



CITY OF BALLARAT



# Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2031

CITY OF BALLARAT 





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The City of Ballarat acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

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# Introduction

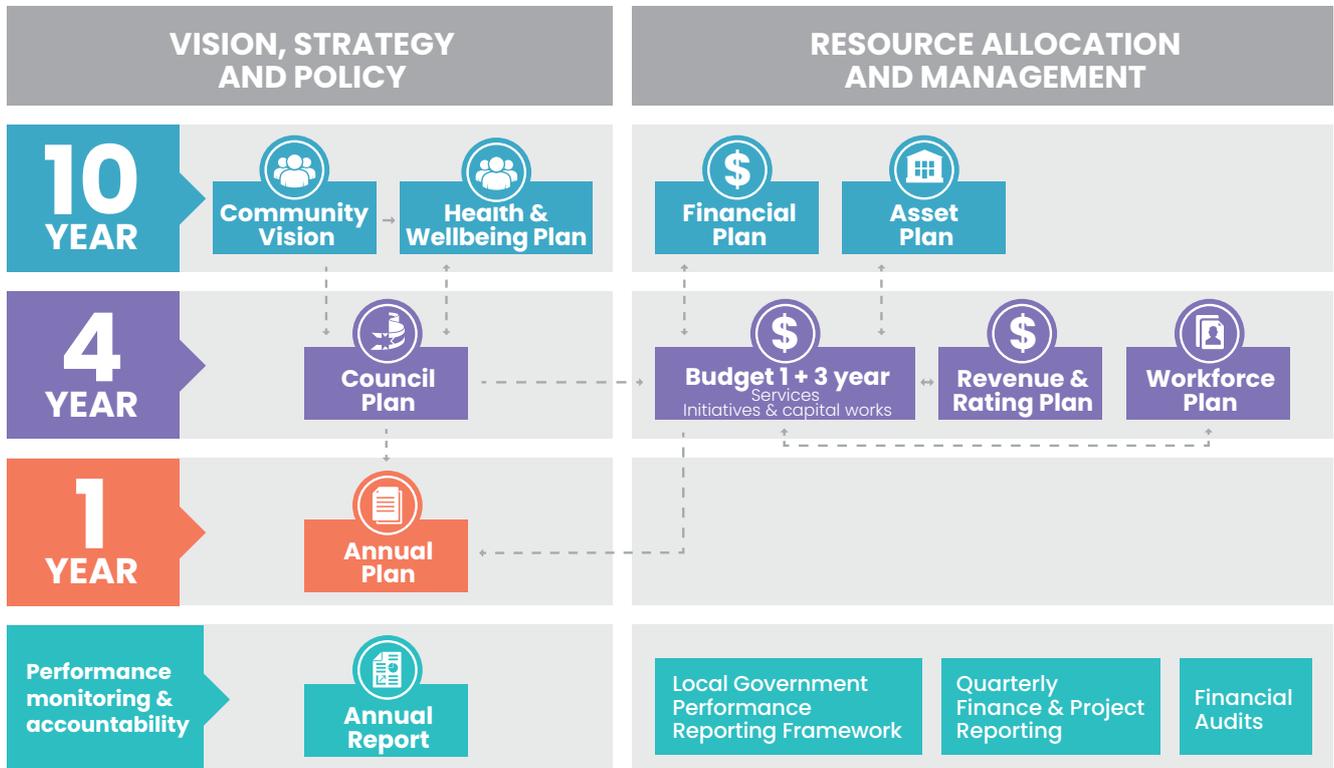
The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires all local governments to prepare a *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* within 12 months of the council election. The *City of Ballarat Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031* sets the health priorities for the municipality, outlines strategies to prevent or reduce public health issues and supports the community to achieve optimum health and wellbeing.

In this term Council has prepared a 10-year strategic plan supported by an annual action plan and will undertake evaluation and community engagement every four years to ensure the priority areas and strategies remain relevant. The longer-term plan reflects the sustained effort required to observe measurable changes in public health and wellbeing.

A community’s health and wellbeing is determined by a complex interaction of individual characteristics, lifestyle behaviours, and physical, social and economic environments. This plan recognises the influence of these broader determinants (or domains) and outlines strategies to ensure a comprehensive approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents.

VISION: The desired long-term outcome of the plan		
PRINCIPLES: Guide the way we work and the decisions we make		
<p><b>Health priorities</b></p> <p>The long-term goals we seek to improve, measured by long-term indicators</p>	<p><b>Priority groups</b></p> <p>Identification of specific groups in our community who require extra support to achieve equitable health outcomes</p>	<p><b>Liveability Domains</b></p> <p>The environment and conditions in which we live, learn, work and age that influence health, that are the focus of Council's actions and strategies, measured by medium-term indicators</p>

## > City of Ballarat integrated strategic planning framework



## How this plan was developed

- Review of previous plan and analysis of process and outcomes
- Collaboration with external Health Partners group
- Preparation of a City of Ballarat Health and Social Profile and a City of Ballarat Youth Profile and analysis of evidence on local social determinants of health
- Analysis of community consultations for *Prosperity Framework* and *Active Ballarat*
- Discussions with staff on upcoming projects
- Analysis of community and stakeholder consultation process for *Ballarat: Our Future* as well as surveys of priority groups and targeted child and youth consultation projects
- Establishment of an Internal Working Group through an EOI process which was tasked with finalising priority areas and priority groups and developing strategies
- Participation in the development of shared priorities for the Central Highlands region



# Vision

A connected, engaged and inclusive community, living safely and sustainably, with residents who are active, healthy and resilient.

# Principles



## > Equity

We will work to ensure everyone is treated fairly and with respect regardless of gender, ability, race or age, recognising that not everyone has the same opportunities, knowledge, skills and resources to achieve and maintain good health and wellbeing.

## > Inclusion

We will work to ensure every member of our community feels valued, respected, supported, safe, can fully participate in community life, and benefits from social and economic inclusion (Community Vision 2021-2031).

## > Accessibility

We will work to ensure equitable access for everyone, regardless of ability, experience, gender and culture.

## > Community participation

We will work to ensure the participation of people and their communities in improving and controlling the conditions for their own health.

## > Collaboration

We will strengthen alliances with partners that share common goals, values and approaches to strengthen capacity and improve integrated health promotion while reducing duplication and fragmentation.

## > Evidence-based practice

We will make decisions based on the best available data, using evidence to identify potential benefits, harm and costs of any interventions and acknowledging that what works in one context may not be appropriate or feasible in another.





# Health priorities

With many different environmental, societal and individual factors influencing a community's health and wellbeing, it can take a long time to achieve small improvements in health outcomes. Council will focus on six health priority areas which will be measured by long-term indicators.

## > Selection of six priority health areas

Selection was based on:

- Requirement to consider the priorities in the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023*
- Requirements under the *Climate Change Act 2017* and *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- Examination of data on health and social issues in Ballarat
- Consideration of community and stakeholder input through the *Ballarat: Our Future* engagement which also informed the *Community Vision* and *Council Plan*, as well as from other recent community engagement processes
- Consultation with staff on future priorities and resourcing
- Consideration of current strategies and plans including the *Ballarat Strategy* which informs the *Municipal Planning Framework*
- Consideration of state policies, strategies and possible future funding opportunities
- The potential for the City of Ballarat to respond effectively within regulatory and legislative boundaries

## Health Partners

The City of Ballarat works in partnership with a large number of stakeholders in the health, wellbeing and social services sector. We engage in regular networking with local organisations to ensure we can identify projects where partnering would offer the potential for better outcomes for the community.

In the area of health promotion and prevention, we work closely with a Health Partners group to ensure we stay informed of developments, strategies and programs which align with our shared health priorities.

Health Partners group: City of Ballarat, Ballarat Community Health, Ballarat Health Services, Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership, Department of Health and Human Services, Sports Central, Women’s Health Grampians, YMCA and Western Victoria Primary Health Network.

The Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership has taken a lead role in developing shared priorities and evaluation measures for the Central Highlands region to ensure better outcomes using a collective impact approach. The shared priority areas are: ‘increasing healthy eating’ and ‘increasing active living’, with investigative work being undertaken to determine the best collective impact approach for ‘tackling climate change and its impact on health’ and ‘improving mental wellbeing’.

## > Tackling climate change and its impact on health

### Central Highlands climate projections 2019

-  > Maximum and minimum daily temperatures will continue to increase over this century (very high confidence)
-  > By the 2030s, increases in daily maximum temperature of 0.9 to 1.7°C (since the 1990s) are expected
-  > Rainfall will continue to be variable over time; over the long term it is expected to decline in winter and spring (medium to high confidence) and autumn (low to medium confidence), with some chance of little change
-  > Extreme rainfall events are expected to become more intense on average (high confidence) but remain very variable in space and time
-  > By the 2050s, the climate of Ballarat could be more like the current climate of Hamilton

Source: Draft Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025

Climate change can directly affect health by exposure to more frequent and intense extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods, droughts and bushfires and the associated disruptions to work, home and social services. Indirect impacts include geographical changes to the spread of infectious diseases, risks to food safety and drinking water quality, increased pollen allergies, increased levels of family violence and reduced mental wellbeing.

The broader social determinants of health including housing, working conditions and food production are also adversely impacted with the most vulnerable community members affected the most, such as the elderly, young children, pregnant women, people with a chronic disease and low-income households.

Council has committed to reducing the organisation's emissions, including seeking to purchase 100 per cent renewable energy, investing in LED street lighting and waste reduction initiatives, and increasing tree canopy cover to 40 per cent, as outlined in the *Carbon Neutrality and 100% Renewables Action Plan*. We will also be working with the community to move to an 'in principle' aspirational community-wide target of zero net emissions by 2030.

Across the Ballarat local government area there was an estimated 1.74Mt CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2019. The highest generators of emissions were electricity use (industrial 29 per cent, commercial 21 per cent, residential 14 per cent), followed by transport (17 per cent), gas (14 per cent), agriculture (3 per cent) and waste (2 per cent).<sup>1</sup>

Climate change and sustainable practices were clearly identified by the community as one of the key issues of concern and urgent areas for improvement. This has informed the goal, 'An Environmentally Sustainable Future' in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, with strategies such as adopting more sustainable practices, achieving zero emissions, reducing waste, supporting communities to be adaptive and resilient to climate change, and protecting and enhancing our biodiversity.

Key initiatives to reduce greenhouse gasses and adapt to the changing climate can also positively impact other health priorities: an increase in active transport reduces vehicle use which, in turn, reduces emissions, improves air quality and increases opportunities for physical activity; buying more locally produced food or growing your own food and composting reduces transport and packaging costs which, in turn, reduces emissions and waste.

1. Snapshot Climate

## > Preventing all forms of violence

The impact of family violence not only impacts the physical and mental health of the victim but can extend to loss of housing, financial insecurity and reduced family or social supports. It can also be detrimental to the development and wellbeing of children exposed to the violence. Across Australia, some groups experience particularly high rates of violence. These groups include women and girls with disability, Aboriginal women, older women, women from culturally diverse backgrounds and people from LGBTIQ+ communities.

In Ballarat, 1,960 family violence incidents were recorded in 2019-20, with the rate of family violence incidents 34 per cent higher than state levels. In the period April to September 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the rate of family violence in Ballarat increased 31 per cent when compared to the same period in the previous year, with more incidents associated with mental health issues and imminent or recent separations and fewer associated with alcohol and other drug use.<sup>2</sup>

Inequality between women and men is the key driver of gender-based violence. In partnership with other local stakeholders and guided by regional leadership from Women's Health Grampians, the City of Ballarat addresses family violence through a primary prevention approach, with a focus on policy, strategy, awareness and education to improve structural and organisational imbalances between women and men.

In the majority (75 per cent) of family violence incidents, men are the perpetrators. However, street or community violence primarily affects men. The City of Ballarat works closely with partners in the Ballarat Community Safety Partnership to develop place-based solutions to improve safety in the community.

## > Increasing healthy eating

Our diet and the food environment have changed substantially over the past generation. Ease of access, affordability and the marketing of unhealthy food and drink choices, coupled with other socio-economic and environmental factors, strongly influence individual choice. The vast majority of Ballarat residents do not eat sufficient vegetables, fruit and wholegrain cereals and consume too many discretionary foods and drinks which are low in nutrients and high in saturated fat, sugar, salt or alcohol.

This shift has led to more than 62 per cent of adult males and nearly 43 per cent of adult females in Ballarat being overweight or obese, with obesity rates considerably higher than state levels. Poor diet has also contributed to high rates of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, dental disease and poor mental health.<sup>3</sup>

Obesity is a complex problem and multiple strategies are required to address it. Organisations across the Central Highlands region are working together to provide healthier food environments, particularly for children and families. Key settings such as schools, sports and recreational environments, workplaces and health services are a focal point for stronger policies to encourage greater access to healthy food and drinks.

## > Increasing active living

Regular physical activity is associated with good mental health, healthy ageing and increased levels of happiness. Incorporating any type of physical activity into each day not only improves physical and mental wellbeing, it can also help prevent many chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and depression. In Ballarat around half the adult population do not get sufficient physical activity each week.<sup>3</sup>

Creating neighbourhoods which encourage walking and cycling is one of the most inclusive and effective ways to encourage people to be active. Walking or cycling to work, school, services or sport is called 'active transport' and provides a good opportunity to not only increase daily physical activity, but also to reduce car emissions and traffic congestion, particularly around schools. Being active in parks and natural environments has also been shown to have a beneficial impact on mental wellbeing while connecting people with their local neighbourhood.

For many people, sport and recreation provide opportunities for participating, spectating, coaching and volunteering and are an integral part of their social life. Sport and recreation associations and clubs can be an important setting for influencing and showing leadership on social and cultural issues such as reducing inequalities and discrimination. The City of Ballarat plans for, upgrades and maintains community sport and recreation facilities and works with sporting associations and clubs to promote flexible and accessible recreation opportunities.

2. Crime Statistics Agency

3. Victorian Population Health Survey 2017

## > Improving mental wellbeing

Good mental health is an essential component of individual and community wellbeing. Feeling a sense of belonging, connecting to family and broader networks in the community and having capacity to contribute and be productive are all critical to mental health. Some community members are more vulnerable to poor mental health and illness due to unfavourable social, economic and environmental circumstances, leading to social isolation and loneliness. There is a large overlap of mental health conditions with chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes, and other issues such as problem gambling, alcohol and substance misuse. Conversely, healthy diet, physical activity and social connection are all very important for good mental health and key preventative factors for chronic diseases.

Although the prevalence is increasing, mental illness is not inevitable. Research shows a large proportion of cases of depression and anxiety, and some behavioural, alcohol and substance use disorders can be prevented by addressing the risk factors that drive mental health conditions.

Preventative mental health programs with strong evidence for positive outcomes include parenting support, social and emotional skill development and bullying prevention for young people, and social programs for older people.<sup>4</sup>

Across the state, females have higher rates of psychological distress, anxiety and depression than males. In Ballarat around 19 per cent of adult females reported a high or very high degree of psychological distress and 41 per cent reported they had been diagnosed with anxiety or depression in their lifetime. While this is high, it is within the range of the state average. Rates of psychological distress, anxiety and depression for males are significantly higher in Ballarat than the state average, with 17 per cent of adult males in Ballarat reporting a high or very high degree of psychological distress, and 31 per cent reporting they had been diagnosed with anxiety or depression at some point in their lifetime. This is significantly higher than the state average on both measures.<sup>5</sup>

VicHealth conducted two surveys in relation to the impacts of COVID-19 and determined that the second lockdown caused a decline in life satisfaction, subjective wellbeing and social connection. VicHealth also identified specific population groups which experienced a greater level of hardship including young people aged 18–35 years, people on low incomes, unemployed, people with disability and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.<sup>6</sup>

The City of Ballarat maintains community, cultural, and sporting facilities that provide opportunities for people to socialise, connect, learn and participate. More work can be done to ensure more marginalised groups and individuals feel included and welcome in these spaces and by the broader community. Council's commitment to improving mental wellbeing is reflected in the goal, 'A healthy, connected and inclusive community' in the *Council Plan 2021–2025*, with strategies such as enhancing social cohesion, addressing isolation, and supporting vulnerable, diverse and age specific communities.

## > Reducing harm from smoking, gambling, alcohol and other drugs

While smoking rates have been decreasing within the general community, tobacco is still the leading contributor to disease and death as it increases the risk of many common chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. Children who live in a household with a smoker are significantly more likely to suffer from respiratory conditions. Although there has been a decrease in smoking rates over the past 30 years, this reduction has stalled in recent years and the rate can be as high as 40 per cent in some population groups including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and people on low incomes. In Ballarat the smoking rate for females (16.3 per cent) is slightly higher than for males (14.9 per cent). This is very different to the state average where males generally have much higher smoking rates than females. Ballarat also has a much higher rate of women smoking while pregnant (14.5 per cent compared to 8.3 per cent state wide). This can increase the possibility of a low birthweight baby.<sup>5</sup>

4. Evidence review: The primary prevention of mental health conditions

5. Victorian Population Health Survey 2017

6. VicHealth Coronavirus Victorian Wellbeing Impact Study: Follow-up survey

Gambling is known to cause emotional and psychological distress, financial and relationship difficulties, family violence, problems at work and criminal activity. It has been estimated that for each problem gambler, between five and 10 other people may be detrimentally affected such as family, friends and employers. In 2018-2019 \$57.5 million was lost, just on poker machines in Ballarat, which equates to approximately \$157,600 every day. Around 16% of adults use poker machines regularly, and in Ballarat those regular users spend a higher amount on poker machines than the state average each year. While it is difficult to measure the extent of online gambling, there was a clear increase in take up by younger gamblers during the COVID-19 lockdown period in 2020.<sup>7</sup>

All organisations, workplaces and sporting clubs have a role to play in helping reduce the risk from gambling harm by raising awareness, reducing access at work, developing a gambling policy and supporting and educating staff to recognise the signs of gambling harm and how to respond.

Excessive alcohol and drug use can develop into a complex series of problems affecting not only individuals, but also their family, friends, employer and the broader community. It also contributes to many other community safety and health issues such as increased violence and an increased risk of accidents and injury. In Ballarat, around 40 per cent of women and 52 per cent of men binge drink (the consumption of excessive alcohol on a single occasion), while 58 per cent of women and 68 per cent of men drink more than the recommended amount regularly and over a long period of time. This increases the lifetime risk of alcohol-related harm.<sup>8</sup>

The ambulance attendance rates for illicit and pharmaceutical drug use in Ballarat show that the rate for pharmaceutical drug use by females is particularly high compared to state levels. Typical pharmaceutical drugs of concern are Fentanyl and Oxycodone. For males, the rate is higher for illicit drug use but it is not higher than the state average. Drug offences make up about 4 per cent of all crimes in Ballarat each year.<sup>9</sup>

Councils have a role to play in helping reduce alcohol and other drug-related harm by supporting and promoting alcohol and drug-free events, addressing place-based safety issues, and considering public amenity and potential for misuse and abuse when reviewing liquor licence applications.

7. Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation

8. Victorian Population Health Survey 2017

9. AoDStats by Turning Point



# Priority groups

We recognise that not everyone has the same opportunities, knowledge, skills and resources to achieve and maintain good health and wellbeing. Council is committed to working towards greater health equity – one of the key principles of this plan – with a focus on strategies and actions that will benefit the health and wellbeing of all community members. This includes specific projects, programs and services targeted to priority groups which require extra support to achieve the same level of health and wellbeing and to targeted groups at key life stages and transition points.

## > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Indigenous communities experience significant disparities in health and wellbeing, with life expectancy for Aboriginal Victorians generally seven years lower than non-Aboriginal Victorians.<sup>10</sup>

The *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-2027* sets a clear vision for self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal people and communities. The plan recognises the importance of Aboriginal people taking ownership, carriage and responsibility for designing, delivering and evaluating policy and services that affect their communities on their own terms.<sup>11</sup>

For many years Aboriginal Victorians have been pushing for self-determination and their right to make decisions on matters that affect their communities. For Aboriginal people, self-determination encompasses a spectrum of rights which support economic, cultural and social equity. Within the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*, the key enablers to making progress towards self-determination include prioritising culture, addressing trauma and supporting healing, addressing racism, promoting cultural safety, and transferring power and resources to Aboriginal communities.<sup>12</sup>

Cultural identity is a key enabler in achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people. Acknowledging, respecting and celebrating connections to family, community, culture and Country is critical to Aboriginal wellbeing. The City of Ballarat supports National Apology Day, National Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. These events provide important opportunities for the Aboriginal community to celebrate their culture and for the non-Aboriginal community to gain a deeper understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginal communities have experienced significant intergenerational trauma as a result of colonisation, dispossession, child removal and many other discriminatory government policies. For Aboriginal people to engage and develop trust in the organisations and systems set up to support their wellbeing, this deep level of trauma must be acknowledged and healing must be supported.

Racism and discrimination towards Aboriginal people are entrenched due to historical structural systems which have excluded Aboriginal people, customs and traditions. Aboriginal people will be more able to participate fully in the community without fear of discrimination if services, businesses and community groups adapt to become more inclusive, culturally welcoming and accessible. Including Aboriginal people in policy development and decision-making will enable them to lead culturally safe lives.

In partnership with the local Aboriginal community and stakeholders, the City of Ballarat Koorie Engagement Action Group (KEAG) has developed the *City of Ballarat Reconciliation Action Plan*. This plan includes a vision for reconciliation by breaking down barriers and leading the way through better choices (employment, services and access to culturally safe places), resources (budget, procurement and capacity building) and voices (representation, language and engagement).

## > Culturally diverse communities

People who were born in another country, speak a language other than English or practise a faith different to the majority of the community often face greater challenges around health and wellbeing. Discrimination and intolerance can reduce their ability to participate in the community and employment and can provide a barrier to accessing health and social services, leading to social isolation and mental health issues.

Ballarat is becoming more culturally diverse. At the last census in 2016, 89 different nationalities were recorded with around 10 per cent of the population born overseas. Since 2011 almost 70 per cent of migrants living in Ballarat have come to Australia through a skilled migration program and around 700 residents do not speak English at all.

Many culturally diverse residents struggle to find meaningful employment, with previous qualifications, education or training not always recognised. Negative community attitudes towards refugees, asylum seekers and migrants exacerbate the challenges involved in accessing affordable housing and using public transport. Those who speak no English or English as a second language face challenges, particularly around accessing health and social services.

10. Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2019: Health and Wellbeing

11. Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027

12. Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023

The *City of Ballarat Intercultural City Strategic Plan 2018-21* outlines four collaborative priority areas to encourage a more inclusive intercultural city: Responsive Services, Active Citizenship, Leadership and Advocacy, and Maximising and Valuing Diversity.

The City of Ballarat Intercultural Services team responds to requests and provides information on relevant migrant services such as childcare, health and social services and English language classes. Staff worked closely with local employers to place migrants in meaningful employment through the Intercultural Employment Pathways Program and we will continue to seek further funding in this area to support migrant employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Events, festivals and recognition of significant days can support culturally diverse communities by increasing awareness within the broader community and providing opportunities for the whole community to experience food, music, dance and ceremonies of other cultures. The City of Ballarat supports Harmony Fest, Refugee Week and Intercultural Cities Network activities and runs an Intercultural Ambassador Program.

Issues and opportunities related to Ballarat's culturally diverse communities are brought to the attention of Council through Council's Intercultural Advisory Committee and the Ballarat Friends of Ainaro Community Committee as well as community organisations such as the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council, Ballarat Community Health and the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

## > LGBTIQ+ communities

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and/or questioning, and asexual (LGBTIQ+) people have a right to equality, fairness and full inclusion in the community. A recent comprehensive state-wide survey estimated that almost 10 per cent of the Ballarat population identifies as LGBTIQ+ and highlighted the discrimination and disparities in health and wellbeing that this diverse community experiences.<sup>13</sup>

One of the key health issues the LGBTIQ+ community faces is discrimination by other community members and services. In the past year, at a state-wide level, over 34 per cent of the LGBTIQ+ community experienced discrimination in the home (by a neighbour or at someone else's home), a hospital, a medical centre or a public place, compared to 16 per cent of the heterosexual, non-LGBTIQ+ community.

The LGBTIQ+ community experiences higher levels of psychological distress than the non-LGBTIQ+ community, with 24 per cent experiencing high or very high levels and 45 per cent having been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. Over 13 per cent of the LGBTIQ+ community experienced family violence in the past two years, compared to 5 per cent of the non-LGBTIQ+ community.

Other major issues the LGBTIQ+ community faces include safety in the community, privacy, confidentiality and stigma. When examining lifestyle risk factors, the LGBTIQ+ community has higher rates of smoking and chronic disease and undertakes lower levels of health checks (a specific example is LGBTIQ+ women aged 50-74 undertaking mammograms).

Structural barriers can also be very limiting to full participation in the community. An example is accessing public toilets which are segregated according to gender binary terms (female and male facilities). Some LGBTIQ+ community members may not feel safe or comfortable using them and this experience can be further compounded by the assumptions that other members of the public may make.

The focus of the work that the City of Ballarat is undertaking in this area includes establishing an LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee, undertaking community engagement, supporting the development of an LGBTIQ+ Action Plan, working with key stakeholders such as Child and Family Services (CAFS) and the Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership, and participating in a Community of Practice with local stakeholders.

## > People with disability

Disability is a very broad term. People with disability have different levels of impairment and individuals are affected to different degrees depending on the level of support provided by society to facilitate participation.

With one-in-five people having some form of disability, in Ballarat there is likely to be at least 22,000 people with disability including around 7,000 with severe or profound disability. Most people will be affected by disability to varying degrees at some stage in their life.

For some individuals, limited mobility can be a major barrier to physical access, with entry to and movement around spaces more difficult. For others, a lack of ability to hear, read, respond, see, comprehend or communicate in some way can be a major barrier to accessing important information.

13. *The health and wellbeing of the LGBTIQ population in Victoria - Findings from the Victorian Population Health Survey 2017*

A variety of communication methods are needed to support inclusion of everyone.

People with disability are more likely to experience poorer physical health and mental health, with one in three reporting high or very high levels of psychological distress and many reporting problems gaining timely access to appropriate health services, particularly for complex needs. Opportunities to participate in sport, recreation, events and community groups can be limited unless specific interventions are provided to increase accessibility and inclusion.

Other factors which can negatively impact the health and wellbeing of people with disability include housing with poor physical access, poor quality or insecure housing, lower rates of workforce participation, lower levels of education, poor or lack of public transport access, lack of affordability of public transport, and lack of pathway connections.

People with disability are more likely than people without disability to experience sexual or physical violence, intimate partner violence, emotional abuse or sexual harassment at some point in their lives. Community safety can be a major issue for people with disability due to discrimination and being the target of assault and other crimes.<sup>14</sup>

The focus of the work that the City of Ballarat Community Participation team is undertaking in this area includes facilitating the Disability Advisory Committee, supporting the implementation of accessible play spaces, increasing accessible events and engagement, providing access and inclusion guidance across other areas of Council to improve knowledge and skills, and partnering with a range of stakeholders including:

- Dementia Alliance
- Ballarat Working Together
- Central Highlands Inclusion Working Group
- Ballarat Mental Health Collective
- Central Highlands Advisory Group

The City of Ballarat is currently developing a new *Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2025* with guidance from relevant state and federal strategies, the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2021-2025* and the new *National Disability Strategy*. Other areas of focus include accessible recreation, dementia-friendly communities, accessible and inclusive businesses, accessible and inclusive community engagement, and accessible housing.

## > Gender

Gender inequities in economic and governance structures, business and sporting boards, media and communications influence access to resources and power and, in turn, health and wellbeing.

Major employment and income inequities faced by women include the pay gap, career and leadership opportunities, superannuation and flexible working conditions. Caring roles and responsibilities can lead to fewer working hours, insecure work and financial vulnerability. Gender inequity is one of the leading drivers of family violence which, in conjunction with other gendered issues, is one of the main reasons women and children become homeless. In Ballarat, women make up 58 per cent of people accessing specialist homelessness services.

Sport and recreation are important parts of our culture and can be a powerful vehicle for change. Increasing access and participation for women and girls can help change community attitudes, provide positive role models for young women and promote a culture of respect and fairness. As part of the *Active Women and Girls Strategy*, the City of Ballarat is building female-friendly facilities, developing the Ballarat Active Women's Leadership Network, supporting campaigns such as This Girl Can and Pride in Sport, and supporting active local women to become involved in leadership programs. The need for gender equity action plans at the sports club level is being addressed through the development of a *Recreation Services Fair Play Policy* and the provision of support for local clubs and associations to conduct gender impact assessments and develop their own gender equity action plans.

The City of Ballarat works closely with key local partners in the area of gender equity. Women's Health Grampians leads the regional Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance — an alliance of organisations, clubs and businesses in the Grampians region that share a vision for safe, equal and respectful communities. Sports Central — the regional sports assembly — works in conjunction with Women's Health Grampians to deliver the Act@Play program in sporting clubs and associations. Council has been a proud member of CoRE since 2016.

New requirements under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* require a gender impact assessment for all new and reviewed policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public. City of Ballarat staff will be supported to conduct audits and undertake training to support gender equity work across the organisation.

<sup>14</sup>. *People with disability in Australia 2020: in brief*

## > Early years and children

A healthy start in life is a key factor for ongoing wellbeing, and investing in the early years is the most effective way to give children the best opportunity for a healthy future. Starting a family is a major life transition and, for many families in Ballarat, this brings new issues such as isolation, the potential for mental health issues, and increased barriers to employment and study which can lead to reduced income and housing insecurity. For some families, a lack of knowledge or awareness of the importance of early childhood services and education may lead to disengaging from vital services due to barriers such as transport and digital access. Children are witness to or affected by family violence in 30 per cent of incidents. Ballarat has high rates of family violence, and Ballarat's teenage pregnancy rate, while declining in recent years, is twice the rate as across the state.

The City of Ballarat Family and Children's Services team delivers a large range of programs and services designed to support the health and wellbeing of children and families. This includes programs funded by the Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) such as Supported Playgroups and Best Start which target families needing extra support. The team provides universal and enhanced Maternal and Child Health services, Sleep and Settling programs and First Time Parent groups, and coordinates and delivers a range of support services at Parent Place. In addition, it undertakes provisional and strategic planning to ensure equitable access to early years and family services across the municipality and into the future.

The team also directly delivers kindergarten, long day care, occasional and family day care programs, and contract manages a further 17 kindergartens which are owned by the City of Ballarat and operated by not-for-profit providers; administers the Central Kindergarten Registration Scheme for the municipality; plays a lead role in the roll-out of funded three-year-old kindergarten programs (from 2022) including provisional planning, infrastructure developments, promotion and access; and delivers childhood and school immunisation programs for the City of Ballarat and Golden Plains municipalities under a Shared Services Agreement.

The City of Ballarat is a signatory to the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter. This involves leading, advocating and implementing requirements relating to the charter, including increased participation by children in decision-making and enabling equitable access to child-friendly environments.

The team plans and delivers child-focused events for Children's Week, National Playgroup Week and the Ballarat Begonia Festival.

The *Municipal Early Years Plan* will be updated at the end of 2021 with current work guided and informed by the following: Early Childhood Reform Plan (Victorian Government), Early Years Compact (agreement between DFFH, DET and Municipal Association of Victoria), and the Marrung Aboriginal Education Action Plan.

### Partnerships

Partnerships are essential for effective delivery of services and programs in this sector to ensure the health and wellbeing needs of children are addressed and favourable outcomes are achieved. With such a broad range of services and programs, the network of community and stakeholder partners is extensive:

- Sector leadership and membership – various groups and committees such as Ballarat 4 Kids
- Early Years partnership group – Best Start program
- Communities of Practice – Supported Playgroup program
- Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council partnership – Developing Our Children Together
- Child Friendly Cities and Communities Advisory and Network Groups
- Better Outcomes for our Koorie Kids Network
- Community Safety Working Group
- Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Network
- The Orange Door – Enhanced Maternal and Child Health program nurse co-located with this program one day per week
- Parent Place partnerships – Ballarat Health Services community-based lactation consultancy, Ballarat and Grampians Community Legal Service, WRISC family violence outreach worker, CatholicCare parent educator
- Ballarat and Grampians Community Legal Service - outreach service to Maternal and Child Health program at Sebastopol Library
- Hospital Liaison Group/Continuity of Care Working Group
- Intensive Infant Response Panel
- Regional Immunisation Network
- Educational Leaders Network
- Early Years Network
- Access to Early Learning Network

## > Young people

Young people move through a range of critical life transition periods and significant life experiences within a short period of time. While each transition can be physically and emotionally challenging, it can also present opportunities for growth and be a key period for learning about risky behaviours and setting up positive habits. This can contribute to good physical and mental health throughout life.

There are currently approximately 20,000 young people aged 12 to 24 living in Ballarat which is almost 18 per cent of the population. Each year, while Ballarat attracts large numbers of young people from surrounding municipalities for education and employment, it loses others to tertiary education and employment options, mainly in Geelong and Melbourne. According to the last census in 2016, around 1,800 more young people came to live in Ballarat than moved away.

Young people face a multitude of personal, community and societal issues. Each individual has different levels of support, guidance and influences to help them navigate these challenges. Key personal issues for young people include coping with stress, mental and physical health, body image, bullying, social connections and forming respectful relationships. Within the broader Ballarat community, major issues include underemployment, cybersafety, disengagement with school, housing insecurity, alcohol and other drugs and becoming young parents. Young people are also concerned about the lack of action by government on climate change and the environment, the impacts of COVID-19 on education and future prospects, and issues of equity and discrimination in the community.

Young people want to be included in discussions about issues they face and have the opportunity to influence decision-making that will impact them. For young people to engage and actively participate in the community, it is essential to seek and value their contribution by supporting youth-led programs and including young people on committees.

The City of Ballarat Youth Services team delivers a range of programs using a Positive Youth Development model. Programs focus on areas of learning and development, social connections, leadership, enterprise skills and recreation. The team facilitates volunteer programs including the Youth Council and FReeZA, and supports youth-specific and youth-led community events in the areas of music, arts, culture and recreation, and events centred around themes such as mental health and the environment.

Young people are actively involved in planning and delivering the annual Ballarat Youth Awards, and planning an event for Victorian Youth Week each year.

### Partnerships

Community and stakeholder partnerships are essential for effective delivery of services and programs in this sector to ensure the health and wellbeing needs of young people are addressed and favourable outcomes are achieved. The network of partners includes:

- Ballarat Youth Services Network Committee of Support
- Youth Mental Health Community of Practice
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- YMCA
- L2P Steering Group
- Ballarat Active Women’s Leadership Network
- Community Safety Working Group
- Wendouree Renewal Project
- Young Creatives in Business
- Central Highlands Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network

Future work to be undertaken includes the development of a *Youth Strategy* and a feasibility study for a youth space.

## > Older people

Ballarat has an ageing population. Currently around 26,000 residents are aged over 60 and by 2036 it is estimated that approximately 34,000 residents (one-in-four) will be aged over 60. Everyone has different experiences of ageing and different aspirations and hopes for how they live their life. Issues for people as they age may include increasing financial and physical vulnerability and insecurity around health and housing. A significant risk to ageing well is the loss of meaningful relationships and social networks that leads to social isolation and loneliness. Ageism is becoming increasingly recognised as a significant issue and an inhibitor to ageing well.

The World Health Organisation has declared 2020 to 2030 as the decade of healthy ageing, putting the spotlight on the need for individuals, governments and societies to make it a priority. Healthy ageing is about creating environments and opportunities that enable people to be able to do what they value throughout their lives. It extends across the lifespan and is relevant to everyone.

In 2018, we engaged with residents about what is important to grow older well in Ballarat. The priorities identified by our community include access to: services, transport and buildings; open spaces suitable for all ages; information so individuals can make their own decisions; social activities that keep people connected to their community; secure and affordable housing options; and safe and affordable meals.

Research shows that one of the most deeply held desires of older people is to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. The City of Ballarat provides a suite of support services in partnership with other tiers of government that focus on supporting people to stay safely and independently in their own homes. We also provide a Regional Assessment Service which is a whole-of-life needs and ability assessment to help identify areas of support required and discuss the goals an older person may wish to achieve to help reach independence and improve their overall wellbeing.

The City of Ballarat Ageing Well team is committed to making Ballarat a good place to grow older using an age-friendly community approach. Age-friendly cities and communities foster healthy and active ageing and enable wellbeing throughout life. They help people remain independent for as long as possible and provide care and protection when needed, while respecting older people's autonomy and dignity. The City of Ballarat partners with local organisations to provide age-friendly programs such as Social Connections, Staying Active and Meals (often referred to as Meals on Wheels) to meet the needs of our diverse community.

Creating age-friendly outdoor spaces where older people can engage in physical and social activities is an important part of the City of Ballarat's continuing commitment to making Ballarat an age-friendly community. In February 2021, the Seniors Exercise Park at Mount Pleasant Reserve was opened. The facility encourages older adults to engage in physical activity while enjoying being outdoors and in the company of others. The first of its kind in regional Victoria, it was developed in partnership between the City of Ballarat, the National Ageing Research Institute, Banyule Council and the State Trustee Foundation of Australia. The City of Ballarat is recruiting community ambassadors to encourage residents to participate in physical activity programs at the facility.

The City of Ballarat's future priorities include: developing and delivering an Age-Friendly Community Strategy for Ballarat; developing the social connections programs to facilitate connections to existing community programs; advocating for age-friendly program development within existing clubs and programs; and developing partnerships in the community to increase opportunities for residents as they age.

## > Financially vulnerable

Financial wellbeing is essential for ongoing positive health outcomes. Financial vulnerability impacts decision-making in relation to health behaviours, reduces options in relation to healthy food access, education and employment prospects, transport and housing, and impacts participation in society.

Many factors influence financial wellbeing, including financial capability (knowledge and behaviours), financial inclusion (access to financial services and products), social capital (support from friends, relatives and community) and income (amount, stability and source).

At the time of the last census in 2016, over 8,700 Ballarat households had an income of less than \$650 per week. This included 32 per cent of households in Wendouree and Sebastopol which is far higher than the state average of 18 per cent.

Having a low or unstable income can reduce housing options. It can also create household stress that impacts the family or individuals as a result of having to limit goods and services such as healthy food, health care, transport and utilities. At the time of the last census, almost 40 per cent of households in Sebastopol were experiencing rental stress (households in the lowest 40 per cent of incomes who spend more than 30 per cent of income on housing costs), and over 4,000 households were experiencing rental stress across the municipality.

Financial vulnerability is a major reason for people experiencing food insecurity (unable to buy nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable or safe foods from non-emergency sources like the supermarket or greengrocer). A recent analysis of local emergency food relief agencies estimated that 12 per cent of people in Ballarat had accessed emergency food relief at least once in a 12-month period. Potential ways to increase access to healthy food for people who are financially vulnerable include community gardens, shared edible gardens, school vegetable gardens, public fruit trees and food swaps.

The City of Ballarat delivers a range of free programs and services specifically targeted at people who are financially vulnerable in locations and at times designed to ensure easier access for those who are most in need. Examples include: the Western Bulldogs Sons and Daughters of the West programs (free 10-week health and wellbeing programs designed to support physical and mental health as well as social connections and linkages to local health services); targeted Early Years services and programs to support vulnerable

families; targeted support for eligible older people; and digital and financial literacy programs and support (as well as access to computers and Wi-Fi) at City of Ballarat libraries to increase access to services and information that may only be available online.

Many programs are place-based in areas of low socio-economic capacity, to ensure the community can become engaged in the project, build a greater level of community capacity and have input into decisions which impact their neighbourhood.



# Liveability Domains

Liveability describes a place that is: *safe, attractive, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable; with affordable and diverse types of housing, public open space, local shops, health and community services, leisure and cultural opportunities; with opportunities for employment and education all accessible by convenient public transport, walking and cycling.\**

\*Lowe et al (2013), *Liveable, healthy, sustainable: What are the key indicators for Melbourne neighbourhoods? Research Paper 1, Place, Health and Liveability Research Program, University of Melbourne*



## > Improving the environments that influence health and wellbeing outcomes

The factors that enhance liveability and make somewhere a desirable place to live also impact positively on the health and wellbeing of the community. The social determinants of health include the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness. There is strong evidence that access, proximity and supportive environments can influence health and

wellbeing. For example, people who live close to a large park or open space are more likely to walk or exercise regularly, and people who live close to unhealthy food outlets are more likely to consume unhealthy food. The strategies outlined in this section detail the work that the City of Ballarat, working with partners, will undertake towards improving the social determinants of health and how we will measure improvement.

### > Active transport

**Outcome – All residents feel safe using walking and cycling paths more often, and have good access to public transport**

Access to transport is a key factor contributing to liveability as it can influence a person’s access to services and ability to participate in society. Walking or cycling for transport – known as active transport – can significantly improve health and wellbeing outcomes by increasing daily physical activity and reducing car emissions and traffic congestion. Access to regular, reliable and

affordable public transport options is particularly important for people on low incomes, people with disability, young people and the elderly. Council’s commitment to supporting our community to increasingly choose active and public transport options is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘An environmentally sustainable future’ goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased numbers of people using active transport for school, work or recreation
- Increased connectivity of walking and cycling paths

### Relevant health priority areas

**Increasing active living; tackling climate change and its impact on health; preventing all forms of violence; improving mental wellbeing**

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Increasing opportunities for walking and bike riding*	✓	✓	
Advocating improved public transport services and access		✓	✓
Connecting pedestrian and cycling routes to key destinations and public transport	✓		✓
Enhancing safety, amenity and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, and at bus shelters	✓		

\*Strategies required as part of VicHealth partnership to encourage healthy environments and opportunities for children and young people

### Indicators

- Walkability for Transport Index
- Average distance to closest public transport stop
- Number of users of cycle and walking paths
- Additional metres of footpaths and cycle paths

## > Community participation

### *Outcome – All residents feel connected and engaged and actively participate in the community*

Creating a socially inclusive community where all people feel welcome, valued and respected is a key factor in supporting good health and wellbeing. People who experience greater levels of discrimination — such as people with disability, the LGBTIQ+ community, culturally diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders — may not participate as fully in the community which may lead to increased social isolation. Creating opportunities for all residents to engage with Council programs, services and planning will support the development of more appropriate, relevant and targeted initiatives. Providing well-planned and accessible facilities

for residents to meet, learn and recreate in their local neighbourhood supports increased participation and satisfaction with their local area. Council’s commitment to increasing opportunities for community participation is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021–2025*, within the ‘A healthy, connected and inclusive community’ and ‘A strong and innovative economy and city’ goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased engagement with the community, particularly priority groups
- Increased participation of community members in Council programs and events
- Increased access to Council facilities

### Relevant health priority areas

#### **Improving mental wellbeing; tackling climate change and its impact on health**

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Building a proud and inclusive community*	✓	✓	
Embedding primary prevention for mentally healthy communities*	✓	✓	
Improving young people’s resilience and connection*	✓	✓	
Facilitating more solutions shaped by young people*	✓	✓	
Improving everyday creativity opportunities for more residents*	✓	✓	
Providing equitable and accessible community facilities, services and events	✓		
Embedding deliberative practice into City of Ballarat engagement with the community, with a particular focus on priority groups	✓	✓	
Building community capacity and opportunities for participation	✓	✓	
Supporting the community to share and adopt sustainable practices	✓	✓	

*\*Strategies required as part of VicHealth partnership to encourage healthy environments and opportunities for children and young people*

### Indicators

- Social Infrastructure Index
- Hours of facility usage and bookings
- Number of library visits
- Number of residents engaged on City of Ballarat projects

## > Community safety

### **Outcome – All residents feel safe and secure in their community**

Gender inequity is the key driver of family violence. By addressing gender inequity within our governing, cultural and sporting institutions and raising awareness of the link between gender-based violence and inequity, we encourage greater participation and safety for women and girls. For the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, feeling culturally safe and welcomed in services and businesses is essential to increase access and participation in the community. Perceptions of safety are influenced by a range of personal, social and built environment factors and can limit people’s participation in physical and social activity within their local neighbourhoods. We can improve

the perception of safety for all residents and encourage opportunities for walking and socialising by providing neighbourhoods with good visibility, street lighting, built features that promote natural surveillance and clean public spaces. Council’s commitment to increasing community safety and creating healthy and safe spaces is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘A healthy, connected and inclusive community’ and ‘A city that fosters sustainable growth’ goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased awareness of and action towards gender inequity as a key driver of family violence
- Increased awareness of and action towards inclusion and being culturally welcoming

### Relevant health priority areas

#### **Preventing all forms of violence; improving mental wellbeing; tackling climate change and its impact on health; increasing healthy eating; increasing active living**

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Addressing family violence through a primary prevention approach	✓	✓	✓
Partnering with stakeholders to develop programs which increase community inclusion and cultural safety	✓	✓	✓
Using evidence and engagement practices to inform the delivery of key safety projects	✓		
Partnering with stakeholders to undertake emergency management planning	✓	✓	
Supporting businesses to provide an environmentally safe and compliant service for customers	✓		

### Indicators

- Perception of safety through place-based surveys
- Participation in gender equity and bystander training
- Participation in library programs developed for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community

## > Employment

### Outcome – Increased participation in diverse and meaningful employment

Secure, adequate and meaningful employment is essential for good health and mental wellbeing. The ability to independently finance access to basic needs such as housing and nutritious food supports a sense of self-worth and relationships with family and the broader community. Secure employment allows people greater choices and options in life and provides opportunities to support personal growth and expand social networks.

There are many groups in the community that have difficulty finding sufficient, regular and meaningful work which reduces their ability to participate fully in the community. Council’s commitment to supporting better employment outcomes for the community is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘A strong and innovative economy and city’ and ‘A city that fosters sustainable growth’ goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased number of new businesses and jobs
- Increased rate of people from priority groups in the workforce
- Increased diversity of business and employment options

### Relevant health priority areas

#### Improving mental wellbeing

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Encouraging local economy investment	✓	✓	
Supporting the development of employment pathways in the community and at City of Ballarat	✓		
Supporting the development of community wealth-building through grant programs and procurement	✓		
Actively seeking to increase the number of creative industry professionals	✓	✓	

#### Indicators

- Annual increase in number of businesses
- Size of the workforce
- Number of residents placed in work through pathway programs
- Number of students and apprentices supported at Council

> Food

**Outcome – Increased access to and consumption of safe, healthy, affordable foods through a sustainable local food system**

Planning for healthy food environments includes good suburb design featuring supermarkets and other fresh food outlets in local neighbourhoods and providing and promoting healthy foods at community facilities and spaces, schools and workplaces. Encouraging a sustainable local food system includes protecting land for growing food, supporting local producers and alternative markets, encouraging community food and gardening groups and reducing food waste. Food insecurity can not only reduce physical and mental health and wellbeing but can limit participation in education, employment and the broader society. Many different Ballarat communities experience food insecurity, particularly groups such as the

unemployed, homeless, students, elderly, people with limited transport options, people with mental health issues and families fleeing domestic violence. Council’s commitment to ensuring healthy and affordable foods are available through sustainable local systems is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘A healthy, connected and inclusive community’ goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased proportion of healthy foods and drinks available at facilities and events
- Improved sponsorship environment and influences for young people
- Increased participation in community food programs
- Improved access to healthy food for people who are food insecure

Relevant health priority areas

**Increasing healthy eating; tackling climate change and its impact on health; improving mental wellbeing**

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Creating better food systems through Council policy*	✓	✓	
Protecting the community from harmful food and drink industries*	✓	✓	
Enhancing the skills required to grow and prepare healthy foods	✓	✓	
Protecting and promoting the local food system	✓		
Improving access to healthy and safe food for vulnerable community members	✓	✓	
Promoting the importance of a healthy diet	✓		
Encouraging sustainable practices to reduce food waste	✓		
Ensuring food businesses offer safe and suitable food for sale	✓		

\*Strategies required as part of VicHealth partnership to encourage healthy environments and opportunities for children and young people

**Indicators**

- Percentage of sugary drinks sold at City of Ballarat-managed facilities
- Average distance from a resident's house to closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer)
- Average distance from a resident's house to closest fast food outlet
- Number of community food programs

## > Health and social services

### **Outcome – Increased access to and participation in health and social services, and greater awareness of and action towards preventative health and wellbeing**

Good access and regular connection to health and social services is important for people to maintain a healthy life. Health and social services encourage screening for early detection of disease and provide health promotion information and support to help residents remain independent and participate in the community. Lifestyle choices and addictions can negatively impact health and wellbeing and may increase the risk of chronic disease. With smoking rates still very high among some groups, restricting the environments where smoking is allowed reduces the risk to others. All organisations and workplaces can play a role in

reducing gambling harm by building awareness of the problem, promoting avenues of support and offering alternative recreational options. The design and management of public spaces, local laws and response to liquor licence applications are factors that can help reduce the harm from long-term and excessive alcohol use in the community. Council’s commitment to supporting and improving community health and wellbeing is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘A healthy, connected and inclusive community’ goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased awareness by young people on alcohol harm prevention
- Increased areas at City of Ballarat-owned facilities and spaces which are smoke free
- Increased participation in health and social services by priority groups

### Relevant health priority areas

#### **Reducing harm from smoking, gambling, alcohol and other drugs; improving mental wellbeing**

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Determining gaps in service delivery and advocating future health and social service needs and investment	✓		✓
Strengthening tobacco control at the local level*	✓	✓	
Preventing alcohol harm at the local level*	✓	✓	
Utilising available planning and regulatory controls and promoting programs and information to support people at risk of harmful gambling	✓	✓	
Providing information and support for the community, particularly priority groups, to access services and screening and understand preventative health measures	✓	✓	
Providing early years services, with focused support for vulnerable families	✓		
Providing support services for eligible older residents	✓		

\*Strategies required as part of VicHealth partnership to encourage healthy environments and opportunities for children and young people

### Indicators

- Average distance to closest off-licence alcohol outlet
- Participation in City of Ballarat-run social alternatives to gambling
- Number of Council facilities with greater than minimum requirement smoke-free zones
- Participation in Sons and Daughters of the West programs

## > Housing

### *Outcome – Increased access to diverse, affordable and sustainable housing*

Secure, suitable and affordable housing is an essential factor in maintaining good physical and mental health. Housing unsuitability can be due to cost, size, location, accessibility, overcrowding or tenure insecurity and can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. For low income earners, when housing costs make up more than 30% of their income, affordability becomes a problem and may lead to reduced levels of food security, healthcare and other basic needs. Housing diversity refers to a mix of housing types and lot sizes and encourages a more diverse range of residents and services within local neighbourhoods. It can support older residents

by providing more suitable and affordable options to remain in their local area. Good planning for sustainable housing and suburbs can reduce costs associated with resources, utilities and waste, improve public amenity and comfort, and increase walkability and community connections. Council’s commitment to supporting the development of affordable and diverse housing choices across the municipality and to ensuring a more sustainable focus in housing developments is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘*A healthy, connected and inclusive community*’ and ‘*A city that fosters sustainable growth*’ goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased diversity of housing
- Increased population density in urban areas

### Relevant health priority areas

#### **Improving mental wellbeing; tackling climate change and its impact on health**

<b>We will do this by:</b>	<b>Deliver</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Advocate</b>
Encouraging housing diversity to ensure appropriate and affordable housing across all life stages	✓		
Supporting stakeholders to improve the quality and diversity of affordable housing		✓	
Supporting high quality housing which demonstrates best practice for sustainability, accessibility and healthy by design guidelines	✓		
Prioritising developments in urban areas to ensure greater access to services and transport	✓		
Encouraging a compassionate approach to homelessness and supporting connection of those experiencing homelessness to appropriate support and services	✓	✓	

### Indicators

- Percentage of dwellings that are government-owned or community housing
- Percentage of rental households in the bottom 40 per cent of incomes who spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing
- Average dwelling density per hectare
- Percentage of 3+ bedroom dwellings
- Referrals to homelessness services

> **Lifelong learning**

**Outcome – Increased access to educational and skill-building opportunities**

Education and literacy are associated with a greater diversity of options, increased accessibility and better health outcomes. Education can provide the skills required to gain employment and security and to support participation in the community and access to health and social services. Ongoing literacy development provides continued access in the face of changing environments. Digital, health, financial and food literacy are areas where people in different stages of life can be supported to encourage greater independence and engagement

with these key areas of life. Council’s commitment to supporting lifelong learning opportunities for all residents is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘A healthy, connected and inclusive community’ goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased participation in early years services by children from priority groups
- Increased number of people accessing skills development and digital literacy programs
- Increased number of programs to support skill development in young people

Relevant health priority areas

**Improving mental wellbeing**

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Providing community infrastructure to facilitate City of Ballarat and community learning spaces and hubs	✓	✓	✓
Planning for, delivering and facilitating early years learning and development	✓	✓	
Providing programs to increase digital literacy, support continuous learning and develop cultural understanding	✓	✓	
Supporting innovative programs which encourage skill development in young people	✓	✓	
Encouraging participation and engagement in learning opportunities provided by local organisations		✓	

**Indicators**

- Percentage of children vulnerable on one or more Australian Early Development Census domains
- Participation in library-based programs
- Number of skill development programs offered to young people

## > Open space and recreation

### **Outcome – Increased access to and participation in active recreation and increased access to public open spaces**

Public open space includes parks, gardens, nature reserves, recreational areas and civic spaces. It plays an important part in supporting residents to socialise, be physically active and make connections within their local neighbourhood. Living close to a park or garden has been shown to encourage more regular physical activity and improve mental wellbeing. Large open spaces have increased potential to attract a diverse range of people as they have the capacity to accommodate more facilities, walking and cycling paths and to support large gatherings. They can also support the preservation and promotion of biodiversity, and are essential in urban areas

for environmental and conservation purposes. Greening city spaces brings a multitude of benefits, from providing shade and cooler air to enhancing walkability, improving street appeal and providing a buffer between footpaths and traffic. Council’s commitment to providing, protecting and enhancing high quality open and recreation spaces is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, within the ‘*A healthy, connected and inclusive community*’, ‘*An environmentally sustainable future*’, ‘*A city that fosters sustainable growth*’, and ‘*A city that conserves and enhances our natural and built assets*’ goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased participation in sport and active recreation
- Increased tree canopy cover across the municipality

### Relevant health priority areas

#### **Increasing active living; tackling climate change and its impact on health; improving mental wellbeing**

<b>We will do this by:</b>	<b>Deliver</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Advocate</b>
Increasing inclusive sport and active recreation*	✓	✓	
Providing and promoting flexible, diverse and accessible recreation and leisure opportunities	✓	✓	
Planning, providing and maintaining sporting facilities and grounds and playspaces	✓		
Planning and developing new open space areas	✓		
Increasing tree planting across the city, with a focus on low socio-economic areas and public areas in the CBD	✓		

\*Strategies required as part of VicHealth partnership to encourage healthy environments and opportunities for children and young people

### Indicators

- Average distance to closest public open space larger than 1.5 hectares
- Annual number of trees planted
- Participation levels at Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre

# Appendices

# How Liveability Domains link to the Council Plan, health priorities and priority groups

LIVEABILITY DOMAINS >	Active transport	Community participation	Community safety	Employment	Food	Health and social services	Housing	Lifelong learning	Open space and recreation
<b>COUNCIL PLAN GOALS</b>									
An environmentally sustainable future	✓								✓
A healthy, connected and inclusive community		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A city that fosters sustainable growth			✓	✓			✓		✓
A strong and innovative economy and city		✓		✓					
A city that conserves and enhances our natural and built assets									✓
<b>HEALTH PRIORITIES</b>									
Tackling climate change and its impact on health	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓
Preventing all forms of violence	✓		✓						
Increasing healthy eating			✓		✓				
Increasing active living	✓		✓						✓
Improving mental wellbeing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reducing harm from smoking, gambling, alcohol and other drugs						✓			
<b>PRIORITY GROUPS</b>									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Culturally diverse communities		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
LGBTIQ+ communities		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
People with disability	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Early years and children	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Young people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Older people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financially vulnerable		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# Community engagement process

Community engagement for the City of Ballarat *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031* was mainly undertaken as part of the *Ballarat: Our Future* community engagement process. This process informed the *City of Ballarat 2021 Integrated Strategic Planning Framework* which includes the *Community Vision* and *Council Plan*. Eight different survey and engagement tools were used to collect data over six weeks in February and March 2021, with 1,981 responses received.

The following community groups made submissions:

- Aboriginal community members at Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative
- Ballarat African Association
- Ballarat Climate Action Co-op
- Ballarat Community Garden
- Ballarat Specialist School
- Buninyong and District Residents Association
- Buninyong Bowling Club
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Extinction Rebellion
- Friends of Ainaro Community Advisory Committee
- Friends of Canadian Corridor Inc
- Ingenia Lifestyle Parkside
- Spotlight on Sebastopol Reference Group

A further 50 responses were received as a result of targeted surveys distributed via Priority Group representatives. Results from the children's consultation and Kids Design Competition and feedback from the Youth Council were also considered.

An internal working group made up of staff representing 17 different City of Ballarat business units was formed to determine health priorities, priority groups and Liveability Domains and to develop strategies.

# Monitoring and evaluation

The *City of Ballarat Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031* outlines a range of goals and strategies which will be undertaken over the next ten years. In addition, detailed annual action plans will be prepared and made available as a separate document on the City of Ballarat website. Actions will include work to be undertaken by the City of Ballarat or in partnership with stakeholders and will be reviewed and updated annually, with progress reported back to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Review documents showing progress against actions will be publicly available from the City of Ballarat website.

As changes in health across the population can usually only be observed over an extended period of time, a range of indicators are used to monitor progress over both the medium and long-term. Medium-term indicators are used to measure the success of projects and their implementation. Long-term indicators are used to show progress against the health priorities we want to improve.

DHHS has developed a comprehensive *Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework* designed to track progress from a whole-of-state perspective. By using some of the same long-term indicators in this plan, outcomes can be measured in local communities and local government areas through to health regions and the whole state. The City of Ballarat will develop an evaluation framework designed to ensure we continuously reflect on and learn from the work undertaken for this plan.

Due to the breadth and scope of this plan, specific projects will be selected for evaluation of their process and project outcomes. Evaluation will be based on the following questions:

- Has this project achieved the desired change?
- Is this project having the influence we expected?
- Have we done what we said we would do?
- What worked well and what needs improvement?
- How effective is our planning?

## > Measuring progress against medium-term outcomes using Liveability Domains

	Indicator	Source*	Baseline/ percentile
<b>Active transport</b>	Walkability for Transport Index – LGA level	AUO	0.5/61
	Average distance to closest public transport stop – LGA level		378m/34
	Additional metres of footpaths and cycle paths	City of Ballarat	
	Number of users of cycle and walking paths		
<b>Community participation</b>	Social Infrastructure Index	AUO	5.6/46
	Hours of facility usage and bookings	City of Ballarat	
	Number of residents engaged on City of Ballarat projects		
	Number of library visits		
<b>Community safety</b>	Perception of safety through place-based surveys	City of Ballarat	
	Participation in gender equity and bystander training		
	Participation in library programs developed for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community		
<b>Employment</b>	Annual increase in number of businesses	ABS	278 (3.1%)
	Size of the workforce		54,213 (Sept 2020)
	Number of new residents placed in work through pathway programs	City of Ballarat	
	Number of students and apprentices supported at City of Ballarat		
<b>Food</b>	Average distance to closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer)	AUO	1370m/40
	Average distance to closest fast food outlet		1395m/52
	Number of community food programs	City of Ballarat	
	Percentage of sugary drinks sold at City of Ballarat-managed facilities		
<b>Health and social services</b>	Average distance to closest off-licence alcohol outlet	AUO	1011m/50
	Participation in City of Ballarat-run social alternatives to gambling	City of Ballarat	
	Number of City of Ballarat facilities with greater than minimum requirement smoke-free zones		
	Participation in Sons and Daughters of the West programs		
<b>Housing</b>	Percentage of dwellings that are government-owned or community housing	AUO	4.8/71
	Percentage of rental households in the bottom 40% of incomes who spend more than 30% of their income on housing		24.2/54
	Average dwelling density per hectare		9/16
	Percentage of 3+ bedroom dwellings	ABS	84%
	Referrals to homelessness services	City of Ballarat	
<b>Lifelong learning</b>	Percentage of children vulnerable in one or more AEDC domains	AEDC	19.6%
	Participation in library-based programs	City of Ballarat	1395m/52
	Number of skill development programs offered to young people		
<b>Open space and recreation</b>	Average distance to closest public open space larger than 1.5 hectares	AUO	409m/72
	Annual number of trees planted	City of Ballarat	
	Participation levels at Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre		

\*Source: AUO – RMIT Australian Urban Observatory (note: measurements taken of urban settlements of Ballarat), ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics, AEDC – Australian Early Development Census

## > Measuring progress against long-term health priorities

	Indicator	Source*	Baseline/ percentile	Year
<b>Tackling climate change and its impact on health</b>	Proportion of tree canopy cover	City of Ballarat	17%	2018
	Annual corporate emissions		35,697t/year	2019-20
	Potable water consumption per person		2.3KL/capita	
	Total CO <sub>2</sub> emissions across LGA	Snapshot	1.74Mt	2019
	Estimated installed capacity across LGA – solar	PV	47225kW	
<b>Preventing all forms of violence</b>	Rate of family violence incidents	CSA	1758/100,000	2019-20
	Rate of assaults that occur in high alcohol hours – females	AoDStats	11.8/10,000	2017-18
	Rate of assaults that occur in high alcohol hours – males		13.7/10,000	
	Proportion of adults who feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark	VIS	41.9%	2015
	Low gender equality score		35%	
<b>Increasing healthy eating</b>	Proportion of adults who consume 3-4 serves of vegetables daily	VPHS	28.6%	2017
	Proportion of adults who consume sugar-sweetened drinks daily		11.2%	
	Proportion of adults who eat takeaway meals or snacks more than once per week		16.7%	
	Proportion of adults who are overweight or obese – females		42.7%	
	Proportion of adults who are overweight or obese – males		62.1%	
<b>Increasing active living</b>	Proportion of adults who are sufficiently physically active	VPHS	46.1%	2017
	Proportion of young people who do the recommended amount of physical activity every day	VSHAWS	20.7% (CH)	2018
	Number of people who walk or cycle to work	ABS	904	2016
<b>Improving mental wellbeing</b>	Proportion of adults who belong to an organised community group	VPHS	Sports – 32.3% Religion – 22.0% School – 19.0% Professional – 29.6% Other – 23.9%	2014
	Proportion of adults who report that their life is worthwhile (low or medium scores)		18.2%	2017
	Proportion of adults who have high or very high levels of psychological distress		17.9%	
	Proportion of adults who are definitely able to get help from neighbours if needed		48.7%	2014
<b>Reducing harm from smoking, gambling, alcohol and other drugs</b>	Proportion of adults who are current smokers – females	VPHS	16.3%	2017
	Proportion of adults who are current smokers – males		14.9%	
	Proportion of adults with increased lifetime risk of alcohol-related harm		45.9%	
	Average loss per person per year on the EGMs	VCGLR	\$683	2018-19
	Rate of pharmaceutical drug-related ambulance attendance rates – females	AoDStats	316.5/10,000	
	Rate of pharmaceutical drug-related ambulance attendance rates – males		196.0/10,000	

\*Source: Snapshot – Snapshot Climate, PV – Mapping Photovoltaic Installations, CSA – Crime Statistics Agency, AoDStats – Turning Point: Alcohol and other Drugs Statistics, VIS – VicHealth Indicator Survey, VPHS – Victorian Population Health Survey, VSHAWS – Victorian Student Health and Wellbeing Survey, CH – Central Highlands region, ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics, VCGLR – Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation

# Legislative requirements

The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* requires all local governments to prepare a *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* within 12 months of the council election. The Act aims to achieve the highest standards of public health and wellbeing by:

- Protecting public health and preventing disease, illness, injury, disability or premature death
- Promoting conditions in which people can be healthy
- Reducing inequalities in the state of public health and wellbeing

A *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan* sets the health priorities for the municipality, outlines strategies to prevent or reduce public health issues, and supports the community to achieve optimum health and wellbeing.

The *City of Ballarat Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031* outlines the extensive work undertaken by various units which positively impacts the health and wellbeing of the local community.

In accordance with the *Act*, this plan:

- Has regard to the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-23* and its priorities
- Includes an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district
- Provides for the involvement of local community members in the development, implementation and evaluation of the plan
- Specifies how City of Ballarat will work in partnership with the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies to undertake public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the plan
- Identifies goals and strategies based on available evidence designed to create a local community where people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing
- Specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims of family violence in the community
- Be consistent with the *Council Plan* prepared under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*



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