

MUNICIPAL PUBLIC

Health and Wellbeing Plan

2017-2021

CITY OF

BALLARAT



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Council and the City of Ballarat respectfully acknowledge the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people as Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which we work and live, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge their significant cultural heritage, their fundamental spiritual connection to Country, and value their contribution to a diverse community.

We are proud to embrace the spirit of reconciliation, and learn from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community how best to improve their health, social and economic outcomes.



Contents

Mayor's message	04
Why do Councils prepare a health plan?	05
Council Plans and Strategies	06
Process of development	07
Health partners	08
Health inequities and the social determinants of health	09
<i>A gender lens</i>	09
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders</i>	10
<i>People with a disability</i>	10
<i>An intercultural city</i>	11
A life course approach	13
<i>A focus on the early years</i>	13
<i>Positive youth development</i>	14
<i>Active ageing</i>	14
Healthy environments	15
Sustainable environments	16
A safe and resilient community	18
Place based and people centred approaches	19
<i>Wendouree West Recreation Reserve</i>	19
Local data and evidence	20
Consultation process	22
Selecting health priorities for Ballarat and the Central Highlands Region	23
Priority 1: Healthy eating and active living	24
Priority 2: Improving mental health	27
Priority 3: Preventing violence and injury	29
Implementation, monitoring and evaluation	31





Ballarat has earned its reputation as the regional capital of western Victoria offering a vibrant culture and diverse opportunities, a glorious historic streetscape and ample natural spaces. However, as a community, we are well short of where we should be in terms of our health and wellbeing. We have higher rates of chronic disease, poor lifestyle habits, and a shorter lifespan when compared to many other municipalities.

Our vision for Ballarat, as outlined in the Council Plan 2017-21, is 'a proud city that is bold, vibrant and thriving'. We are continually planning and preparing our city for growth and to retain high quality facilities and services for the community. We also recognise our community is at the heart of this vision, and to achieve this vision, we need to support our community to attain a higher level of health and wellbeing.

Council and the City of Ballarat have always played a significant role in supporting the health of the community through a number of services including waste removal, food safety inspections and immunisations, and maintenance of sporting grounds, parks and gardens.

This plan recognises those elements, but also works to make healthy choices the easy choices. We plan to encourage and promote an environment where fresh nutritious food is more easily available, cycle and walking paths are the obvious option, strong local neighbourhoods are developed and people feel safe and secure participating in the community.

Health issues are complex and require many organisations working together over an extended period to achieve real change. I see this plan as a first step by Council, joining with state government and other local health and wellbeing organisations to tackle difficult health issues in a coordinated and efficient manner to achieve a higher level of health for our community.

I thank all the health partner organisations which have worked in conjunction with City of Ballarat on this plan, we look forward to working together over the next four years and into the future. I also thank the community members who have shared their ideas during the consultation phase, giving essential local insight on how to create a healthier community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Samantha McIntosh". The signature is stylized and cursive.

**Cr Samantha McIntosh
Mayor**



Why do Councils prepare a Health and Wellbeing plan?

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 objectives of the Act are 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

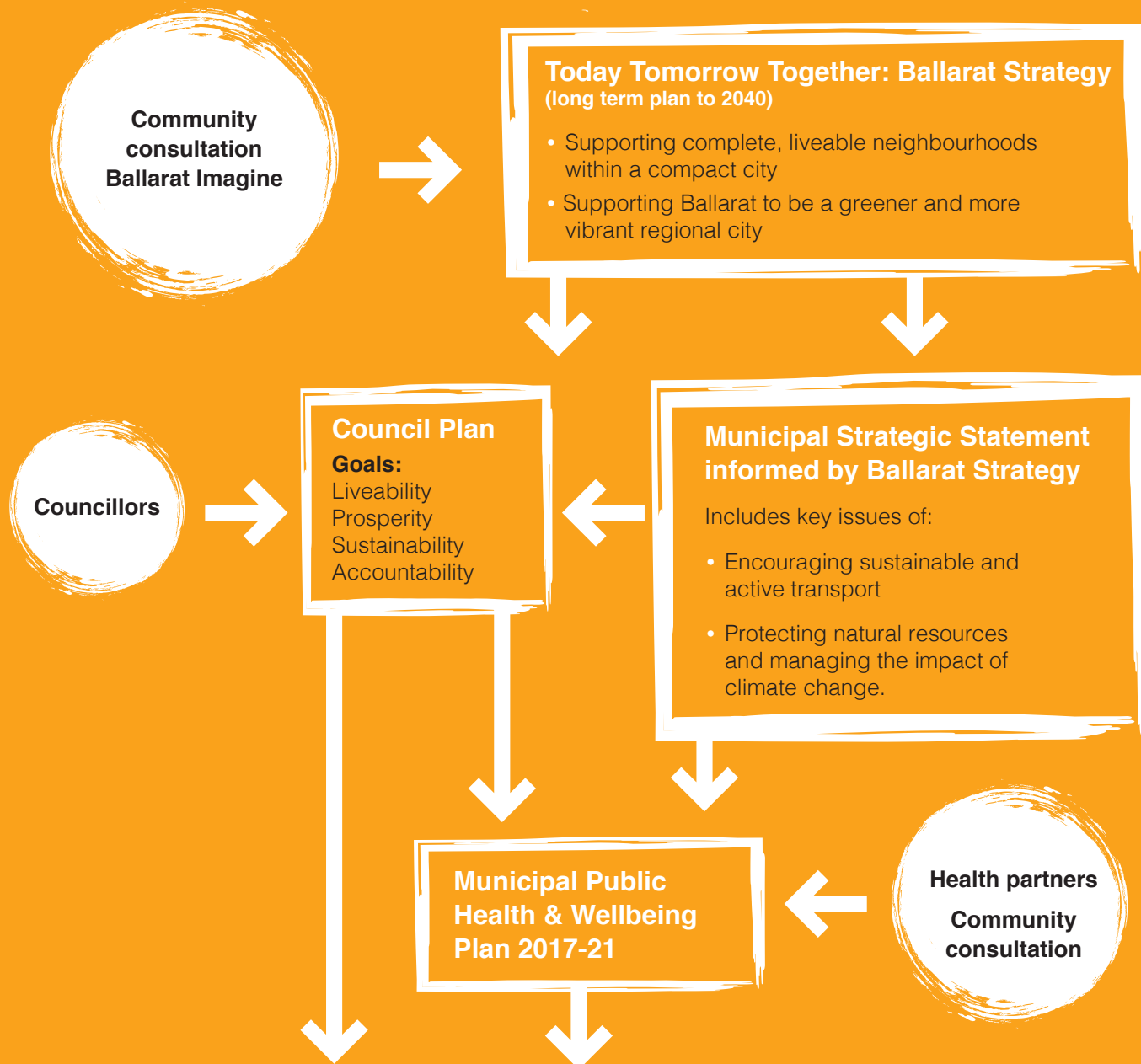
Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans set the health priorities for the municipality, outline strategies to prevent or reduce public health issues, and support the community to achieve optimum health and wellbeing.

The plan outlines the extensive work undertaken by various City of Ballarat units which positively impact the health and wellbeing of the local community.

The Act requires councils to:

- Have regard to the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19* and its priorities
- Include an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district
- Provide for the involvement of people in the local community in the development, implementation and evaluation of the plan
- Specify how Council will work in partnership with the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies undertaking public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the health plan
- Identify goals and strategies based on available evidence for creating a local community in which people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing

Council plans and strategies



A selection of Council plans and strategies which will contribute to addressing health and wellbeing priorities:

Municipal Early Years Plan 2015-18 • Reconciliation Action Plan 2014-17 • Community Safety Strategic Statement 2017-2021 • Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-17 • Positive Ageing Framework 2015-18 • Intercultural Cities Strategic Plan • Youth Development Framework 2016-21 • Recreation Strategy 2014 • Aquatics Strategy 2014 • Playspace Strategy • Active Women and Girls Strategy • Municipal Emergency Management Plan • Library Services Strategy • Community Road Safety Strategy • Urban Forest Strategy • Greening Ballarat • Ballarat Cycling Action Plan 2017-25

Process of development

In the previous term of Council, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan was integrated with the Council Plan 2013-17. This process was instrumental in developing a cross-council view of responsibility for health and wellbeing.

However, in this term of strategic planning, there has been a strong emphasis outlined in the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19*, for local health and wellbeing organisations to work more closely with local government on complex health priorities. Hence a separate plan has been produced to allow more detailed consultation with local health organisations, and ongoing development of actions.





Health Partners

City of Ballarat has been working closely with a group of local health and wellbeing organisations since development of the partnership plan, **Our Partners in Health 2015-18**. The nine organisations involved are: 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 more recently, Western Victoria Primary Health Network.

Our Partners in Health 2015-18 emphasised joint advocacy and support for community based activities in the areas of: increasing physical activity, reducing tobacco related harms, improving healthy eating and food security, promoting gender equity and preventing violence against women.

One of the key outcomes from this partnership work was a better understanding of other organisations: capacity, processes, resourcing, strengths, barriers, limitations and timing. This type of relationship building is essential before any sustainable and detailed partnership work can commence.

This same group of organisations has been the key stakeholders for input and consultation on the health plan and have jointly developed goals, strategies and actions to address the key priorities over the life of the plan.



Health inequities and the social determinants of health

Good health and wellbeing are essential elements of a successful community. Being in good health allows people to participate fully and contribute to society. The improved physical and mental health and safety of the people who live, learn and work in the municipality are key aims of this plan. City of Ballarat and its health partners work together in the areas of prevention and early intervention to support the community to achieve improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

There are multiple factors which contribute to a person's health during their life; inequities in social determinants such as education, employment, gender, housing and early development can lead to health inequities, higher rates of avoidable disease and reduced life expectancy. Key components of the long-term plan **Ballarat Strategy** and the City of Ballarat **Council Plan 2017-21** aim to improve these key social determinants through increased employment opportunities, a focus on the early years, provision of facilities for life-long education and supporting a diversity of housing.

The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19* has outlined strategies to ensure the greatest improvements in health are realised by those whose health is poorest. Hence many projects undertaken by City of Ballarat and local health providers focus on populations which experience significant health and wellbeing inequities. These include families who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability, people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and gender specific advocacy and projects.

A Gender Lens

The City of Ballarat with the support of its health partners are learning to work with a gender lens, recognising the disparities in health due to gender; with significant gender biases in resources, entitlements, power and the way organisations are structured. This can negatively impact upon the capacity for women to access income, education and employment.

Violence against women is a serious and pervasive issue in Ballarat. Family violence incidence rates in Ballarat were 43% higher than the state average in 2015-16, and in three out of four cases women are the family member affected. Gender inequity in society provides the underlying social conditions for violence against women. Gender inequities are obvious in economic and governance structures, such as unequal pay for the same work, and positions on business and sporting boards which influence decision making and resource allocation.

This broad social context of gender inequity encourages behaviours and situations that contribute to violence against women including general condoning of violence, stereotypical roles for men and women, men's control of decision-making and disrespect towards women. This lack of control over one's life is a key social determinant of health and can lead to feelings of depression and helplessness. In Ballarat, the proportion of the population with mental and behavioural problems, the life-time prevalence of depression and anxiety, and hospital admissions due to self-harm, are all far higher for women than men.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Across Victoria, the group which experiences the most significant disparities in health and wellbeing are people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. *Koolin Balit* outlines the Victorian government's strategic direction for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The plan has emphasised an integrated, whole-of-life framework where levels of government and health organisations work with local communities to make a significant and measurable impact on improving the length and quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The plan includes six key priorities which influence many of the strategies developed by City of Ballarat and other local health providers including: a healthy start to life, a healthy childhood, a healthy transition to adulthood, caring for older people, addressing risk factors and managing illness better with effective health services.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Ballarat has increased to 1470 people; 1.4% of the total population. Consultation with the local Koorie Engagement Action Group Advisory Committee highlighted discrimination and abuse as key issues which continue to prevent local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from fully participating and engaging in the broader community. City of Ballarat is committed to supporting the reconciliation process and closing the gap in disadvantage between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians.

City of Ballarat will continue to collaborate with the local community and, through actions outlined in the next **Reconciliation Action Plan**, continue to show and support greater cultural awareness, acknowledgement and respect, social inclusion and opportunity for employment.

People with a Disability

National surveys show nearly one in five people have a disability, with about 78% of those physical and 22% mental or behavioural. The rate of disability increases markedly with age, with over half the population aged over 65 living with a disability. However, recent trends show older people are becoming more active, resulting in a slight drop in the rate of disability in this age group.

People with a disability have lower rates of employment and experience higher rates of discrimination and social exclusion, particularly young people with a disability.

City of Ballarat will continue to advocate for improved access and inclusion to support people with a disability to participate more fully in the community. One of the most widely-celebrated City of Ballarat initiatives in recent years was the introduction of an all-abilities regional level play space at Victoria Park, encouraging and supporting people of all abilities and ages to participate in recreation. City of Ballarat continues to be guided by input from the Disability Advisory Committee on issues and opportunities to encourage access.



“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experience the most significant disparities in health and wellbeing”

An Intercultural City

The culturally and linguistically diverse community of Ballarat has rapidly increased in recent years, with the majority of new residents who were born overseas, coming from India, the United Kingdom and China in the last five years. Migrants generally face more difficulties coming into an unfamiliar city due to less connections and little knowledge of services and processes.

Ballarat was recently the first Australian city accepted into the Intercultural Cities Network, an international best practice program. Inclusion in the network recognises City of Ballarat policies and programs which promote, celebrate and use diversity to progress and advantage the community. Residents

of intercultural cities regard diversity as a resource, accepting that local cultures change as new residents enhance and improve options, outlooks and perspectives. Intercultural cities publicly advocate respect for diversity and actively combat prejudice and discrimination, developing policies and opportunities for connections between diverse cultures.

City of Ballarat has embraced the intercultural methodology with programs such as the Multicultural Ambassadors program, CALD Education and Employment Pathways, information provision through the Multicultural Information Place, events such as Harmony Fest and harnessing the input and advice of the Intercultural Advisory Committee of Council.





A life course approach

Health and wellbeing issues and risks, both physical and social, can accumulate throughout life. There are key life stages which are considered critical points at which to intervene; while an individual is vulnerable, it is also an opportune time to develop resilience and capability. Typical transition points include the birth of a child, transition into education, transition into adolescence, experiencing gaps in employment, developing poor health or disability, and retirement.

City of Ballarat delivers a range of programs and services which are directed at the key life stages and transition points, to support health and wellbeing outcomes at the most critical stages. City of Ballarat also recognises the value of multi-generational initiatives, such as the Rebel Elders project, which support bridging social capital connections between groups.

A focus on the early years

Investment in the early years is widely recognised as the most effective life stage for long term health and wellbeing outcomes. City of Ballarat provides many services and facilities for families with children, including key age and stage consultations through the Maternal and Child Health program, immunisations, childcare, kindergartens, supported play groups and drop-in support at Parent Place. Families and children are also supported with recreational, educational and cultural programs at the libraries, galleries, theatre, sporting facilities and through family friendly events.

For the past 10 years Ballarat has been recognised officially as a Child Friendly City; and more recently became a signatory to the

Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter, a commitment to increasing the participation of children in decision making, and providing equitable access to supportive environments and services for children.

Immunisation

Immunisation is an essential public health measure which protects the community from illness and disability caused by infectious diseases. A high rate of immunisation in the community reduces the spread of infectious diseases, protecting people who have been immunised and people who are unable to receive vaccines.

Local government is required under the State Health and Wellbeing Act to provide immunisation services to the community. City of Ballarat offers a whole of life immunisation service at sites across the city, and through a high quality, flexible service, has achieved immunisation rates of between 93-95% across the one, two and five-year age groups.

City of Ballarat's immunisation service includes adult vaccines and work with local secondary schools to coordinate delivery of the free adolescent vaccination program.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development is a widely used framework of principles that operates under the belief that young people have great potential. It builds the skills, aspirations and strengths of young people by focusing on the promotion of positive experiences and developmental outcomes.

Adolescence is a critical transition period physically, neurologically and emotionally. This stage brings numerous significant life experiences and decision-making opportunities including: education, employment, relationships, housing, legal age for driving and alcohol consumption. Adolescence is often the stage when individuals make decisions about risky behaviours or set up positive habits which can assist with good physical and mental health throughout life. City of Ballarat works in conjunction with other education and health providers to deliver a range of programs supporting youth development, leadership opportunities, gender equity and safe behaviours.

Active Ageing

Being healthy and active throughout life will assist people to be healthy and independent as they age. Active ageing implies people will continue to participate and contribute, socially and economically, to their communities as they age. City of Ballarat supports eligible residents through an active service model with meals, living support and maintenance, and encourages social opportunities through group meals outside the home, support for Senior Citizens centres and planned activity groups.

Volunteer Hub

Development of the City of Ballarat meals on wheels volunteer hub allows for an enhanced and efficient service, and a welcoming and familiar space for volunteers to meet and socialise. Volunteers have worked to improve the space with the addition of a vegetable and flower garden which adds to the range of activities they can enjoy together.

City of Ballarat highly values the contribution and dedication of meals on wheels volunteers and believes the hub will assist with volunteer retention.

Youth Councillors

Youth Councillors are young people who are passionate about being involved in their community; representing the views, ideas and needs of young people in the Ballarat area.

During their term Youth Councillors are mentored by the Mayor and Councillors to develop their leadership skills. The team works with a range of services and City of Ballarat departments to develop projects and campaigns, and to advocate for young people in the Ballarat region.

Recent projects include holding and facilitating a forum on homelessness, contributing to consultations on issues which affect the local community and to the planning and delivery of the annual City of Ballarat Youth Awards.



Healthy Environments



City of Ballarat has a responsibility under the Health and Wellbeing Act to protect, promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of the community. This is achieved through the delivery of an efficient environmental health program that minimises public health risks and impacts, and delivers on the various statutory requirements of local government in relation to environmental health.

While being committed to continuously improving the standard and quality of public health in the municipality, the key activities focus on prevention of infectious disease: the sale of safe and suitable food; prevention and control of environmental health hazards such as domestic wastewater management and residential concerns; tobacco act education and enforcement; and enhancement of the health of the community through targeted health and education programs.

City of Ballarat will be instrumental in supporting local business to understand and comply with new amendments to the Tobacco Act which require outdoor dining areas to be smoke-free, and will regulate e-cigarettes and shisha.

“outdoor dining areas are required to be smoke-free”

Sustainable Environments



City of Ballarat recognises the critical role sustainable, diverse and safe natural and built environments play in the health and wellbeing of the community.

Encouraging residents to have a closer connection to nature will help raise awareness and understanding of potential health benefits, issues of reduced biodiversity and the impacts of climate change.

City of Ballarat has a broad role in the provision of sustainable environments from encouraging sustainable transport to responsible management and maintenance of natural remnant vegetation areas, reduction of fire hazards and water reuse.

Climate change will impact the Ballarat area in many ways including: greater risk of bushfires, more hot days and warm periods, more frequent and intense storms, fewer frosts and less rainfall in winter and spring.

Local governments are required under the Climate Change Act to have regard for climate change and the impact it may have on the health and wellbeing of the community, particularly vulnerable groups, and outline responsive measures in their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Since development of the **Ballarat Strategy** – City of Ballarat's long-term land use plan - many initiatives, strategies and action plans have been developed which enhance the sustainability of the environment and address the future impacts of climate change.

“set a target of 40% canopy cover on public land by 2040”

The **Urban Forest Strategy** is still in development but has set a target of 40% canopy cover on public land by 2040, more than double the current level of 17%. The discussion paper highlights the importance of planting diversity, improving vegetation health and resilience to a changing climate. A key priority is to ensure equity in planting, focussing on areas of disadvantage, and communities vulnerable to heat stress where trees have most social benefit.

An action plan on urban water management, **Greening Ballarat**, sets out principles and ideas on how the urban area of Ballarat could better support urban greening and local water management outcomes. The plan outlines how the city can recreate a naturally-oriented water cycle while contributing to urban greening. Along with improved reuse and treatment of stormwater, benefits include increased biodiversity, increased shade and cooling and improved air quality.

City of Ballarat has also commenced a series of integrated transport action plans which support a more sustainable transport system. The **Ballarat Cycling Action Plan 2017-2025** outlines a series of cross city cycle routes suitable for recreational riders and designed to encourage more people to ride to and from work.

A number of programs have been implemented which reduce greenhouse gas emissions including introduction of a kerbside green waste collection, replacing street lighting with low energy use fittings, and installing a range of heating and thermal solutions at the Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre.





A Safe and Resilient Community

City of Ballarat plays a significant role in the local emergency management sector, with strategies and activities aimed at creating a safer and more resilient community which is better able to withstand and adapt to chronic stresses like climate change or acute shocks such as bushfires.

Emergency management includes a range of measures which reduce and manage risks to community and the environment. Key areas of prevention, response and recovery are all essential elements to support community to be prepared and develop the capacity to respond appropriately.

In addition to working with community to maintain blocks and reduce fuel loads, City of Ballarat has assessed risks in relation to natural disasters and set up procedures and response plans to increase preparedness. City of Ballarat has prepared a **Heatwave Response Plan**, outlining procedures for supporting vulnerable residents during periods which exceed the local heat health threshold of 30 degrees.

City of Ballarat has also identified five areas in the municipality as places of last resort which may protect people from radiant heat during bushfires, as outlined in the **Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan**.

“work in partnership to create a safer and more resilient community”

Place-Based and People-Centred Approaches

City of Ballarat and its health partners will use place-based and people-centred approaches in delivering strategies and actions across the community, with an example underway at the Wendouree West Recreation Reserve. Place based approaches recognise that the locations where people live, work, learn and play have a fundamental impact on health and wellbeing.

Place-based approaches can be directed at the community level to address a multitude of interrelated health risks and harness the knowledge and input of local organisations to gain community engagement and effect positive outcomes. Place-based approaches can also be directed at a range of settings in a particular location, such as workplaces, early childhood centres, schools and sports groups.

People-centred approaches involve City of Ballarat and health partners working with the community to co-design policies and programs with a focus on people, families and communities, to deliver flexible and responsive services and adapt to the changing needs of the community.

Wendouree West Recreation Reserve

City of Ballarat has commenced planning for an integrated sports and community centre based in an area of need at Wendouree West. The master planning process included wide consultation with all user groups including sports clubs, education providers, community and youth groups, local residents and government departments. Key issues and requests were identified including a high level of disability in the local community, the need for a safe and attractive recreational area, and a space which can be used by a number of local organisations.

This project highlights the opportunity to improve an area of need by co-locating activities and services, responding to local concerns and embracing the community's desire to be actively involved in local decisions.



Doing Well



83%

of adults can get help from family if needed¹



Smoking rate has dropped to

15%

but remains very high in specific population groups¹

High rates of participation in organised groups across all categories: sports, religious, school, professional and other¹

71%

have attended local community events in the past year¹



Residents agree strongly it is a good place to live and raise a family with good parks and open spaces²

43%

of adults volunteer¹

20%

of young people aged 15-24 volunteer³ which is higher than average levels

Residents agree there are a variety of recreation and leisure facilities and opportunities for arts and cultural experiences²



High levels of satisfaction with life as a whole¹

Community shows a very high level of resilience, higher than state average levels⁴

85%

of adults agree most people can be trusted¹

1. Victorian Population Health Survey 2014 (Department of Health and Human Services) 2. Community Perceptions Survey 2016 (City of Ballarat) 3. Youth Profile (City of Ballarat) 4. VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015 5. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (2014) 6. Crime Statistics Agency Victoria 7. Social Health Atlas of Australia (compiled by PHIDU from Department Human Services 2016)

Opportunity for Improvement



People eat about
2 1/2 serves
of vegetables each day, better than state average, but still only half of recommended servings⁴

61%
of Ballarat adults¹ and
27%
of children statewide⁵ are
overweight or obese

46% 
of adults participate in physical activity 4 or more days per week, which shows more opportunity for improvement⁴

42%
of adults feel safe walking alone in their local area at night⁴

Rates of crime against property and crime against persons are higher than state averages⁶



49%
of adults feel they could definitely get help from neighbours¹

21%
sought professional help for a mental health problem in 2014¹

5.3%
of young people aged 16-24 receive Centrelink unemployment benefits, nearly twice the state average⁷

We are heavily dependent on cars,

67% 
of people do not walk for even 10 minutes for transport in a typical week¹

35%
display a low level of gender equality in relationships⁴

46%
of adults in the Grampians region think multiculturalism definitely makes life in their area better¹

Consultation Process

The consultation process included the following:

- Ongoing consultation with health partners
- City of Ballarat Advisory Committees: Disability Advisory Committee, Community Safety Advisory Committee, Child-friendly Advisory Committee, Positive Ageing Committee, Intercultural Advisory Committee, Koorie Engagement Action Group, Youth Council
- Stakeholder groups: Food Access Network, Local Food Forum
- City of Ballarat business units: Active Ageing, Family and Children's Services, Libraries, Cultural Diversity, Human Resources, Youth Development, Strategic Planning, Traffic and Roads, Engaging Communities, Sport and Active Living, Emergency Management, Environmental Health, Events, Occupational Health and Safety
- Online and paper based survey through my Townhall – 230 responses
- Considered responses from recent relevant consultations: Lake Wendouree Masterplan, Wendouree West Recreation Reserve, MR Power Park, Lake Esmond, Cycling Action Plan, Children's Consultation

Quotes (common topics mentioned by respondents):

.....

“ Light up walking tracks, parks and gardens to make it safer to exercise after hours
Provide more shelter in parks from both sun and rain
Better maps or information about the natural bushland areas nearby
 Provide opportunities to engage in volunteer work, including weeding, planting and cleaning up rubbish
 Create green spaces in town, Sturt St is not enough
More free drinking taps across the city **A local food hub**
Run community events in parks and gardens **Produce swap**
 More work needs to be done for people experiencing greater levels of disadvantage
Education for children about gender equity and respecting others
Showcase strong women in the community **Cheaper healthy food**
 More farmers markets, community gardens and fruit trees **Healthy food festival**
Hold organised activities in natural bush areas *After hours activities in the library* ”
Nature based playgrounds **No lollies and soft drink at junior sport**

.....

Selecting health priorities for Ballarat and the Central Highlands region

Population health issues are highly complex with multiple factors influencing outcomes. The complex nature of health issues requires a systems approach to achieve solutions. A systems approach encourages an understanding of all elements of the system, how they interact and relate to one another. However a systems approach will only be effective when organisations are collaborating and working on the same priorities towards shared outcomes.

City of Ballarat has developed working relationships with local health organisations over a number of years. On a broader scale and more recently, local governments and health and wellbeing providers in the Central Highlands Region have agreed to work together on a shared prevention priority; '**healthy eating, active living**'. This initiative will see Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn and Moorabool Council's work with regional health organisations and services towards this priority over the next four years, with a shared set of measures to track progress.

Although the systems are complex, many chronic diseases also share common risks, common protective factors, and are influenced by the same social determinants. By focusing on and influencing these leading causes of ill health, such as poor diet, sedentary lifestyles or being overweight, there is an opportunity to improve a wide range of physical and mental health problems.

Health and wellbeing priorities for this plan were selected by understanding the leading causes of poor health, the potential to effect change through awareness of risk and protective factors, acting on the social determinants of health, and considering the broader context of state and national policy.

The main influences on priority selection included:

- Requirement to have regard for the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19*
- Alignment of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan with strategic plans of local health organisations
- An examination of local data on health and wellbeing issues
- Consideration of City of Ballarat's long term land use planning strategy – **Ballarat Strategy** and associated plans
- Consideration of state policies, strategies and recommendations for future funding of projects
- City of Ballarat's ability to respond effectively within regulatory and legislative boundaries
- Consultation with staff, stakeholders and community

Priority 1: Healthy Eating and Active Living

*“the largest
cause of
disease burden
is a poor diet”*

‘Healthy eating and active living’ has been selected as a shared prevention priority for the Central Highlands Region. Chronic diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and mental health disorders, are clearly the leading cause of death and disability for the local population, accounting for 85% of the total burden of disease.

Significantly, about one-third of the total burden of disease and injury is potentially avoidable through preventative measures; people modifying risky behaviours or undertaking screening for early detection and treatment. The largest cause of disease burden is a poor diet, closely followed by being overweight or obese. As 61% of Ballarat’s adult population is overweight or obese, promotion of a healthy

and nutritious diet will be a clear focus of the strategies addressing this priority.

Reduced levels of physical activity, an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, and a reliance on cars for transport, all combine to add to the burden of overweight, chronic disease and other physical and mental health issues.

Significantly, our children are at increased risk of disease and a reduced lifespan with up to 40% of their energy intake coming from foods which are low in nutrients and high in sugar, fat and salt. Additionally, only one in four children of secondary school age undertake sufficient regular physical activity to support good health and wellbeing.¹

1. Health and wellbeing status of Victoria – Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2015-2019 companion document



Healthy Eating

Objectives

- Increase consumption of fruit and vegetables
- Increase availability of healthy food options
- Increase water consumption and reduce consumption of sugary drinks



Strategies

Increase food security

- Increase access to, availability and affordability of healthy foods

Create supportive environments

- Develop policy which supports City of Ballarat and the community to make healthy food and drink choices
- Encourage and promote breast-feeding friendly settings
- Support food outlets and key settings including early childhood services, schools, community groups and sports clubs to provide and promote healthy food and drink choices

- Provide access to water in recreational areas and other public spaces
- Reduce the marketing of unhealthy food at City of Ballarat facilities

Build capacity and enable skills

- Educate residents to help them make healthy food and drink choices
- Help residents to develop skills to grow, purchase, store and prepare healthy foods

How will we track progress?

Proportion of the adult, child and adolescent population consuming sufficient vegetables (serves per day)

Proportion of the adult, child and adolescent population consuming sufficient fruit (serves per day)

Proportion of adults, children and adolescents who consume sugar sweetened beverages daily

Proportion of adults, children and adolescents who are overweight or obese (self-report)

Number of food outlets providing healthy food choices through the award program

Number of organisations introducing healthy catering policies through the Achievement Program

Number of community led projects implemented to strengthen the food system

Number of people accessing emergency food relief

Active Living

Objectives

- Increase the level of physical activity residents undertake each week
- Decrease sedentary behaviour



Strategies

Support diverse opportunities

- Support and promote a range of both formal and informal sports and recreation opportunities

Create supportive environments

- Encourage cycling and walking by improving connectivity of paths, improved safety and amenity
- Support key settings including early childhood services, schools and workplaces to promote cycling and walking as a means of transport
- Encourage the use of cycling, walking and public transport to attend community events

- Support key settings including schools and workplaces to reduce sedentary behaviour

- Reduce barriers to participation in sports and recreation

Enable participation and develop skills

- Support community members to develop skills which encourage a return to an active lifestyle, participation in diverse sports or increased levels of physical activity
- Support sports and recreation clubs to develop innovative programs which encourage greater and more inclusive participation
- Increase awareness of the risks of sedentary behaviour

How will we track progress?

Proportion of adults, children and adolescents who are sufficiently physically active

Proportion of people participating in organised sport

Proportion of adult population sitting for more than eight hours per day on an average weekday

Proportion of adult population sitting for more than eight hours per day on an average weekend

Participation rate for the Walk to School program

Annual bike count

Number of people participating in Active April

Proportion of adults who walked for transport for trips longer than 10 minutes during the preceding week

Proportion of adults who cycled for transport for trips longer than 10 minutes during the preceding week

Proportion of children and young people who use electronic media more than two hours per day

Number of local organisations registered for the Achievement Program and working towards relevant benchmarks

Priority 2: Improving Mental Health

*“only 49% of
Ballarat residents
feel they could
definitely get help
from their
neighbours if
needed”*

Each year one in five people will experience a mental health condition, with 45% of Victorians experiencing mental health conditions over their lifetime. Mental health disorders are a significant cause of disability, with certain population groups at higher risk due to discrimination, social isolation, family violence and stress.¹

City of Ballarat can have influence over this priority by building a resilient community which has robust economic participation, is socially inclusive, and has strong connection to country and to nature. Local surveys show Ballarat residents have strong ties to family and friends, but only 49% feel they could definitely get help from their neighbours if required.²

City of Ballarat and its local health partners can enhance and support the key protective factors for good mental health including positive early childhood experiences, healthy families, liveable and safe environments and accessible health and human services. Actively addressing issues of racial and gender discrimination, inequality and disadvantage will also support improved mental health.

1. Victoria's 10-year mental health plan
2. Victorian Population Health Survey 2014



Improving Mental Health



Objectives

- Increased mental wellbeing
- Increased community connections and support

Strategies

Support connections and social networking

- Provide opportunities to build community resilience through connections, activities that develop a sense of belonging and purpose or that create a sense of wellbeing and strength to cope with difficulties.
- Provide and promote access to facilities where local community members can meet to socialise and participate in community activities

Create supportive environments

- Promote and encourage environments that are respectful, inclusive, responsive, safe and supportive
- Ensure community events are welcoming and inclusive for all community members
- Encourage key settings including sports clubs and community groups to become more inclusive and welcoming

- Support key settings including school's and workplaces to promote mental health, wellbeing and resilience
- Ensure new facilities are planned following Universal Design guidelines to encourage access for all ages and abilities

Build capacity and enable skills

- Develop a better understanding of mental health through promotion of common risk and protective factors, particularly among young people
- Ensure community members and the workforce in schools, health and community services have an understanding of mental health issues, referral pathways and systems of support
- Assist community members to understand how they can improve their mental health and wellbeing

How will we track progress?

Proportion of adults who belong to an organised community group

Proportion of adults who are able to get help from neighbours if needed

Average extent that adults report that their life is worthwhile

Proportion of adults who feel valued by society

Proportion of adults who think multiculturalism definitely made life in their area better

Experiences of racism

Proportion of adults who volunteer

Proportion of adults who feel there are opportunities to have a real say on important matters

Proportion of adults with high or very high levels of social isolation

Proportion of adults and young people with psychological distress

Proportion of adolescents with a high level of resilience

Proportion of young people who report having a trusted adult in their lives

Proportion of young people who are satisfied with the quality of their life

Proportion of adults who attend or participate in a cultural or arts event

Number of local schools and workplaces registered for the Achievement Program and working towards relevant benchmarks

Priority 3: Preventing Violence and Injury

“family violence rates are 43% higher in Ballarat than state levels”

Prevention of family violence is a major priority for the Ballarat region, and City of Ballarat and its health partners have been actively addressing this issue for many years. However, following the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015, all councils must now report through Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans on the measures they will take to reduce family violence and respond to the needs of victims.

The City of Ballarat is a signatory to the Grampians Regional Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women: Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) 2016-2020, which represents a Grampians-wide strategy to prevent violence against women and promote gender equity.

Family violence rates in Ballarat in 2015-16 were 43% higher than state levels, with an average of five reported incidents every day. In 75% of reported cases of family violence, women were the affected family member. Unfortunately, children were present in about 34% of all reported cases and charges were laid in 40% of cases the police attended.¹

The rate of alcohol related family violence incidents in Ballarat is also particularly high; double the rate of state levels. In 2016 around 34% of family violence incidents in Ballarat were either definitely or possibly associated with alcohol which confirms the understanding that alcohol can be seen as a contributing factor to

family violence, but is not considered the main underlying cause. The City of Ballarat and the other members of the CoRE Alliance will be raising awareness of gender inequity as the key cause of gender-based violence.

Violence outside the home, in public places and on the street, usually involves and impacts on males, who are far more likely to be the victim of crimes such as assault and robbery outside the home.

Crime rates against property such as thefts, burglary and property damage make up 60% of all crimes in Ballarat and are currently about 37% higher than state levels. Crimes against the person, including assaults, sexual offences and family violence account for about 16% of crimes, the rate is currently 50% higher than state levels. Drug dealing, cultivation, possession or use accounts for 4% of all crimes in Ballarat. However studies show about 60% of all adult males detained by police for violent and property offences across Australia test positive for drug use.¹

Excessive alcohol consumption, placing people at risk of both short and long term harm, is clearly an issue in Ballarat. Surveys show nearly 70% of the adult population is at an increased lifetime risk of alcohol related harm, and 54% of the adult population is at an increased risk of alcohol related injury on a single occasion.²

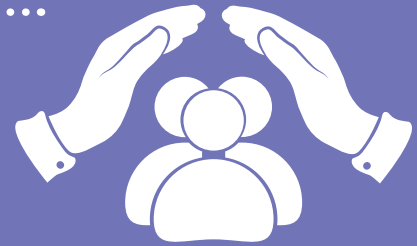
1. Crime Statistics Agency

2. Victorian Population Health Survey 2014

Preventing Violence and Injury

Objectives

- Reduce prevalence of family violence and increase gender equity
- Increase community safety
- Reduce the rate of alcohol and other drug related harm



Strategies

Leadership and advocacy

- Demonstrate a commitment to addressing family violence through a primary prevention approach in conjunction with community partners as part of the CoRE Alliance.
- Support community initiatives which raise awareness of family violence
- Build a gender-equitable workplace culture supported by policy, training and capacity building opportunities

Create supportive environments

- Develop a social policy framework which outlines City of Ballarat's role and position on key health and social issues
- Use design principles which enhance safety and wellbeing for development and upgrades of community spaces and facilities
- Support provision of infrastructure in public spaces which enhance community safety

- Work in partnership with community and key stakeholders to deliver best practice for crime prevention projects

- Encourage and promote alcohol and drug free community events

Build capacity and enable skills

- Support service providers and carers to develop skills in family violence and elder abuse risk identification, assessment and management
- Provide and promote information on local support services
- Promote the importance of gender equity and the connection to family violence
- Work in partnership with schools, sports organisations and clubs to ensure gender equity and health promoting behaviours are supported
- Assist young people and the broader community to reduce risk taking behaviour associated with harmful use of alcohol and other drugs

How will we track progress?

Rates of crime against the person

Rates of crime against property

Rates of family violence

Rates of alcohol related family violence incidents

Assaults that occur in high alcohol hours

Low gender equality in relationship scores

Proportion of adults who feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark

Number of alcohol and drug free community events

Number of local organisations which are members of CoRE

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

This plan outlines a range of goals and strategies which will be undertaken over the next four years. A detailed action plan has been prepared which is available as a separate document on the City of Ballarat website. The actions will include work to be undertaken by council, work which will be undertaken in partnership with health partners and some actions which will be supported by City of Ballarat but undertaken by the health partners. The action plan will be **reviewed and updated** annually, with progress reported back to the Department of Health and Human Services. Review documents showing progress against actions will also be available from the City of Ballarat website for the community to view.

Changes in health across the population are usually only observed over extended periods of time. Hence a range of indicators have been selected which allow monitoring of progress over the short, medium and longer term. **Short and medium term indicators** can measure the success of projects and the process taken to implement them. Whereas **long term indicators** show progress against the outcomes we effectively want to change.

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a comprehensive *Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework* which will track progress from a state perspective. By using some of the same long term indicators we can measure outcomes from work undertaken in communities through to local government areas, health regions and the state.

An **evaluation framework** will be developed to be completed in the final year of the plan, allowing reflection and learnings from the work of this plan. Due to the breadth and scope of the health plan, specific projects will be selected for individual evaluation on process and project outcomes. Overall we intend to evaluate using the following questions:

Have we achieved the change we sought?

Are we having the influence we expected?

Have we done what we said we would do?

What worked well and what needs improvement?

How effective is the way we plan?

