

Community Safety Strategic Statement 2017-2021



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1. Message from the Community Safety Advisory Committee

The Community Safety Advisory Committee is proud to endorse its Strategic Statement for the next four years.

This Statement is underpinned by evidence gathered to inform Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 and engagement with Advisory Committee members and key stakeholders across the sector.

Priorities and leadership opportunities have been established based on the community's key strengths and capacities, discussion on the feasibility of implementation and the acceptability of strategies to key community and sector stakeholders.

This Statement supports a focus on both leadership and integration with other key plans and with our sector partners. We welcome your perusal of the Statement and value the opportunity to talk further regarding opportunities for collaboration on shared priorities identified within the Statement.

2. About the Community Safety Advisory Committee

Council's Community Safety Advisory Committee was established in 1998 to identify and respond to local safety and crime issues. The City of Ballarat is committed to a partnership approach to improving community safety.

The Ballarat Community Safety Advisory Committee brings together a cross section of people from a variety of organisations and backgrounds, all of whom have a key responsibility or role in ensuring Ballarat and its communities remain safe. The Advisory Committee also includes representation from community members.

The partnerships which have been developed since 1998 are vital since no single agency can prevent crime, nor have a major impact on the many complex factors that influence community safety.

The Community Safety Advisory Committee is an endorsed Advisory Committee of Council and is guided by a Terms of Reference which is reviewed every two years by Committee members. The group meets six times per year.

As at July 2017 the members of the Advisory Committee are:

- Victoria Police
- Councillors
- Child and Family Services
- Department of Justice and Regulation
- The Ballarat Courier
- Regional Sports Assembly Sports Central
- Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
- Women's Health Grampians
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Community Houses
- Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative
- Bridge Mall Traders
- Ballarat Taxi Co-operative
- Federation University
- Community Representatives
- Youth Services Agency
- Ballarat Community Health

Council also plays a key regional role in crime prevention and community safety through its participation in the Central Highlands Crime Prevention Reference Group. The Reference Group established in 2011, is auspiced by the Grampians Region Department of Justice and Regulation and includes all Councils within the region along with, State Government and Non-Government organisations.

3. Councils Role in Community Safety

Councils have a unique role in promoting and developing strategies which enhance community safety and wellbeing. Safety, along with shelter and food, is considered the basic pre-condition for health and as such this Statement is closely aligned with Councils Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021.

Safety principles are important in how Council goes about managing land use, community assets, open space, social and recreation planning to influence the development of safe public spaces, facilities, activity centres, roads and neighbourhoods.

Council's role in community safety includes a focus on service policy and planning, advocacy and leadership, service provision and management, facilitation and communication and organisational development.

The purpose of this Strategic Statement is to provide Council with a framework to guide decision-making and determine its role in providing for the community safety needs of the community.

4. Relationship to other Council Plans and Strategies

As a key contributor to health and wellbeing, community safety is an integral component of a liveable community and is linked to a number of key Council policies and strategies, including the:

- Council Plan
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan detailing our health and wellbeing priorities to meet a diverse range of health and wellbeing needs of the community.
- Municipal Strategic Statement, which identifies key strategic planning objectives for land use, urban design and development for the municipality and the associated regulations outlined in the Ballarat Planning Scheme to achieve these objectives.

5. Municipal Health and Wellbeing Priorities

Council has developed a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21 in conjunction with local health organisations, and with input from community and key stakeholders.

Health and wellbeing priority areas have been identified with direction from the state Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-19, which takes current state and federal strategies and policies into context.

Key priority areas include:

- Preventing violence and injury
- Improving mental health
- Healthy eating and active living

The 'Preventing Violence and Injury' priority includes objectives to:

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

Strategies will be undertaken by Council and health partner organisations in the areas of leadership, advocacy, creating supportive environments, building capacity and enabling skills.

6. Principles that underpin our approach to addressing community safety issues

Five key principles underpin Councils approach to addressing issues associated with crime and injury prevention within the municipality.

Partnerships

Council is committed to promoting opportunities for community members and organisations to embrace in their everyday activities and work. Partners share responsibility and leadership for safety and contribute to effective decision making.

Community Strengthening and Capacity Building

Fostering a strong sense of community connectedness, where all members of the community are equally valued and respected, is essential in creating a safer and healthier community. Council aims to ensure that all members of the community feel safe and welcome and places an emphasis on strategies to improve the connectedness of vulnerable groups.

Placemaking for Safe and Healthy Places and Spaces

Community safety has major implications for Ballarat's health, economy and social wellbeing. Good design, lighting and effective use of the urban environment through placemaking helps reduce the opportunity for crime, as well as reduce the fear of crime and increase feelings of safety.

Evidence Based Practice

Council endorses an evidence based practice approach to improving safety, including addressing the underlying causes of crime by considering the social, economic and environmental determinants of health and wellbeing when developing strategic priorities and actions.

Harm Reduction

Council supports a harm reduction approach to reduce the adverse social, economic and health consequences of alcohol and other drug use to the individual and the broader community. This principle encompasses three main approaches which include supply, demand and harm reduction.

7. Strategic Statement Opportunities

The Statement articulates opportunities for integration, leadership and influence with key sector and community partners over the next four years.

These opportunities include the following areas:

- Preventing Violence against Women
- Alcohol and other Drug Related Harm
- Central Business District Public Safety
- Neighbourhood Safety and Wellbeing
- Perceptions of Safety

Strategies responding to each of the identified areas are currently being undertaken and opportunities for future partnerships and collaboration sought.

8. Reporting and Evaluation

Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021 will act as the mechanism to measure and report on community wide perceptions of safety data and family violence rates. Where possible this data will be used to show movement towards desired outcomes during the life of the Statement.

Project based reporting and evaluation will be undertaken against each of the priority areas and for funded initiatives. A report will be

provided to the Community Safety Advisory Committee detailing project progress, evaluation and learnings against each of the priority areas. This will occur at the February meeting annually.