



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-26 Review

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Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People, the Traditional Owners of the land.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Acknowledgement of First Nations People

The City recognises that there are people from many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities living in Greater Bendigo.

We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to all First Nations Peoples who live and reside in Greater Bendigo on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country, and we thank them for their contribution to our community.

Executive Summary

The *Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026* (the Strategy) sets out a long term vision for a sustainable, thriving environment for Greater Bendigo. The Strategy's 2036 vision and goals are still valid and provide the longer term aspirations for the City and the community.

The 2021-2026 period has now concluded with many of the Strategy's original actions now complete. An update for the Strategy (the *Climate Change and Environment Strategy Update 2026 – 2031*) has been developed to outline the actions and direction for the next five years. The Update also reviewed and changed indicators and targets to ensure they are meaningful and measurable. A new "Climate Resilience" theme was added in recognition of the importance of providing strategic direction for how the City will support climate adaptation within the City and across the community. The Strategy Update also establishes a new date of 2040 to achieve net zero emissions for the City.

This document outlines the process taken to review and update the Strategy. It also highlights the achievements and challenges from the previous Strategy and the context and process for the review.

The Strategy Update is a separate document that sets out the actions, indicators and target for 2026 – 2031.

Context

What's changed

Since the development of the Strategy in 2021 a lot has changed in terms of climate and environmental policy.

External context

Action to protect the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change has been taken at all levels of government including:

- Establishment of a new Australian Government emissions target of a 62-70% reduction in emissions by 2035
- Establishment of an updated Victorian Government net zero emissions target of 2045
- Establishment of VicGrid to coordinate the roll out of transmission and large-scale renewable energy projects
- Establishment of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC) to accelerate the energy transition through investment in renewable energy projects and support and advice to businesses and households
- Introduction of policies and incentives that support investment in electric vehicles and the expansion of charging infrastructure
- Expansion of grants and rebates beyond solar to other products such as heat pumps and household batteries
- Update to the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to strengthen a range of environmental powers, while also streamlining some assessment processes
- Establishment of an increased minimum energy performance standard for new homes from 6 to 7 stars and inclusion of additional sustainable design standards in all planning schemes in Victoria
- Establishment of Recycling Victoria to oversee waste, recycling and resource recovery policies and programs
- Establishment of a Container Deposit Scheme in Victoria

At the same time Greater Bendigo has experienced an increase in the frequency and severity of climate disasters including flooding events in 2022, 2023/24, drought conditions in early 2025, 2026 bushfires and multiple extreme hot days and heatwaves.

Internal context

The City has:

- Adopted the Council Plan *Mir wimbul 2025 – 2029* which includes the following goals and priority actions relevant to the Climate Change and Environment Strategy:
 - *Goal 1.1 The City is efficient and sustainable: Work towards zero-carbon City operations; work to make our existing infrastructure more resilient*
 - *Goal 2.1 We care for land, water and air: Progress the Reimagining Bendigo Creek Project for a healthy and resilience creek*
 - *Goal 2.2 We take action for a healthier climate: Continue and grow support for local climate action initiatives and partner projects*
 - *Goal 3.1 Increase action towards a zero-waste economy in Greater Bendigo*

- Adopted the *Managed Growth Strategy* which establishes a target that 70% of the City's future development occur in "infill" locations
- Changed the frequency of organic bin collections to weekly and expanded the organic service to more households
- Secured funding and commenced work on two strategic separated bike lanes – i.e. Mundy Street and the Low Line
- Adopted the *Greater Bendigo Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2033*
- Secured funding for restoration works along the Bendigo Creek and progressed several projects in collaboration with DJAARA and North Central Catchment Management Authority (North Central CMA)
- Completed a *Fleet Transition Plan*
- Developed a *Zero Emissions Transport Discussion Paper*
- Progressed electrification projects for several large emitting community facilities including the Bendigo Library and the Bendigo Art Gallery
- Installed additional electric vehicle chargers and increased the number of electric vehicles within the organisation's fleet
- Established ongoing biodiversity, farming and agribusiness engagement programs
- Developed a program of drainage upgrades and flood mitigation projects in response to the 2022 and 2024 floods
- Worked with flood affected communities on recovery, emergency and resilience planning
- Established the Healthy Loddon Campaspe program with neighbouring councils
- Progressed a range of integrated water management initiatives including an audit of stormwater treatment assets and an update of the Water Sensitive Bendigo Implementation Plan
- Continued to assist neighbouring councils during emergency events

Overall, the need for climate action and enhancement of biodiversity is widely accepted across the community. Emission reduction and climate adaptation considerations are also increasingly being incorporated into many "business as usual" activities across the public and private sector. At a household level, solar and battery installations have dramatically increased, as has the affordability and take up of electric vehicles. For businesses, advancement in battery electric heavy vehicles has enhanced the viability of transitioning some freight and logistics functions to electric vehicles.

Achievements

The City has achieved the following since adoption of the Strategy in 2021:

Zero Carbon and the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration Flagship Project

- 100% renewable electricity contract in place for all City facilities
- 19 passenger electric vehicles and 7 electric heavy vehicles / plant in the City's fleet, up from 4 and 0 in 2021/22
- 760kW solar on 35 City buildings
- 28 buildings are all electric
- Carbon offset credits secured through Grow Towards Zero - 8,257 tube stock planted resulting in approximately 6,219 tCO₂e carbon credits by 2050
- Development of a *Fleet Transition Plan*
- Engagement of 39 business in the Beat the Power Bills energy efficiency program

- Delivery of the Home Energy Empowerment Program with over 350 participants
- Completion of the *Low Income Homes Feasibility Study*
- Completion of a solar farm feasibility study
- Continuation of the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration and establishment of sub-working groups for advocacy, communications and fleet

Active and Public Transport

- Low Line shared trail underway
- Mundy Street separated bike lane underway
- Public transport advocacy commenced
- *Zero Emissions Transport Discussion Paper* completed

Sustainable Food Systems

- Farm Advisory Service established
- Rural Regeneration Grant established administering close to \$100,000 in grants for sustainable land management projects over 3 years
- Continued involvement in the Healthy Landscapes project led by Macedon Ranges Shire Council and supported by other project partners
- Bendigo Foodshare relocated with support from the City

Circular Economy

- Reduction in waste collected per capita
- Reduction in recoverable resources going to landfill
- Collection frequency change to general waste and recycling bins and expansion of organic collection services

Climate Resilience

- Establishment of the Emergency Dashboard which provides a one-stop-shop porthole for preparedness, response, relief and recovery information for the community
- Delivery of recovery, emergency and resilience planning with multiple communities
- Commencement of Waterway Flood Mitigation Action Plans for waterways in Heathcote, Junortoun, Epsom and Huntly
- Commencement of a flood study for Goornong and Junortoun (the latter led by North Central CMA), and updates to flood modelling for urban Bendigo and Huntly taking into account the latest rainfall data

Water and the Reimagining Bendigo Creek Flagship Project

- Establishment of a Stormwater Treatment Offset Policy that clarifies and updates the organisation's cash in lieu system for small scale developments
- Commencement of an Integrated Water Management Plan
- Audit and assessment of the effectiveness of water treatment assets including wetlands, bioretention systems and floating wetlands
- Progression of restoration projects along Bendigo Creek and its tributaries in partnership with DJAARA and North Central CMA, including the Yaram Yaram Bayikina project (Bendigo Creek Reawakening) and other restoration initiatives in the upper catchment

Biodiversity

- Development and adoption of the *Greater Bendigo Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2033*
- Establishment of a successful community biodiversity engagement program
- Establishment of a biodiversity monitoring program and collection of baseline data

- Commencement of environmental management plans for several City managed Natural Reserves
- Delivery of the Nature Stewards Program
- Delivery of the Wilderhoods program in Maiden Gully
- Planting of over 2,000 street trees annually
- Planting of thousands of trees by Landcare and Friends Groups

Be the Change Flagship Project

- Delivery of over 30 events for staff including Bats of Bendigo, How to Keep Warm in Winter, Electric Vehicle Novated Leasing, World Environment Day Expo and Trivia, Threatened Species Bake Off, Ride to Work Day breakfast and Biketober.
- Establishment of the internal Be the Change Network

Healing Country Flagship Project

- Engagement of Traditional Owner organisations to deliver land management projects and services, facilitating increased opportunities for first nations community members to be on country
- Establishment of a Djaara led approach to restoration projects along Bendigo Creek and its tributaries

Challenges

While the Strategy resulted in substantial achievements, challenges include:

- Achieving the net zero target for corporate and community emissions by 2030
- Achieving the mode share target of 1/3 public transport use, 1/3 active travel and 1/3 electric vehicle use by 2036
- Attracting suitable companies that recycle or repurpose different waste streams to facilitate a circular economy
- Establishing local food supply chains that can compete with supermarkets
- Building capacity across the development sector in how to design, construct and maintain water treatment assets
- Inflationary costs which have reduced the cost-benefit outcome for energy efficiency and electrification initiatives and placed pressure on the City, households and business discretionary spending
- Keeping communities informed about flood recovery initiatives
- Ensuring indicators have suitable data sources and help tell a story of progress.
- Progressing discussions with DJAARA and the Taungurung Land & Waters Council towards joint or sole management due to other priorities within both Traditional Owner organisations

Process for review

The process for reviewing the Strategy began with reviewing the achievements, targets, goals and indicators from the 2021 – 2026 version of the Strategy. Key achievements are listed on the preceding pages.

The indicators used for reporting have been annually reviewed in the development of the Annual Environment Reports to ensure they are reportable, measurable and tell the story of how we are achieving our goals.

Internal and external engagement

Internal engagement included:

- Oversight by an internal Project Reference Group
- Workshops on Zero Carbon and Active Travel, Circular Economy, Biodiversity Water and Food and Climate Resilience
- Follow up discussions with relevant staff to unpack the proposed actions
- Circulation of a draft version of the Strategy Updated was circulated to ensure all staff who had contributed to the process knew the outcomes and were aware of any actions assigned to them

External engagement included:

- A Stakeholder Roundtable with Coliban Water, North Central CMA, DJAARA, Department of Transport, Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance
- A Community Group Roundtable attended by representatives from Bike Bendigo, the Central Victoria Australian Conservation Foundation and the Mid Loddon Landcare Network
- Presentation to the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration Governance Group
- Presentation to the Municipal Relief and Recovery Committee

The review

Evaluation of the 2021-26 Strategy

The annual environment reporting process, as well as the desktop review and engagement process highlighted the following strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy:

Strengths

- Ambitious targets that helped set the City's trajectory and provide a focus of collaboration and advocacy
- Flagship projects that elevated the status of some of these initiatives
- Some clear actions to direct the City's allocation of resources

Weaknesses

- Inclusion of indicators that were unable to be measured and that did not tell a story of progress or change
- Inclusion of a number of targets that were unachievable
- Themes with overlapping actions resulting in duplication of reporting
- Lack of direction for climate adaptation work

Despite these weaknesses, the Strategy has provided an important focus for the City's environmental work and has raised the profile of some environmental goals, especially its emission reduction and circular economy goals. The challenge for the updated strategy is to retain the focus on emission reductions while raising the profile other environmental objectives such as enhancing biodiversity, water quality and sustainable transport.

The actions

Of the 126 actions included in the 2021 Strategy:

- 32 have been completed or are completed and ongoing (51%)
- 27 are in progress (21%)
- 27 are no longer relevant (21%)
- 8 are to be commenced (6%)

This indicates that most actions are either complete or no longer relevant, supporting the need for updated actions for the next 5 years.

Actions identified as “completed and ongoing” will be included in the updated Strategy as appropriate.

Indicators and targets

The 2021-26 Strategy had 79 indicators. Through the iterative annual environment reporting process, of these original indicators, 28 have been retained as active, some with changes, 12 were identified as no longer relevant and 11 were not used because the data has not been available. These indicators have been further reviewed as part of this process and the 2026-31 Strategy will have 55 indicators for reporting.

Review of the City’s emissions boundary

The City’s emissions boundary was reviewed taking into account the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and the boundary framework established by Climate Active.

The outcome of this review is that the following sources will be included when reporting on progress towards the City’s net zero target:

- Scope 1 emissions from gas, diesel and petrol
- Scope 2 emissions from electricity
- Scope 3 emissions from City owned and managed community facilities

The following sources will not be included when reporting on progress towards the City’s net zero target:

- Scope 1 emissions from landfill
- Scope 3 emissions, other than from City owned and managed community facilities

The City will still report on emissions from landfill and will work towards collecting the necessary data and information from its suppliers to enable reporting on Scope 3 emissions in the future. The feasibility of offsetting these emissions will be reviewed in future years.

Net zero target date review for corporate emissions

While substantial emission reductions have been achieved within the City of Greater Bendigo, achieving net zero emissions before 30 June 2030 is not viable. This is due to the following factors:

- The heavy electric vehicle industry is still emerging. Suitable electric vehicle types across the City's diverse heavy fleet and plant are not likely to be available within the next 4 years
- Electrifying the City's largest emitting buildings requires time to plan, evaluate options and progress from concepts to detailed design. The cost to electrify these facilities is estimated to be in excess of \$13 million, including community managed facilities. This expenditure needs to be carefully planned in conjunction with the cost of other City services and priorities

While the City could achieve net zero emissions by purchasing carbon offsets, the cost to do this for the City's estimated residual emissions at 2030 (approximately 80,000 tCO₂e) would be approximately \$5.2 million. Investing these funds in emissions reductions is considered a more effective use of the resources.

As a result, this updated Strategy proposes to shift the City's net zero target date from 2030 to 2040.

Net zero target date review for community emissions

While achieving net zero emissions across the community is not likely to be achievable by 2030, establishing an alternative target date requires analysis and consultation with the community and stakeholders. This work will occur as a part of the review of the Greater Bendigo Zero Emissions Roadmap.

Inclusion of Climate Resilience Theme

The updated Strategy will include a seventh action area of climate resilience. Through the annual reporting, a gap in reporting on the City's emergency response and climate resilience work was identified. In the Annual Environment Report 2023-24, climate resilience was included for the first time in recognition of the increasing number of extreme weather and climate related emergency events that have occurred in the last 5 years.

The City has a legislated role to support all phases of emergencies, and an increasing role in climate resilience. The inclusion of this action area highlights the existing role the City plays, and sets the direction for future work.

The action area outlines the background to the City's climate adaptation work, the reasons for investing as well as priority actions for the next five years.

Change to transport theme title

The original Strategy included a theme Sustainable and Active Transport. The goals and actions for this theme primary focused on increasing walking, cycling and public transport use rather than the transition to electric vehicles which is addressed in the Zero Carbon theme. To help clarify the scope of the transport theme, the title has been changed to "Active and Public Travel".

Flagship project review

The six flagship projects were reviewed to ensure they align with current and future work. Changes have been made to all projects to reflect the achievements from the last five years and to reflect changes in direction needed in response to the current context and priorities. Below is an outline of what has changed and why for each flagship project

Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration

The Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration brings together organisations from across the City to co-fund and work together on projects and initiatives aimed at reducing emissions across the community.

The Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration has enabled development of the Greater Bendigo Zero Emissions Roadmap, completion of feasibility studies for a solar farm and a low income homes retrofit program, as well as delivery of advice and support to households and businesses with planning their transition. Working groups have also been established to progress collective advocacy, communications and to share information on organisational fleet transition plans.

The collaborative approach has been successful in ensuring a shared vision for emission reductions across some of the City's largest employers and most influential organisations. It has also facilitated knowledge sharing, collective advocacy and progression of initiatives that the City would not have been resourced to progress.

The founding partners committed to a further three years of collaboration until 30 June 2027. The City aspires to continue the collaborative approach to supporting community emission reductions by continuing to host and support the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration as long as partner organisations wish to continue their involvement.

Given that the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration supports delivery of the goals under Zero Carbon, including the Collaboration as a stand alone flagship project is not considered necessary.

All actions relating to this project will be included under the Zero Carbon theme.

Be the Change

The project has successfully delivered internal education sessions which have been well attended and which have received positive feedback. An internal network was also established to maintain and build support for sustainability initiatives across the City. This project will continue to deliver education sessions internally for City staff. Actions relevant to Be the Change will be included under each theme as appropriate.

Reimagining Bendigo Creek

Funding has been secured through various sources to progress implementation of The Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan in collaboration with the City's project partners. This has resulted in the following:

- Development of a large portion of the Low Line shared trail
- Development of instream restoration works at the site between Weeroona Avenue and the railway bridge
- Completion of Aboriginal Waterway Assessments for the upper catchment.
- Collaborative planning with DJAARA for restoration of Sunrise Gully
- Installation of native grasses and native revegetation at a selection of locations as a part of the DEECA funded Grassy Green Links project
- Commencement of the Australian Government funded Yaram Yaram Bayikina naturalisation, restoration and community and cultural engagement program in collaboration with DJAARA and North Central CMA

These projects along with other initiatives to implement the Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan will continue to be a priority.

Actions relevant to Reimagining Bendigo Creek will be included under the Water theme.

Showcase Sustainable Developments

This flagship project aimed to see the City partner with the community, business and other levels of government to build four sustainable developments on City managed land with at least one showcasing affordable housing and one showcasing commercial or industrial development.

Since adoption of the Strategy in 2021 a number of advancements have occurred in the development sector including an increase to minimum energy efficiency standards to 7 stars and introduction of sustainable design performance measures into all planning schemes. As a result, it can be argued that sustainable design is increasingly “business as usual” for all developments.

Instead, the current challenge involves achieving the City’s infill development target of 70% as specified in the Managed Growth Strategy. Achieving this target is critical to achieving the Climate Change and Environment’s emission reduction and active and public transport goals.

Achieving the 70% infill target may require the City to take an interventionist approach to demonstrating what’s achievable and encouraging private sector investment. This could involve precinct based development facilitation or direct investment. Determining the role the City may want to play in this realm requires further exploration.

In recognition of the new priorities, this theme will be replaced with an “Accelerating Infill Development” theme.

Healing Country Together

This flagship project aimed to “regenerate biodiversity, connect more communities with nature and support the self-determination of Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people to heal Country”

Since the development of the Strategy the City has:

- Worked collaboratively with DJAARA to progress the planning for waterway restoration works in the upper catchment
- Entered into contracts with DJAARA to deliver on-ground works, including revegetation and grass slashing
- Provided funding to DJAARA to participate in the Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration and to engage DJAARA members on climate change topics
- Implemented a biodiversity engagement program aimed at connecting the community to nature

The City has progressed less partnerships with the Taungurung Land & Waters Council, so this remains an opportunity for the future.

This flagship project as it relates to Traditional Owner self determination continues to be relevant. New actions will be added to help progress the flagship project’s goals.

Actions related to community engagement will be integrated within each theme as relevant.

Building a Circular Greater Bendigo

This flagship project aimed to develop circular economy solutions for Greater Bendigo.

Since the development of the Strategy, the City has:

- Overseen an Expression of Interest process for reprocessing services in the City which resulted in the establishment of a local composting facility in Huntly to process the contents of the City's kerbside green bins (FOGO)
- Supported the community to establish the Share and Repair Shed
- Taken over management of the Eaglehawk Recycling Centre

The action to deliver the flagship project now align with business-as-usual work as the City continues to work towards post-landfill solutions and support circular economy practices within the City. As a result, actions related to this flagship project will be delivered through the Circular Economy theme instead of as a flagship project

What's new

To address the changes and challenges discussed in the previous section, the Refreshed strategy includes the following new directions and focus areas:

- Revised net zero emissions target date for City operations from 2030 to 2040.
- Formalisation of the City's emissions boundary for the purposes of tracking progress towards net zero
- Alignment of the electrification of the City's fleet with the Fleet Transition Plan.
- Inclusion of a new Climate Resilience theme which includes relevant goals and actions relating to flood mitigation
- Inclusion of an increased focus on place-based climate, biodiversity and climate resilience community engagement
- An increased focus on integrated transport planning, including exploration of lower cost interventions and advocacy
- Replacement of the Showcasing Sustainable Development flagship project with a new flagship project "Accelerating Infill Development"
- Reduced number of indicators and targets from 79 to 55
- Improved alignment between the Strategy, environmental management systems, and ISO 14001 certification requirements, supporting operational teams to incorporate environmental objectives, compliance obligations, monitoring, and continual improvement into routine operational practices

Annual Environment Reports

Environment Reports have been produced annually to highlight the achievements, challenges and areas for improvement for the delivery of the Strategy.

You can find more information on the yearly achievements across 2021 – 2026 on the City's website: [Annual environment report | City of Greater Bendigo](#)

Appendix 1 – Climate Resilience theme background information

Greater Bendigo's climate is changing, and we have already experienced the impacts of climate change. Recent years have seen an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events including:

- Flooding events in 2011, 2022 and 2023/24
- Drought conditions in early 2025
- Bushfires in January 2026
- 22 days over 35 degrees from December 2025 – February 2026
- January Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating Day
- Heatwaves in January 2026

With some communities being affected multiple times in a short space of time. The City has continued to work with partner agencies to prepare for, respond to and recover from these events. This work is guided by the four pillars of emergency management:

1. Mitigation - proactive measures to reduce risks and the impacts of disasters before they occur
2. Preparedness - planning and educating communities, organisations and individuals to respond effectively
3. Respond - actions; taken prior to, during and immediately after an emergency
4. Recovery - working with communities to return to as close to pre-emergency and potentially build back better

Climate change modelling indicates that emergency events are likely to occur more frequently and at greater scale. In response, the City will continue to strengthen emergency management partnerships and work with communities to build resilience.

Definitions

Climate resilience is the ability to plan for, withstand, recover from and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate including emergencies such as floods, fires, heatwaves or service disruptions.

Current initiatives, policy and strategic direction

The City performs a legislative role in emergency response and recovery and operates in the following legislative and policy environment:

- *Emergency Management Act 2013* – establishes the role of local government in emergency management

- Country Fire Authority Act 1958 – establishes the role of local government in fire preparedness
- *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958* – establishes the requirements for the City to provide fire prevention notices to property owners
- *Local Government Act 2020* – requires local government to consider climate change risks
- *Climate Change Act 2017* - requires local government to embed climate considerations into planning and decision making
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* – requires local government to consider climate related health risks
- State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) – sets out roles and responsibilities across the state
- Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) – establishes emergency management roles, protocols and priorities for the region
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) – establishes emergency management roles, protocols and priorities for the municipality

Frameworks:

- Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management
- Victoria's Emergency Management Planning Framework
- Victorian Preparedness Framework
- Victorian Emergency Management Planning Toolkit for People Most at Risk
- Risk Management Framework

The benefits of investing

Local Government Associations (LGA's) across Australia face significant costs during and after emergencies, including repairing infrastructure, clean-up, and managing disrupted services. While some of these costs can be recovered through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), this funding is largely reactive and granted after damage has already occurred. This highlights the need to prioritise more proactive investment in risk reduction, preparedness, and resilience.

Australian research consistently shows the importance of investing in disaster preparedness and resilience. There are multiple benefits of reducing risks before disasters occur, LGA's can lower long-term costs and better protect their communities, infrastructure and services.

The benefits on investing include:

- **Economic benefits:** Investing in preparedness can significantly reduce the cost of disasters. Research shows that every dollar invested in disaster resilience can deliver up to \$10 in avoided costs (Insurance Council of Australia, 2021). LGA's face growing financial risks due to the size and exposure of their asset portfolios. Repeated disasters also accelerate asset wear and tear, meaning that proactive upgrades can reduce long-term maintenance and replacement costs.
- **Infrastructure benefits:** Investing in upgrades and climate-proofing City assets reduces the risk of damage and service disruption. With a large and exposed asset base, there is a clear opportunity for the City to invest and advocate to other levels of government to support betterment programs that strengthen infrastructure, extend asset life, and reduce future recovery costs.

- **Social benefits:** Investing in preparedness and resilience helps build stronger, more connected communities. Evidence shows that communities with higher levels of social connection are better able to withstand and recover from disasters more quickly (Natural Hazard Research Australia). Strengthening community preparedness and social cohesion supports faster recovery and improves overall resilience to a changing climate

What our partners and community can do

Building resilience to climate change requires everyone to act. Working with partner agencies is important to achieving these outcomes and the City will continue to invest in coordination with other agencies across Greater Bendigo. The City will continue to work closely with relevant agencies, emergency response organisations and community organisations to support preparedness and resilience.

Community members can enhance their own resilience by educating themselves on their risks, preparing emergency plans for their households, getting involved in community resilience planning and working with their neighbours to plan for and respond to emergencies.

Appendix 2 – Audit of Actions from original Strategy

Action #	Actions	Status
Biodiversity and Regeneration		
1.1	Develop an ecological baseline and mapping to determine the extent and condition of existing biodiversity and remnant vegetation in Greater Bendigo	Complete. (partly, partly no longer relevant)
1.2	Investigate and progress potential nature corridors between remnant vegetation, and commence developing partnerships and implementation arrangements to facilitate corridors	In progress
1.3	Investigate and develop stronger planning controls to protect native vegetation under the Planning Scheme	In progress
1.4	Implement the Sustainability and Environment recommendations of the 2019 Planning Scheme Review	In progress
1.5	Review and update the Rural Roadside Management Plan 2005	To commence
1.6	Implement a program to monitor and maintain the City's 300 environmentally sensitive water sensitive urban design assets	Complete and ongoing
1.7	Employ an Environmental Education and Community Liaison Officer	Complete
1.8	Establish a Gardens for Wildlife program to support and empower the community to actively store biodiversity	No longer relevant
1.9.1	Develop a local planning policy to increase tree canopy and vegetation cover in subdivision design	No longer relevant
1.9.2	Develop a biodiversity management policy and investment plan	Complete
1.10	Implement the City's Invasive Plants and Animals Policy and Procedures	Complete and ongoing
1.11	Establish a rare and threatened species collection and research program at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens	To commence
1.12	Join ICLEI's Cities with Nature program	No longer relevant
Zero carbon		
2.1	Purchase all electricity used by City owned and operated facilities from 100% renewable energy via Victorian Energy Collaboration (VECO)(2022).	Complete
2.2	Support community groups operating from City owned facilities to access 100% renewable energy via VECO.	In progress
2.3	Facilitate and plan for the transition to locally generated renewable energy power supply.	No longer relevant
2.4	Install solar panels on City owned buildings via Power it from the Rooftop program.	Complete
2.5	Progressively remove existing gas appliances from City owned buildings and replace them with electric alternatives.	In progress
2.6	Develop a policy mandating no new gas connections installed in City owned and operated buildings.	Complete
2.7	Progressively replace the City's lightweight vehicle fleet to be electric vehicles.	In progress
2.8	Investigate options and costs to transition Heavy Fleet away from fossil fuels	Complete
2.9	Install Electric Vehicle charging stations at selected City sites powered by renewable energy.	In progress

Action #	Actions	Status
2.10	Purchase offsets for other emissions to reach 2026 Target, including offsetting emissions from fleet, landfill and gas.	No longer relevant
2.11	Develop a shadow carbon price to better account carbon emissions in the City's investment decisions	No longer relevant
2.12	Raise awareness and support community groups to prepare for climate change and create zero carbon homes and lifestyles	Complete and ongoing
2.13	Audit and retrofit City owned buildings to maximise energy efficiency.	To commence
2.14	Develop a baseline of energy intensity across all of the City's assets and operations	No longer relevant
2.15	Partner with North Central CMA and other stakeholders to explore and develop local carbon offset schemes	Complete and ongoing
2.16	Advocate in partnership with Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance for upgrading inefficient street lights on major roads (cost shared lights)	In progress
Circular economy		
3.1	Evaluate options and implement solutions to address the closure of Eaglehawk Landfill	In progress
3.2	Revise design and procurement approaches for new and existing projects that require the use of reused and recycled products, and ensure product recyclability at end of life.	Complete and ongoing
3.3	Provide all City facilities with access to organic recycling options	Complete
3.4	Implement the single use plastics policy	Complete and ongoing
3.5	Reduce general waste to landfill by implementing the Circular Economy and Zero Waste Policy	Complete and ongoing
3.6	Quantify the City's embodied carbon emissions (e.g. scope 3 emissions)	In progress
3.7	Engage with businesses and residents to support the adoption of reused and recycled materials	Complete and ongoing
3.8	Establish 'Circular Economy Hubs' that act as physical material hubs for the drop-off and recirculation of materials and products from and for both commercial and residential activities	No longer relevant
3.9	Support the establishment of Tool Libraries, Repair Cafes, Library of things to facilitate the repair and sharing of products and goods rather than the need to buy new	Complete
Sustainable and active transport		
4.1.1	Develop a 10 year walking and cycling infrastructure prioritisation plan	Complete
4.1.2	Develop an activation plan to increase community capacity to use active transport	In progress
4.1.3	Develop a budget bid to increase the funding for new footpaths	Complete
4.2	Design and construct the Mundy Street and Hargreaves Street separated cycleway infrastructure to enable better connections to the City Centre	In progress
4.3	Deliver priority works to reduce gaps and barriers within the walking and cycling network (including building underpasses and road crossings)	In progress
4.4	Deliver sustainable transport education program promoting low carbon modes of transport	To commence
4.5	Update the Environmentally Sustainable Design policy and deliver increased bicycle parking and change room facilities for new developments	No longer relevant

Action #	Actions	Status
4.6	Advocate for additional and more frequent public transport options that meet growing community needs	Complete and ongoing
4.7	Advocate for bike sharing and car sharing programs	No longer relevant
4.8	Advocate for the Greater Bendigo commuter rail service	Complete and ongoing
4.9	Advocate for Public Transport to be powered by renewable or sustainable fuel sources	No longer relevant
Sustainable food systems		
5.1	Implement Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy	Complete and ongoing
5.2	Progress the City of Gastronomy, including promoting and supporting sustainable food production	Complete and ongoing
5.3	Provide financial incentives for producers to transition to sustainable agricultural practices including applying for the sustainable agriculture rate	Complete and ongoing
5.4	Improve the City's procurement practices by preferencing caterers who source locally produced food	Complete and ongoing
5.5	Support schools and early education centres to incorporate sustainable food education into the curriculum, including kitchen garden programs	Complete and ongoing
5.6	Enable Traditional Owners to grow and harvest traditional food and fibre plants	To commence
5.7	Support local businesses and the community to avoid food and packaging waste	To commence
5.8	Partner with North Central CMA and Landcare groups to promote and deliver sustainable agricultural practices	Complete and ongoing
5.9	Advocate for greater incentives for primary producers to transition to regenerative / agro-ecological practices, including carbon sequestration	Complete and ongoing
5.10	Advocate to State and Federal government to create more sustainable food systems	Complete and ongoing
Water Sensitive Bendigo		
6.1	Develop a policy for the water quality reserve that advances Water Sensitive Urban Design outcomes for new developments and stormwater offsets	Complete
6.2	Develop the Central Bendigo and Heathcote flood mitigation studies	Complete
6.3	Evaluate and secure funding for highest priority flood mitigation options for Greater Bendigo	In progress
6.4	Partner with Coliban Water to install digital meters on the City's water connections and implement water efficiency measures	In progress
6.5	Investigate and evaluate alternative water supply infrastructure for City assets	In progress
6.6	Develop a policy to promote alternative water supply options (includes stormwater harvesting) for new sporting fields and recreational reserves	In progress
6.7	Implement the Domestic Wastewater Management Strategy	Complete and ongoing
6.8	Facilitate the Water Sensitive Bendigo Partnership including shared decision making for integrated water management outcomes.	Complete and ongoing

Action #	Actions	Status
6.9	Support and facilitate relevant agencies to undertake water security planning including investigating alternative supply options	No longer relevant
6.10	Advocate for and enable Traditional Owners to heal Country and actively manage waterways	Complete and ongoing
6.11	Partner with North Central CMA to implement the Waterwatch program including citizen science program for Bendigo Creek	Complete and ongoing
6.12	Partner with Department Environment Land Water and Planning (now DEECA) to identify a long-term solution for the Bendigo Groundwater project	Complete
6.13	Partner with Coliban Water to improve household and business water use efficiency	No longer relevant
6.14	Advocate for investment for priority water initiatives via the Water Sensitive Bendigo Partnership & Reimagining Bendigo Creek Prospectus	Complete and ongoing
Reimagining Bendigo Creek Flagship Project		
7.1	Finalise and implement the integrated water quality monitoring plan for Bendigo Creek	Complete and ongoing
7.2	Commence creating chain of ponds on Bendigo Creek	Complete and ongoing
7.2.1	Obtain approvals and funding for instream works downstream of Kings Bridge	Complete
7.2.2	Construct instream works downstream of Kings Bridge	Complete
7.2.3	Establish and maintain instream works downstream of Kings Bridge	Complete
7.3	Establish priority constructed wetlands	In progress
7.3.1	Obtain & funding approvals for Long Gully constructed wetlands (stage 1)	No longer relevant
7.3.2	Construct Long Gully constructed wetlands (stage 1)	No longer relevant
7.3.3	Establish and maintain Long Gully constructed wetlands (stage 1)	No longer relevant
7.3.4	Design and seek approvals for later stages of the Long Gully constructed wetlands	No longer relevant
7.4	Investigate and prioritise channelised sections of the urban creeks to renaturalise	In progress
7.4.1	Design and seek approvals for priority renaturalisation sections	In progress
7.5	Assess the catchment and identify potential interventions to reduce sediment and retain water in the landscape	In progress
7.6	Co-develop a video with Dja Dja Wurrung to celebrate the creek's heritage and future aspirations	In progress
7.7	Plan cycling and walking infrastructure along the creek lines including low line.	In progress
7.7.1	Obtain funding to undertake design and approvals for the Low Line trail	Complete
7.7.2	Plan and detailed design of the low line trail from Golden Square to Lake Weeroona	Complete
7.7.3	Obtain approvals and funding for the low line trail from Golden Square to Lake Weeroona	Complete
7.7.4	Construct the low line trail from Golden Square to Lake Weeroona	In progress
Healing Country Together		

Action #	Actions	Status
8.1	Facilitate a co-design process with Taungurung and Djaara, Council and relevant agencies to identify public land of interest, management aspirations, opportunities to foster community stewardship	To commence
8.2	Partner with communities, Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria, DELWP and North Central CMA to identify opportunities to better connect people with natural places through regeneration	Complete and ongoing
8.3	Support community groups, agencies, Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung to connect with nature and do healing works on Country	Complete and ongoing
8.4	Restore and nurture Country by planting native species, including bush tucker and medicine plant species	In progress
8.5	Monitor the current condition of waterways, landscapes, flora and fauna using both Western Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Complete and ongoing
Be the change		
9.1	Develop a project plan including communications and engagement approach to implement 'Be the Change'	Complete
9.1.1	Develop and deliver an internal training program to raise awareness and drive behaviour change to deliver goals of Climate Change and Environment Strategy	Complete and ongoing
9.1.2	Collaborate with 'Change Champs' to deliver drive behaviour change activities to deliver goals of Climate Change and Environment Strategy	Complete and ongoing
9.2	Develop a capability framework for climate change and environmental responsibilities	No longer relevant
9.2.1	Develop climate change and environment related Key Performance Indicators for relevant Directors and Managers	No longer relevant
9.2.2	Develop standard Key Performance Indicators that progress climate change and environment actions to be included in all performance development plans	No longer relevant
9.3	Review budget decision making principles and assessment metrics to increase climate change considerations in investment decisions	Complete and ongoing
9.4	Review procurement assessment metrics to increase climate change considerations in purchasing decisions	Complete
9.5	Audit and assess City buildings and infrastructure from climate resilience, climate adaptation and sustainability perspectives	To commence
9.6	Undertake a climate risk and vulnerability assessment for all City buildings and infrastructure and identify necessary adaptation actions.	No longer relevant
9.7	Plan, design and implement buildings and infrastructure retrofits	In progress
9.8	Assess the City's systems and policies to identify improvements and efficiencies in line with the goals of this strategy	Complete
The Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration		
10.1	Secure financial partners to support the Greater Bendigo Climate collaboration	Complete
10.2	Develop project approach including education program, monitoring and evaluation and project governance	Complete
10.3	Facilitate 1000 households & 100 businesses to develop zero carbon plans	No longer relevant

Action #	Actions	Status
10.4	Facilitate Greater Bendigo's sectors of the economy to co-design and deliver city-scale projects that will achieve zero carbon economy	In progress
10.5	Host a Greater Bendigo Climate Summit	Complete
10.6	Partner with Loddon Campaspe regional councils to collectively design and advocate for the top ten regional projects to support zero carbon	Complete
Showcase sustainable developments		
11.1	Advocate for the Big Housing Build partners, affordable housing providers, developers and government agencies to deliver environmentally sustainable housing projects	Complete and ongoing
11.2	Investigate and progress partnership opportunities for the Bendigo Regional Employment Precinct to create a framework for an environmentally sustainable industrial estate	Complete and ongoing
11.3	Facilitate a co-design approach to the planning and design of the identified projects	No longer relevant
11.4	Develop a manual to guide the design and construction of Environmental Sustainable Developments	No longer relevant
Foundational actions		
12.1	Establish monitoring arrangements so each indicator is embedded within corporate monitoring systems	Complete
12.2	Establish the working group to implement the Strategy	No longer relevant
12.3	Complete Operating budget bid to secure adequate resources for the Strategy's implementation	Complete and ongoing
12.4	Complete annual report	Complete and ongoing
12.5	Undertake mid-term evaluation of strategy implementation in 2023	Complete
12.6	Develop a communications and engagement plan to implement the strategy	No longer relevant