom or via customer service is recorded prior to being passed on. No communication is withheld from Councillors.

Question 3:

From: Geoff of Strathfieldsaye

Topic: Surplus Land for Sale

Question:

Can and/or will the Mayor or council staff inform the local residents of the progress regarding the sale of our Public Open Space at 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye?

Answer:

City officers are currently taking administrative steps to prepare the site for sale. It is likely the site will be put on the market later in 2026.

Question 4:

From: Trevor of Patya

Topic: Bendigo first payable gold sale

Question:

Will the City of Greater Bendigo assist me to formally recognise the roles that 'the shepherds' - Christian Asquith, Benjamin Bannister and James Graham - living in the Bendigo Hut in 1851, had in Bendigo's golden history (in time for the 175th anniversary of Gold in November 2026)?

Answer:

Thank you for your question. City officers have commenced discussions about the 175th anniversary of the discovery of gold and how it might be recognised. A City officer will contact you to discuss your suggestion.

Question 5:

From: Marissa of Bendigo

Topic: Item 10.5 Changes to Aquatic Services

Question:

What formal community consultation was undertaken with pool users, schools, disability groups, elderly residents, sporting clubs and the broader Bendigo community prior to the recommendation being prepared to close Bendigo East Pool during winter months, particularly given the facility's shallow depth, accessibility, calmer environment, convenient parking and sheltered areas which many residents rely on, as well as the number of high school-aged swimmers who currently travel to the pool by bus after school and may find alternative venues difficult to access?

Answer:

As detailed in the public report, Council's adopted Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy (Strategy) provides guidance on the provision of aquatic services across Greater Bendigo. The process of developing the Strategy included community engagement, which identified a community desire for access to a year-round, heated, outdoor 50m pool service. Importantly, under the proposed changes, the community would continue to have access to such a service. Bendigo East Swimming Pool being transitioned to a summer season only facility is supported by the Strategy.

The report also outlines engagement that has occurred with the Bendigo East Swimming Pool Committee, including that the 2025/26 funding agreement with the Committee included a requirement for a review to be undertaken by the end of February 2026. The Committee was provided with advice on the in-principle outcome of the review and suggested changes on February 27, 2026, noting any changes would require a decision of Council.

Question 6:

From: Naomi of Spring Gully

Topic: Bendigo East Pool

Question:

With cost seemingly not the deciding factor what is the 'risk' we've heard that the Bendigo East pool decisions may be based upon?

Answer:

As detailed in the public report, providing public aquatic services is a significant undertaking, with inherent complexity and numerous risks involved. Factors such as changes to safety requirements, and increased capital and operating costs, are placing growing pressure on aquatic services.

The report notes that these factors are placing growing pressure on all aquatic services, particularly those managed by volunteers, and this is particularly the case for a volunteer managed pool that is open year-round.

Question 7:

From: Chris of Junortoun

Topic: Bendigo East Pool

Question:

Has Council compared the full costs of opening Faith Leech Aquatic Centre versus Bendigo East Pool for the winter season, comparing expected gas use, utility costs, staff costs for the same opening hours, yard maintenance, change room cleaning, upgraded lighting and any other on costs./ overheads Given gas usage price per kilojoule would be the same, has council extrapolated expected gas use comparisons for the two pools from previous usage. ie which uses more gas to maintain pool at the constant temperature range. What are the figures. Without them how can councillors make an objective decision for this winter season. Given that East meets the risk management / safety requirements currently or it wouldnt be operating and is to open nex summer season then it seems costs / value for money / limiting losses is the major deciding factor for this winter season.

Answer:

The public report details that options cost modelling was undertaken by officers and presented at Council Briefing to help inform Council decision-making. The report also notes that cost modelling results were not included in the report due to the commercial-in-confidence nature of the information. The report also outlines that Council's adopted Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy proposes major plant and equipment renewal works at Faith Leech Aquatic Centre from 2027/28, including investigating the feasibility of moving away from gas boilers to electric heat pumps. Work has commenced on the feasibility study. Moving to electric heat pumps would also contribute to the aims of Council's adopted Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

Question 8:

From: Claire of Bendigo

Topic: Bendigo East Pool

Question:

Why is Faith Leech described in the agenda for this meeting as Bendigo's premier outdoor aquatic facility? The attendance figures published by the council in 2023 would suggest otherwise. More than 73 000 visits in a year for BEP, as opposed to just over 17 000 for FLAC. Wouldn't this suggest that BEP and not FLAC is the premier facility?

Answer:

Faith Leech Aquatic Centre is publicly referenced - including on the City's website - as Greater Bendigo's premier outdoor aquatic facility.

Question 9:

From: Robert of Bendigo

Topic: Bendigo East Pool

Question:

The council is voting on a major change of operations to Bendigo East Pool, and making a significant commitment to a year round open water pool at Faith Leech. This is a very significant update to the 2023 CAFS strategy. Would it be possible for the council to meet stakeholders prior to a final decision on this to allow discussion with a broader group of community. A 2 week window (including a long weekend) for discussion and feedback seems unnecessarily short to discuss this important legacy plan for our region.

Answer:

As detailed in the public report, Bendigo East Swimming Pool being transitioned to a summer season only facility is aligned with the Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy. Importantly, under the proposed changes, the community would continue to have access to a year-round, heated, outdoor 50 metre pool.

The report also outlines engagement that has occurred with the Bendigo East Swimming Pool Committee, including that the 2025/26 funding agreement with the Committee included a requirement for a review to occur by the end of February 2026.

Question 10:

From: Elle of Nerrina

Topic: Bendigo East Pool

Question:

As a senior swimmer with Bendigo East Swimming Club, what specific infrastructure upgrades and operational arrangements will Council complete and formally commit to at the Faith Leech Aquatic Centre before requiring Bendigo East Swimming Pool, including guaranteeing the club access to a minimum of four lanes in a 50-metre configuration at all scheduled training times?

Answer:

The public report details that City staff will work with Swimming Bendigo to:

- support a collaborative approach to lane availability and management for Greater Bendigo's three swimming clubs over the winter season.
- identify squad and training infrastructure requirements to assist in meeting the needs of all swimming clubs.

The report also notes that City staff have provided Bendigo East Swimming Club with lane availability assurances.

Question 11:

From: Phil of Ironbark

Topic: Bendigo East Pool

Question:

Section 17.12.7 of Council's Governance Rules states that petitions with 10 or more signatures will be tabled at a Council Meeting and referred to the CEO or relevant Director for consideration or report. Given that the Bendigo East Pool petition now contains a few thousand signatures from community members, how and when does Council intend to formally receive and process this petition in accordance with the Governance Rules so that the community's submission can be properly considered prior to any final decision regarding aquatic services?

Answer:

Council's Governance Rules provide a clear process for petitions with 10 or more signatures. Under Rule 17.12, those petitions are required to be tabled at a Council meeting and then referred by resolution to the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director for consideration and response.

In this instance, the Bendigo East Pool petition was not received in time to be included on the agenda for tonight's meeting, and as a result it cannot be formally tabled at this meeting under the Governance Rules.

However, to ensure transparency, the list of petition signatories has been provided to all Councillors ahead of tonight's meeting so that Councillors are aware of the level of community interest relating to Bendigo East Pool as they consider the report before them.

Once the petition has been finalised and provided to council, it will be formally tabled at a future Council meeting and dealt with in accordance with the Governance Rules.

Question 12 & 13:

From: Rob of Strathfieldsaye

Topic: Strathfieldsaye sports and community precinct – irrigation and rabbit management

Question:

Can Council provide advice and explanations regarding the irrigation, maintenance and rabbit management of the baseball precinct at the Strathfieldsaye Sports and Community Precinct.

Answer:

In agreement with the submitter, these questions will be taken on notice, response in writing provided as soon as available.

3.3. Gallery Questions

Question 1:

From: Megan of Strathfieldsaye

Topic: 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye

Question:

The local residents surround 3 -4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye, have not received any answers regarding their questions or alternative solutions offered. What avenues are available for residents to speak with Councillors or council staff?

Answer:

While residents might not agree, I feel that this question was answered during the previous council meeting decision in November 2025 and a number of correspondence since.

Question 2:

From: Lachie of Bendigo

Topic: Aquatic Strategy

Question:

Is it time for a review of the Aquatic Strategy?

Answer:

Answer taken on notice - but yes this is being discussed.

Question 3:

From: Marie from Strathfieldsaye

Topic: 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye

Question:

Do the Council believe that open space is not surplus land waiting to be developed? It is a vital part of what makes a community livable. If so why cant the local community have input to a win-win situation regarding the development of 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye?

Answer:

I wont be able to give you a direct answer, as you question is asking me to re-debate something that has already been addressed.

Question 4:

From: Sharon of Bendigo East

Topic: Bendigo East Pool

Question:

Why are you voting on something based on a strategy that clearly stated that Bendigo East Swimming Pool should revert to a summer only pool once extensive changes, renovations and improvements have been made to Brennan Park? That is the recommendation in the strategy and that has not occurred.

Answer:

The report tonight acknowledges that the strategy needs to be reviewed and re-developed, but it does not take away from some of the issues that the report raises. We are having to address it here and now. That is what the debate at the table will be about.

Question 5:

From: Geoff of Strathfieldsaye

Topic: 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye

Question:

Have the Councillors been made aware of the alternative solutions presented to them regarding 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye

Answer:

This question has been answered previously and it request that we revisit a previously debated decision and we cant do that.

Question 6:

From: Chris of Junortoun

Topic: East Bendigo Pool

Question:

Given the resignation of the area manager of Belgravia Leisure and as a matter of public record that he plead guilty to fraud in relation public grants and that he has an adverser finding from IBAC in relation to his role as a councillor with an Council. Can council assure us that there was no undue influence from them in any negotiations?

Answer:

This question will be taken on notice.

Question 7:

From: Gary of Bendigo East

Topic: East Bendigo Pool

Question:

Has the difficulty in obtaining access to certain pools been considered as a part of this decision

Answer:

Accessibility has been considered, it has been a discussion point between Councillors, at briefings and part of the advocacy from the community. It will factor into tonight's decision.

Question 8:

From: Ebony of Kennington

Topic: East Bendigo Pool

Question:

Has there been an cost benefit analysis conducted considering the usage and projections between East Bendigo Pool and Faith Leach? Has this been made available to Councillors.

Answer:

This information has been provided to Councillors but has not been included in the agenda as it is commercial in confidence.

Question 9:

From: Kaylene of Long Gully

Topic: Bendigo Town Hall

Question:

Has there been an more updates n the town hall?

Answer:

Question taken on notice.

4. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No attendee declared a conflict of interest.

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) (**the Act**) provides that a relevant person must disclose a conflict of interest in respect of a matter and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee meeting and any action in relation to that matter.

The procedure for declaring a conflict of interest at a Council Meeting is set out at rule 18.2.4 of the Governance Rules.

Section 126 of the Act sets out that a relevant person (Councillor, member of a delegated Committee or member of Council staff) has a conflict of interest if the relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** or a **material conflict of interest**.

A relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** in a matter if an impartial, fair minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A relevant person has a **material conflict of interest** in a matter if an *affected person* would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

5. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Recommended Motion

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on February 16, 2026, as circulated, be taken as read and confirmed.

Previous minute location:

<https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings#past-meetings>

RESOLUTION

That the recommended motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Owen Cosgriff

Seconded: Cr Andrea Metcalf

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-165

6. WARD REPORTS

6.1. Ward Report - Ravenswood

Ward Report - Ravenswood, Cr Damien Hurrell presented a report on various issues and meeting/events, including:

Much has been happening in Ravenswood ward and the City of Greater Bendigo.

I would like to begin my report by noting that I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Lockwood Community Hub Association last month. The Association are a relatively new group of locals that has come together to organise events and build community spirit in Lockwood, and they have big ideas for the future of the district. I congratulate the new committee and look forward to supporting them as they move forward.

On to a matter that includes, but extends well beyond the boundaries of Ravenswood Ward: Many people will know that we are coming to the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month. During the month, many Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, and the meal after sunset is called Iftar. The Bendigo Islamic Association arranges weekly community Iftar meals, and I and fellow councillors have been pleased to be invited and to attend these Iftar events over the last month.

It has not been an easy time for our Muslim community, many of whom live in Ravenswood Ward, with many people mourning, or worried for the safety of family and friends, especially in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iran. It has not been made easier by some of the leaders of our nation, one of whom in particular has made remarks, which I will not repeat, that called into question the goodness of all adherents to the Muslim Faith. I want to say that I utterly disagree with and reject those remarks. The generosity, hospitality, and kindness we were shown was exemplary. I was fortunate enough to sit next to the Imam of Bendigo one evening, and he is a thoughtful, learned, compassionate and caring man who is a credit and asset to his community and to us all. I could say so much more, but let me just say that I am glad that we have a thriving Muslim community in Bendigo and I look forward to celebrating with them when the Mosque is complete and open.

Coming back to more local matters, I just this morning met with Judy and Wayne and their staff who are hard at work bringing Happy Jacks back to life as a farm cafe. I have been given permission to say that while work is continuing, they now have limited opening hours for takeaway food and drinks and will be continuing to expand their offering over the coming weeks and months. I know that many people have very fond memories of Happy Jacks, so if you're out Lockwood South way, please consider dropping in and supporting this new business.

Conclude with acknowledging the Kangaroo Flat Cricket Club under 18 boys team, who over the weekend have won the Bendigo District Cricket Association premiership

The ladder leading team made 8 for 221 and scored a convincing victory over Sandhurst who were bowled out for 43. Kangaroo Flat had many contributors with

bat, ball and in the field in an even display of cricketing prowess that hopefully points to future success for the club.

I also congratulate all the other premierships winning teams in the many divisions, and wish Sandhurst and Strathdale-Maristians all the best for the division one grand final this weekend.

As we move ahead I'm looking forward to many events, including Bendigo's iconic Easter Fair. I'm hoping to take a more active role in this year's Fair: if you see me, please come up and say hello!

6.2. Ward Report - Whipstick

Ward Report - Whipstick, Cr Owen Cosgriff presented a report on various issues and meeting/events, including:

Dahlia and Arts Opening this Friday, Parade on 21/03

Met with various stakeholders in Eaglehawk about how to improve live music and events in town.

Met with Woodvale Hall ctte with regards to improvements to their grounds.

I attended 2 iftar dinners during the holy month of Ramadan. The first one was hours after the Apartheid state of Israel and the USA launched their criminal assault on Iran. As I sat there surrounded by laughing children, a tomahawk missile was launched from a US ship and ripped through the bodies of 170 school girls in a city called Minab. An unspeakable crime but only the first of many. In the weeks since I have had cause to reflect on this city's response to the tidal wave of Islamophobia that has crashed on the heads of our neighbors as a result, and I have found it utterly lacking.

It is completely insufficient to point to our 'welcoming cities' accreditation or to pat ourselves on the back for having attended a dinner in the face of racist 'one nation' thugs bashing people at mosque events as happened in Ballarat last week. For my failure and the failure of the city I am profoundly and sincerely sorry.

I spoke to a young person at the Iftar dinner who told me something truly heartbreaking. They said that they feared going to school knowing that ¼ of the parents of their peers were thinking of voting for the racist one nation party. That those parents wanted this child deported or worse. No one around this table can tell me that we have done nearly enough to make this child feel safe in their own community. For my part in that I am sorry.

I also attended the Lockwood ward candidate q&a in Long gully and a resident asked a question which made me angry on her behalf. I didn't catch her name and the question itself was reasonable, she wanted more footpaths in a part of town which is notorious for not having them. What made me angry was that she felt compelled to preface her reasonable request by saying "I know Long gully has a low rate base but..." Like she was Oliver holding out a bowl, this grown woman felt the need to almost apologize for coming from a working class community. This can only come from a lifetime of low expectations of what the council can do for you. Certainly Long gully was neglected by their previous councillor but this stems from something more systematic. For my part in that I am sorry.

Finally I want to tell you about a conversation I had with a long gully resident named Maggie. Over a cup of tea and some bikkies she told me that she spent two decades of her working life as a council aged care worker. She spoke about how enmeshed in the lives of the people she supported. How she knew their kids and grandkids and how she attended their funerals. She also told me how disappointed she was that when the time came that she required these services that they weren't there for her. I want to say that although I was not party to that decision, that I am sorry for that bitter experience.

6.3. Ward Report - Axedale

Ward Report - Axedale Cr Chatley presented a report on various issues and meeting/events, including:

Good evening everyone, and thank you for being here.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge our Mayor, our Chief Executive Officer and the Executive Leadership Team for their leadership and continued support. And to our community members, our cultural groups, our volunteers and partners — thank you. Your voices, your effort and your spirit are what make Greater Bendigo strong, inclusive and resilient.

Let me walk you through the key areas of work over this period.

Council, Governance & Strategic Engagement

I continued strengthening relationships across Council, including attending the Councillors, ELT and Partners Christmas Dinner — a valuable moment to reflect on our shared progress.

I joined Phoenix FM for a post-Council Meeting interview with Anne Conway, participated in the Bendigo 2050 Leadership Summit, and attended the JCAG Flood Workshop, where we discussed preparedness, resilience and community safety.

There were ongoing conversations with the Mayor about public matters and local issues, and regular collaboration with fellow Councillors through phone and virtual platforms.

I also attended the Fosterville Gold Mine ERC Site Tour and the ERC Meeting on the 11th of February.

Community & Cultural Engagement

This period included a number of meaningful community events.

I joined the Bendigo Malayalee Association for their Christmas and New Year celebration, where I delivered a community address recognising cultural diversity.

I attended the BDAC Survival Day Dawn Service — a moment of reflection, respect and solidarity.

There were multiple International Women’s Day events, where I had the opportunity to strengthen networks, share insights and support women across sectors. I also attended the VLGA IWD Lunch, “Give to Gian: A Path to Gender Equality.”

And during Ramadan, I joined the Community Iftar — a beautiful expression of intercultural understanding and community cohesion.

Civic, Arts & Heritage Activities

I attended the Barbara Rae Sculpture unveiling, celebrating local artistic contribution and storytelling.

I also joined the National Trust Tour of the Old Bendigo Law Courts — an important reminder of our heritage and the responsibility we hold in preserving it.

Local Issues, Advocacy & On-Site Matters

I met on-site with resident David Seiler regarding the proposed footpath on Emu Creek Road in Strathfieldsaye. Concerns around pedestrian safety and accessibility were raised and follow-up actions have been initiated.

Summary

Despite reduced travel due to health priorities, my focus has remained clear and consistent.

I have continued to prioritise:

- Transparent and accessible community representation
- Strong governance and strategic leadership

- Support for cultural, civic and heritage initiatives
- Advancing gender equality conversations through IWD participation
- Advocacy for local infrastructure and community safety
- Open communication with residents, colleagues and partners

My commitment to serving our community remains steady — with integrity, compassion and genuine connection.

Thank you for your trust, your engagement and your ongoing partnership in shaping a stronger Greater Bendigo.

7. MAYORAL PRESENTATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nil

8. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

8.1. Joint Letter Acknowledgment – Local Homelessness Executive Summary

Petitions and joint letters with ten (10) or more signatures are included in the agenda or tabled at the meeting, unless there is a separate legal process (ie Statutory Planning).

The following joint letter has been received from residents and ratepayers as outlined below:

We, the undersigned residents and rate payers of The City of Greater Bendigo, formally request that the council address the issues below promptly.

There is an imminent need for long and short term emergency shelter required as there is a proven lack of crisis beds (homeless and displaced) in Bendigo and surrounds leaving vulnerable citizens exposed to the elements and increasing risks of victims and perpetrators of crime.

Recent violent incidents have created a climate of fear that can only be addressed by providing stable, managed environments for the displaced.

It is time to acknowledge the critical link between the current housing crisis, extreme weather conditions and the rising crime rate (including the tragic death of Joshua Penny) and prioritize this site for secure, supervised accommodation.

A request of council staff to investigate the immediate conversion of existing infrastructure - such as this vacant premises as mentioned below- rather than waiting for long-term construction, to save lives now.

I am a resident of Golden Square. I have collected over 100 signatures from locals who are concerned about the link between homelessness and the rising crime rate in our area.

We have a proposal for the adaptive reuse of the e.g. Old Golden Square primary and/or similar buildings for emergency shelter.

There would be an imminent need to also have services attend the residents/office/reception and address requirements as per necessary, eg. Mental health, check in/out, and so forth.

Of course adjustments would be necessary to the building in order to advocate the standards of such residential arrangements; however as sewerage, plumbing and kitchen facilities are already on hand, separated rooms for family accommodation etc would be advised, short term camping ability on the grounds could be also considered for those simply requiring facilities and communal/services ability.

A possibility of kitchen staff and communal meals could be arranged from the kitchen area.

Consideration to event planning/communal skill/rehabilitation/activities if desired to attend.

Possible security staff day/night to also increase safety and employment at the facility. I am the chief petitioner. I am not a public speaker and would prefer not to address the chamber but, I request that this petition be formally tabled, and written response provided to myself.

I would like to formally present this petition to you and ask that you advocate for this on our behalf at the next Council meeting, so I do not have to speak publicly.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this urgent matter which is on the increase within our community and surrounds.

Signatures – Approximately 100

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Receive the joint letter.
2. A response be prepared within two (2) meetings.

RESOLUTION

That the recommended motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Karen Corr

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-166

8.2. Petition Acknowledgement - Weeroona Avenue Crossing Executive Summary

Petitions and joint letters with ten (10) or more signatures are included in the agenda or tabled at the meeting, unless there is a separate legal process (ie Statutory Planning).

The following petition has been received from residents and ratepayers as outlined below:

As part of a Monday morning U3A walking group we are concerned that crossing Weeroona Ave from the Rowing Club to the Bendigo Creek track on the other side and returning is a safety problem.

The railway line which bisects Weeroona Ave is raised and cars coming from Napier Street are blind to any people crossing further along until they are over the rise.

As the line of sight across the railway line is obscured until vehicles mount the rise and proceed down the other side, our group is often caught unawares halfway across the road.

This happens weekly and our group of retired people, some with mobility issues, are left scrambling to get to the other side.

We are asking that the City of Greater Bendigo Council and VIC ROADS give consideration to creating a safe crossing here for all the community.

Signatures - 26

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Receive the petition
2. A response be prepared within two meetings.

RESOLUTION

That the recommended motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Owen Cosgriff

Seconded: Cr Andrea Metcalf

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-167

8.3. Petition Acknowledgement - 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye Executive Summary

Petitions and joint letters with ten (10) or more signatures are included in the agenda or tabled at the meeting, unless there is a separate legal process (ie Statutory Planning).

The following petition has been received from residents and ratepayers as outlined below:

We request that CoGB councillors and council staff pause work on the preparation for the sale of the land declared surplus until a small group have the opportunity to discuss the matter further and get clarification of a number of points reported to council prior to their decision of 17 November 2025.

Signatures - 113

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Receive the petition
2. A response be prepared within two meetings.

RESOLUTION

That the recommended motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Shivali Chatley

Seconded: Nil

LOST

RESOLUTION

1. That Council acknowledges the receipt of Petition 2615288 - 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye.
2. Clarifies that the decision regarding 3-4 Lindsay Court Strathfieldsaye was made at the 17th November 2025 meeting. That this petition will not reopen the decision and no response will be prepared for the petition. The decision is consistent with the Public Open Space strategy and the decision-making principle as outlined in the Local Government Act 2020.

The Councillors considered and made its decisions fairly, with consideration of the fairness and equity community guidance provided as a part of the Council

Plan develop process - "Decisions must be inclusive, accessible and considerate of diverse needs, ensuring no one is unfairly disadvantaged".

3. We thank the petitioner for the time it took to prepare this petition.

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf
Seconded: Cr Damien Hurrell

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-168

9. PLANNING ITEMS

Nil

10. REPORT ITEMS

10.1. Arbiter's Report - Response

Executive Summary

In response to the item 10.1 - Arbiters Report presented at the February 16, 2026 Council Meeting, an apology is to be tabled.

Cr Cosgiff's response to Arbiter's report tabled at February 16, 2026 meeting:

I have been compelled by the Local government inspectorate to make an apology. By now residents have had a chance to read the report and will have no doubt made up their own minds as to whether they consider it to have been a good use of councillors time or state tax money.

I want to thank all of the people who have emailed, called or bailed me up in the street to support me. I even had a dad at a kids birthday at one of those bounce places who was at another kids party come up and pat me on the back.

To my detractors, I've hardly heard a peep and honestly I'm disappointed. Lift your game.

As is hopefully clear from my ward report, my mind has not been fixed on the feelings of the powerful people sat around this table; it has instead been laser focused on those that feel powerless in our community. I am here to represent them, they are all that I care about. If in my pursuit of their interests I came across as Brash or too Colloquial for your taste then I am sorry. It was not my intention to upset you, it is my sole intention to serve them.

As Popeye was wont to say 'I am's what I am's' my only suggestion to you going forward is that If you have a problem with me in the future that you talk to me about it rather than running straight to the inspectorate. I believe that's what the people of the city expect of us as their elected representatives and it will be a much more pleasant way to spend the next 3 years.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

That the item listed as 10.5 **Changes to Aquatic Services** on the agenda be considered before the item 10.2 **Councillor Led Motion for MAV State Council Meeting**.

RESOLUTION

That the item listed as 10.5 Changes to Aquatic Services on the agenda be considered before the item 10.2 Councillor Led Motion for MAV State Council Meeting.

Moved: Cr Thomas Prince
Seconded: Cr Andrea Metcalf

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-170

10.5. Changes to Aquatic Services

Executive Summary

Council's adopted Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy (Strategy) provides guidance on the provision of aquatic services across Greater Bendigo. The process of developing the Strategy included community engagement, which identified a community desire for access to a year-round, heated, outdoor 50m pool service.

Currently, both Faith Leech Aquatic Centre (FLAC) and Bendigo East Swimming Pool (BESP) provide the community with access to heated, outdoor 50m pools, with FLAC closing over winter and BESP remaining open year-round. Both Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre and Peter Krenz Centre provide year-round access to heated, indoor 50m pools. FLAC is managed under a commercial contract and BESP is managed by a volunteer-based committee. All other volunteer-managed aquatic facilities funded by the City are only open for the summer season.

Providing public aquatic services is a significant undertaking, with inherent complexity and numerous risks involved. Factors such as changes to safety requirements, and increased capital and operating costs, are placing growing pressure on aquatic services, particularly those managed by volunteers. This means there is an increased risk that service delivery will be impacted over time.

This report recommends maintaining a year-round, heated, outdoor 50m pool service but changing the service delivery location from BESP to FLAC, consistent with FLAC being Bendigo's premier outdoor aquatic facility. In addition, it recommends BESP transition to a summer season only heated facility. The transition is proposed to occur by the end of this financial year (June 30, 2026). The supporting rationale is further detailed in the report.

The recommended changes aim to make best use of the City's assets and provide the greatest level of service assurance to the community based on existing resources. The changes would align service delivery (year-round, heated, outdoor 50m pool) with the most appropriate location based on current and planned investment. The recommendations consider the growing requirements and challenges related to managing aquatic facilities.

MOTION

That Council resolve to Standing Orders be suspended to allow Cr Corr to complete debate remarks.

RESOLUTION

That the motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Damien Hurrell
Seconded: Cr Aaron Spong

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-171

Standing Orders were resumed.

MOTION

That the Mayor vacates the role of Chair temporarily to participate in the debate

RESOLUTION

That the motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Thomas Prince
Seconded: Cr Karen Corr

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-172

MOTION

That the Deputy Mayor vacates the role of Chair and the Mayor returns.

RESOLUTION

That the motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Owen Cosgriff
Seconded: Cr Damien Hurrell

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-173

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. **Endorse** maintaining community access to a year-round, heated, outdoor 50m pool service, with Faith Leech Aquatic Centre nominated as the service delivery location.
2. **Endorse** the transition of the Bendigo East Swimming Pool to a summer season only heated facility by June 30, 2026, with the provision of pool heating to be reviewed in the event of an infrastructure failure or changed community needs.
3. **Note** the August 28, 2023 Council resolution that formed part of Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy adoption stated: "If a suitably skilled Community Committee of Management is not able to be established, and adhere to the terms of the resolution, that the Bendigo East Swimming Pool is permanently closed" and **agree** that the continued operation of Bendigo East Swimming Pool should no longer be contingent upon a "Community Committee of Management".
4. **Recognise and thank** the Bendigo East Swimming Pool Committee for its efforts in operating the facility and providing a community service over many years.
5. **Endorse** officers providing transition support to the Bendigo East Swimming Pool Committee and Bendigo East Amateur Swimming Club, with the facility remaining available to the Bendigo East Amateur Swimming Club as its 'home base'.
6. **Endorse** officers taking the necessary steps to ensure there is a suitably skilled and qualified operator in place for Bendigo East Swimming Pool prior to the commencement of the 2026/27 summer season.
7. **Note** Council will receive a future report about any recommended Community Aquatic Facility Strategy refinement, including future infrastructure and service needs.

RESOLUTION

That Council:

1. **Endorse** maintaining community access to a year-round, heated, outdoor 50m pool service, with Faith Leech Aquatic Centre nominated as the service delivery location.
2. **Endorse** the transition of the Bendigo East Swimming Pool to a summer season only heated facility by June 30, 2026, with the provision of pool heating to be reviewed in the event of an infrastructure failure or changed community needs.

3. **Note** the August 28, 2023 Council resolution that formed part of Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy adoption stated: “If a suitably skilled Community Committee of Management is not able to be established, and adhere to the terms of the resolution, that the Bendigo East Swimming Pool is permanently closed” and **agree** that the continued operation of Bendigo East Swimming Pool should no longer be contingent upon a “Community Committee of Management”.
4. **Recognise and thank** the Bendigo East Swimming Pool Committee for its efforts in operating the facility and providing a community service over many years.
5. **Endorse** officers providing transition support to the Bendigo East Swimming Pool Committee and Bendigo East Amateur Swimming Club, with the facility remaining available to the Bendigo East Amateur Swimming Club as its ‘home base’.
6. **Endorse** officers taking the necessary steps to ensure there is a suitably skilled and qualified operator in place for Bendigo East Swimming Pool prior to the commencement of the 2026/27 summer season.
7. **Note** Council will receive a future report about any recommended Community Aquatic Facility Strategy refinement, including future infrastructure and service needs.

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Damien Hurrell

Those voting **for** the Motion: **5**

For: Cr Owen Cosgriff, Cr Karen Corr, Cr Damien Hurrell, Cr Andrea Metcalf and Cr Thomas Prince

Those voting **against** the Motion: **3+0:**

Against: Cr Abhishek Awasthi, Cr Shivali Chatley and Cr Aaron Spong

Abstained: Nil

Absent: Nil

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-174

10.2. Councillor Led Motion for MAV State Council Meeting (Mayor Cr Prince)

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the motion prepared by Mayor Cr Thomas Prince for submission to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council Meeting scheduled for May 29, 2026.

MOTION

That the Mayor vacates the role of Chair temporarily to participate in the debate for item 10.2.

RESOLUTION

That the motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Thomas Prince
Seconded: Cr Owen Cosgriff

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-175

MOTION

That the Deputy Mayor vacates the role of Chair and the Mayor returns.

RESOLUTION

That the motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Thomas Prince
Seconded: Cr Andrea Metcalf

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-176

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Endorse the Motion prepared by Mayor Cr Thomas Prince for submission to the Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting on May 29, 2026; and
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor changes to improve the wording of the motion and/or to update the motion relative to any changes

to the issue that may have occurred between the Council Meeting and the date of lodgment with the MAV.

RESOLUTION

That Council:

1. Endorse the Motion prepared by Mayor Cr Thomas Prince for submission to the Municipal Association of Victoria State Council Meeting on May 29, 2026; and
2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor changes to improve the wording of the motion and/or to update the motion relative to any changes to the issue that may have occurred between the Council Meeting and the date of lodgment with the MAV.

Moved: Cr Thomas Prince

Seconded: Cr Damien Hurrell

Those voting **for** the Motion: **5**

For: Cr Abhishek Awasthi, Cr Shivali Chatley, Cr Karen Corr, Cr Damien Hurrell and Cr Thomas Prince

Those voting **against** the Motion: **3+0:**

Against: Cr Owen Cosgriff, Cr Andrea Metcalf and Cr Aaron Spong

Abstained: Nil

Absent: Nil

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-177

10.3. Quarterly Finance Report - December 2025 Executive Summary

The Quarter 2 (Q2) Financial and Capital Management Report (Q2 report) provides an update on financial performance for the 2025/26 financial year. The report provides a summary of revenue and expenses, rates for the municipality, and cash management for the quarter.

The report includes;

- Income Statement – Year to Date (YTD) and Forecast as compared to budget.
- Balance Sheet – As at 31 December 2025
- Key financial sustainability indicators
- Borrowings position as at 31 December 2025
- Cash position as at 31 December 2025

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Receive the report comparing budget and actual revenues and expenses to December 31, 2025, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).

RESOLUTION

That Council:

1. Receive the report comparing budget and actual revenues and expenses to December 31, 2025, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Abhishek Awasthi

Those voting **for** the Motion: **8**

For: Cr Abhishek Awasthi, Cr Shivali Chatley, Cr Owen Cosgriff, Cr Karen Corr, Cr Damien Hurrell, Cr Andrea Metcalf, Cr Thomas Prince and Cr Aaron Spong

Those voting **against** the Motion: **0+0:**

Against: Nil
Abstained: Nil

Absent: Nil

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-178

10.4. Contracts Awarded Under Delegation Executive Summary

To inform Council of contracts signed under Delegation

Recommended Motion

That Council:

1. Note the contracts awarded under delegation during the previous reporting period.

RESOLUTION

That the recommended motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Abhishek Awasthi

Seconded: Cr Karen Corr

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-179

11. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER PARTIES

Nil

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil

13. URGENT BUSINESS

Nil

14. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor, Cr Thomas Prince, tabled a report on attendance at the following meetings and events:

Over the past month, my work as Mayor has really been about being present. Present in conversations, present in communities, and present where decisions today shape Bendigo's future tomorrow. What stood out most wasn't the number of events, but the *why* behind them and the people who made them meaningful.

Community, Belonging & Shared Experiences

This month offered many moments that reminded me just how connected our community is. Attending several Community Iftar dinners throughout Ramadan was a powerful reminder of the values we share; generosity, reflection and care for one another. Celebrations such as Holi – the Festival of Colours and welcoming new students at La Trobe University O-Week showed Bendigo at its best: open, vibrant and inclusive.

Equally important were the quieter moments of listening. Through Ward Listening Posts, community forums in Long Gully and Marong, and informal conversations with residents and business owners, people shared what's working, what's frustrating, and what they hope will improve.

Speaking Up for Bendigo

Advocating for Bendigo remains a central part of the role. A roundtable with the Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, alongside discussions with regional leaders, provided an opportunity to highlight the challenges and opportunities facing regional cities, from climate resilience to energy transition.

Closer to home, much of my focus has been on ensuring growth and development decisions are made carefully and transparently. Engagements around planning applications and discussions with community stakeholders reinforced the importance of balancing progress with neighbourhood character, liveability and long term community confidence.

Leadership & Good Decision Making

Behind the scenes, much of the work this month focused on ensuring Council continues to operate with integrity and purpose. I chaired Councillor Briefings, participated in the Audit & Risk Committee, and had the privilege of officiating the Youth Council Special Meeting to elect the Youth Mayor and Deputies. A moment that always leaves me optimistic about the future of local leadership.

Ongoing learning also remains important, and recent communications training reinforced the responsibility that comes with leading in a public and fast-moving environment.

Celebrating People, Effort & Achievement

One of the great privileges of being Mayor is recognising the people who give their time, talent and energy to this city. This month included presenting student leadership badges at local schools, talking with students about rules, laws and community, and supporting youth leadership at every opportunity.

Community pride was also on full display at events such as the Bendigo Sports Star Gala, Bendigo TAFE Industry Excellence Awards, the Bendigo Gold Nugget Gift, and major sporting and cultural events across the city. These moments remind us that Bendigo's success is built on volunteers, educators, athletes, carers and community leaders quietly doing the work that keeps our city thriving.

Health, Wellbeing & Looking After One Another

Health and wellbeing were strong themes this month. From the unveiling of the da Vinci Xi surgical robot donors board at St John of God Hospital, to walking alongside the community at the SPAN suicide awareness walk and participating in Clean Up Australia Day, these events reinforced how much progress is made when people come together around shared responsibility and care.

Looking Ahead

As I reflect on the month, I'm reminded that leadership isn't defined by how many rooms you walk into, but by what you carry forward from them. The ideas shared, concerns raised, and hopes expressed this month will continue to guide my work in the weeks ahead.

Bendigo is a city that speaks honestly about its challenges, celebrates its people loudly, and looks to the future with confidence. I'm grateful to play a part in that journey, and I look forward to what we'll continue to shape together.

List of events since the last meeting:

- Planning application consultation meeting regarding CA 4B Section L, Saunders Street, West Bendigo.
- Spoke at the Sandhurst Launch of Caritas Australia's Project Compassion in Hargreaves Mall.
- 66th Birthday Consul-General of Japan Mr Furuya Tokuro held in Melbourne.
- Roundtable meeting with The Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy.
- Bendigo Agricultural Show Society Committee of Management meeting.
- Visit to Bendigo Library with The Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy.
- Roundtable discussion with Hargreaves Mall landlords.
- David Boon sportsman's night at Marong Cricket Club.
- Sod Turning for the Bendigo Bowls and Croquet Club.
- St John of God Hospital unveiling donors board for the da Vinci Xi surgical robot.

- Presentation of Junior School Council Leadership badges at Quarry Hill Primary School.
- Cr Awasthi's Kennington Ward Listening Post held at TOMS Bendigo.
- Spoke at the Community Iftar Ramadan (Sunday 22 February).
- Spoke at the La Trobe University O-Week Welcome Festival.
- Chaired Councillor Briefing.
- City of Greater Bendigo meeting with Lockwood Ward candidates.
- Met with Sally Mitchell, Chair North Central Catchment Management Authority.
- Bendigo Local Safe Community online meeting.
- Communications and media training with Saltwater Media.
- Laid a wreath at the Animals in War Commemorative Service 2026 held at the Bendigo District RSL Sub-Branch.
- Officiated at the Youth Council Special Meeting to elect Youth Mayor & Deputies.
- Marong Community Action Group meeting.
- Bendigo TAFE Industry Excellence Awards 2026.
- Regional Cities Victoria online meeting.
- Meeting to discuss the R711 train.
- Huntly/Epsom Flood and Waterways Workshop #2.
- VIP Launch Night for the Bendigo Health Foundation's Corvette for Cancer Launch Night.
- Long Gully Community Forum with the Lockwood Ward candidates.
- Presented the Huntly Primary School Student Leadership badges.
- Chaired the Loddon Campaspe Group of Councils.
- Officially welcomed participants participating in the Victorian Mine Rescue Competition.
- Presented at the Bendigo Sports Star 60th Gold & Glitter Gala Event.
- Community Iftar Dinners – Ramadan (Saturday 28 February).
- Clean Up Australia Day - Ironbark Gully and Friends.
- Victorian Mine Rescue Competition Award Night Celebration Dinner.
- Chaired the Councillor Briefing.
- Curiosity Exhibition Opening at the Discovery Science and Technology Centre.
- Strathfieldsaye and District Community Enterprise meeting.
- Bendigo Agricultural Show Society meeting.
- Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony at the 'Believe Early Learning' Eaglehawk childcare centre.
- City of Greater Bendigo Audit & Risk Committee meeting Q2 25/26 reports.
- Met with Paul Scullie, CEO Bendigo Jockey Club.
- Spoke at the Exhibition Launch at Djaa Djuwima: *'Their Stories: A Solo Series'*.
- Planning application consultation meeting regarding 9 Bath Lane, Bendigo.
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee's International Women's Day Breakfast.
- School visit: Grade 3 -6 students Elmore Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School.

- Spoke at the Bound 4 Bendigo VIP Event followed by Melbourne Vixens vs Melbourne Mavericks practice match held at Red Energy Arena.
- Spoke at the Bendigo 2050 Leadership Summit.
- Present Leadership Badges at Golden Square Primary School.
- Spoke at the Netball light announcement at Bendigo Stadium with The Hon. Maree Edwards MP.
- Heathcote Harvest.
- Assisted with presentations at the Bendigo Gold Nugget Gift.
- Community Iftar Dinners – Ramadan (Sunday 8 March).
- Media announcement and Official Launch of the Melbourne Cobra's team (Hockey One League).
- National Trust tour of old Bendigo Law Courts.
- School visit: Year 3 students at St Francis of the Fields on 'rules, laws and community chat'.
- Community Presentations attended by Bendigo Maubisse Friendship Committee, Bendigo Foodshare, Bendigo Bike and Bendigo Heritage.
- Lake Weeroona Ward Listening Post held at the Holdsworth Road Milkbar.
- Present Leadership Badges at Golden Square Primary School.
- Speaking at the Holi - Festival of Colours.
- Melbourne Mavericks vs Giants Round 1 Suncorp Super Netball held at Red Energy Arena.
- 5k Frenzy at Lar Birpa Athletics Complex.
- Community Iftar Ramadan (Saturday 14 March).
- Spoke at the SPAN Central Victoria annual suicide awareness and prevention walk 2026.
- Spoken with residents, businesses and community groups regarding a wide range of issues.

Participated in numerous radio, newspaper, television media interviews and photo opportunities

15. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

CEO Report to Council Meeting

I would like to use my report to again highlight the important contribution of our community volunteers and the longevity of the events and celebrations they co-ordinate.

Bendigo Sports Star Awards

February saw the annual celebration of the Bendigo Sports Star of the Year Awards and saw Dyson Daniels crowned as the Sports Star of the Year for 2026. The event also celebrated the achievements of Graham Arthur, famous for his contributions on and off the field for the Hawthorn Football Club and inducted Graham into the Hall of Fame

Bendigo Country Week Bowls

Bendigo's annual Country Week event has commenced - with more than 600 bowlers involved in the event. This is the 56th year of the event and a showpiece on our local sporting and tourism calendar. A great demonstration of the collaboration between our local Bowls clubs with the event being held at 8 venues across Bendigo

Eaglehawk Dahlia and Arts Festival

Eaglehawk Dahlia and Arts Festival is being held on 20-22 March. The Festival is celebrating its 53rd anniversary in 2026.

2026 Bendigo Easter Festival

Easter Festival will return from April 3–6 with an outstanding program featuring vibrant parades, cultural performances, family entertainment, and popular community run events for residents and visitors to enjoy.

This year's festival, will also mark the Bendigo Easter Fair Society's 100th anniversary. The volunteer-led organisation was established in 1926 to guide the Bendigo Easter Festival, which remains one of Australia's longest running community festivals.

Bendigo 2050

Bendigo 2050 is a shared regional vision for how we will live, work, play and learn in 2050 where it is expected the Greater Bendigo population will be approaching 200,000. To assist with the development of Bendigo 2050, our Community Leadership Summit was held last week. Approximately 70 participants from organisations across Bendigo attended the facilitated session. Participants at the Summit considered 'Who will residents be in 2050' and 'What is wanted for Greater Bendigo in 2050'.

Lockwood Ward By-Election

Nominations for the by-election have now closed and 8 candidates are standing for the vacancy in Lockwood Ward. Ballot papers have been sent to all residents in Lockwood Ward and need to be completed following the instructions in the pack and posted in the reply-paid envelope before 6.00pm on Friday 27 March.

Curiosity: Lego Building Breakthroughs

Curiosity: Building Breakthroughs in LEGO Bricks has opened at the Discovery Science and Technology Centre and will run from March to November
This exhibition is presented by Bendigo Art Gallery in collaboration with the Discovery Centre as part of the City's commitment to attracting events during the redevelopment of the Bendigo Art Gallery.

In addition to the LEGO Exhibition, we have welcomed the Melbourne Vixens, Melbourne Mavericks and the Giant Suncorp Super Netballs teams to Bendigo during March to play a practice match and a home and away match.

16. CONFIDENTIAL (SECTION 66) REPORTS

Recommended Motion

That Council close the meeting to members of the public pursuant to Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, to consider reports relating to:

- (g) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that -
 - (i) relates to trade secrets; or
 - (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage; and
- (a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

RESOLUTION

That the recommended motion be adopted.

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Karen Corr

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-180

16.1. CT000771 Quarry Products under an Open Panel Arrangement

Reason for Confidentiality

This report is CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to the following confidential information defined as: Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released;

- (g) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that -(i) relates to trade secrets; or(ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

RESOLUTION

That Council:

1. Award contracts to the successful Tenderers under Contract CT000771 Quarry Products under an Open Panel Arrangement as a Schedule of Rates contract for a five-year term, plus one optional extension periods of two-years, until 2033. With a maximum contract term being seven-years.
2. Delegates authority to the CEO to execute the contracts on behalf of Council.
3. Delegates authority to the CEO to award and execute future contracts on behalf of Council should contract CT000771 be retendered to admit additional Service Providers to the panel contract following future formal procurement activities.
4. Appoints Senior Works Coordinator as the Principal's Representative (Contract Manager).
5. Delegates the Principal's Representative all powers or functions under the Contract in line with the financial delegation set out in the Procurement Policy Schedules 2 and 3. With provision of approving, withing their authorisation limit, payment and any variation claims, subject to remaining withing budget or offset savings being identified. Except those listed below:
 - a. Appointment of Principal's Representative
 - b. Issuing notice to 'show cause' or 'contract breach' notices
 - c. Issuing notices relating to delay costs, suspension or termination.
6. Delegates authority to the Principals Representative (Contract Manager), to exercise contract extensions options, subject to supporting evidence of contractor/supplier meeting the satisfactory performance levels during the initial contract term subject to item 5 above.

Moved: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Seconded: Cr Abhishek Awasthi

Those voting **for** the Motion: **8**

For: Cr Abhishek Awasthi, Cr Shivali Chatley, Cr Owen Cosgriff, Cr Karen Corr, Cr Damien Hurrell, Cr Andrea Metcalf, Cr Thomas Prince and Cr Aaron Spong

Those voting **against** the Motion: **0+0:**

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

Absent: Nil

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-181

16.2. Circular Greater Bendigo Contract - Western Composting Technology Reason for Confidentiality

This report is CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with Section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to the following confidential information defined as:

- (a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released;
- (g) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that -(i) relates to trade secrets; or(ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

RESOLUTION

That Council:

1. Agrees to extend the contract term of the Western Composting Technology Pty Ltd contract for an additional two years via a deed of variation
2. Authorises Council's CEO to execute the Service Agreement and Lease on behalf of Council

Moved: Cr Karen Corr

Seconded: Cr Andrea Metcalf

Those voting **for** the Motion: **8**

For: Cr Abhishek Awasthi, Cr Shivali Chatley, Cr Owen Cosgriff, Cr Karen Corr, Cr Damien Hurrell, Cr Andrea Metcalf, Cr Thomas Prince and Cr Aaron Spong

Those voting **against** the Motion: **0+0:**

Against: Nil

Abstained: Nil

Absent: Nil

CARRIED
Resolution No. 2026-182

17. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business, this Council Meeting closed at 8:36 pm.