CITY OF BALLARAT

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2021-2031

Proudly working with and for our community

Updated 2025

Lucas, Dyson Drive, Western Growth Area

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

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

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This is the community's vision for Ballarat.

Ballarat, Victoria's heritage city: leading the way as a safe, sustainable, innovative and inclusive community, that is a great place to live.

Our city strives towards sustainable living with ecologically-sound neighbourhoods where people can meet their daily needs within a short walk, ride or bus trip.

We have easy access to parks and gardens, community facilities and education for all ages. Our health and community services are proactive in responding to community needs.

We have a community where people feel safe, valued and welcomed in our city.

We celebrate our diversity, everyone in our community is well-informed, treated equitably and can participate fully in life.

We engage challenges and opportunities with a creative and innovative approach to get the best result for our people.

Our city works towards expanding our local economy by attracting a diverse range of industries.

We embrace our rich heritage and we continue to preserve our links to the gold rush era.

We recognise and respect the long Aboriginal history and community, and the breadth of cultural heritage.

We balance the need to conserve our historic places and spaces with the need and desire to progress as a modern regional city.

Looking north west towards Ballarat CBD, featuring Ballarat Main Road Mural by Ballarat artist Travis Price.

Introduction

The City of Ballarat *Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031* sets the health priorities for the municipality, outlines strategies to prevent or reduce public health issues and supports the community to achieve optimum health and wellbeing.

In 2025 the 10-year plan (first endorsed in 2021) has been evaluated and updated to reflect recent community engagement and new council projects. Evaluation and engagement will be undertaken every four years to ensure the priority areas and strategies remain relevant. The longer-term plan reflects the sustained effort required to observe measurable changes in public health and wellbeing.

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

Legislative requirements

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

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

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

In accordance with the *Act*, this plan:

- Has regard to the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027* and its priorities
- Includes an examination of data about health status and health determinants in the municipal district
- Provides for the involvement of local community members in the development, implementation and evaluation of the plan
- Specifies how City of Ballarat will work in partnership with the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies to undertake public health initiatives, projects and programs to accomplish the goals and strategies identified in the plan
- Identifies goals and strategies based on available evidence designed to create a local community where people can achieve maximum health and wellbeing
- Specify measures to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victim survivors of family violence in the community
- Be consistent with the *Council Plan* prepared under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*

In addition Section 17 and Schedule 1 of the *Climate Action Act 2017* outlines the requirements for certain decision-makers to have regard to a changing climate. The specified decision or action that creates an explicit obligation for local government is the preparation of a Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan by a council under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act.* The duty to have regard to a changing climate explicitly requires consideration of the potential:

- biophysical impacts
- long- and short- term economic, environmental, health and other social impacts
- beneficial and detrimental impacts
- direct and indirect impacts
- cumulative impacts.

In relation to the decisions or actions taken, the Act requires consideration of potential:

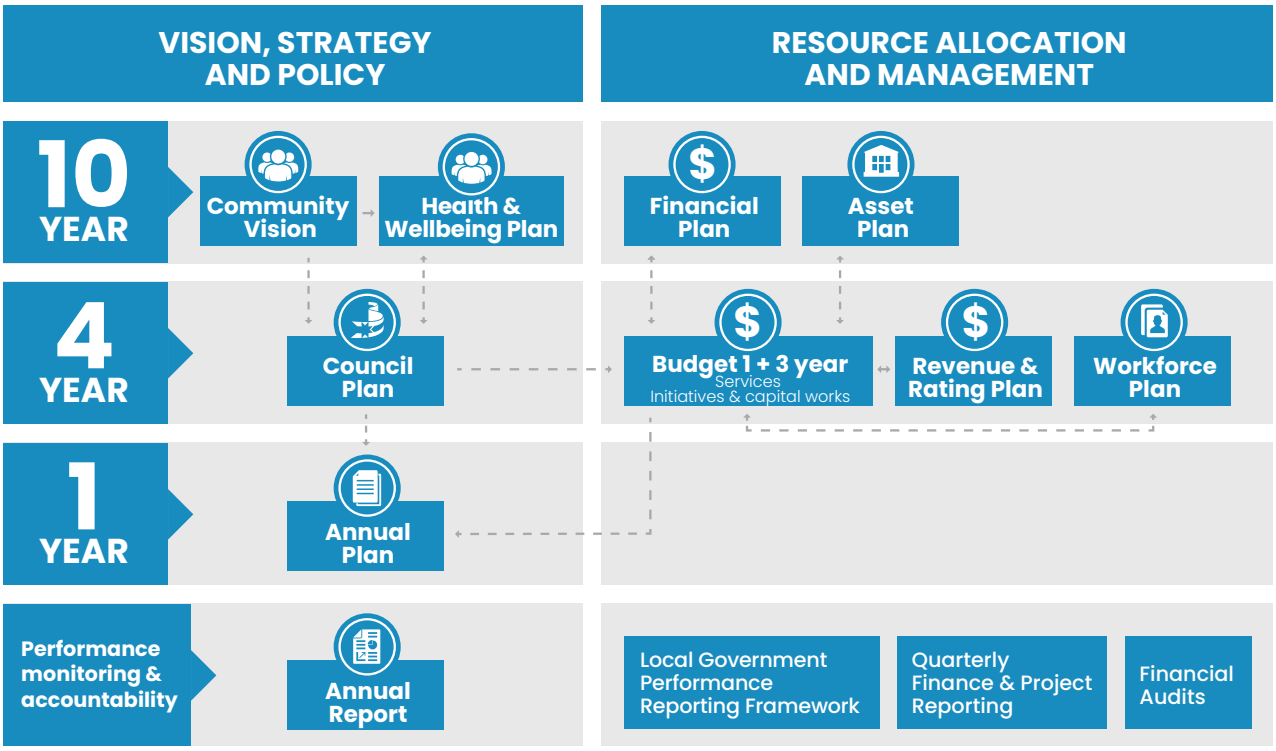
- short- and long-term greenhouse gas emissions
- direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions
- increases and decreases in greenhouse gas emissions
- cumulative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

How this plan was developed

- Preparation of a City of Ballarat Health and Social Profile, Youth Profile and Ageing Well Profile, and analysis of evidence on local social determinants of health
- Collaboration with external health partners to fully appreciate the capacity and strengths of the local health promotion network
- Establishment of an Internal Working Group which was tasked with finalising priority areas and priority groups, and developing strategies
- Analysis of community and stakeholder consultation process as well as surveys of priority groups and targeted child and youth consultation projects
- Participation in the development of shared priorities for the Central Highlands region
- Updated following review in 2024-25 considering discussions and outcomes of the Deliberative Engagement Process undertaken to inform development of the Council Plan and Community Vision.

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

City of Ballarat integrated strategic planning framework



Community Engagement

In November 2024 Council undertook a range of community engagement activities to help inform the development of a set of plans which are required following the election of a new Council, including updating the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

In total, 2271 people were engaged through the various activities and events including:

- 1728 community members responded to the online survey
- 200 people completed a survey with council staff at Springfest
- 335 people engaged with council staff at drop-in sessions
- 8 children gave their opinions at a Children's Advisory Committee workshop

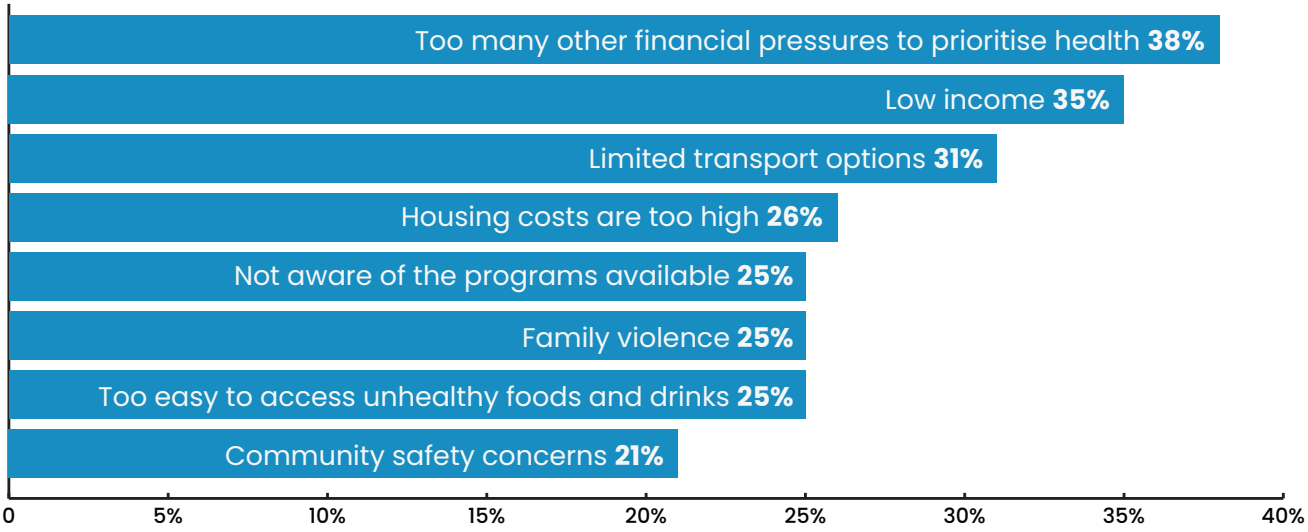
Survey participants were asked "**What are some of the barriers that prevent people in the Ballarat community from being healthy and well?".** Respondents could nominate up to five reasons from a list of 22 possibilities but could also give their own reasons. The results show that the four most common barriers related to finances and access, but program promotion, family violence, unhealthy food and drink access and community safety were also major barriers.

The questions **"How can we make our people and places healthier?"** offered an extended response (with 1129 responses supplied), with results analysed into various categories. The five most common responses included:

- Health education, promotion and information (25%)
- Public transport and walkability (19%)
- Healthier food and food security (19%)
- Recreation, sports and exercise (18%)
- Green spaces, environment and sustainability (13%)

The engagement results confirmed the health priorities, goals and strategies, originally developed in 2021, still reflect the health and wellbeing priorities and key issues and barriers raised by the community in 2024. There has also been a greater emphasis by the community on affordability, community safety, health education and better information provision to the community on the programs and services available.

What are some of the barriers that prevent people in the Ballarat community from being healthy and well?



Principles

Equity

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

Inclusion

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

Accessibility

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

Community participation

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

Collaboration

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

Evidence-based practice

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

Health Priorities

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

SELECTION OF SIX PRIORITY HEALTH AREAS

Selection was based on:

Requirement to consider the priorities in the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027*
Requirements under the *Climate Action Act 2017* and *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
Examination of data on health and social issues in Ballarat
Consideration of community and stakeholder input through engagement which also informed the *Community Vision* and *Council Plan*, as well as from other recent community engagement processes
Consultation with staff on future priorities and resourcing
Consideration of current strategies and plans
Consideration of state policies, strategies and possible future funding opportunities
The potential for the City of Ballarat to respond effectively within regulatory and legislative boundaries

Health Partners

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

In the area of health promotion and prevention, we work closely with local and state based health partners to ensure we stay informed of developments, strategies and programs which align with our shared health priorities.

The Grampians Public Health Unit, together with stakeholders from across the region have developed shared priorities which are outlined in the *Grampians Region Population Health Plan 2023-2029: Stronger and Healthier Together.* The plan identifies key strengths, challenges, and common goals to support healthier communities.

It provides a data-backed foundation for local leaders and organisations to align efforts and take coordinated action across systems, settings and environments that influence the wellbeing of our communities.

Key local partners for health promotion and prevention include the following, with more partners mentioned under priority groups:

- Ballarat Community Health
- Women's Health Grampians
- Grampians Public Health Unit
- Sports Central

Tackling a changing climate and its impact on health

The *Climate Action Act 2017* (Section 17) recognises that Victoria's climate is changing and requires certain decision-makers to have regard to a changing climate and to consider its potential impacts and contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. Local government is identified as a decision-maker that must consider the changing climate when preparing a municipal public health and wellbeing plan.

The Central Highlands Climate Projections 2024 (CSIRO) indicate significant risks for our region:

- increasing daily minimum and maximum temperatures
- more intense and frequent heatwaves
- declining rainfall
- intensification of extreme rainfall events
- heightened risk of floods, heatwaves, droughts and bushfires.

These projections reinforce the urgent need for sustainable, resilient infrastructure, and awareness of the communities most vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate.

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

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

City of Ballarat will monitor the communities which are most likely to be impacted by a changing climate through analysis of the Social Vulnerability Index. The index currently highlights the areas of Wendouree-Miners Rest, Ballarat East-Warrenheip, Delacombe, Canadian-Mount Clear, and Sebastopol-Redan as most at risk due to low levels of community participation and cohesion in combination with high prevalence of chronic disease.

Across the Ballarat local government area there was an estimated 1.19Mt CO_2 emissions in 2022-23. The highest generators of emissions were electricity use (commercial 15 per cent, industrial 12 per cent, residential 16 per cent), followed by transport (26 per cent), gas (15 per cent), industrial processes and product use (8 per cent), agriculture (4 per cent), and waste (4 per cent).[1]

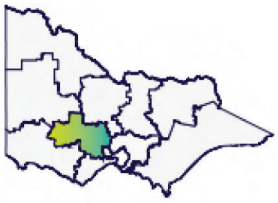
The changing climate and sustainable practices were clearly identified by the community as one of the key issues of concern and urgent areas for improvement. This has informed the goal, *'An environmentally and financially sustainable future'* in the *Council Plan 2025-2029* with strategies to support active transport, waste reduction and re-use, reduced emissions, community resilience and enhanced biodiversity.

Council has adopted the *Ballarat Net Zero Emissions Plan* (community) with an aspirational community-wide target of reaching net zero emissions by 2030. Two initiatives which are supporting businesses to transition to renewable energy are the Business Renewables Buying Group and the Ballarat Energy Network.

Council has significantly reduced the organisation's emissions since 2018 by switching to renewable electricity and investing in LED street lighting. Other initiatives outlined in the *Carbon Neutrality and 100% Renewables Action Plan* (corporate) include reducing emissions from landfill, fleet and gas categories. Council will be commencing a Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) service in 2025 which will assist in the re-use of food and garden waste and reduce the amount of food waste sent to landfill. Council is also increasing tree planting across the city with a target of 40 per cent canopy cover.

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

1. Snapshot Climate



The climate of Central Highlands has already changed and will continue to change

Minimum and maximum daily temperatures will continue to increase until at least 2050. Warming is projected to continue in the second half of the century if significant cuts in global greenhouse emissions are not made immediately (*very high confidence*).

Rainfall will continue to be variable over time, but over the long term is expected to continue declining in the cool season (*medium to high confidence*). Long-term changes to summer rainfall are uncertain.

Compared to 1986–2005 baseline the projections indicate the following increase in **average annual temperature** (°C change):

Low emissions scenario:

- 1.0 (0.4–1.4) by 2050
- 1.0 (0.4–1.5) by 2090

High emissions scenario:

- 1.4 (0.8–1.8) by 2050
- 3.0 (2.1–3.5) by 2090

Extreme rainfall events are expected to become more intense on average through the century (*high confidence*) but remain very variable in space and time.

High-impact **climate hazards** that affect Victoria including floods, heatwaves, drought and bushfires are also changing.

Hot days and nights will become hotter and more frequent, with longer, more intense heatwaves (*very high confidence*).

Central Highlands Climate Projections 2024

Preventing all forms of violence

Family and gender-based violence not only impacts the physical and mental health of the victim-survivor, but can extend to loss of secure housing, financial insecurity, increased isolation, and reduced family or social supports. It is also detrimental to the development and wellbeing of children exposed to the violence. Inequality across genders is the key driver of gender based violence.

Across Australia, some groups experience particularly high rates of violence. These groups include women and girls with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, older women, women from culturally diverse backgrounds and people from LGBTIQA+ communities.

Our community has experienced significant trauma in the first half of 2024 when several women lost their lives due to violence from men.

In Ballarat, 2,574 family violence incidents were recorded in 2023-24, with the rate of family violence incidents 51 per cent higher than state levels. Family conflict or violence was identified as a concern by 24 per cent of young people who participated in consultation for the *Youth Strategy 2022-26*. A child was present as a victim or a witness at 48 per cent of reported family violence incidents in Ballarat in 2023-24.[2]

In the majority (75 per cent) of family violence incidents, men are the perpetrators. However, street or community violence primarily affects men, and is perpetrated by men. The City of Ballarat works with partners in the Ballarat Community Safety Alliance to identify opportunities for strategic action to improve community safety outcomes for the Ballarat community.

Increasing healthy eating

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

In Ballarat, 60 per cent of adults are either overweight or obese. Across the state a higher percentage of males are overweight compared to females and the highest rates of overweight and obesity are reported in adults aged 45 to 74.

Poor diet has also contributed to high rates of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, dental disease and poor mental health.[3]

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

Dental conditions are the highest cause of all potentially preventable hospitalisations in children 0-9 years predominantly because of tooth decay. The key risk factors for tooth decay include sugary foods and drink and lack of access to the preventative effects of fluoride such as in toothpaste or water. In Ballarat 39% of adults delayed visiting a dental professional due to cost, with smoking, vaping and alcohol also contributing significantly to dental issues such as gum disease and oral cancer.

Increasing active living

Regular physical activity is associated with good mental health, healthy ageing and increased levels of happiness. Incorporating any type of physical activity into each day not only improves physical and mental wellbeing, it can also help prevent many chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and depression. In Ballarat around 64% of the adult population do not get sufficient physical activity each week.[3]

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

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

2. Crime Statistics Agency
3. Victorian Population Health Survey 2023

Improving mental wellbeing

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

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

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

Across the state the highest levels of psychological distress are reported in young women aged 18-24 (42 per cent) and 25-34 (27 per cent). For men the highest levels of psychological distress are reported in people aged 18-24 (24 per cent) and 25-34 (21 per cent). In Ballarat the rate of people seeking help for a mental health problem is 25 per cent which is significantly higher than the average across the state (19 per cent).[5]

Loneliness has been identified as a major public health issue in Australia and is linked to poor physical and mental health and premature death. Loneliness describes a distressing feeling of a lack of connection to other people and a desire for more, or more satisfying, social relationships. In contrast, social isolation is defined as having objectively few social relationships or roles and infrequent social contact. The two concepts may, but do not necessarily, coexist - a person may be socially isolated but not lonely, or socially connected but feel lonely.

Across the state the largest rates of loneliness are reported in young people aged 18-24 with similar rates in women (32.5 per cent) as men (31.2 per cent).

Ballarat has the third highest rate of loneliness in the state at 29.2 per cent compared to a state average of 23.3 per cent.[6]

The Ballarat Social Inclusion Action Group will establish in 2025 as a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System which recognised that communities are best placed to support social inclusion and connection.

Social Inclusion Action Groups are community led and owned groups that make decisions and develop solutions at a local level to promote mental health and wellbeing through place-based coordination and activities or initiatives addressing social inclusion and connection.

Membership of the Ballarat Social Inclusion Action Group will comprise people with a variety of lived and living experiences including members with experience of mental illness, psychological distress, addiction and/or social exclusion, isolation and discrimination. Membership will also reflect diverse communities (defined as people with disability, LGBTIQA+ people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), as well as include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people and older adults.

In recent years the City of Ballarat have delivered a number of community hubs through the direction of the *Community Infrastructure Plan 2022-37*, designed as spaces which can be utilised by community groups, library and early years services and often co-located with kindergartens, neighbourhood houses and sports clubs. Hubs are located at Wendouree, Lucas and Alfredton (Djila-tjarriu) and are currently being developed or upgraded in Sebastopol and Eastwood Street in the CBD.

Council's commitment to improving mental wellbeing is reflected in the goal, *'A healthy, safe, connected and inclusive community'* in the *Council Plan 2025-2029,* with strategies such as enhancing social cohesion, addressing isolation, and supporting vulnerable, diverse and age specific communities.

Reducing harm from smoking, vaping, gambling, alcohol and other drugs

Tobacco is still the leading contributor to disease and death as it increases the risk of many common chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. Children who live in a household with a smoker are significantly more likely to suffer from respiratory conditions.

4. Evidence review: The primary prevention of mental health conditions
5. Victorian Population Health Survey 2023
6. Western Victoria Primary Health Network - Safer Care Victoria 2021

Although smoking rates are lower in adolescents and young adults, young people have the highest rates of vaping with 17% of people aged 18-24 years and 15% of people aged 25-34 years surveyed as vaping in 2023.

Evidence shows that young people who vape are five times as likely to take up smoking. Vaping delivers toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde directly into the lungs which can cause breathing difficulties and lung damage. Vaping is particularly harmful to young people due to the likelihood of addiction and damage to the developing brain.

The Central Highlands Vaping Prevention project, led by City of Ballarat, brings together local government, health services, and education partners to increase the awareness of vaping harms and improve young people's capability to reject vaping.

Daily smoking rates in Ballarat go against the statewide trend and show more women smoke daily (12%) compared to men (10%). In rural areas across the state women smoke daily at significantly higher rates than women in metropolitan areas, and the highest proportions are reported in the 45-64 age group in both men and women. The proportion of women who smoked at any stage during pregnancy is also very high at 21 per cent.

However, when looking at the number of people who *currently smoke and/or vape* the number jumps to around 1 in 5 people in Ballarat, and the highest proportions are seen in younger people aged 18-34. [7]

Gambling has the potential to generate negative social and economic impacts for individuals, their family and friends, and the wider community. Adverse consequences resulting from gambling harm can include financial loss, relationship breakdown, emotional or psychological distress, issues with work or study, criminal activity, and reduced health and wellbeing.

It has been estimated that for each person experiencing harm from gambling, between five and 10 other people are likely to be negatively impacted, including family, friends and colleagues.

In the 2023-24 financial year $63.5 million dollars was lost in Ballarat to gambling on Electronic Gaming Machines (aka 'pokies'); this equates to $173,634 a day being lost on poker machines in Ballarat alone.

We are unable to gather data on sports betting losses at an LGA level, however data published by the State Revenue Office and the VGCCC shows that Victorian sport and race betting losses increased from an estimated $1.65 billion in 2019–20 to $2.58 billion in 2022–23.[8]

All organisations, workplaces and sporting clubs have a role to play in helping reduce the risk from gambling harm by raising awareness of risk factors, preventing access to gambling websites on workplace devices and networks, developing a gambling policy and supporting and educating staff to recognise the signs of gambling harm and how to respond.

Excessive alcohol and drug use can develop into a complex series of problems affecting not only individuals, but also their family, friends, employer and the broader community. It also contributes to many other community safety and health issues such as increased violence, increased rates of family and gender- based violence and increased risk of accidents and injury. Across the state, significantly higher proportions of men from rural areas particularly in the 55-74 age group drink alcohol at levels which increase risk of harm. The figures for Ballarat are close to the average for the state which shows about 1 in 5 people do not drink alcohol at all and around 13 per cent of people drink at a level which increases their risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.[9]

The ambulance attendance rates for illicit and pharmaceutical drug use in Ballarat show that the rate for pharmaceutical drug use by females is particularly high compared to state levels. Typical pharmaceutical drugs of concern are Fentanyl and Oxycodone. For males, the rate is higher for illicit drug use but it is not higher than the state average. Drug offences make up about 3 per cent of all crimes in Ballarat each year.[10]

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

7. Western Victoria Primary Health Network - Safer Care Victoria 2021
8. Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission
9. Victorian Population Health Survey 2023
10. AoDStats by Turning Point

Priority Groups

The City of Ballarat has identified nine priority groups and developed a plan for each which includes practical actions to achieve our vision for inclusion. The intersections between the different groups have been considered in the development of these plans and there are common areas of action identified in the *Inclusion Framework* and represented in plans. There is currently no separate plan for the financially vulnerable priority group however this group is considered in the development of each plan within the framework.

- *Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-27*
- *Intercultural Plan 2022-2026*
- *LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Plan 2022-2026*
- *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026*
- *Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025*
- *Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-2026*
- *Youth Strategy 2022-2026*
- *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-2026*

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities

Indigenous communities experience significant disparities in health and wellbeing, with life expectancy for Aboriginal Victorians generally eight years lower than non-Aboriginal Victorians.[11]

The *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-2027* sets a clear vision for self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal people and communities. The plan recognises the importance of Aboriginal people taking ownership, carriage and responsibility for designing, delivering and evaluating policy and services that affect their communities on their own terms.[12]

For many years Aboriginal Victorians have been advocating for self-determination and their right to make decisions on matters that affect their communities. For Aboriginal people, self-determination encompasses a spectrum of rights which support economic, cultural and social equity. Within the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 (extended to June 2025)*, the key enablers to making progress towards self-determination include prioritising culture, addressing trauma and supporting healing, addressing racism, promoting cultural safety, and transferring power and resources to Aboriginal communities.[13]

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

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

Racism and discrimination towards Aboriginal people are entrenched due to historical structural systems which have excluded Aboriginal people, customs and traditions.

Aboriginal people will be more able to participate fully in the community without fear of discrimination if services, businesses and community groups adapt to become more inclusive, culturally welcoming and accessible. Including Aboriginal people in policy development and decision-making will enable them to lead culturally safe lives.

In partnership with Traditional Owners, local Aboriginal community and key stakeholders including the Koorie Engagement Action Group (KEAG) Advisory Committee, the City of Ballarat has developed the *City of Ballarat Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2027.* This plan includes a vision for reconciliation by breaking down barriers and leading the way through promoting respect, creating opportunities (employment, services and access to culturally safe places), resources (budget, procurement and capacity building) and voices (representation, language, engagement and truth telling).

Culturally diverse communities

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

Ballarat is becoming more culturally diverse. At the last census in 2021, 129 different nationalities were recorded with around 11 per cent of the population born overseas. In Ballarat, and typically for Victoria, almost 70 per cent of migrants have come to Australia through a skilled migration program. Of the nearly 12,900 residents who were born overseas only 730 residents do not speak English at all.

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

The *City of Ballarat Intercultural Strategic Plan 2022-2026* outlines four collaborative priority areas to encourage a more inclusive intercultural city: Responsive Services, Active Citizenship, Leadership and Advocacy, and Maximising and Valuing Diversity.

11. Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2023: Health and Wellbeing
12. Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027
13. Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 (extended to June 2025)

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

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

LGBTIQA+ communities

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and/or questioning, and asexual (LGBTIQA+) people have a right to equality, fairness and full inclusion in the community. A recent comprehensive state-wide survey estimated that almost 10 per cent of the Ballarat population identifies as LGBTIQA+ and highlighted the discrimination and disparities in health and wellbeing that these diverse communities experience.[14]

One of the key health issues the LGBTIQA+ communities face is discrimination by other community members and services. In the previous 12 months to being surveyed, at a state-wide level, over 34 per cent of people within LGBTIQA+ communities experienced discrimination in the home (by a neighbour or at someone else's home), a hospital, a medical centre or a public place, compared to 16 per cent of the heterosexual, non-LGBTIQA+ community.

LGBTIQA+ communities experience higher levels of psychological distress than the non-LGBTIQA+ community, with 24 per cent experiencing high or very high levels and 45 per cent having been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. Over 13 per cent of people in LGBTIQA+ communities experienced family violence in the previous two years to being surveyed, compared to 5 per cent of the non-LGBTIQA+ community.

Other major issues people from LGBTIQA+ communities face include safety in the community, privacy, confidentiality and stigma. When examining lifestyle risk factors, people in LGBTIQA+ communities have higher rates of smoking and chronic disease and undertake lower levels of health checks (a specific example is LGBTIQA+ women aged 50-74 undertaking mammograms).

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

The focus of the work that the City of Ballarat is undertaking in this area is guided by the *City of Ballarat LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Plan 2022-2026.* Implementation of the plan which features four priority areas including Safety, Advocacy and Culture, Visibility, and Inclusion is informed by the LGBTIQA+ Advisory Committee and key local stakeholders including Child and Family Services (CAFS), Tiny Pride and Ballarat Community Health.

People with disability

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

With one-in-six people having some form of disability, in Ballarat there is likely to be at least 21,000 people with disability including around 7,000 with severe or profound disability. Most people will be affected by disability to varying degrees at some stage in their life.

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

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

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

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

People with disability are more likely than people without disability to experience sexual or physical violence, intimate partner violence, emotional abuse or sexual harassment at some point in their lives. Community safety can be a major issue for people with disability due to discrimination and being the target of assault and other crimes.[15]

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

- Ballarat Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance
- Ballarat Working Together Group
- Central Highlands Inclusion Group
- Ballarat Mental Health Collective
- Central Highlands Regional Advocacy Group

The *City of Ballarat Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026* aligns to relevant state and federal strategies, *Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022-2026* and *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*. Areas of focus are leadership, engagement, information and communication, employment and community participation including accessible recreation, dementia friendly communities, accessible and inclusive businesses.

Gender

Gender inequities across society, throughout economic and governance structures, in business, sport and media influence access to resources and power and, in turn, health and wellbeing.

Major employment and income inequities faced by women include the gender pay gap, career and leadership opportunities, superannuation and flexible working conditions. Women are statistically more likely to be primary caregivers of children or other family members. These caring roles and responsibilities can lead to fewer working hours, insecure work, and financial vulnerability.

Gender inequity is one of the leading drivers of family violence which, in conjunction with other gendered issues, is one of the main reasons women and children become homeless. In Ballarat in 2023-24 women accounted for nearly 57 per cent of people accessing specialist homelessness services.[16]

Sport and recreation are important parts of our culture and can be a powerful vehicle for change. Increasing access and participation for women and girls can help change community attitudes, provide positive role models for young women and promote a culture of respect and fairness. City of Ballarat have developed a *Fair Access Policy* which establishes the expectation that gender and intersectional equality is considered, prioritised, and action is taken in all Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice in relation to community sport infrastructure.

The City of Ballarat works closely with key local partners in the area of gender and is a member of the regional Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) which is led by Women's Health Grampians. CoRE is an alliance of more than 120 organisations, clubs and businesses in the Grampians region that share a vision for safe, equal and respectful communities.

City of Ballarat is committed to aligning to other state and federal initiatives to improve gender equity and contribute to primary prevention of gender-based violence including the 4-year Ballarat Saturation Model project to be led by Respect Victoria which was announced by the State Government in 2024.

City of Ballarat is also a member of the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee which aims to strengthen, integrate and improve the family violence system in the region, and to help end family violence.

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

Early years and children

A healthy start in life is a key factor for ongoing wellbeing, and investing in the early years is the most effective way to give children the best opportunity for a healthy future. Starting a family is a major life transition and, for many families in Ballarat, this brings new issues such as isolation, the potential for mental health issues, and increased barriers to employment and study which can lead to reduced income and housing insecurity.

15. People with disability in Australia 2020: in brief
16. AIHW: Specialist homelessness services annual report 2023-24

For some families, a lack of knowledge or awareness of the importance of early childhood services and education may lead to disengaging from vital services due to barriers such as transport and digital access. Ballarat has high rates of family violence and children are witness to or affected by family violence in 48 per cent of incidents. Ballarat's teenage pregnancy rate, while declining in recent years, is twice the rate recorded statewide.

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

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

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

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

The *Municipal Early Years Plan* will be updated at the end of 2026 with current work guided and informed by the ARACY (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth) Nest framework.

Partnerships

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

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

Young people

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

In 2025 there are approximately 20,600 young people aged 12 to 24 living in Ballarat which is almost 16.5 per cent of the population. Each year, while Ballarat attracts large numbers of young people from surrounding municipalities for education and employment, it loses others to tertiary education and employment options, mainly in Geelong and Melbourne. According to the last census in 2021, around 1,260 more young people came to live in Ballarat than moved away in the 5 years since 2016.

Young people face a multitude of personal, community and societal issues. Each individual has different levels of support, guidance and influences to help them navigate these challenges. Key issues of concern for young people in Ballarat include mental health, coping with stress, school or study problems, cost of living, body image, physical health, suicide, the changing climate and social media use. Within the broader Ballarat community, major issues include school retention rates, absentee days, unemployment, loneliness, cyber-safety, housing insecurity, alcohol and other drugs and becoming young parents.[17]

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

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

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

A major initiative supporting youth mental health is the Youth Live4Life program. The Youth Services team deliver this program in partnership with 11 secondary schools, with around 3500 students receiving Teen Mental Health First Aid education from 2023 to 2024. In 2024, 36 young people were engaged to act as Mental Health Ambassadors for their school and the broader community.

Partnerships

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

- Ballarat Youth Services Network Committee of Support
- Youth Mental Health Community of Practice
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Y Ballarat
- L2P Steering Group
- Wendouree Renewal Project
- Young Creatives in Business
- Central Highlands Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network

Older people

Ballarat has an ageing population. In 2025 approximately 31,660 residents (25 percent) are 60 years and over. By 2036 it is estimated that this will increase to approximately 42,400 residents, increasing to almost 30 per cent of our population.

As part of the global response to our growing ageing population, across the world there is an increasing focus on how we can all age well and remain healthy and active throughout our lifetime. The United Nations has declared 2021-30 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing, putting the spotlight on the need for individuals, government and societies to make it a priority.

Everyone has different experiences of ageing and different aspirations and hopes for how they live their life. Issues for people as they age may include increasing financial and physical vulnerability and insecurity around health and housing. A significant risk to ageing well is the loss of meaningful relationships and social networks that leads to social isolation. Ageism is becoming increasingly recognised as a significant issue and an inhibitor to ageing well.

17. Mission Australia Youth Survey 2024 - City of Ballarat

Healthy ageing depends on individual genetic and behavioural factors, as well as broader environmental and socioeconomic determinants. It is about creating environments and opportunities that enable people to be able to do what they value throughout their lives. It extends across the lifespan and is relevant to everyone.

The City of Ballarat Ageing Well Services team is dedicated to creating supportive environments that foster healthy and active ageing including planning for and responding to the diverse and emerging needs of our ageing community. The team delivers a number of programs focussed on residents 55 years and over including a Social Activities Program with a strong focus on health and wellbeing and a Community Connector Service to help people navigate the supports and services they need to live and age well.

City of Ballarat is committed to creating an age friendly community for our residents demonstrated through the *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-2026.* The strategy includes a vision to create an age-friendly community where people feel valued, connected, included, and respected and feel confident to participate fully in life however they choose.

The strategy has been informed with a strong focus on our residents and their feedback and is based around the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities and Communities Framework which includes eight interconnected domains that can help to identify and address barriers to the wellbeing and participation of older people. According to the World Health Organisation, an age friendly community is "an inclusive and accessible community environment that optimises opportunities for health, participation and security for all people, in order that quality of life and dignity are ensured as people age."

The City of Ballarat is a member of the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC). Membership of GNAFCC involves a commitment to becoming more age-friendly, bringing together like-minded cities and communities from across the world to facilitate the exchange of information, resources and best practice.

Financially vulnerable

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

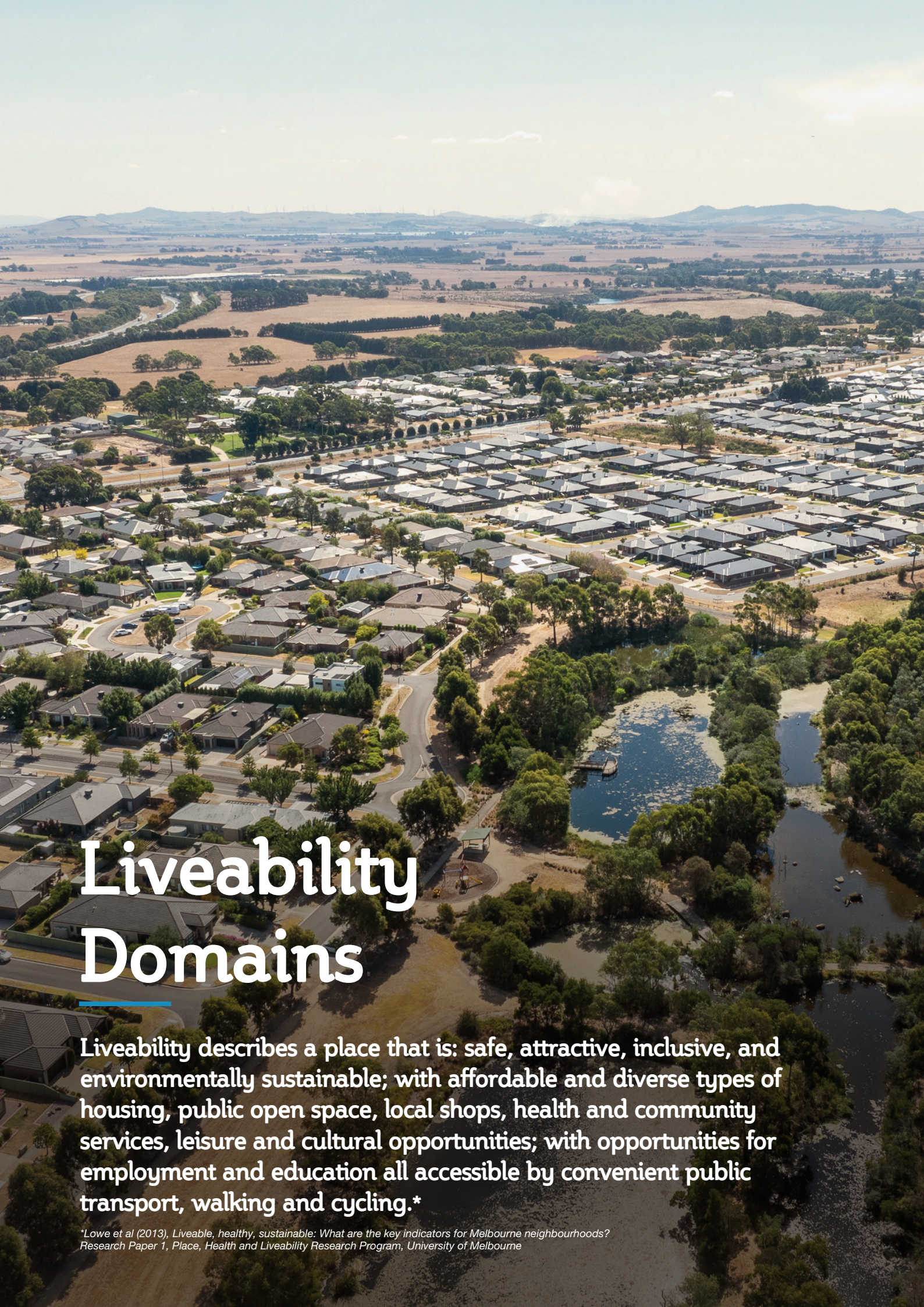
Many factors influence financial wellbeing, including financial capability (knowledge and behaviours), financial inclusion (access to financial services and products), social capital (support from friends, relatives and community) and income (amount, stability and source).

In addition the ABS reported in December 2024 an increase in the cost of living over the previous 12 months of between 2.5 per cent and 4.0 per cent, depending upon the household type, which is particularly difficult for people on low and fixed incomes. Over the same time period the wage price index rose 3.2 per cent.

At the time of the last census in 2021, over 11,500 Ballarat households had an income of less than $800 per week. This included around 36 per cent of households in Wendouree and Sebastopol, which is far higher than the state average of 21 per cent.

Having a low or unstable income can reduce housing options. It can also create household stress that impacts the family or individuals as a result of having to limit goods and services such as healthy food, health care, transport and utilities. At the time of the last census, almost 34 per cent of households in the Sebastopol and Wendouree areas were experiencing rental stress (households spending more than 30 per cent of income on housing costs), and over 4,450 households were experiencing rental stress across the municipality.

Financial vulnerability is a major reason for people experiencing food insecurity (unable to buy nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable or safe foods from non-emergency sources like the supermarket or greengrocer). A recent analysis of local emergency food relief agencies estimated that 12 per cent of people in Ballarat had accessed emergency food relief at least once in a 12-month period.



Liveability Domains

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

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

Improving the environments that influence health and wellbeing outcomes

The factors that enhance liveability and make somewhere a desirable place to live also impact positively on the health and wellbeing of the community. The social determinants of health include the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness. There is strong evidence that access, proximity and supportive environments can influence health and wellbeing. For example, people who live close to a large park or open space are more likely to walk or exercise regularly, and people who live close to unhealthy food outlets are more likely to consume unhealthy food. The strategies outlined in this section detail the work that the City of Ballarat, working with partners, will undertake towards improving the social determinants of health and how we will measure improvement.

Active transport

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

Access to transport is a key factor contributing to liveability as it can influence a person's access to services and ability to participate in society. Walking or cycling for transport — known as active transport — can significantly improve health and wellbeing outcomes by increasing daily physical activity and reducing car emissions and traffic congestion. Access to regular, reliable and affordable public transport options is particularly important for people on low incomes, people with disability, young people and older people. Council's commitment to supporting our community to increasingly choose active and public transport options is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029,* within the *'An environmentally and financially sustainable future'* goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

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

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Increasing opportunities for walking and bike riding	✓	✓	
Advocating improved public transport services and access		✓	✓
Connecting pedestrian and cycling routes to key destinations and public transport	✓		✓
Enhancing safety, amenity, thermal comfort, UV protection and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, and at bus shelters	✓		
Partnering and facilitating community education sessions for older residents including safer transport, active transport and mobility	✓		

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Ballarat Integrated Transport Plan*
- *Ballarat Cycling Action Plan 2017-25*
- *Ballarat Net Zero Emissions Plan*
- *Carbon Neutrality and 100% Renewables Action Plan*
- *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-26*

Community participation

Outcome | All residents feel connected and engaged and actively participate in the community.

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

Council's commitment to increasing opportunities for community participation is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029,* within the *'A healthy, safe, connected and welcoming community for all' and 'A strong and innovative local economy and city'* goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

Improving mental wellbeing; tackling a changing climate and its impact on health

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

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Youth Strategy 2022-26*
- *Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-26*
- *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-26*
- *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-26*
- *LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Plan 2022-26*
- *Intercultural Plan 2022-26*
- *Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-2027*
- *Community Engagement Framework*
- *Event Strategy 2018-28*
- *Creative City Strategy*
- *Libraries and Learning Strategy 2022-27*
- *Community Infrastructure Plan 2022-37*
- *Waste as a Resource Our Circular Economy Strategy 2024-28*
- *Biodiversity Strategy - Healing Country Together 2024*

Community safety

Outcome | All residents feel safe and secure in their community

Surveys report community safety as one of the most important factors determining what makes somewhere a good place to live. Perceptions and experiences of safety are influenced by a range of personal, social and built environment factors and can limit people's participation in physical and social activity within their local neighbourhoods. Council's role in safety is broad and encompasses many areas of the organisation from designing safe and welcoming infrastructure and programs, through to addressing the key drivers of family and gender based violence, supporting community with emergency management responses to engaging young people with supportive and informative programs. Council partners with stakeholders through the Ballarat Community Safety Alliance, the Ballarat Liquor Accord, Neighbourhood Watch Victoria, the Ballarat Saturation Model for prevention of family violence, supports CCTV infrastructure and operates a City Safe Taxi Rank.

We can improve the perception and experience of safety for all residents by utilising a compassionate and trauma-informed approach to developing solutions, and encourage opportunities for walking and socialising by providing neighbourhoods with good visibility, street lighting, built features that promote natural surveillance and clean public spaces.

Council's commitment to improving community safety is highlighted in the Council Plan 2025-2029, within the *'A healthy, safe, connected and welcoming community for all'* goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

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

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Implement the Free from Violence Local Government Program and contribute to gender-based violence collective impact approaches including the Ballarat Saturation Model	✓	✓	✓
Implementation of the MARAM* framework to effectively identify, assess and manage family violence risk	✓		
Implement and embed Child Safe Standards across all City of Ballarat services, policies and frameworks	✓		
Implementing Council's Gender Equality Action Plan	✓		
Partnering with stakeholders to develop programs which increase community inclusion and cultural safety	✓	✓	✓
Using evidence and engagement practices to inform the delivery of key safety projects	✓	✓	
Partnering with stakeholders to undertake emergency management planning	✓	✓	
Engage with community to collect place-based perceptions of safety through a mapping platform	✓		
Supporting businesses to provide an environmentally safe and compliant service for customers	✓		

** MARAM - Family violence multi-agency risk assessment and management*

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Municipal Emergency Management Plan*
- *Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-27*
- *Intercultural Plan 2022-26*
- *LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Plan 2022-26*
- *Ballarat Libraries and Learning Strategy 2022-27,*
- *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-26*
- *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-26*

Employment

Outcome | Increased participation in diverse and meaningful employment

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

There are many groups in the community that have difficulty finding sufficient, regular and meaningful work which reduces their ability to participate fully in the community. Council's commitment to supporting better employment outcomes for the community is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029*, within the *'A strong and innovative local economy and city'* and *'A city that fosters sustainable growth'* goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

Improving mental wellbeing

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

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Ballarat Creative City Strategy*
- *Youth Strategy 2022-2026*

Food

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

Planning for healthy food environments includes good suburb design featuring supermarkets and other fresh food outlets in local neighbourhoods and providing and promoting healthy foods at community facilities and spaces, schools and workplaces. Encouraging a sustainable local food system includes protecting land for growing food, supporting local producers and alternative markets, encouraging community food and gardening groups and reducing food waste. Food insecurity can not only reduce physical and mental health and wellbeing but can limit participation in education, employment and the broader society. Many different Ballarat communities experience food insecurity, particularly groups such as the unemployed, homeless, students, older people, people with limited transport options, people with mental health issues and families fleeing family violence. Council's commitment to ensuring healthy and affordable foods are available through sustainable local systems is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029*, within the '*A healthy, safe, connected and welcoming community for all'* goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

Increasing healthy eating; tackling a changing climate and its impact on health; improving mental wellbeing

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

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Social policy position statement: Access to safe, affordable and nutritious food*
- *Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-26*
- *Waste as a Resource Our Circular Economy Strategy 2024-28*

Health and social services

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

Good access and regular connection to health and social services is important for people to maintain a healthy life. Health and social services encourage screening for early detection of disease and provide health promotion information and support to help residents remain independent and participate in the community. Lifestyle choices and addictions can negatively impact health and wellbeing and may increase the risk of chronic disease. With smoking and vaping rates still very high among some groups, restricting the environments where smoking and vaping is allowed reduces the risk to others. All organisations and workplaces can play a role in reducing and preventing gambling harm by building awareness of the risk factors, promoting avenues of support and offering alternative recreational options. The design and management of public spaces, local laws and response to liquor licence applications are factors that can help reduce the harm from long-term and excessive alcohol use in the community. Council's commitment to supporting and improving community health and wellbeing is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029*, within the '*A healthy, safe, connected and welcoming community for all'*goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

- Increased awareness by young people of harms caused by smoking, vaping and alcohol
- Increased areas at City of Ballarat-owned facilities and spaces which are smoke and vape free
- Increased participation in health and social services by priority groups

Relevant health priority areas

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

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Determining gaps in service delivery and advocating future health and social service needs and investment	✓		✓
Advocate for increased funding for family violence intervention, response and recovery sector in Ballarat			✓
Strengthening tobacco control at the local level and preventing harms from smoking and vaping	✓	✓	
Preventing harms from excessive alcohol and other drug use at the local level	✓	✓	
Utilising available planning and regulatory controls and promoting programs and information to support people experiencing harmful effects of gambling and their families	✓	✓	
Ensure programs and services are promoted effectively to reach all relevant community members	✓	✓	
Providing early years services, with focused support for vulnerable families	✓		
Support older community members through education, events and the Community Connector program to promote understanding and improve navigation of services and supports available	✓	✓	

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-26*
- *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-26*
- *Social policy position statements: Minimising gambling harm, Reducing harm from alcohol and other drugs, Preventing family violence*

Housing

Outcome | Increased access to diverse, affordable and sustainable housing

Secure, accessible and affordable housing is an essential factor in achieving and maintaining good physical and mental health. Housing unsuitability can be due to cost, size, location, accessibility, overcrowding or tenure insecurity and can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. It is not enough for housing to be affordable. It must also be located in areas that have good access to schools, shops, services, public open space, and public transport. For low income earners, when housing costs make up more than 30% of their income, affordability becomes a problem and may lead to reduced levels of food security, healthcare and other basic needs. Housing diversity refers to a mix of dwelling types (size, style and tenure type) within a neighbourhood or development, and lot sizes, and encourages a more diverse range of residents and services within local neighbourhoods. It can support older residents by providing more suitable and affordable options to remain in their local area. Good planning for sustainable housing and suburbs can reduce costs associated with resources, utilities and waste, improve public amenity and comfort, and increase walkability and community connections. Council's commitment to supporting the development of affordable and diverse housing choices across the municipality and to ensuring a more sustainable focus in housing developments is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029,* within the '*A healthy, safe, connected and welcoming community for all'* and *'A city that fosters sustainable growth'* goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

Improving mental wellbeing; tackling a changing climate and its impact on health

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

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Housing Strategy 2041*
- *Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan*
- *Sustainable Subdivision Framework*
- *Social policy position statement: Homelessness*
- *Homelessness Protocol 2022*

Lifelong learning

Outcome | Increased access to educational and skill-building opportunities

Education and literacy are associated with a greater diversity of options, increased accessibility and better health outcomes. Education can provide the skills required to gain employment and security and to support participation in the community and access to health and social services. Ongoing literacy development provides continued access in the face of changing environments. Digital, health, financial and food literacy are areas where people in different stages of life can be supported to encourage greater independence and engagement with these key areas of life. Council's commitment to supporting lifelong learning opportunities for all residents is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029*, within the '*A healthy, safe, connected and welcoming community for all'*goal and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

Improving mental wellbeing

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

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Ballarat Libraries and Learning Strategy 2022-2027*
- *Community Infrastructure Plan 2022-2037*
- *Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-2026*
- *Youth Strategy 2022-2026*
- *Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-26*

Open space and recreation

Outcome | Increased access to and participation in active recreation and increased access to public open spaces

Public open space includes parks, gardens, nature reserves, recreational areas and civic spaces. It plays an important part in supporting residents to socialise, be physically active and make connections within their local neighbourhood. Living close to a park or garden has been shown to encourage more regular physical activity and improve mental wellbeing. Large open spaces have increased potential to attract a diverse range of people as they have the capacity to accommodate more facilities, walking and cycling paths and to support large gatherings. They can also support the preservation and promotion of biodiversity, and are essential in urban areas for environmental and conservation purposes. Greening city spaces brings a multitude of benefits, from providing shade and cooler air to enhancing walkability, improving street appeal and providing a buffer between footpaths and traffic. Council's commitment to providing, protecting and enhancing high quality open and recreation spaces is highlighted in the *Council Plan 2025-2029*, within the *'A healthy, safe, connected and welcoming community for all'*, *'An environmentally and financially sustainable future'*, *'A city that fosters sustainable growth'*, and *'A city that conserves its heritage and enhances our natural, cultural and built assets'* goals and related strategies.

In the medium term we expect to see:

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

Relevant health priority areas

Increasing active living; tackling a changing climate and its impact on health; improving mental wellbeing

We will do this by:	Deliver	Partner	Advocate
Increasing inclusive sport and active recreation	✓	✓	
Providing and promoting flexible, diverse and accessible recreation and leisure opportunities	✓	✓	
Planning, providing and maintaining sporting facilities and grounds and playspaces	✓		
Planning and developing new open space areas	✓		
Increasing tree planting to support multiple climate and health co-benefits including heat mitigation and UV protection across the city, with a focus on low socio-economic areas and public areas in the CBD	✓		
Integrating biodiversity, thermal comfort, UV protective shade and low-UV reflective surfaces across public space design	✓		

Associated plans and strategies:

- *Active Ballarat Strategy*
- *Open Space Strategy*
- *Urban Forest Action Plan*
- *Recreation Infrastructure Plan 2024-2039*
- *Fair Access Policy*
- *Playspace Planning Framework*
- *Biodiversity Strategy - Healing Country Together*

Appendices

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

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

Monitoring and evaluation

The *City of Ballarat Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031* outlines a range of goals and strategies which will be undertaken over the next four years until the plan is updated again with a new council and with input from the community. Strategies outline work to be undertaken by the City of Ballarat or in partnership with stakeholders and will be reviewed annually. Review documents showing progress against actions are available from the City of Ballarat website.

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

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

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

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

Measuring progress against medium-term outcomes using Liveability Domains

	Indicator (*new)	Source**	Baseline (year)	Updated measure (year)
Active transport	Walkability for Transport Index – LGA level	AUO	-1.3 (2018)	-1.4 (2021)
	Average distance to closest public transport stop – LGA level		385m (2018)	465m (2021)
	Additional metres of footpaths and cycle paths per year	City of Ballarat	40430m (2020-21)	38462m (2022-23)
	Community perception of ease of cycling and walking*	CSS	70% (2023)	73% (2024)
	Indicator removed – *Number of users of cycle and walking paths* – due to difficulty collecting data			
Community participation	Social Infrastructure Index	AUO	3.7 (2018)	3.4 (2021)
	Hours of bookings for community hub usage*	City of Ballarat	COVID impacts (2021)	1580 hrs (2023-24)
	Number of unique contributors to engagements through the MySay platform*			2764 (2023-24)
	Number of participants in Social Inclusion Action Group programs*		Project starting 2025	
	Annual number of students trained in Teen Mental Health First Aid through the Live4Life program		1246 (2023)	2345 (2024)
	Indicator removed - *Hours of facility usage and bookings* – difficult to define, replaced by community hub indicator			
	Indicator removed - *Numbers of residents engaged on City of Ballarat projects* – difficult to define, replaced by MySay indicator			
	Indicator removed - *Number of library visits* – replaced to focus on participation through Social Inclusion Action Groups			
Community Safety	Community perception of Ballarat being a safe place to live*	CSS	73% (2021)	67% (2024)
	Participation in gender equity and bystander training	City of Ballarat	335 (2020-21)	286 (2023-24)
	Number of Gender Impact Assessments completed annually*			18 (2024)
	Number of council services or projects that have been designed or adapted to better address the drivers of family violence and violence against women*		Measurement commencing 2025	
	Participation in library programs that support expressions of culture, identity and community*		COVID impacts (2021)	2665 (2023-24)
	Indicator removed – *Perception of safety through place-based surveys* – replaced with regularly collected survey			
	Indicator removed – *Participation in library programs developed for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community* – changed to align with current data collection as per library indicator			
Employment	Number of GST registered businesses – all industries*	ABR	9709 (March 2021)	11366 (March 2024)
	Total workforce employed*	NIEIR	56283 (June 2020)	62005 (June 2023)
	Number of students and apprentices supported at City of Ballarat	City of Ballarat	19 (2022)	44 (2023-24)
	Indicator removed – *Annual increase in number of businesses* – replaced with more specific indicator on business output			
	Indicator removed – *Size of the workforce* – replaced with more specific indicator on employed workforce			
	Indicator removed – *Number of new residents placed in work through pathway programs* – due to completion of funded program			

	Indicator (*new)	Source**	Baseline (year)	Updated measure (year)
Food	Average distance to closest healthy food outlet (supermarket or greengrocer)	AUO	1552m (2018)	1540m (2021)
	Average distance to closest fast food outlet		2075m (2018)	2090m (2021)
	Number of community food programs	City of Ballarat	59 (2020)	64 (2024)
	Percentage of sugary drinks displayed at aquatic facilities*		51% (Aug 2024)	44% (April 2025)
	Indicator removed – *Percentage of sugary drinks sold at City of Ballarat-managed facilities* – reworded for clearer definition			
Health and social services	Average distance to closest off-licence alcohol outlet	AUO	980m (2018)	962m (2021)
	Number of City of Ballarat facilities with greater than minimum requirement smoke and vape-free zones	City of Ballarat	3 (2021)	3 (2024)
	Participation in Sons and Daughters of the West programs		65 (2021)	100 (2023-24)
	Indicator removed – *Participation in City of Ballarat run social alternatives to gambling* – due to completion of funded program			
Housing	Percentage of dwellings that are government-owned or community housing	ABS	4.4% (2016)	3.8% (2021)
	Percentage of one-bedroom properties*		3.6% (2016)	3.4% (2021)
	Percentage of rental households in the bottom 40% of incomes who spend more than 30% of their income on housing	AUO	61% (2018)	57.6% (2021)
	Average number of dwellings within 1600m*		2115 (2016)	2138 (2021)
	Number of people receiving support from Specialist Homelessness Services in the Ballarat region*	AIHW	2322 (2021-22)	2772 (2023-24)
	Number of applications for social housing across the Central Highlands district on the Victorian Housing Register*	Homes Victoria		2680 (Dec 2024)
	Indicator removed – *Average dwelling density per hectare* – AUO changed wording to the indicator above re dwellings within 1600m			
Lifelong learning	Percentage of children vulnerable in one or more AEDC domains	AEDC	19.6% (2018)	21.7% (2021)
	Participation in library-based programs	City of Ballarat	4200 (2020-21)	17865 (2023-24)
	Number of skill development programs offered to young people		143 (2023)	195 (2024)
Open space and recreation	Average distance to closest public open space larger than 1.5 hectares	AUO	554m (2018)	577m (2021)
	Annual number of trees planted	City of Ballarat	1953 (2021-22)	1815 (2023-24)
	Number of visits to aquatic facilities per municipal population*		1.87 (2021)	6.21 (2024)
	Indicator removed – *Participation levels at Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre* – wording changed to be more specific			

***Source: AUO – RMIT Australian Urban Observatory (note: measurements taken of urban settlements of Ballarat), CSS – Community Satisfaction Survey, ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics, AIHW – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AEDC – Australian Early Development Census, ABR – Australian Business Register, NIEIR – National Institute of Economic and Industry Research – Modelled Series*

Measuring progress against long-term health priorities

	Indicator (*new)	Source**	Baseline (year)	Updated measure (year)
Tackling a changing climate and its impact on health	Proportion of tree canopy cover	City of Ballarat	17% (2018)	17.3% (2023)
	Annual corporate emissions		35697 t/year (2019-20)	26359 t/year (2022)
	Potable water consumption per person – existing and growth area homes			Existing 184 L/p/day Growth 159 L/p/day (2023)
	Total CO_2 emissions across LGA	Snapshot Climate	1.576 Mt (2018-19)	1.186 Mt (2022-23)
	Estimated installed capacity across LGA - solar	API	47225 kW (2019)	93873 kW (2024)
	Indicator removed – *Potable water consumption per person* – originally measured Council water use on sports fields and gardens			
Preventing all forms of violence	Rate of family violence incidents (per 100,000)	CSA	2088 (2020-21)	2143 (2023-24)
	Rate of assaults perpetrated by females that occur in high alcohol hours (per 100,000)	AoDStats	139.9 (2020-21)	116.4 (2021-22)
	Rate of assaults perpetrated by males that occur in high alcohol hours (per 100,000)		147.9 (2020-21)	160.8 (2021-22)
	Percentage of female CEO's, General Managers and Legislators*	ABS	26.5% (2016)	29% (2021)
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark* – using a different survey (CSS) to measure and reported in the medium term indicators			
	Indicator removed – *Low gender equality score* – not included in recent surveys			
Increasing healthy eating	Proportion of people who 'definitely' worried about food insecurity in the past year*	VPHS***		women 16.2% men 10.4% (2023)
	Proportion of adults who consume sugar-sweetened drinks daily or several times per week*			women 35.8% men 40.7% (2023)
	Proportion of adult population who avoided or delayed visiting a dental professional due to cost*			39% (2023) Vic 32.3%
	Proportion of adult females who are overweight or obese			58.6% Vic 49.0%
	Proportion of adult males who are overweight or obese			62.2% Vic 60.4%
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who consume 3-4 serves of vegetables daily* – not included in recent surveys			
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who consume sugar-sweetened drinks daily* – wording changed in recent surveys			
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who eat takeaway meals or snacks more than once per week* – not included in recent surveys			

	Indicator (*new)	Source**	Baseline (year)	Updated measure (year)
Increasing active living	Proportion of adults who are sufficiently physically active – at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per week	VPHS***		women 31.2% men 38.7% (2023)
	Proportion of young people (in the Central Highlands) who do the recommended amount of physical activity every day	VSHAWS	20.7% (2018)	
	Number of people who walk or cycle to work	ABS	904 (2016)	1568 (2021)
Improving mental wellbeing	Proportion of adults experiencing loneliness*	VPHS***		29.2% (2023 Vic – 23.3%
	Proportion of adults who sought professional help for a mental health problem in the last 12 months*			25.2% (2023) Vic - 19.0%
	Proportion of adults who have high or very high levels of psychological distress			women 23.3% men 17.8% (2023)
	Percentage of people by tolerance of diversity – agreeing that 'Multiculturalism definitely makes life in your area better'*			57.1% (2023 Vic - 66.5%
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who belong to an organised community group* – not included in recent surveys			
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who report that their life is worthwhile (low or medium scores) – replaced with indicator related to seeking professional help*			
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who are definitely able to get help from neighbours if needed* – not included in recent surveys			
Reducing harm from smoking, vaping, gambling, alcohol and other drugs	Proportion of people who smoked tobacco daily*	VPHS***		women 12.4% men 10.1% (2023)
	Proportion of people who vaped daily or weekly*			5.4% (2023)
	Proportion of adults with increased risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury*			women 6.5% men 19.8% (2023)
	Average loss per person per year on EGMs (pokies)	VGCCC	$683 (2018-19)	$677 (2023-24)
	Rate of pharmaceutical drug-related ambulance attendances – females (per 100,000)	AoDStats	316.5 (2018-19)	375.4 (2021-22)
	Rate of pharmaceutical drug-related ambulance attendances – males (per 100,000)		196.0 (2018-19)	174.9 (2021-22)
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults who are current smokers (females and males)* – word change from 'current' to 'daily' smokers			
	Indicator removed – *Proportion of adults with increased lifetime risk of alcohol-related harm* – word change in surveys			

***Source: API – Australian Photovoltaic Institute, CSA – Crime Statistics Agency, AoDStats – AoDStats by Turning Point, ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics, VPHS – Victorian Population Health Survey, VSHAWS – Victorian Student Health and Wellbeing Survey, VGCCC – Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission*
****VPHS – Victorian Population Health Survey – The sample size for this survey is not large enough to compare accurately across time periods but can be compared to the state average. If the figure for Ballarat is significantly above or below the state average, it has been highlighted as such in the table.*

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