

COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025

DRAFT



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Acknowledgement of Country

We, the Benalla Rural City Council, would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to their elders and the elders from their communities.

We also acknowledge all other peoples who have contributed to the rich diversity of this Country.

About the Council Plan

The Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2021-2025 is Council’s medium-term strategic planning document that guides decision making and sets key directions to work towards the community’s vision for the future.

The development of a Council Plan is a legislative requirement. Under the *Victorian Local Government Act 2020*, a Council Plan must be prepared every four years and submitted to the Minister for Local Government.

The Council Plan forms a key part of Council’s integrated business planning framework, which incorporates short, medium and long-term essential planning processes.

	Vision, Strategy and Policy	Resource Allocation and Management
Long Term	Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2036 Benalla Rural City Community Plan	Asset Plan Long-term Financial Plan
Medium Term	Council Plan Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Other Key Strategies and Plans	Budget Revenue and Rating Plan
Short Term	Action Plans Service Plans Programs, projects and initiatives	Budgets Staff Grant Funding

The Council Plan is reviewed annually, and outcomes reported to the community.

Council’s role

Council have a range of roles in delivering outputs of this Council Plan with these roles often dependant on community partnerships, networks, other service providers and the support of State and Federal Governments.

To assist with clarity we have included these roles alongside each strategy in the plan.

Provider: Council is a leading provider of services which support this strategy.

Funder: Council does not directly provide the services/activities of this strategy but provides funding for its delivery.

Facilitator: Council facilitates, partners and plans with others to achieve these strategies.

Regulator: Council is responsible for enforcing legislative requirements to ensure compliance and delivery of services for this strategy.

Asset Owner: Council owns (or is a custodian) and has responsibility for capital, operating and maintenance costs.

Advocate: Council advocates on behalf of the community to other levels of government, service and business organisations.

MPHWP: Refers to an objective that is aligned with the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Council Plan has been informed by the long-term Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2036 (drawn from recent engagement and the Benalla Rural City Community Plan 2016-2036), extensive community consultation over a six-month period and key strategic documents, plans and policies.

A summary of engagement results can be found in the succeeding section of this document.

Five themes provide the framework for the key objectives and strategies within the Council Plan:

1. Community
2. Liveability
3. Economy
4. Environment
5. Leadership

This Council Plan also includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, a demonstration of our commitment to the health and wellbeing of the community.

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Mayor's Message

In my message last year, I said 2020 would be known as the lockdown year, little did we think it would continue into 2021 and beyond.

In spite of these conditions Benalla Rural City has seen unprecedented growth. We understand our recovery from the economic, health and social impacts will take considerable time, and this has challenged our thinking.

This plan is strongly influenced by and aligns with the wishes expressed in the long-term vision 2036 and was developed following workshops with councillors and council staff and listening to the community through the many engagement opportunities.

Over the life of this plan Council in conjunction with the Victorian and Australian Governments will deliver many new projects and address many ageing infrastructure problems.

Major Projects:

1. Committing \$6.745m in the upgrading and renewal of our road and rural bridge infrastructure.
2. Investing \$1.041m in new and upgrading of footpaths and shared pathways.
3. A \$2m investment in the kerb and channel and drainage network.
4. A \$956,000 commitment to our parks, open space, streetscapes, and playgrounds.
5. Redevelopment of the Visitor Information Centre.
6. Redevelopment of the Benalla Art Gallery.

On behalf of Benalla Rural City I am proud to present the *Council Plan 2021 – 2025*.

The Council Plan establishes the actions we will take in partnership with the community over the coming four years.

As Councillors we strive to ensure that our community receives the best possible infrastructure programs and services we can afford.

Cr Danny Claridge
Mayor

Your Councillors



Cr Danny Claridge (Mayor)



Cr Bernie Hearn (Deputy Mayor)



Cr Peter Davis



Cr Don Firth



Cr Punarji Hewa Gunaratne

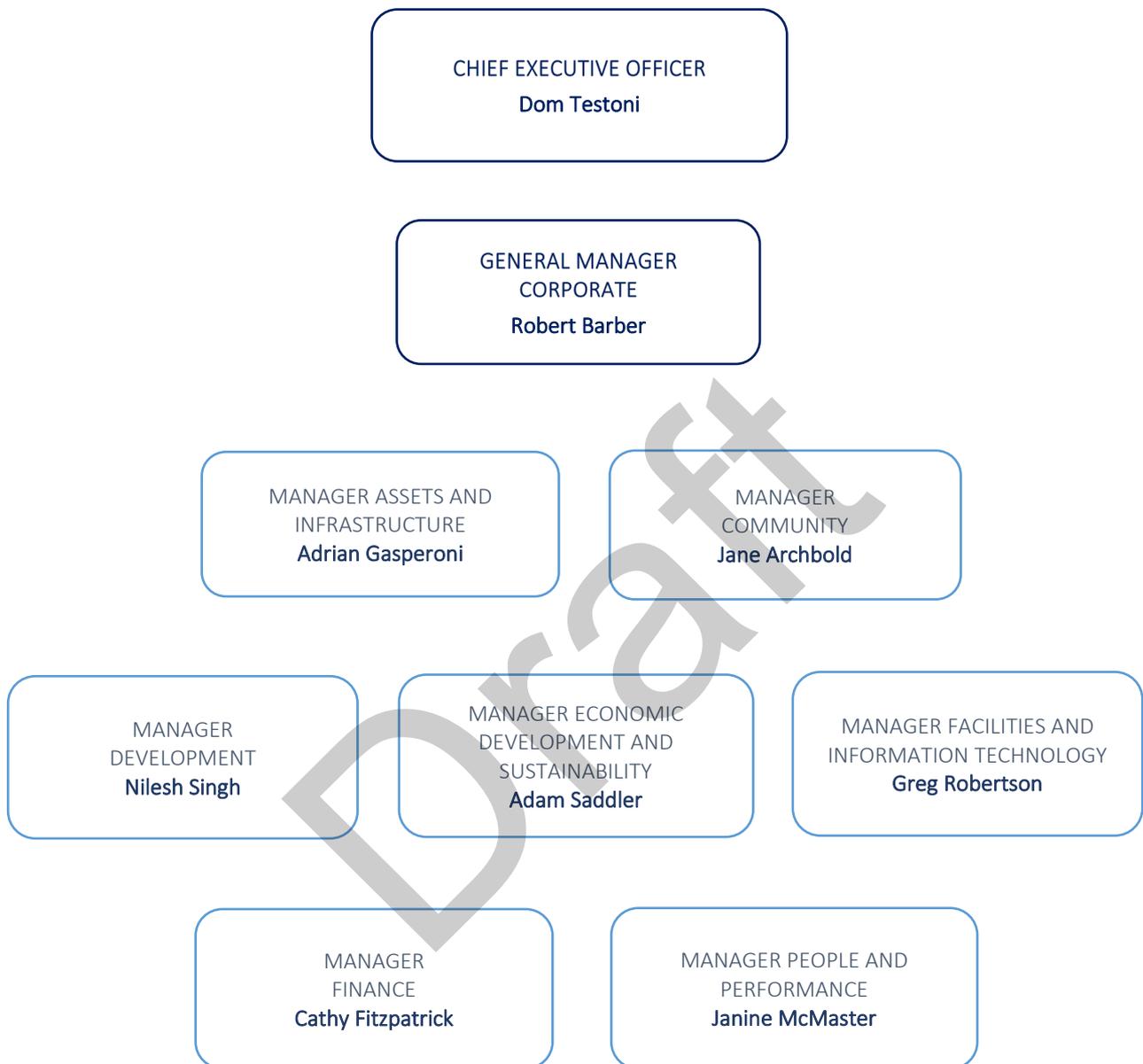


Cr Gail O'Brien



Cr Justin King

Organisational Structure 2021



Council's Vision, Purpose and Values

Our Vision

To provide a sustainable, thriving and cohesive community where lifestyle, culture, health and wellbeing are supported by strong leadership and community partnership.

Our Purpose

Through leadership and quality service we will meet our community's needs and aspirations with a focus on thoughtfully planned growth to maintain and enhance the high productivity of our collective community.

Values

We will:

- Plan and guide the community of Benalla Rural City with unwavering ACCOUNTABILITY.
- Strive for CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.
- Make decisions based on sound research and participate in decision making that meets the needs of the whole community in solid EQUITY.
- Act with transparency, truthfulness and INTEGRITY.
- Provide clear, innovative and strong LEADERSHIP.
- Serve our community, environment and council with RESPECT.

Community Vision 2036

The Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2036 captures the community's vision for the next 15 years with a focus on liveability, sustainability, inclusivity and resilience.

The Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to develop, maintain, and review a long-term Community Vision with its municipal community using deliberative engagement practices.

In 2015 Council undertook a deliberative engagement process to develop a long-term Community Plan with more than 700 community members and guided by eleven independent community representatives from across the Benalla Rural City.

This notable long-term Community Plan has been reviewed with community representatives and the long-term vision content has been adapted and updated to form the Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2036.



Benalla Rural City
Creating our future together

Our Vision

Benalla Rural City is welcoming and friendly, thriving and prosperous, sustainable, innovative and industrious, caring and supportive and engaging for all residents and visitors – a place where people want to continue to live, move to and are proud to call home.

To achieve this vision, individuals, communities, organisations and businesses must continue to work together for the common good and prosperity of all people who live, visit, work and invest in Benalla Rural City.

The Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2036 incorporates seven guiding themes:

Community wellbeing and sense of place

In 2036 we will be a vibrant, activated, inclusive, cohesive rural city celebrating our valued and progressive lifestyle, diversity, and cultural heritage. All our communities will be working together in partnership to strengthen our overall wellbeing and sense of place.

A well-planned, connected and accessible community

In 2036 we will be a well-planned, connected and accessible community with quality, well-maintained and utilised infrastructure, including integrated transport and advanced telecommunications.

A vibrant, thriving and progressive economy

In 2036 Benalla Rural City will boast a diverse, robust and resilient economy attracting ongoing investment, offering a diverse range of tourism experiences and providing a destination of choice for new industries and job opportunities in a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Planning for population growth

In 2036 Benalla Rural City will have an increased population with ample job opportunities, exceptional services, facilities and infrastructure and a strong, skilled and innovative workforce. Diversity will be embraced and the welcoming community feel of Benalla Rural City will be maintained with sustainable and planned growth.

A sustainable environment

In 2036 we will have beautiful scenic landscapes, healthy waterways and excellent air quality. We will responsibly manage our valued natural resources with innovative practices, sustainable planning and living and strengthened community education and partnerships.

A destination of choice

In 2036 Benalla Rural City will be a destination of choice with a diverse range of tourism experiences, arts, sport and cultural initiatives, programs and events. These will present a range of participation and employment opportunities for visitors and the local community.

Leadership and community spirit

In 2036 Benalla Rural City will have a strong and distinctive spirit and character. Our community will be recognised for its strong leadership, collaborative partnerships, extensive networks, and high level of community engagement and participation.

The objectives, themes and future vision statements of the Community Vision 2036 have informed the strategic framework for the Council Plan 2021-2025 and ensure that Council's objectives and strategies are aligned to the long-term vision of the community.

Our Commitment to Health and Wellbeing

The Benalla Rural City Council recognises that the circumstances that people are born, grow, live, work, play and age all have an impact on their health and wellbeing and overall quality of life. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2014) shares these key social determinants of health and wellbeing as:

- Income
- Early childhood experiences
- Gender stereotypes, norms and expectations
- Education and employment
- Social inclusion
- Housing and geography
- Living and working conditions
- Quality of air, soil and water; and
- Health systems.

This Council Plan integrates Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and details our role and commitment to improving health and wellbeing in the Benalla Rural City. It also highlights the key partnerships necessary to address the multifaceted and complex nature of many of our health and wellbeing challenges.

Our approach to supporting good health and wellbeing outcomes is strongly informed by the priorities within the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023 and aims to support all members of the community across various life stages. Our efforts over the next four years prioritise three of the four designated focus areas of the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023:

1. Tackling the health impacts of climate change
2. Increasing healthy eating
3. Increasing active living.

Local data informs our approaches, and we are committed to local partnership priorities to strengthen collective health and wellbeing action, as captured by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Benalla Health and the Central Hume Primary Care.

The Central Hume Primary Care Partnership (CHPCP) 2021 Data Profile highlights identified health strengths and challenges for the Benalla Rural City:

Strengths

- High levels of volunteerism.
- Adult vegetable consumption higher than Victorian measure.
- Estimated homeless persons is lower compared to Victoria.

Challenges

- Percentage of highly disadvantaged SA1s is higher than Victorian measure.
- Higher number of people with income less than \$500 per week compared to Victoria.
- Higher rate of family violence incidences compared to Victoria.
- Very high teenage fertility rate compared to Victorian measure.
- High percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more early childhood domains.
- Higher rate of obesity and sugar sweetened beverage consumption compared to Victorian measure.
- Higher rates of psychological distress and diagnosis for anxiety or depression than Victorian measures.

Key partners in ensuring our community's health and wellbeing include:

- Aboriginal corporations
- Aged care providers
- Ambulance Victoria
- Australian Childhood Foundation
- Australian Government
- Benalla Health
- Benalla Health and Wellbeing Partnership Group
- Cancer Council Victoria
- Central Hume Primary Care Partnership
- Centre Against Violence
- Churches
- Community Accessibility
- Community and sporting groups
- Early years providers
- Environmental Health Professionals Australia
- Gateway Health
- GOTAFE
- Headspace
- Junction Support Services
- La Trobe Health Services
- Medical practitioners
- Merri Health
- Mind Victoria
- Minus18
- Murray Primary Health Network
- National Disability Support Service
- National Health and Medical Research Council
- North East Health
- North East Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- North East Multicultural Association
- North East Support and Action for Youth
- North East Water
- NE Tracks LLEN
- Odyssey House
- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Scope
- St Vincent De Paul
- Schools
- Service Clubs
- Support Groups and Networks
- The Centre
- Tomorrow Today Foundation
- Upper Murray Family Care
- Uniting
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- State Government Departments
- VicHealth
- Victoria Police
- Waminda Community House
- Women's Health Goulburn North East
- World Health Organisation
- YMCA
- Yooralla
- Youth Live4Life.

Theme 1: Community

“More entertainment and family friendly activities.”

“We need more entertainment for young people.”

“Engage youth back into sporting clubs”.

“Continue to add to the vibrancy of the area through mural arts projects.”

“More support for mental health and wellbeing.”

“Volunteering is an important part of our community.”

“I would like to see more events at the art gallery/ library. We need to embrace these two fantastic resources.”

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Theme 1: Community

Objective: A healthy, safe and resilient community

	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Partner with key stakeholders, such as Victoria Police to promote and enhance community safety including for mobility scooter users, cyclists and pedestrians.	Facilitator MPHWP	Development Assets and Infrastructure Community
2	Work closely with community and key stakeholders to plan for emergencies and build community resilience.	Facilitator Regulator MPHWP	Development Community
3	With our community and key stakeholders to address some of the priorities of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023: healthy eating and active living; mental wellbeing, preventing violence and injury, and climate change and its impact on health.	Facilitator Advocate MPHWP	Development Community
4	Act on the prevention of family violence through awareness raising, workplace policy and support for local and regional initiatives.	Facilitator Advocate MPHWP	Community People and Performance
5	Work together with key health, welfare and community organisations and networks to support better learning, development and wellbeing outcomes for community members.	Facilitator Advocate MPHWP	Development Community
6	Offer programs, services, activities and events that support, develop and connect community members of all abilities and lead the community in being age friendly and child and Covid safe.	Provider Funder Facilitator Asset Owner MPHWP	Development Community Economic Development and Sustainability

What community told us they wanted:

- Intergenerational activities
- Covid recovery-safety at events/activities
- Child Friendly, safe walkable cities
- Stronger sport participation
- Mental health support
- Safety for isolated aged residents
- Early years development.

Objective: A connected, involved and inclusive community

	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Support and promote opportunities for the community to participate in a range of social, recreational, and arts and cultural programs, activities and events.	Provider Funder Facilitator Asset Owner MPHWP	Community Economic Development and Sustainability
2	Build community capacity through supporting community groups to deliver local initiatives that build social connections and enhance health and wellbeing.	Facilitator Funder MPHWP	Community
3	Create and promote welcoming and inclusive practices and culture, so community members-whatever their age, gender, physical ability, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, sexuality or cultural background feel like they belong and are valued, respected and included.	Facilitator Asset Owner MPHWP	Community People and Performance Economic Development and Sustainability
4	Encourage, support, value and celebrate volunteering in the community.	Provider Facilitator	Community People and Performance Economic Development and Sustainability
5	Celebrate and promote history and cultural diversity.	Provider Facilitator	Community People and Performance Economic Development and Sustainability
6	Continue to respectfully engage, include, celebrate and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and people.	Facilitator Advocate	Community People and Performance Economic Development and Sustainability
7	Promote, support and actively engage with smaller rural communities.	Provider Funder Facilitator	Community

What community told us they wanted:

- Welcoming new residents
- Council Community Grants
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Updated community directory
- Strengthen social connections/volunteering following Covid disruptions
- Training to build the capacity of volunteers.

Key Supporting policies, strategies and plans

- *Benalla Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2017* (currently being updated)
- *Benalla Rural City Community Plan 2016-2036*
- *Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2021-2036*
- *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023*
- *Korin Korin Balit-Djak Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan*
- *Central Hume Prevention Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021*
- *Benalla Rural City Youth Strategy 2013 – 2017* (currently being updated)
- *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Master Plan.*

Key Community Partners

- Please refer to the list of key community partners on page 13.

Performance Measures

- Community satisfaction with community development activities
- Community satisfaction with community and cultural activities
- Community satisfaction with support services for older people
- Community satisfaction with emergency and disaster management
- Community satisfaction with family support services
- Community satisfaction with libraries
- Community satisfaction with youth services and activities
- Community groups allocated support from the Community Support Program
- Family violence incidents per 1,000 population
- Immunisation rates
- Number of forums held in rural townships
- Number of Local Safety Committee meetings
- Participation in maternal child and health service
- % of Library users
- % of people reporting being obese (BMI greater than 30)
- % meeting vegetable consumption guidelines
- % of residents meeting physical activity guidelines
- % daily consumer of sweetened soft drinks
- % high or very high level of psychological distress
- % of people who help as a volunteer
- % of required food safety assessments undertaken
- Number of visits to the Benalla Aquatic Centre.

Theme 2: Liveability

“Better footpaths, roads, lake amenities and recreation would improve the image of Benalla liveability.”

“Build a dog park. There are so many dogs in Benalla, and it would be nice to have a specific off leash dog place to take the dogs.”

“Continue to promote and develop Benalla as a place to live and as a destination.”

“Ensure housing development is appropriate and includes sustainable design.”

“Sport and recreational development is essential for the region.”

“We need to find a way to rebuild our small rural townships and the sense of community.”

“I think Benalla Council could be more innovative in the use and upgrade of our public spaces.”

Theme 2: Liveability

Objective: Vibrant public spaces and places

	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Advocate and plan for street lighting, shade, seating and pedestrian crossings that support current growth and development and enhance safety and outdoor engagement.	Provider Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate MPHWP	
2	Maintain and develop sport and recreation facilities and reserves, parks, gardens, playgrounds, and walking and cycling paths to increase passive and active community participation and social connection.	Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate MPHWP	
3	Maintain the amenity and cleanliness of townships, public spaces, roadsides and community facilities.	Provider Asset Owner Funder	
4	Ensure open spaces and public places in existing and developing communities are thoughtfully planned, connected up, green, sustainable, accessible, engaging and inclusive and consider the needs of an ageing community.	Provider Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate	
5	Beautify streetscapes, landscaping, signage and town entrances.	Provider Facilitator	
6	Enhance and maintain key places of significance.	Provider Facilitator Asset Owner	
7	Advocate for and act on opportunities to protect, maintain and preserve heritage assets.	Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- Open space planning
- Sustainable subdivisions
- Tree planting/management
- Recreation planning
- Reduced speed zones for pedestrian safety
- Pedestrian crossings
- Great playgrounds
- Further development of Lake Benalla
- An off-leash dog park
- Squash Courts
- Synthetic Hockey Pitch
- Toilets at splash park
- Shading at splash park
- A focus on the priorities in the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Plan*.

Objective: Connected and accessible roads, footpaths, transport and parking			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Deliver and maintain accessible and safe footpaths and cycle paths in existing and new neighbourhoods.	Provider Facilitator Asset Owner MPHWP	
2	Maintain and improve drainage, bridges, parking and road networks to meet the needs of the current and future population.	Provider Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate	
3	Plan for population growth and accessibility for all.	Facilitator Advocate	
4	Advocate for improved public transportation to be linked to new housing developments and advocate for increased and better-connected public transport options.	Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- Improve Bridge/CBD traffic congestion
- A walkable community
- Age friendly seating
- Linked precincts
- A focus on outlying/rural towns
- More disability parking.

Key Supporting policies, strategies and plans

- *Benalla Rural City Community Plan 2016-2036*
- *Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2021-2036*
- *Benalla Tourism and Events Strategy*
- *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023*
- *Benalla Airport Master Plan*
- *The Former Migrant Camp Conservation Management Plan*
- *Ten Year Capital Management Plan*
- *Asset Management Policy and Plan*
- *Road Management Plan (under review)*
- *Urban Stormwater Management Plan (under review)*
- *Benalla Indoor Recreation Master Plan*
- *Pathways to the Future Strategy.*

Key Community Partners

- Vic Roads
- Vic Health
- Heritage Victoria
- Benalla Historical Society
- Benalla Migrant Camp Inc.
- ARTC
- Vic Tracks
- Better Rail for Benalla
- North East Multicultural Association
- Sporting and recreation groups.

Performance Measures

- Active library members
- Community satisfaction with appearance of public areas
- Community satisfaction with art centres
- Community satisfaction with providing libraries
- Community satisfaction with local roads and footpaths
- Community satisfaction with recreational facilities
- Community satisfaction with condition of sealed local roads
- Community satisfaction with slashing and weed control
- Community satisfaction with condition of unsealed roads
- Ratio of Capital Works Program delivered compared to budget
- Footpath Strategy developed
- Urban Tree Management Plan reviewed and updated.

Theme 3: Economy

“More support for local business.”

“Promote tourism and have more events.”

“Work to improve what visitors see when they first come to town.”

“There is a lack of places for visitors to stay.”

“Keep investing in economic development for the region”.

“New industry to Benalla has provided more employment opportunities.”

“We have a lot of empty shops in Benalla.”

“Promote the liveability of Benalla.”

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Theme 3: Economy			
Objective: Thriving business and industry			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Work together with key stakeholders to engage, support, strengthen, enhance and diversify local business.	Facilitator Advocate	
2	Attract new investment, business and industry to the Benalla Rural City to facilitate business growth and job creation.	Facilitator Advocate	
3	Support a circular economy to improve business productivity and reduce waste.	Provider Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- An Economic Development Strategy
- Improved shop/buy local support
- Small business support
- COVID recovery focus for small business
- Social enterprise
- Recognition of local business achievements

Objective: Flourishing tourism			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Strengthen the visitor economy through growth of events and promotion of unique assets and experiences and visitor attractions.	Facilitator Advocate	
2	Grow, enhance and promote sports, arts and culture tourism opportunities.	Provider Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate	
3	Improve accommodation offerings in the Benalla Rural City.	Facilitator Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- A Tourism Strategy
- Development of higher-level accommodation
- Develop/promote history tourism
- Develop sports tourism
- Promote street/silo art
- Improved rail links.

Objective: Diverse education and employment			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Work with key stakeholders to improve local learning and employment pathway opportunities that address skills gaps, align with future needs and support lifelong learning.	Facilitator Advocate	
2	Advocate for improved local access to post-secondary education opportunities.	Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- Skills sharing initiatives/mentoring
- Strengthened business/education links
- Improved local TAFE offerings.

Objective: Population growth			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Broadly market Benalla Rural City's liveability.	Facilitator Advocate	
2	Continue to support Rural Councils Victoria projects and initiatives.	Facilitator Advocate	
4	Proactively plan for new residential development to support increased population and growth.	Facilitator Regulator Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- Sustainable planning
- Leverage off Melbourne residents interest in rural living
- Housing diversity.

Key Supporting policies, strategies and plans

- *Benalla Rural City Community Plan 2016-2036*
- *Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2021-2036*
- *Benalla Tourism and Events Strategy*
- *Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2013-2025*
- *Benalla Airport Master Plan*
- *Enterprise Park Strategy.*

Key Community Partners

- Tourism North East
- Rural Councils Victoria
- Local Business and Industry
- Benalla Future Workforce Steering Group
- Startup Shakeup
- Buy from Benalla Town Team
- Buy from North East Vic
- Ovens Murray Digital Futures Group
- Ovens Murray Regional Partnerships
- Regional Development Victoria
- Small Business Victoria
- Victorian Chamber of Commerce
- ITAG Indi Telecommunications Group

Performance Measures

- Community satisfaction with arts centres
- Community satisfaction with business development
- Community satisfaction with tourism development
- Population growth figures.

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Theme 4: Environment

“Become more focussed on a sustainable future.”

“Ensure our natural and built environment is protected and create opportunities to showcase these.”

“We need a leafier city.”

“The green bins are a fabulous addition to waste collection.”

“There needs to be a recycling shop at the waste facility as too much reclaimable material is tipped.”

“We could be doing so much more; climate change is already impacting us.”

“Support environmental leadership”.

Theme 4: Environment

Objective: Healthy and protected natural environment

	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Partner with agencies and the community to manage and enhance our natural environmental assets, water quality and river health across Benalla Rural City and support the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority Regional Catchment Strategy and other regional environmental strategies.	Facilitator Regulator Advocate MPHWP	
2	Maintain and establish shading for public areas, including planning for shade trees in new residential developments.	Provider Facilitator Regulator	
3	Enable a safe and thriving natural environment.	Provider Facilitator Regulator	

What community told us they wanted:

- Tree planting
- Green spaces
- Roadside management.

Objective: High quality, efficient and sustainable waste management

	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Actively Promote responsible behaviours to reduce waste.	Provider Facilitator Regulator Advocate	
2	Provide efficient and sustainable waste management services.	Provider Facilitator Regulator Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- Tip shop/Repair Cafe
- Tip vouchers
- Hard waste disposal
- Waste education
- Audit farms/large business to understand waste/recycling needs
- Halt single use plastic.

Objective: Sustainable practices			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Partner with business, industry and community to plan and implement local approaches and initiatives that respond to climate change.	Facilitator Asset Owner Advocate MPHWP	
2	Advocate, promote, support and encourage the use of renewable and clean energy and technology.	Facilitator Advocate MPHWP	
3	Improve Council's sustainability performance through greater use of renewable energy and demonstrating sustainability leadership to the community.	Provider Asset Owner	

What community told us they wanted:

- Car charging stations
- Climate change education
- Solar hubs in communities.

Key Supporting policies, strategies and plans

- *Benalla Rural City Community Plan 2016-2036*
- *Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2021-2036*
- *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023*
- *Korin Korin Balit-Djak Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-2027*
- *Central Hume Prevention Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021*
- *Roadside Weeds and Pest Plan 2017-2019*
- *Tree Asset and Maintenance and Management Plan 2018-2021*
- *Waste Management & Minimisation Strategy 2014-2019*
- *Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2013-2025*
- *Environment Strategy 2016-2020*
- *Electric Line Management Plan 2021-2022*
- *Domestic Wastewater Management Plan.*

Key Community Partners

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Benalla Sustainable Future Group
- Winton Wetlands.

Performance Measures

- Community satisfaction with our environmental sustainability
- Community satisfaction with waste management
- Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill
- Benalla Landfill and Resource Recovery Centre transfer station established
- Benalla Landfill and *Resource Recovery Centre Rehabilitation Strategy* adopted.

Theme 5: Leadership

“Continue with consulting the community in the future.”

*“Understand and connect with the community you serve.
Respect local knowledge and experience.”*

*“Ensure sufficient staffing is in place to prioritise building
planning and approvals.”*

*“Would like to see more Councillors at
community events.”*

*“Keep re-evaluating efficiencies and effectiveness, and whether you have the right
person in the job. Encourage employees to offer solutions and innovative ideas to
normal processes.”*

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Theme 5: Leadership

Objective: Good governance

	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 2020 and other relevant legislation and regulations.	Provider Facilitator Regulator	
2	Ensure key community priorities captured in the long-term community vision are reflected in the Council Plan.	Provider Facilitator	
3	Manage the procurement of goods and services to provide transparency and best value for money.	Provider	
4	Deliver responsible budget outcomes linked to strategy that maintain financial sustainability and deliver value for money and rating fairness.	Provider	

What community told us they wanted:

- Capital works linked to demonstrated community need
- Capitalise on grant seeking
- Affordable rates
- Equitable resourcing of rural outlying communities.

Objective: Engaged and informed community

	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Work in partnership with community members, groups and organisations to achieve the aspirations captured within the Benalla Rural City long-term Community Vision.	Provider Facilitator Advocate MPHWP	
2	Create opportunities for deliberative engagement prior to decision making and actively improve and enhance Council's community engagement practices.	Facilitator MPHWP	
3	Provide timely and effective communications in plain language to the community about Council services, activities and decision making.	Provider	
4	Plan, provide and promote direct Councillor engagement opportunities across the Benalla Rural City.	Facilitator	

What community told us they wanted:

- Regular Council Plan progress reporting
- Plain language focus
- Council presence at community events
- More opportunities for deliberative engagement.

Objective: High performance culture			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Improve customer experience through responsive, timely, efficient, well planned, and accessible services.	Provider	
2	Develop a skilled, efficient and high performing customer focussed workforce.	Provider	
3	Pursue and lobby for appropriate and sustainable funding and service arrangements with Victorian and Australian Governments.	Provider Regulator Advocate	
4	In collaboration with key community partners support an inclusive and safe workplace, aiming to increase awareness of and access to appropriate training for staff in the prevention of all forms of violence.	Provider Advocate MPHWP	

What community told us they wanted:

- Reduce red tape
- Upskill staff on community engagement and communication
- A well-informed Council.

Objective: Effective and responsive advocacy			
	Strategies	Council Role	Service Area
1	Work in partnership with community, groups, local agencies, and all levels of government to advocate for improved services, infrastructure and social outcomes for the community and report on advocacy outcomes.	Partner Advocate	
2	Participate in advocacy outcomes as part of Rural Councils Victoria.	Advocate	

What community told us they wanted:

- Network/join with North East networks
- COVID recovery focus.

Key Supporting policies, strategies and plans

- *Benalla Rural City Community Plan 2016-2036*
- *Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2021-2036*
- *Annual Report and Budget*
- *Benalla Rural City Community Engagement Policy*
- *Procurement Policy*
- *Rating and Revenue Plan 2021-2025.*

Key Community Partners

- Rural Councils Victoria
- Community Groups and Organisations
- Victorian and Australian Governments

Performance Measures

- Community satisfaction with advocacy
- Community satisfaction with community consultation
- Community satisfaction with customer service
- Community satisfaction with informing the community
- Community satisfaction with making community decisions
- Community satisfaction with overall direction of Council
- Loans and borrowings
- Lost time injuries frequency rate
- % of required food safety assessments undertaken
- Planning application decided within 60 days
- Workforce turnover
- Working capital
- 100% compliance with Governance and Management Checklist.

Draft

Our Community

Benalla Rural City is located in north-east Victoria, 193km north east of Melbourne, and is centred in the Broken River valley. The current estimated resident population of Benalla Rural City is 14,137 with approximately 9,000 living in the Benalla urban area and the remainder living in and around our smaller towns. The population forecast for 2036 is 14,660.

Benalla Rural City was established as an agricultural and pastoral district in the 1840s, following long habitation by Aboriginal people. It was proclaimed a city in 1965 and Lake Benalla was artificially created in 1973.

The geography of Benalla Rural City is divided by the Hume Freeway with hills, valleys, grazing land and forests to the south. The communities include those of Acherton, Baddaginnie, Boho South, Glenrowan West, Lima, Lima South, Lurg, Molyullah, Moorngag, Samaria, Swanpool, Tatong, Upper Lurg, Upper Ryan's Creek, Warrenbayne and Winton.

The north side of the freeway is characterised by plains and rolling hills used as cropping and grazing land. The communities include those of Boweya, Boxwood, Broken Creek, Bungeet, Chesney Vale, Devenish, Goomalibee, Goorambat, Stewarton, Taminick, Tarnook and Thoona.

The Benalla Rural City economic sectors include the town's role as a regional centre, agricultural production, tourism and manufacturing. It is dominated by employment in the manufacturing, retail trade, health and community services sectors.

The proportion of people employed in agriculture is above the state average. **Local** agriculture is diverse and innovative including beef, sheep, cropping, forestry, viticulture and a range of new and growing areas such as aquaculture.

Some of the main tourism attractions include, but are not limited to, the Winton Motor Raceway, Winton Wetlands, State Gliding Centre (Benalla Airport), Benalla Street Art Wall to Wall Festival and the Benalla Art Gallery.

Benalla Rural City offers a lifestyle that has a choice of primary and secondary schools, a TAFE college, comprehensive health services and a wealth of participation opportunities including sport, music, wine and art. Lake Benalla, with the surrounding Botanical Gardens and walking track, is a key attraction located within the town. Benalla Rural City has well developed disability, aged care and childcare services.

There are many active community and service groups throughout Benalla Rural City.

Benalla Rural City



If Benalla Rural City was 100 People...

- 49 would be male and 51 Female
- 16 aged < 14
- 10 aged 15-24
- 18 aged 25-44
- 30 aged 45-64
- 22 aged 65-84
- 4 aged > 85
- 17 Born Overseas
- 4 speak another language at home
- 2 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
- 32 live by themselves
- 50 couple family without children
- 32 couple family with children
- 17 one parent family
- 20 completed higher education qualification (Diploma level and above)
- 33 did not complete year 12
- 54 work full time
- 34 work part time
- 5 unemployed
- 27 volunteer
- 71 own or mortgage a house
- 24 Rent
- 29 households have an income of less than \$650/week
- 6 live in a dwelling without a motor car
- 22 live in a household with no internet access

Figures based on 2016 ABS Census.

Community Engagement

Community consultation began in November 2020 and continued on until the draft Council Plan was released for community consultation in August 2021. The Youth Strategy survey ensured the inclusion of young people's need and aspirations.



Our Engagement Approach

Input into the new Council Plan was invited through a varied number of engagement methods:

- 286 people filled in an online Council Plan Community survey
- 299+ people attended a listening post or filled in a postcard
- 189 people filled in a 'have your say' online survey
- 125 people attended a focussed discussion group and rural open houses
- 18 people attended a deliberative community stakeholder workshop
- 8 people attended a workshop to review the Community Plan and draw on visionary content to form the Benalla Rural City Community Vision 2036
- 8 people wrote a submission.

Who we heard from

Council's engagement centred on hearing from a diverse mix of voices that represent the Benalla Rural City community. Demographic data was not collected for all engagement activities however, Council's engagement centred on hearing from:

- ✓ A range of age groups
- ✓ A balanced gender mix
- ✓ Residents living in both Benalla and rural outlying towns; and
- ✓ Cultural diversity.

Postcards/ Online have your say survey:

- 68% lived in the township of Benalla, 26% lived in a rural outlying community
- A wide range of age groups were engaged, with 55–64-year-olds (20%), 65–74-year-olds (19%), 35–44-year-olds (17%) being the top three age groups

The Council Plan Community Survey:

- 70% lived in the township of Benalla, 25% lived in a rural outlying community
- 7% under 18 years, 18% aged 18-34 years, 21% aged 35-54 years, 40% aged 55-74 years and 14% aged 75 years and older.
- 60% of respondents identified as female, 37% identified as male, 1% identified as non-binary and 2% preferred not to disclose their gender.

The Benalla Youth Survey has captured the needs and aspirations of over 200 young people aged 12-25 years.

What we heard-Community Strengths

The top ten community strengths that community members shared were:

1. Friendly/caring people
2. The Lake
3. Peaceful and quiet
4. Country living/relaxed lifestyle
5. Community facilities (e.g. Swanpool Theatre, BPACC, Sporting facilities, seniors citizens, Winton, Art Gallery)
6. Parks/Gardens/Playgrounds (Splash park, rocket park, gardens)
7. Community activities (e.g. footy, golf, market, U3A, community garden)
8. Small town
9. Good location
10. Clean/tidy

What we heard-Community Challenges

The key challenges that community consultation revealed were:

- Ageing population
- Mental health
- Planning for population growth
- Climate change
- Sustainable living
- Small business support
- Vulnerable communities
- Affordable and diverse housing
- Retaining and engaging young people
- Volunteering
- Community Engagement and communication
- Impact of Covid and Covid recovery.

Is there a Council service that is particularly important to you?



“Lovely pretty town; friendly, casual, no rushing around.”

“There should be more support for local business.”

“As a long-term resident, I have a sense of belonging living in the area and have the opportunity to be involved in many community activities.”

“Support community connection and well-being activities.”

“We have a direct train line into major centres”.

“Need something for youth; not enough night life; more creative in what we offer kids.”

“I love the community spirit, the friendly people and a lovely safe place to raise a family or as in my situation retire in.”

“There is not enough housing or rental stock in town.”

“Love the friendly community and the rose gardens”.

“Volunteer organisations are under immense pressure and stress.”

“Benalla, although growing still has a country feel about it.”

“We need to really focus on mental health-practical support and services.”

The Council Plan Community Survey captured the top ten services of importance for Benalla Rural City residents.

Health and Wellbeing Data Snapshot

Our key sources for this information are the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2016, the Victorian Population Health Survey, 2017 and the Central Hume PCP Benalla LGA Data Profile, 2021.

Our top three health conditions in the Benalla Rural City (identified by number of hospital admissions):

1. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (87 admissions)
 2. Congestive cardiac failure (72 admissions)
 3. Iron Deficiency Anaemia (66 admissions)
- 17.8% of our residents are current smokers
 - 31% of our residents were considered obese (Vic 19.3%)
 - 19.3% of our residents are estimated to have high or very high levels of psychological distress
 - 37.15% of our residents shared that they had been diagnosed with depression or anxiety by a doctor (Vic 27.36%)
 - 27.9/1,000 population family violence incidents (Vic 9.3/1,000): We have three times more family violence incidents compared to Victoria.
 - 6.5% of people in our community are living with a severe or profound disability
 - Adults are eating more vegetables compared to the rest of Victoria
 - 47.2% of our children are fully breastfed at 3 months of age
 - At 2.4 per 1,000 people, Our estimated rate of homeless persons is lower compared to Victoria (4.2)
 - 82.73% of our residents could raise \$2000 within two days of an emergency
 - 29.5% of our residents reported that their health was either excellent or very good which is lower compared to Ovens Murray Region (40.8%) and Victoria (41.6%)
 - 26.5% of us helped out as a volunteer.

Compared to Victoria, in the Benalla Rural City we rate ourselves higher for:

- ✓ having an opportunity to have a say on important issues
- ✓ feeling safe walking down their street after dark
- ✓ having a friend or relative who would care for us or our children in an emergency
- ✓ trusting people in our community.

Impacts of COVID-19

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on the health and wellbeing and livelihoods of our residents with economic and social disruptions widely experienced. To better understand and plan for the impacts of COVID-19, our Council Plan Survey asked residents to share their experiences.

Benalla Rural City residents who completed an online survey (286) shared that COVID-19 had affected them in a number of ways, with the social impact being the greatest.



Additional COVID-19 impacts shared by community members were travel bans, physical/health issues due to service access issues, home schooling challenges, volunteer management and work/life balance issues.

Community members also shared the unexpected positive outcomes they had experienced during the COVID pandemic with the top three being:



The top three areas that community members wanted Council to focus on during COVID recovery were:

Top 3 Covid-19 Recovery Areas For Council To Focus On





BENALLA

RURAL CITY COUNCIL

Benalla Rural City Council
Draft Council Plan 2021-2025

PO BOX 227
BENALLA VIC 3671

(03) 5760 2600
council@benalla.vic.gov.au

www.benalla.vic.gov.au