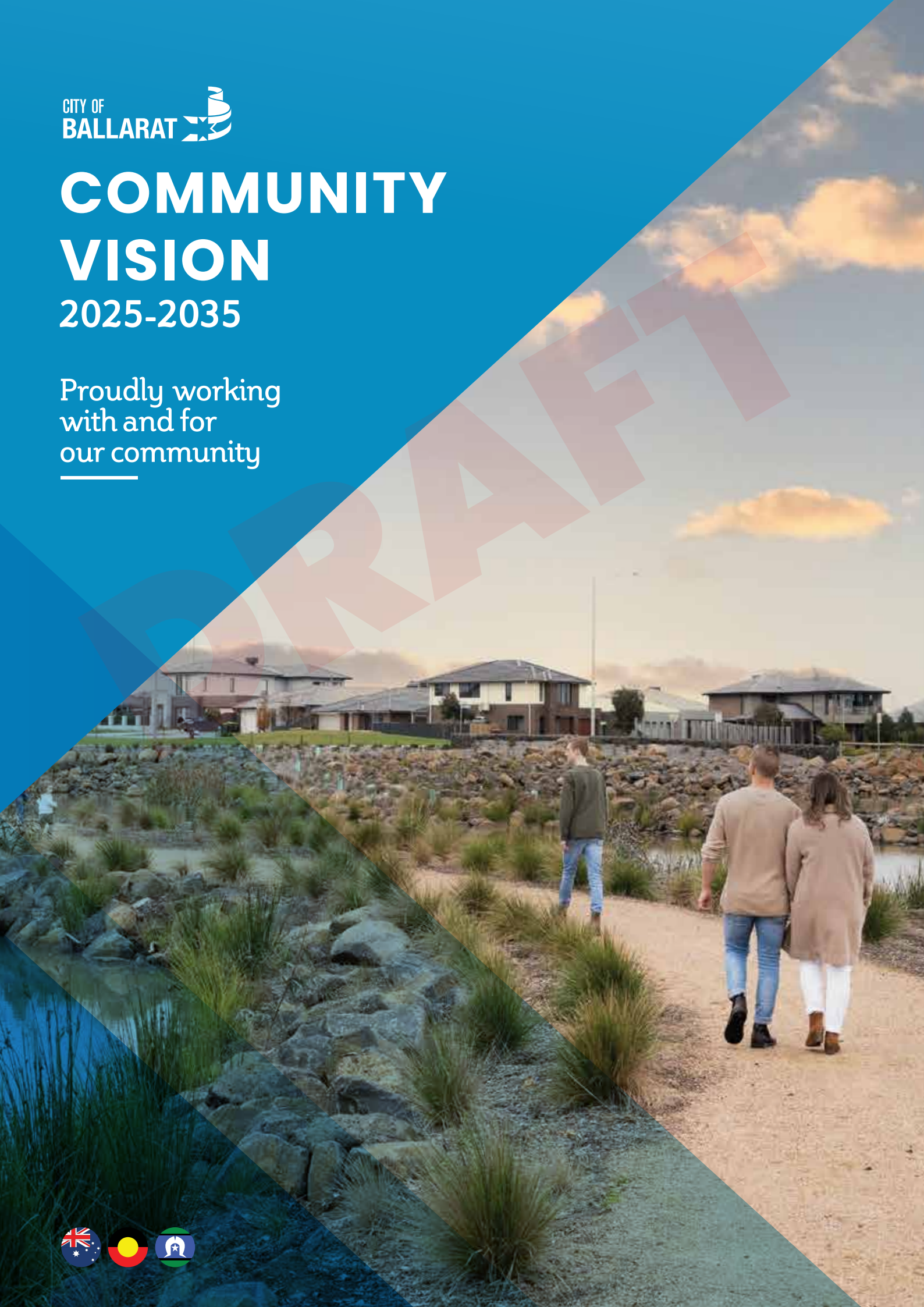
CITY OF BALLARAT

COMMUNITY VISION

2025-2035

Proudly working with and for our community



DRAFT

Lake Wendouree, View Point.

Table of contents

The community vision	**04**
A snapshot of Ballarat	**07**
We asked our community	**08**
The deliberative engagement process	**09**
Community vision principles and themes	**11**
Our vision for a well-planned and liveable city	**12**
Our vision for a safe, healthy and connected community	**14**
Our vision for a diverse and agile economy	**16**
How we will bring your vision to life	**19**

DRAFT

—

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.

—

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 our long Aboriginal history and community, and the breadth of our 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.

DRAFT

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

"Ballarat needs to keep its country charm while offering sophisticated places and spaces"

Kitchen table conversation, 6 people, 35-69 years | 2021

"We need places, spaces and services that acknowledge the changing population's social and health needs, consider the impacts of climate change, and connect us with the modern and sophisticated world beyond but also pay respect to our heritage and regional setting."

Resident, 35-49 years | 2021

"Be proud of where we are, what we have, how lucky we are, and encourage everyone to be positive."

Resident | 2024

"The City and its communities must be supported to plan for and adapt proactively to changing weather conditions to ensure we remain a liveable City for all levels of income."

Resident | 2024

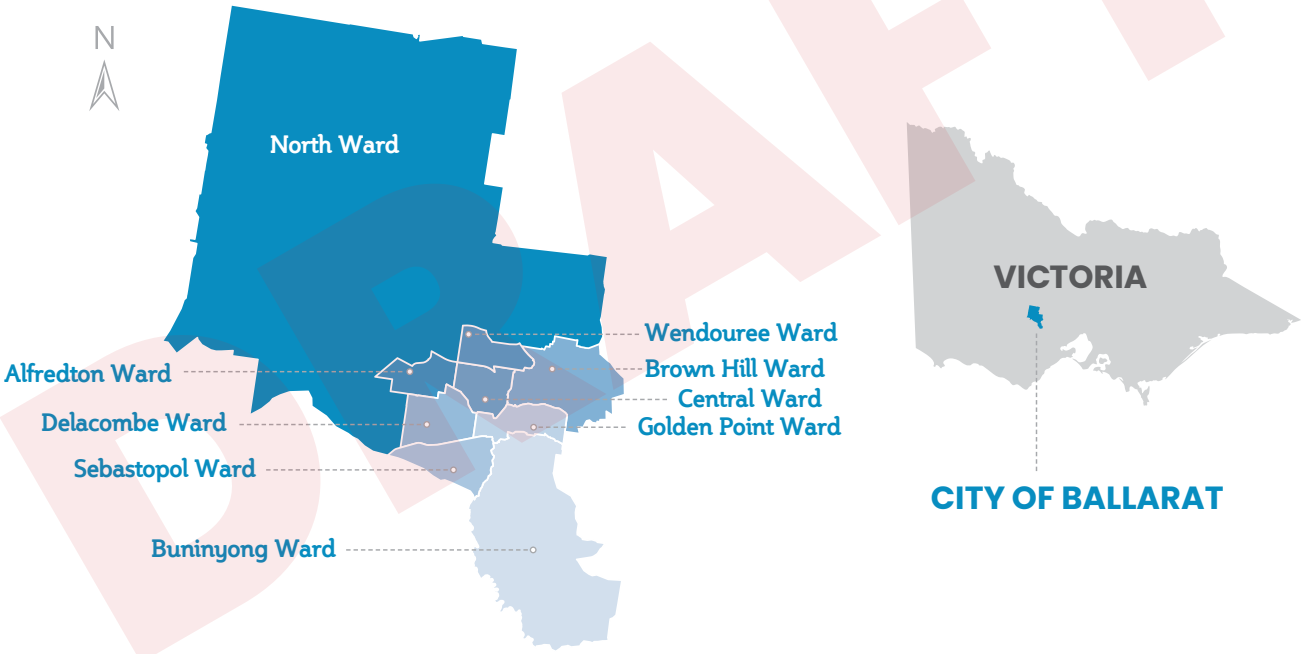
"Ballarat residents care for each other and our council responds to disadvantaged and vulnerable residents within our city to encourage an inclusive and cohesive [community]."

Resident | 2024

A snapshot of Ballarat

Ballarat or Ballaarat (Historical Spelling) 740km² and the 3rd largest City in Victoria

'balla' meaning *'elbow'* or *'reclining on the elbow'* + *'arat'* meaning *'place'*: from two Aboriginal words signifying a camping or resting place.



124,543
Population in 2025*

9.8%
Population growth 2021-2025*

164,365
Population forecast for 2025-2046 a growth of 31.97%*

11.3%
Population were born overseas as at 2021^

Our top industries 22/23

- Health care and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Education and training
- Construction
- Manufacturing

1.8%
Population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander as at 2021^

10,133
Businesses in 2024#

62,005
Jobs in 2023#

$7.693B
Gross Regional Product in 2023#

**Source: profile.id ^Source: profile.id #Source: economy.id >Source: remplan*

We asked our community

**How do we make Ballarat an even greater place to live?
What should we focus on to get us there?**

STAGE 1:
Whole community engagement

Community members of all ages and backgrounds from right across the municipality told us what they would like to see for the future of our community.

They shared their priorities through surveys, conversations with family, friends and groups they were involved in, submitted written responses, left comments on Facebook and participated in face-to-face engagements across the municipality.

STAGE 2:
Community Panel

The ideas received in Stage 1 were gathered together, sorted into themes and further developed by a Community Panel randomly selected to represent the diversity of our Ballarat community.

The Panel developed the vision statement, identified the overarching principles and further developed the key themes and priorities for action outlined in this document.

Almost 2,000 responses were received. More than 4,000 ideas were shared by our community.

DRAFT

Community Vision review 2025

The Community Vision outlines the Ballarat our community wants to exist in 2035. As outlined above, this Vision was developed through a significant community engagement process in 2021. We have worked with the community to review and refresh the vision to ensure it is still meaningful to our residents for the next 10-years.

Sixty per cent of more than 1,700 survey respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with the 2021 Community Vision. A further 22 per cent stated that they didn't have strong feelings in favour or against the existing Vision. Some people commented that they want the Vision to reflect the need for good quality and well-maintained infrastructure. Others wanted to see safety included as a key feature of our future city.

A Community Panel comprising of 43 people representative of the Ballarat community provided further input into the Vision to reflect survey feedback. Safety was included as a key component in the Vision statement.

Council's role in meeting the community's vision is led by key principles for decision making and themes for action. The 2021 Vision principles of environmental sustainability, innovation and inclusion have been expanded upon in the reviewed Vision to become Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion and Innovation. Feedback received from the Panel provided continued support for the themes of the 2021 Vision, with some minor amendments to highlight a focus on safety and liveability.

This is your vision

The first Community Vision for our city, it outlines the aspirations of our community and articulates the type of city that allows our community to thrive.

**We are excited about this vision for our great city.
We will work alongside you – our community – to achieve it.**

The deliberative engagement process

The Community Panel comprised 43 randomly selected participants from a recruitment process. Participants met over three face-to-face sessions between February and March 2025. The Community Panel's primary task was to respond to the following remit, in order to help the City of Ballarat formulate our strategic plans.

REMIT

The future of Ballarat is set for significant growth, with the population projected to increase and change in age and diversity. The Community Vision sets out our aspirations for Ballarat's future, however we must ensure we are supporting the Ballarat we know today, while planning for the changing needs of our community.

What should Council do to prioritise and balance our services, infrastructure and finances to best support our community?

The Community Panel worked together to revise the Community Vision and write a set of principles in their own words. All Community Panel members had the opportunity to contribute to the writing and refining of each principle.

The final report consisted of:

- A brief introduction
- The updated Community Vision 2025-2035
- A set of principles

At the conclusion of their final session the Community Panel handed over their report to Councillor Tracey Hargreaves (Mayor) and Evan King (Chief Executive Officer).

The process involved:

a clear question (remit) to focus the deliberations access to a broad range of information from a variety of sources relevant to the remit

conversations and Q&As with City of Ballarat staff

17 hours per person of discussion and deliberations across three Community Panel sessions

support from facilitators experienced in delivering deliberative processes

an online portal that provided a central place for participants to access relevant information inputs

group agreement processes where 80% or more of the Community Panel said they could live with it or better was used as a guiding principle

"Equity and inclusion should be a priority across all business areas."

Resident 18-24 years | 2021

"Because it seems as if Victoria and Australia in general are not doing much for our planet we should just go ahead and make the path."

Resident 12-17 years | 2021

"Our appreciation of the need to take risks – we are a community which understands that innovation comes with risk, including the risk of failure."

Resident 50-59 years | 2021

"Create more green spaces, plant more trees, minimise reliance on car travel"

Resident | 2024

Community Vision

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

VISION PRINCIPLES

The key considerations in Council's decision-making to ensure we achieve our community's vision

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY	INNOVATION	DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
• How will this action impact our environment? • Will this action lead to long-term and sustainable impacts? • How could this action promote environmental sustainability? • How could a focus on environmental sustainability shape our ideas and actions for this project or service?	• Does this action reflect an innovative approach and a willingness to try new things? • Does the challenge being addressed also provide opportunities we could harness?	• How will this action promote inclusion and prosperity for all residents? • How have we engaged those who will be affected by this decision? • How will this action lead to better social and economic outcomes, particularly for people who experience greater challenges?
In 2035...	**In 2035...**	**In 2035...**
Ballarat is a city that has risen to the challenges of climate change. We lead in sustainable practice, development and industry. Our city is well-designed to adapt to changes in weather patterns and our people live in sustainable and energy-efficient homes. Our natural environment thrives and is home to a diverse range of plants and animals.	Ballarat is a city where challenges are faced with a curious and creative eye. We are known for identifying opportunities and delivering innovative solutions to health, social, economic and environmental issues. We are committed to learning from the experiences of others and building on those learnings to deliver outcomes suited to our community.	Ballarat is an inclusive city where diversity is not only accepted but welcomed and celebrated. Our city values the contribution of all people and our spaces, places, programs, events and services are designed to be welcoming and accessible to all. We recognise not everyone has the same experience and we work to make sure that people receive the support they need to ensure that no one is left behind.

THEMES

The key areas for action to ensure we achieve our community's vision

A WELL-PLANNED AND LIVEABLE CITY	A SAFE, HEALTHY, AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY	A DIVERSE AND AGILE ECONOMY

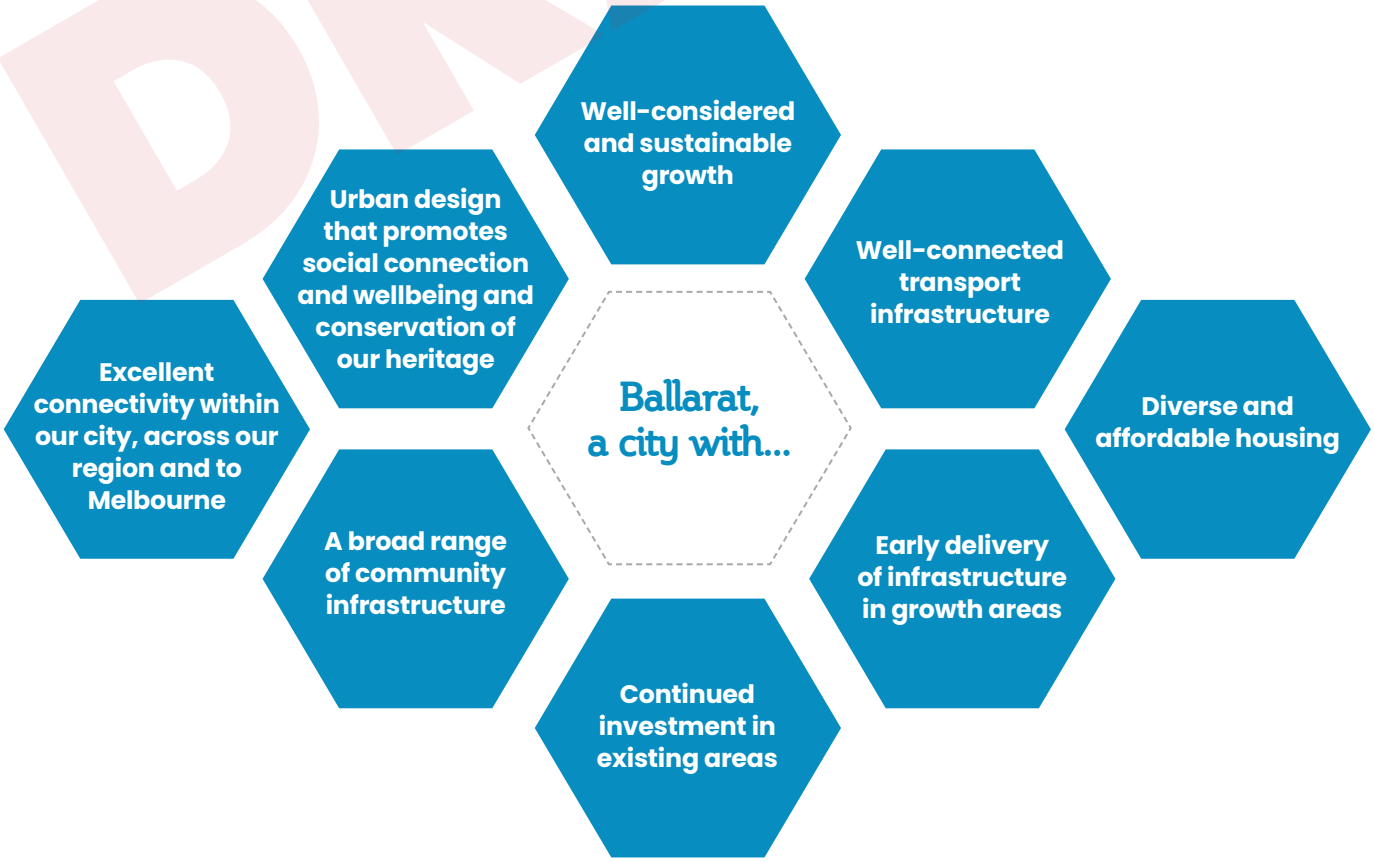
DRAFT

Our vision for a well-planned and liveable city

Ballarat is a city with well-considered growth, with environmentally sustainable development and design. We have well-connected public transport and active transport infrastructure, reducing our dependence on cars. We can easily get around our city, to other parts of the state and to Melbourne. We continue to conserve our heritage while developing as a modern city. Infrastructure is delivered early in growth areas, and we continue our investment in our existing suburbs to ensure equitable access to facilities.

There is a broad range of community infrastructure to service the community including community centres, arts and cultural facilities and formal and informal recreation facilities. There is diverse and affordable housing to meet everyone's needs. Our city is designed to bring people together and promote healthy and active living.

DRAFT



"I would like to see Ballarat become a champion, a world-leading example of sustainable development… to reduce emissions across energy use, transport and all other sectors and minimise the effects of climate impacts."

Resident 35-49 years | 2021

"We need affordable environmentally friendly sustainable development that pushes 7-star minimum housing and social and public housing quotas in all new developments, as well as compulsory infrastructure."

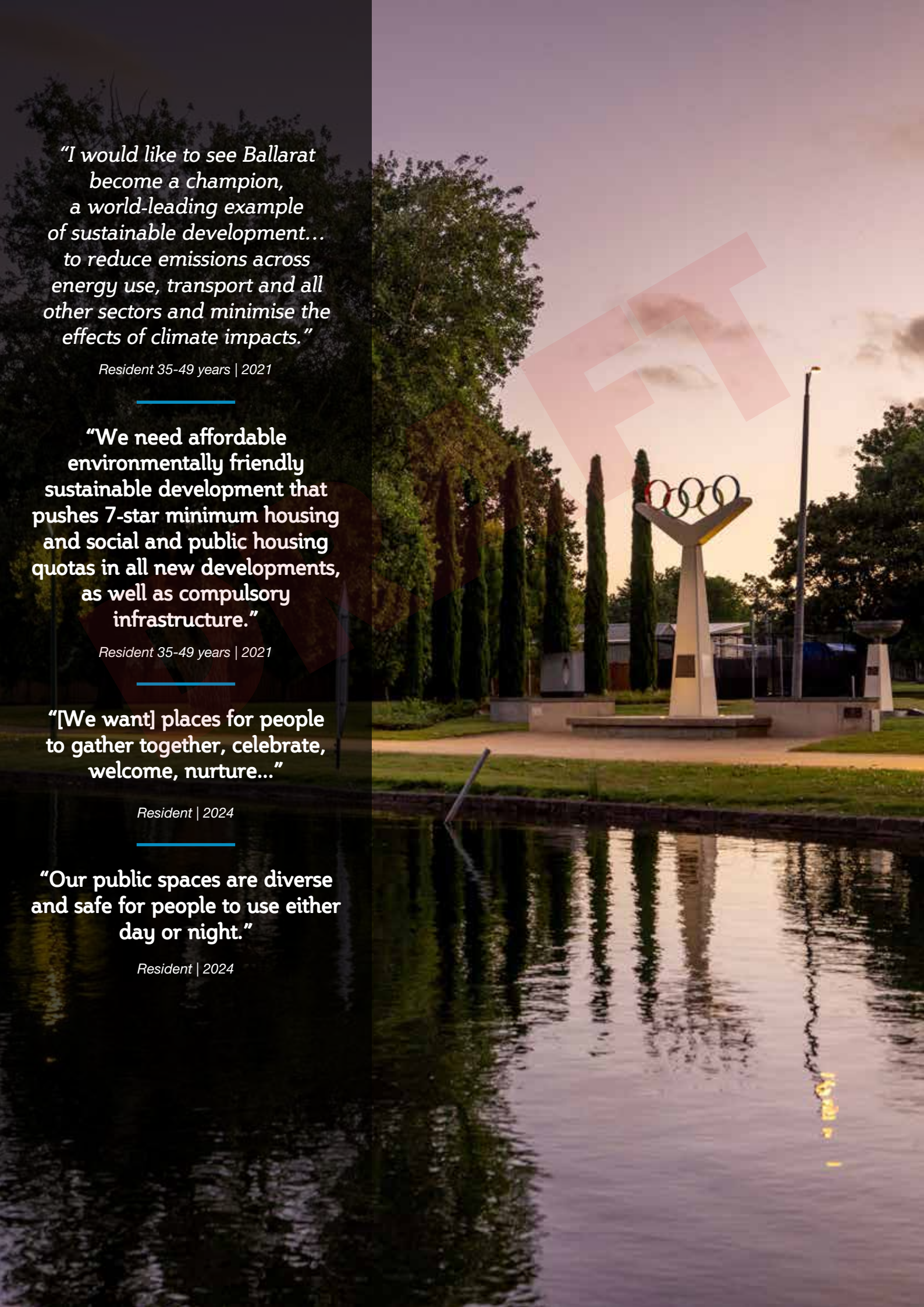
Resident 35-49 years | 2021

"[We want] places for people to gather together, celebrate, welcome, nurture…"

Resident | 2024

"Our public spaces are diverse and safe for people to use either day or night."

Resident | 2024



Our vision for a safe, healthy and connected community

Ballarat is a city where every person feels safe and that they belong. People can participate fully in life in a city that values and celebrates diversity in all its forms. Social connections are strong across generations, cultures and backgrounds. Everyone has their basic needs met for secure housing, quality education and stable employment.

Services, infrastructure and amenity meet community needs and everyone has the opportunity to lead a healthy lifestyle in a well-designed city with a thriving cultural scene. Our residents are invested in their community and take an active role in decisions that affect them.

DRAFT

"Keep people socialising to help (strengthen) a strong sense of community – this is what keeps Ballarat feeling like a big country town."

Kitchen table conversation 2 people, aged 70-84 years | 2021

"Ensure local planning and development encourages and supports a healthy and active lifestyle, promotes diverse and affordable housing and ensures easy access to local health services."

Female, 50-59 years | 2021

"Stop racism."

Resident, 5-11 years | 2021

"Social connection: a place where emotional well-being is nurtured through a multitude of community groups."

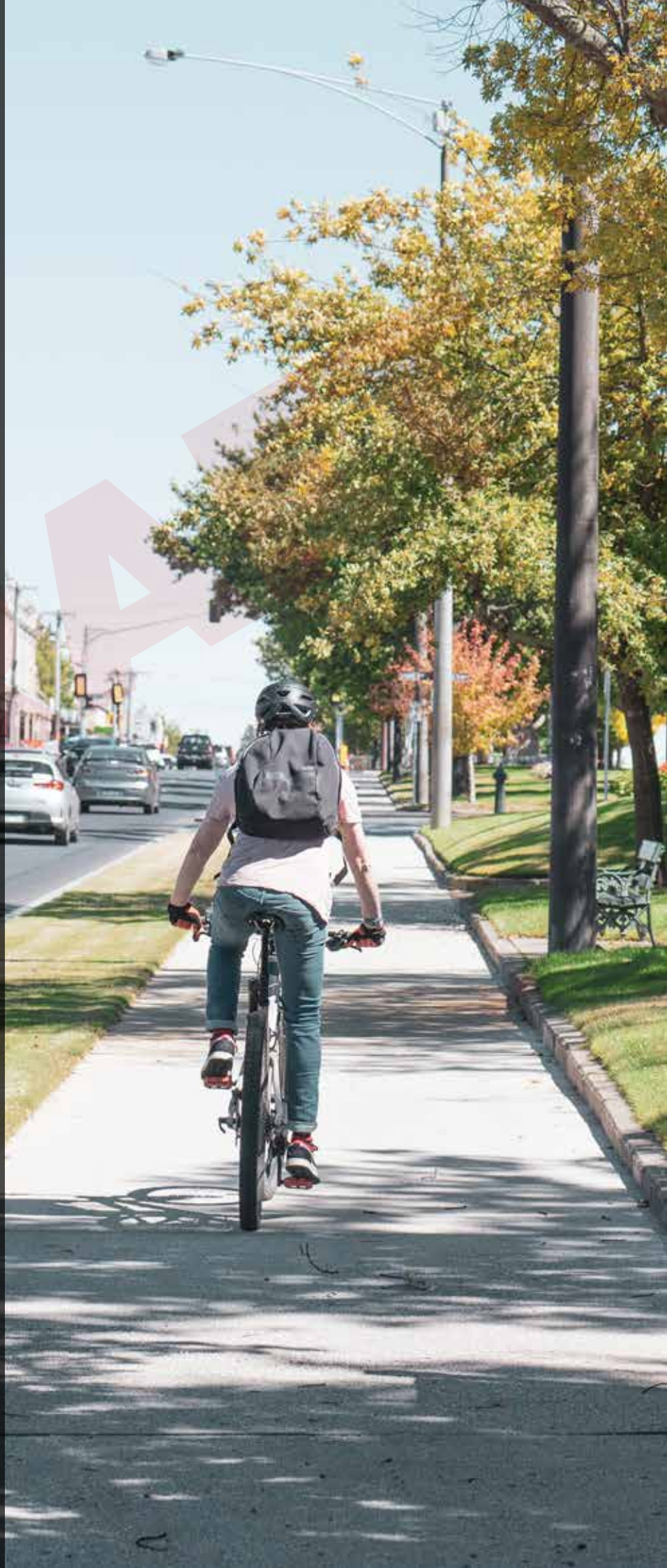
Resident | 2024

"We bring people together into the public realm. Encourage neighbours to connect in their neighbourhoods."

Resident | 2024

"[A city] where residents are considerate and respectful of each other, not just accepting of diversity."

Resident | 2024



Our vision for a diverse and agile economy

Ballarat is a city where our economy delivers a diverse range of business and employment opportunities to our community. Our economic diversity makes us resilient to economic shocks. Local people are trained and employed close to home. There is continued investment in long-standing industries (such as arts and culture, health, tourism and education) and we are also known as a great city for innovation and growth in industry. We are an agile city that harnesses emerging opportunities. Together with quality planning and infrastructure, our easy access to Melbourne attracts investment in our city. All community members enjoy the benefits of the city's economic prosperity.

DRAFT

"Attracting employment opportunities through industry, small businesses and government. If you have employment you have people spending and investing in the city and it will prosper."

Residents, 60-69 years | 2021

"A strong regional city with a diverse and innovative economy… providing jobs and great initiatives to benefit Ballarat."

Residents, 12-17 years | 2021

"There should be a focus on building local industries and attracting businesses and government to Ballarat to build and maintain local employment."

Resident | 2024

"More diverse economy with more jobs in IT, Retail, education, hospitality, tourism and healthcare. Make it more favourable for people to move into vibrant Ballarat!!"

Resident | 2024

Ballarat CBD looking toward Lake Wendouree

How we will bring your vision to life

City of Ballarat's role

The Community Vision will be reflected in Council's overarching strategic document, the *Council Plan 2025-2029,* which outlines the steps this Council will take over the next four years to work to achieve this vision. It will also provide direction to a range of other strategic documents to guide Council's work.

Council is just one of a range of stakeholders responsible for acting to bring this vision to life. We will play a key role in three areas: delivering key initiatives and priorities; collaborating and partnering with strategic stakeholders – including Victorian and Australian governments, the private and not-for-profit sectors and community groups – to deliver the work; and playing a lead role in bringing parties together to advocate and promote our community's best interests and priorities to other levels of government and decision makers.

This vision goes well beyond a four-year Council term, allowing us to consider and plan for longer-term outcomes. It will be reviewed every four years to ensure it continues to capture our community's aspirations for our great city.

City of Ballarat's commitment

Our community's aspirations were captured in the Community Vision 2021-2031. As we have seen in recent times, much can change in a short period of time so it is important for us to check in every four years to make sure that the vision still resonates with our community. Through our broad community engagement process and our 2025 community panel, we heard that the vision is still very much reflective of our community priorities.

We have listened, and we will act on what you told us. The vision will continue to inform our strategic direction and planning as it has over the last four years.

We sincerely thank everyone who participated in the development and review of this vision. Thank you to every community member or group who shared their thoughts. Thank you to our community panel who took on the significant task of representing the wider community in their review of the vision. Your engagement in this important work reflects an engaged and empowered community.

This process has provided an opportunity to build relationships and involve our community in setting priorities and making decisions in a very considered way. We look forward to continuing to work with you to bring your vision to life.

Cr Tracey Hargreaves
Mayor, City of Ballarat

DRAFT

CITY OF BALLARAT

Customer Service
Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5pm

Phone
5320 5500

Email
info@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Postal Address
PO Box 655
Ballarat, VIC 3353

Website
ballarat.vic.gov.au

NRS-Friendly Hearing or Speech Impaired?
Call via the National Relay Service on 133 677

Translating and Interpreting Services
Call 131 450 for immediate phone interpreting (available 24 hours)
Visit **tisnational.gov.au** for online service

@BallaratCityCouncil

cityofballarat

ballarat-city-council

All information was correct at time of publish - April 2025

DRAFT