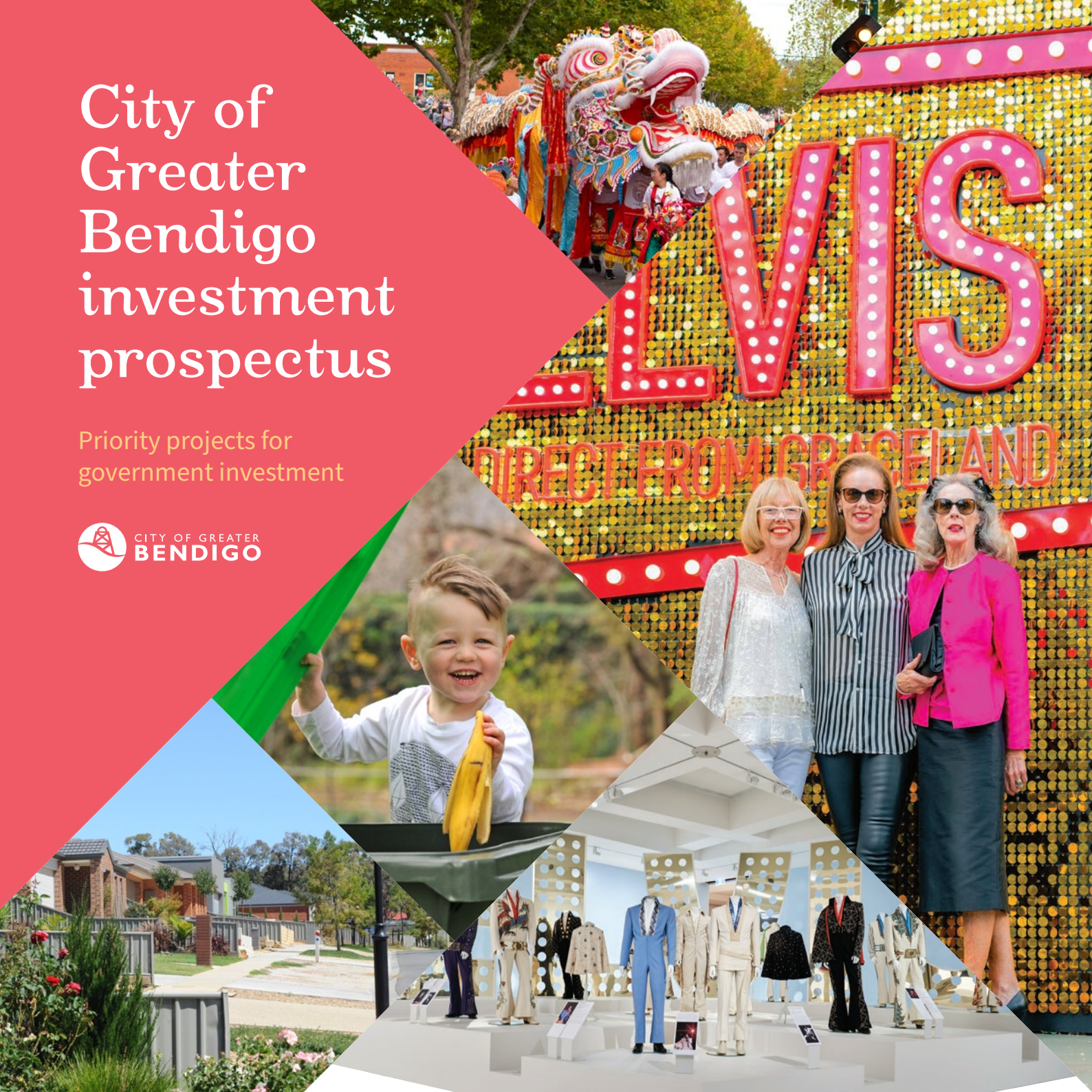


City of Greater Bendigo investment prospectus

Priority projects for government investment





Greater Bendigo is investment-ready

The City of Greater Bendigo is pleased to present this investment prospectus. The projects outlined in this document are the City's top priority projects for the 2020-2024 Council term. They represent a diverse investment in our community and its people, contributing to the vibrancy, liveability, sustainability, health and economic success of our city and region.

They also seek to build on new opportunities, in particular Bendigo's role as a co-host for the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Our population is growing and diversifying because Greater Bendigo offers the best of regional living – world-class health care, access to domestic and international flights, quality education providers, affordable housing, and great employment, recreation and cultural opportunities.

This prospectus demonstrates the City's dual strengths of being responsive to changing circumstances, while also being able to plan long-term to ensure Greater Bendigo remains a successful and inclusive community for all.

These projects are an investment in the future of Greater Bendigo and we respectfully seek your support.

Community vision:

Greater Bendigo celebrates our diverse community. We are welcoming, sustainable and prosperous. Walking hand-in-hand with the Traditional Custodians of this land. Building on our rich heritage for a bright and happy future.



Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. The City acknowledges and extends its appreciation to the Traditional Owners of the land, and pays its respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and the hopes of all Aboriginal people. The City expresses its gratitude in the sharing of this land, sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing, and hopes that the community may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.



About Greater Bendigo

Greater Bendigo is one of Australia’s largest inland cities, supporting a local population of approximately 120,000 and regional population of close to 250,000.¹ By 2050 Greater Bendigo’s population is expected to reach 200,000.²

The City wants Greater Bendigo to be a place that focuses on wellbeing and equity for all citizens.

We are proudly a nationally accredited Welcoming City, the first Local Government to achieve this recognition in honour of our commitment to cultural diversity, Aboriginal reconciliation and social cohesion. Our organisation is also working closely with Traditional Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung, to acknowledge and increase the visibility of their culture, history and landscape.

Greater Bendigo and the wider region is internationally recognised as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, which highlights a commitment to creativity, innovation and celebration of our amazing local producers.

Our city centre boasts a super-fast 100 gigabit broadband network, which has the capacity to break down the ‘digital divide’ between Bendigo and the rest of the world (100 gigabits per second is more than 1,000 times faster than Australia’s average internet speed³).

The ‘100 Gig Bendigo’ initiative aims to make Bendigo a destination for digital businesses and large enterprises thanks to access to critical high-quality local infrastructure and skills.

Bendigo was once one of the richest cities in the world after gold was discovered here in 1851 and the impact of the gold rush is still evident today, particularly through our beautiful streetscapes and historic buildings.

Our urban area and many rural small towns and villages contribute to our strong sense of community and provide residents with great lifestyle alternatives. Inner-city living, family homes, or hobby or large-scale farms can all be found here.

We are also a service and infrastructure centre surrounded by Mount Alexander, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Macedon Ranges, Loddon, Mitchell and Strathbogie shires, which see Bendigo as a viable alternative to travelling to Melbourne to access the services they need. Our location in the geographic centre of Victoria is two hours from Melbourne by road or train and a 90-minute drive from Melbourne Airport.

Although easily accessible, this distance has seen Greater Bendigo develop into a largely self-contained regional centre. Our main employment industries are healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, construction, education and training, and manufacturing. Greater Bendigo’s economy is valued at \$7.923B per annum and large employers range from major institutional organisations to private business.⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to evaluate what is most important and its regional Victoria and Australia that is benefiting from people choosing a more relaxed lifestyle. But it is important regional communities can keep pace with this growth and continue their unique offering.



1. Estimated Resident Population, ABS 2020 2. Based on Victoria in Future 2016
 3. Australia’s average download speed for October 2020 was 58.5mbps, according to the Speedtest Global Index www.speedtest.net/global-index/australia#fixed
 4. Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au), viewed June 2021; REMPLAN, REMPLAN - Plan with clarity, viewed June 2021



Commonwealth Games – Counting down to Victoria 2026

The Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Greater Bendigo to secure new sporting and other complementary infrastructure, while celebrating our thriving community, Traditional Owner culture, and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for athletes, officials and spectators.

Events such as this are about more than just competition; they seek to set a new benchmark for amplifying everyone's voices, advancing equality, creating a green future, driving economic recovery and collaborating effectively. Team Bendigo – Local Government, State Government, business and community groups – will work as work as one to make Victoria 2026 the most successful games ever.

A proud legacy of the Games will enhance delivery, directly and indirectly, of the following:

First Nations

- First Nations People are meaningfully engaged in the design of the athletes' hub
- First Nations People benefit from the future use of the athletes' hub
- Educate athletes, visitors and the community on the culture, traditions and language of our First Nations People, and incorporate this into a complementary cultural program
- First Nations employment and business opportunities are created through the Games' procurement
- Support Traditional Owners to achieve their aspirations of 'healing country'





Our community

- Expand the capacity and reach of Greater Bendigo’s network connectivity
- Ensure a variety of free and low-cost activities are included in the Games’ program
- Provide incentives and support to encourage volunteers to be involved in the Games’ experience
- Work with the relevant support agencies to understand the potential impact of the Games on vulnerable members of the community
- Create an inclusive event that provides a safe experience for athletes, spectators and the community

Climate and environment

- Delivery of a carbon-positive Games, including investment in local vegetation offset projects
- Delivery of a zero waste Games
- Delivery of a zero carbon athletes’ hub
- Funding for the Bendigo Stadium solar and battery storage project
- Investment in alternative fuel vehicles to provide transport during and after the Games
- Additional tree planting and urban greening to cool streets and make it safer as people move around

Culture, creativity and culinary

- Expanded Bendigo Art Gallery to be the cultural hub for the Games and host a major exhibition
- Australian Government to provide Central Victorian Goldfields with a ‘tentative listing’ to support the World Heritage bid
- Performances and events showcasing talented artists in venues, live sites and community spaces during the Games to activate precincts in and around the city centre
- Local food producers and hospitality venues to be promoted and supported to add to the vibrancy of the city centre and celebrate the City of Gastronomy designation

Jobs and the regional economy

- A Victorian Government funding allocation to support investment in accommodation infrastructure
- Program to identify skills in demand for the Games and match people to jobs and training packages, including working with local agencies to engage with young people
- Continue to promote Bendigo’s 100gb internet capacity and seek funding to extend this network
- Mandating local content for key construction and service contracts required to deliver the Games
- Investment in destination marketing and associated infrastructure to increase visitation and enhance the experience for tourists in small towns in the region

Infrastructure

- Funding and construction of the Bendigo Low Line safe transport connection
- Funding and construction of key off-road tracks and trails to enable safe connections to the city centre, Games’ precincts and athletes’ hub
- Funding for the development of the Bendigo Showgrounds
- Provide passenger train access for the Bendigo Showgrounds and Harcourt, including the construction of new platforms
- Increase frequency of Bendigo-Melbourne, Bendigo-Echuca, Bendigo-Swan Hill rail services
- Restoring duplication of the Bendigo-Kyneton rail line
- Funding to significantly increase the delivery of universal access change facilities at rural and regional sporting facilities
- Funding for swimming pool refurbishment program for rural pools



Artist impression of Bendigo Art Gallery

Arts and culture

Bendigo Art Gallery expansion – *The People's Gallery*

The success of Bendigo Art Gallery has caused it to outgrow its current facilities. The Gallery is renowned for hosting large-scale international blockbuster exhibitions that are a significant tourism drawcard and have many positive flow-on effects to tourism, accommodation and hospitality sectors, and our economy more broadly.

These successful exhibitions include *Elvis: Direct from Graceland*, *Mary Quant: Fashion Revolutionary*, *Tudors to Windsors: British Royal Portraits*, *Bendigo Art Gallery and Twentieth Century Fox present Marilyn Monroe and Grace Kelly: Style Icon*.

Over the past 10 years the Gallery has averaged 150,000 visitors a year but this number has been in excess of 200,000 when major exhibitions have been staged.

A redevelopment of the entire site will deliver a multi-storey building that enhances the capacity for major exhibitions and visitor attraction, and creates new engagement and public spaces for the regional community including:

- 600m² new world-class learning centre for students, families and community
- Traditional Owner recognition via Place of Keeping for the Dja Dja Wurrung collection
- Large, second level blockbuster exhibition space
- Redeveloped restaurant with a City of Gastronomy offering
- Expanded access to free and collection-based exhibitions and displays
- Expanded commercial opportunities via a Gallery shop and pop up blockbuster exhibition shop
- Accessible amenities and expanded public spaces

Total project cost – \$48M

Australian/Victorian governments – \$31M (shared cost)

City of Greater Bendigo – \$9M

Bendigo Art Gallery Board – \$3M

Philanthropic – \$5M

National Chinese Museum of Australia

The Golden Dragon Museum is ready to become the National Chinese Museum of Australia and serve as a cultural touchstone for celebrating our multicultural nation.

The Museum's international collection is unsurpassed, holding items rarely seen outside of China and bringing together art and culture from a globally significant Chinese diaspora. Famous among the collection are Bendigo's Imperial Processional Dragons – Loong, Sun Loong and Dai Gum Loong.

The surrounding Yi Yuan Gardens, Guan Yin Temple, and a public gathering and event space greatly enhance the Museum and together form the Dai Gum San precinct.

Easter time provides the Museum with its highest period of visitation each year, with approximately 100,000 tourists visiting for the Bendigo Easter Festival.

A key part of the Museum's masterplan is to extend the current Museum building. This will increase visitation to the facility and enable current and additional artefacts that are of historical significance to be properly displayed.

The Victorian Government and City of Greater Bendigo have invested \$1.2M to upgrade the Museum's entry foyer and restaurant and reinvigorate its front-of-house experience for visitors.

Total project cost – \$39M (estimated)

Australian Government – \$10M

Victorian Government – \$15M

City of Greater Bendigo/NCMA – \$5M

Private investment – \$9M



Artist impression of Central Deborah Gold Mine

Tourism and event infrastructure

Central Deborah Gold Mine upgrade

A refresh of the site will complement Central Deborah Gold Mine's existing underground tours and self-guided surface mine tour.

The current proposal focuses on upgrading the existing site to create more multipurpose spaces for education and events, improved visitor experiences such as interpretive museum and exhibition spaces, as well as improving the retail and visitor hub for all Bendigo Heritage Attractions experiences, including evening tram services through the city centre.

It would also have the capacity to host new opportunities including gold panning, artisan workshops and a focus on STEM education. Additionally, the plan identifies the need for school/group accommodation in Bendigo, and the Central Deborah site is well suited due to its location and connectivity via the tram network.

Total project cost – \$10M (approximate)

Stage 1, refine business case (in progress)

Stage 2, delivery based on business case

Australian Government – \$4M

Victorian Government – \$5M

City of Greater Bendigo – \$1M

Major events partnership

The City would welcome the opportunity to partner with the Victorian Government on the delivery of major events that are held in Melbourne. For example, when the Grand Prix is on, creating pop-up events in regional areas so competitors can experience more of Victoria and communities can participate in the event. Another option is giving event ticket holders a 'regional Victoria pass' that allows them, while the event is on or for a limited time afterwards, to access discount tourism experiences in the regions as part of having purchased their ticket to the event.

Request

Explore the feasibility of a partnership model between regional Victorian tourism bodies and major events in Melbourne such as the Australian Open, Moomba, Melbourne Grand Prix, AFL Grand Final and Spring Racing Carnival etc.

Bendigo Showgrounds upgrade

The 2019 Master Plan for the Bendigo Showgrounds, developed in partnership between the City, Bendigo Agricultural Show Society and Regional Development Victoria, identifies a nine-stage plan to improve the Bendigo Showgrounds.

Given Bendigo's close proximity to Melbourne and other regional cities, there is a wide catchment area the Bendigo Showgrounds can draw on to attract visitors.

Proposed upgrades include a new \$6.5M arena for junior and women's sport, in-ground irrigation and lighting upgrade, a multipurpose sports pavilion including player changerooms, function room, umpire rooms, toilets, kiosk/canteen and a covered terraced viewing area.

The exhibition buildings and market precinct require a \$2.9M investment in covered market stall spaces, solar conversion, kitchen and equipment upgrades, sealed surfaces, gardens and landscaping, toilets and storage.

Total project cost – \$13M

Australian Government – \$5.5M

Victorian Government – \$5.5M

City of Greater Bendigo – \$2M





A thriving regional economy

Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct – *securing jobs for the future*

The manufacturing and mining sectors are responsible for half of Greater Bendigo’s total exports to more than 50 countries around the world, valued at approximately \$2B per annum. Gold mining, defence equipment, transportation, engineering and advanced engineering, and food manufacturing are industries that have flourished with a highly skilled workforce.

An industrial precinct is essential and urgent to support central Victoria’s growing advanced manufacturing sector. The Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct (BREP) will provide a long-term pipeline of industrial land to meet growing industry needs and will secure jobs close to a growing residential population. It will also reduce land use conflicts and reduce freight movements through central Bendigo.

The City has negotiated the purchase of land that will need to be rezoned to facilitate employment and industrial activity. When this is complete, infrastructure and utility connections on the site will be necessary.

Required investment, stage 1

Project element	Investment
Trunk infrastructure works	\$21.5M
Additional subdivision roads and internal infrastructure cost	\$12.5M
Marong Western Freight Corridor – Land	\$7.1M
Project management and fees	\$1.4M
Water servicing strategy	\$0.5M
Freight route planning	\$1.5M
Total cost	\$44.5M

An additional \$40M is required to support Marong’s residential and industrial growth, in particular water infrastructure. Major upgrades will be required to potable water and wastewater infrastructure (both trunk mains and treatment plants).

These works are critical to the sustainable growth of the Bendigo western growth corridor, with the BREP being a significant trigger for increased capacity in these essential services.

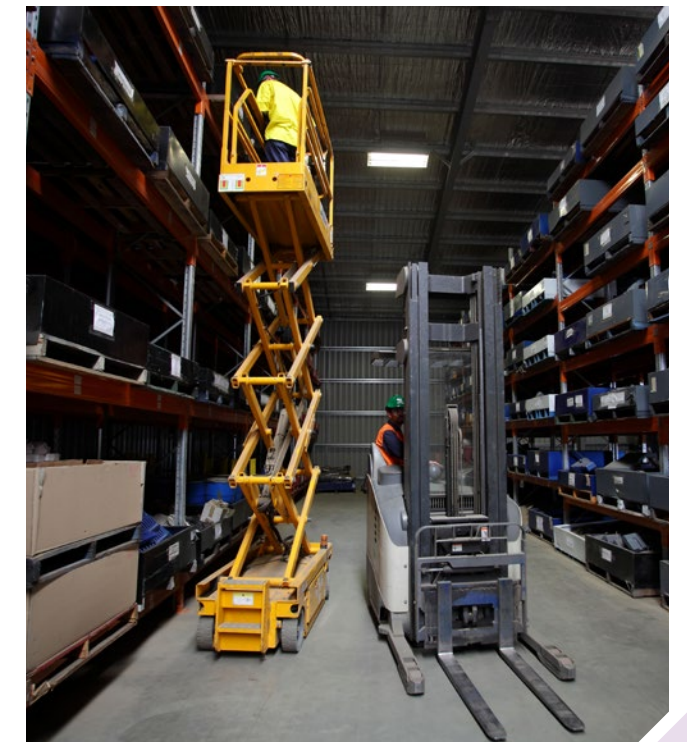
Total, stage 1 – \$44.5M

Australian Government – \$4.5M

Victorian Government – \$30M

City of Greater Bendigo – Land purchase + \$10M

Additional \$40M for water infrastructure, including strategic planning work (suggested even cost shared between Victorian and Australian governments).





Circular Greater Bendigo

The City operates the Eaglehawk landfill and three regional transfer stations and re-sale shops. The Eaglehawk landfill will close in 2023 and as part of its post-landfill aspirations, the City is developing suitable circular economy infrastructure and multiple 'Circular Greater Bendigo' hubs to replace it.

Work to-date has identified the necessary infrastructure solutions, and ongoing work focuses on developing master plans to future-proof the City's own resource recovery operations at its existing resource recovery facilities, in addition to planning for a new commercial and industrial focused 'Circular Economy Precinct' to be developed at a City-owned site. This work will future-proof the provision of high-quality resource recovery and circular economy services to regional residents and businesses, and support the region's transition to a post-landfill environment.

Total project cost – \$44.6M (subject to firming as part of master planning)

Australian Government – \$15M

Victorian Government – \$25M (less than our waste levy payments over the last 5 years)

City of Greater Bendigo (potentially other Councils) – \$4.6M

This would involve:

\$44.6M for the implementation of the Circular Greater Bendigo hubs. This includes:

- Transitioning the Eaglehawk landfill to a residential-focused hub
- Developing a dedicated commercial and industrial Circular Economy Precinct to support central Victoria's shift to a circular economy
- Upgrading the City's additional regional transfer stations and re-sale shops to support the region's two circular economy precincts



Bendigo Livestock Exchange shade structure

Provision of shade or cooling systems and shelter from extreme temperatures for animals in holding facilities is desirable. The Bendigo Livestock Exchange is the last of regional Victoria's four main saleyards to be without a significant roof structure.

The Bendigo Livestock Exchange is audited annually by AUSMEAT to ensure it complies with the National Saleyard Quality Assurance program – an optional standards program the site has continued to meet for more than 10 years.

It supports the sale of animals from across north and east Victoria and into southern New South Wales, and more than 1 million sheep and lambs pass through the site each year.

Given the extreme climate in central Victoria, it is optimal to have shelter for the animals and infrastructure of this scale presents an opportunity for added benefits such as solar power generation and water harvesting.

The City has allocated \$100,000 towards the development of a feasibility study and scoping document, and concept designs are completed

- Total project cost – \$12.9M**
- Australian Government – \$4M*
- Victorian Government – \$6M*
- City of Greater Bendigo – \$2.9M*



GROW Bendigo

The Victorian Government's Growing Regional Opportunities for Work (GROW) initiative started in Geelong in 2015 to address disadvantage through employment opportunities. In 2019 it commenced in Bendigo and has been activating growth and employment across the community along with Shepparton, Ballarat and Gippsland municipalities, with current funding concluding in June 2023.

GROW Bendigo – delivered under the guidance of Bendigo's Chamber of Commerce, Be.Bendigo – brings together business, government, community organisations, employment providers and individuals with a common goal to improve and grow opportunities for employment in the Bendigo community.

GROW Bendigo has already delivered more than 150 employment outcomes across multiple target cohorts, and this momentum continues as the approach and practices embed within businesses, and new programs are piloted.

Further funding is required to ensure the positive momentum created by these GROW initiatives, is maintained beyond 2023, to secure lasting outcomes for communities of disadvantage, including:

- Young people (aged 15-24 years);
- People with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Refugees and migrants
- Long-term unemployed

In light of the current labour shortages, and with industries being encouraged to review their recruitment processes that will benefit people with a disadvantage, now is an ideal time to continue the momentum by encouraging business to focus on their procurement activities and prioritise inclusive employment.

- Total project cost**
- Victorian Government – \$2M*
- \$1.5M (over 3 years)*
- \$500,000 (over 3 years, regional coordinator role)*



Connected Greater Bendigo

Marong Western Freight Corridor

Marong is located 15 kilometres west of the centre of Bendigo at the junction of the Calder, Calder Alternate and Wimmera Highways where heavy vehicle traffic volumes are severely compromising the town centre.

Marong's population is projected to grow to approximately 8,000 people (currently 1,500) in the next 15-20 years.

The Calder Freeway/Highway is one of the key freight routes connecting Mildura to Melbourne. It was recently gazetted on the Victoria Principle Freight Network and forms part of the National Freight Network.

The proposed Marong Western Freight Corridor will service the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct, as well as bypassing heavy vehicles from the Marong town centre, creating a safer and higher amenity environment for all road users and residents.

In the longer term, the aim is to upgrade Bendigo's major western freight route (Ravenswood to Epsom) and improve traffic and freight distribution around urban Bendigo. When delivered, this improved corridor will make it easier for freight vehicles to travel to the west or north of Bendigo, enhancing opportunities for existing, new and emerging businesses to succeed.

Request

Funding a planning study to identify, plan, design and adopt a preferred alignment for the future Marong Western Freight Corridor and confirm surrounding land uses. The study would include:

- Assessment of existing conditions
- Development of multiple viable road alignments
- Preparation of a planning study for community consultation
- Formal approval of the new freight corridor, estimated cost and land requirements

Total project cost – \$1.5M, study

Australian Government – \$1.1M

Victorian Government – \$400,000

New intersection – Carolyn Way, Maiden Gully

Maiden Gully is a key growth area in Greater Bendigo. The current population is 5,600 but is estimated to reach 11,600 in 30 years.

Maiden Gully has been steadily growing over recent years, placing pressure on the Calder Highway and Maiden Gully Road intersection, and resulting in the need for its urgent upgrade to signals, including the addition of a connection to Carolyn Way.

Recent school developments and increased traffic along the corridor have also triggered the need for improvement.

A Regional Roads Victoria business case estimates the project will cost approximately \$12M. Development of the intersection will make other suburban roads safer to travel on, as traffic using existing unsignalised intersections is expected to make use of this intersection.

Total project cost – \$12M

Signalise Calder Highway/Maiden Gully Road/Carolyn Way

Intersection project cost – \$12M

Victorian Government – \$11M

City of Greater Bendigo – \$1M

Howard Street intersection

The current Howard Street/Midland Highway signalised intersection and approaching lanes are not adequate for a major intersection. There have been many reported casualty crashes at this intersection in recent years, including students from the nearby primary school.

The Midland Highway is a key arterial road, whilst Howard Street is a gazetted truck route. Both roads carry in excess of 10,000 vehicles each day. Issues at this intersection are compounded due to the proximity to Epsom Primary School, Epsom Train Station and Epsom Shopping Centre.

Department of Transport analysis confirmed the intersection is not suitable for the quantity or type of vehicles using it. A planning permit amendment process for the Epsom Village Shopping Centre redevelopment has also secured land and investment by a developer to help improve the intersection.

Total project cost – \$18M

Victorian Government – \$15M (including land acquisition)

Private investment – \$3M



Regional projects

Energy

There is an urgent need to upgrade the KerangLink to support the Victoria New South Wales Interconnector (VNI) West project.

The KerangLink interconnector is a priority project for the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and would run between Victoria and New South Wales, via a proposed terminal north of Ballarat, new stations near Bendigo and Kerang, through to Project EnergyConnect in Dinawan, NSW.

KerangLink will also facilitate the development of Victorian Renewable Energy Zones and help to bring forward significant network capacity to connect renewable energy projects in Victoria and support regional jobs.

VNI West will unlock and share geographically and technologically diverse clean, low-cost renewables.

VNI West is a proposed new 500 kilovolt (kV) electricity transmission interconnector. It will increase power export capacity to NSW by 1,930MW and capacity to Victoria by 1,800MW, as well as unlocking investment in over 2,000MW of renewable energy projects.

Request

Progress the development of KerangLink as quickly as possible because of the benefits it will deliver to regional economies.

Digital connectivity

Digital technology and infrastructure are fundamental to the economic and social growth of regional Victoria. Digital connectivity creates opportunities and reduces barriers.

Quality digital connection is essential for businesses and households to be able to participate and engage in modern life, engage with friends and family as well as access everyday services, including health care and education. Digital connectivity reduces the need to travel and brings services to the home or business.

One of the biggest challenges facing rural and regional Victoria is access to essential services. Without access to quality NBN connections, many rural and regional communities are falling behind.

Request

- Continuation of mobile blackspot funding
- Rollout of very fast connectivity in central Bendigo, using the 100 gig network
- Extension of free public Wi-Fi in central Bendigo
- Improved rural access to telehealth to reduce the health inequalities in health service access and provision



Healthy communities and environments

Peter Krenz Centre

A multi-stage redevelopment is planned for the Peter Krenz Centre in Eaglehawk to create a vibrant community hub.

Peter Krenz Centre currently features a range of facilities, including gym, group fitness studio, four squash courts, single court stadium, creche and meeting rooms. It also features aquatic facilities, including a spa, steam room and three heated pools (50 metre, program and toddler pools). The current facilities are either approaching or at the end of their lifespan and many no longer meet community needs.

Stage 1 of the project will connect to the Centre's existing aquatic facilities and include:

- A new library
- A new indoor/outdoor café
- A 24/7 gym with strength and exercise equipment
- Flexible meeting spaces with kitchenettes
- Public toilets to service the wider precinct

Total project cost – \$27M

Australian Government – \$10M

Victorian Government – \$10M

City of Greater Bendigo – \$7M

Low Line shared trail

The Low Line will create an active transport corridor into and through the city centre.

The Low Line represents an adaptive reuse of the Bendigo Creek channel, where a shared path will be built along the channel to create a safe, efficient and low carbon travel option for locals and visitors. This will ease traffic congestion and support our local population to be active and healthy.

Bendigo Creek is the natural spine of Bendigo connecting the majority of suburbs, with 95,000 people living within 5km of the creek. Most of Bendigo Creek has an existing trail, but a key gap of 4.4km exists within the city centre. The Low Line will fix this gap and activate a central public space corridor.

The Low Line will emulate New York's High Line, yet do it Bendigo-style! This will include enabling the Dja Dja Wurrung to express a cultural narrative for the trail and then creating public art to celebrate all of Bendigo's cultures.

Total project cost – \$8M

Victorian Government – \$7.5M

City of Greater Bendigo – \$500,000



Tracks and trails

When we walk and cycle we contribute to creating better places and environments, healthier people, better connected communities and more viable businesses. By making daily walking and cycling easier and more comfortable, these benefits can be shared more fairly across the community.

Greater Bendigo is Australia's first internationally-accredited Bicycle Friendly Community, while the 2019 Active Living Census found walking and cycling were among the most popular physical activities of all residents within the municipality, with three quarters indicating that they would like to walk or cycle more often.

To support Greater Bendigo's population growth to 200,000 residents by 2050, the City is seeking to create a more connected, safe and accessible cycling network.

Strategic cycling corridors – \$9.2M

- Calder Highway – Maiden Gully to West Bendigo link – \$7M
- Ironbark Gully Trail – \$2.2M

Heathcote to Rushworth Rail Trail – \$3.1M

- Construction of a walking and cycling trail along the former railway reserve at Rushworth to connect to the Murchison Rail Trail and to extend the works to Heathcote via existing tracks and trails, including a new Heathcote winery loop

Underpasses and crossings – \$2M

- Lockwood Road underpass – \$500,000
- Emu Creek, Strathfieldsaye underpass – \$300,000
- Bullock Creek, Marong underpass – \$300,000
- Crossing construction on existing corridors, including the Long Gully Trail, Bendigo Creek Trail and Back Creek Trail (nine key crossings identified) – \$100,000 per crossing (\$900,000 total)

Bushland Tracks and Trails Strategy – \$100,000

Total project cost \$14.4M

Victorian Government – \$12.9M

City of Greater Bendigo – \$1.5M

Reimagining Bendigo Creek

Bendigo Creek flows through the heart of Bendigo. The Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan focuses on restoring the health of the catchment and creek, creating connections to the creek, and celebrating Djaara and migrant culture along the creek.

An extensive co-design process with Traditional Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung, relevant agencies and the community was undertaken to develop the plan.

The investment priorities include:

1. Enable Dja Dja Wurrung to lead the way – \$1M over 5 years. Funding for project staff and Traditional Owner engagement.
2. Dja Dja Wurrung cultural expression – \$350,000. Funding to enable Dja Dja Wurrung to develop a cultural narrative along Bendigo Creek and commence installing public art and modern cultural interpretation.
3. Recreate a chain of ponds on the Bendigo Creek – \$4.4 M. Works are underway to create the first ponds on Bendigo Creek near Weeroona Ave. Future stages will continue the chain of ponds 1.6 kilometres downstream to Lyons St, White Hills. These works will involve significant earthworks, revegetation and landscaping. This will improve water quality and create habitat for native fish and platypus in years to come.
4. Creek renaturalisation detailed design and investigations – \$400,000. Funding for the necessary due diligence and design to enable two priority locations to be renaturalised – Back Creek and Bendigo Creek between Bay St and Maple St, Golden Square.
5. Build stage 1 of the Long Gully Constructed Wetlands – \$850,000. The first stage is to build a series of wetlands and associated landscaping. The longer-term vision is to create a linear park jointly managed by the Dja Dja Wurrung and the City. The initial investment will decontaminate the site and be a catalyst for further enhancements.
6. Detail design and investigations for the priority flood mitigation option – \$200,000. Design to divert flood waters from the upper catchment into No. 7 Reservoir and Crusoe Reservoir and reduce downstream flooding risk.
7. Mobilising the community to act – \$300,000 over three years. Funding to facilitate revegetation by Landcare and community groups within the Bendigo Creek catchment and to deliver citizen science activities such as water and bird monitoring.

Total project cost – \$7.5M

Australian Government – \$2.5M

Victorian Government – \$2.5M

City of Greater Bendigo – \$2.5M



Policy support

Planning – housing our community

There are clear policy tensions between managing bushfire risk and retaining vegetation. While recognising these are both essential planning considerations and must be addressed through the planning process, strict guidelines and direction in both of these areas in recent years is leading to an inability to progress planning in certain areas. With no clear growth front in Greater Bendigo to provide certainty and ensure the more cost effective and timely delivery of infrastructure, this is also a challenge to managing growth.

Implementing the Big Housing Build is critical to addressing the need for affordable housing supply. To close the housing gap, the City is supportive of inclusionary zoning being added to the Victoria Planning Provisions so social and affordable housing can be mandated within the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. The City would also welcome being a trial Council for inclusionary zoning.

Rehabilitation of contaminated former mining land would also assist in in-fill development, providing a pipeline of land for development and a way to address access to housing shortages as a result of people seeking a tree change throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This would also unlock public open space for recreation and environmental enhancement.

Elevating sustainable design requirements for new development is critical to achieving climate resilient, energy efficient homes which minimise operating costs for households and contribute to tackling climate change. The Victorian Government's commitment to 7-star energy ratings for new homes is welcome. This initiative should be supported with higher sustainable design requirements in planning schemes, including requirements for zero carbon development, as set out in the planning scheme amendments lodged in July 2022 by 24 local councils.

Returning State fees to the regions

Greater Bendigo contributes to a range of State Government fee or levy collections, in particular the Gold Mining Royalty and EPA Waste Levy. From June 2023, the Windfall Gains Tax will also be introduced for Victoria.

- In 2021/2022, more than \$140M was paid in the Gold Mining Royalty by Victoria's minerals sector, of which the Greater Bendigo region contributed approximately \$43M. Local mining companies Agnico Eagle and Mandalay Resources, together with the Minerals Council of Australia, all consider as a top priority the return of some of the royalty to mining communities. As little as 20 per cent reinvested over a 10-year period would support major land rehabilitation and help heal 'upside-down Country' for Traditional Owner groups.
- The City paid \$6.9M in the EPA Waste Levy for 2021/2022. The City allocates \$500,000 in its annual budget towards waste education and other initiatives to support residents to 'put the right thing in the right bin'. The City also continues to reserve capital provisions for future circular economy improvements for the region. A 20 per cent reinvestment of waste levy funds in Greater Bendigo over five financial years would be \$6.2M, which would very nearly match our capital investment over the same period.
- Windfall Gains Tax will come into effect from July 1, 2023 and will apply to all land that has increased in value by \$100,000 or above as a result of government rezoning. As Greater Bendigo continues to grow it would be appropriate to see part of this money invested in infrastructure improvements for the future communities of the rezoned land.



Energy and environment

Australia is on the brink of an energy transformation with the replacement of coal fired power with renewable energy. This rapid decarbonisation is critical to mitigating the worst effects of climate change. To facilitate this change and ensure local communities benefit from the transition, the following regulatory changes and infrastructure upgrades are required:

- Review of electricity regulations that currently inhibit trading of electricity by small embedded generators such as households and businesses with roof top solar. Current market regulations and distribution charges preference large generators and disincentivise peer-to-peer transactions that could enable increased generation and transmission of renewable energy at a local scale, thereby increasing the flow of revenue to local communities.
- Upgrades to local distribution networks to enable increased local renewable energy generation through rooftop solar and other small-scale renewable energy projects. This will help support the transition to renewable energy while enabling local households and businesses to benefit.

Carbon market

While the City is aiming to achieve zero emissions by 2030 for the organisation and the community, it is likely that some residual emissions will remain from historic landfill sites and from fuels. The City's preference would be to offset these emissions through local projects that achieve environmental and economic co-benefits.

The current Emission Reduction Fund requirements and carbon accounting standards do not support biodiverse revegetation projects relevant to our region, preferring establishment of a forest ecosystem relevant to only a small part of Victoria. The verification process is also costly and time consuming, making participation in the carbon market prohibitive for small-scale projects.

Consequently, review of the current Emissions Reduction Fund regulations is encouraged to broaden participation in the Australian carbon market in a way that benefits biodiversity and local communities.



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