

A photograph of a park path in autumn. The trees are covered in bright yellow leaves, and the ground is covered in fallen yellow leaves. A man and a woman are walking hand-in-hand on the path, with a small dog on a leash. In the background, there are more trees, a trash can, and a bench.

Citizens' Jury: Response to recommendations



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

FOREWORD

To members of the Citizens' Jury,

Thank you for participating in the Greater Bendigo City Council's first-ever Citizens' Jury.

The Council is grateful for your commitment to this bold experiment in community engagement.

In 2016 the Council engaged the not-for-profit research enterprise newDemocracy Foundation to conduct a Citizens' Jury process and answer the question: "What should Council spend our money on to shape the community's future?"

Your report with 44 recommendations was presented to the previous Council and there was an undertaking to provide a written response by March 30, 2017. The current Council has done that and I am delighted to present the response to you.

On behalf of the Councillors, I express our sincere appreciation to all Jury members for the work you have put in, for your attention to a wide range of topics and for your considered recommendations.

The Greater Bendigo community is indebted to you for your efforts. You have come together with the assistance of newDemocracy Foundation and an independent facilitator to produce an impressive and thoughtful report.

Every Councillor has read and reflected on the report and its recommendations. The Jury's emphasis on eight specific topics and actions that it thinks the Council should consider have definitely influenced our deliberations and discussion of our agenda for the next four years.

The preparation of the four-year 2017-2021 Greater Bendigo Community Plan (formally known as the Council Plan) with its vision and strategic objectives, together with formulating a new budget have all been influenced by what you have said.

Your efforts have resonated with many of the Council's ambitions for Greater Bendigo.

In future, as Greater Bendigo develops, you will recognise how your report and recommendations have progressively shaped our municipality. Future generations should be grateful for your work, your vision and aspirations.

Mayor Cr Margaret O'Rourke



BACKGROUND

In March 2016, the former Council resolved to undertake a Citizens' Jury process and engaged the not-for-profit research enterprise newDemocracy Foundation and independent facilitator Chad Foulkes to assist in conducting the process.

During a workshop with the newDemocracy Foundation, the former Council deliberated and formulated the question that was to be put to the jurors:

"What should Council spend our money on to shape the community's future?"

Some 3,000 invitations to participate were sent out by newDemocracy Foundation to a random selection of residents across the whole municipality. From the responses they received, 28 jurors were selected to ensure a representative sample based

on gender, age, urban and non-urban locations.

The selected jurors' occupations included: a postmaster, a business manager from Bendigo Health, a real estate agent, a rural business advisor, a retired dairy farmer and a State Government employee.

The role of the Jury was to:

- Discuss and compare the possible outcomes and implications of each option they identify
- Make evidence-based decisions, informed by information on the operations of Council and expert advice
- Collectively make recommendations to Council at the end of the process

An undertaking was provided to the Citizens' Jury members that their report would be presented to the new Council and that a formal response would be provided by the end of March 2017.

Prior to the commencement of the Jury sessions, stakeholder sessions were held for interested community and sporting groups, individuals, State Government agencies, education providers and other organisations, with a view to making a submission to the Jury. Following the invitation for submissions, 14 submissions were received by the Jury from the following people and groups:

- Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership
- William Collier
- Andrea Metcalf

- Bike Bendigo x 2
- Brian Stanmore
- Pat Horan
- Michael McKenzie
- St Johns Close Public Space Action Group
- Bendigo Community Health Services
- Colin Campbell
- Bendigo Health
- AFL Central Vic
- Mary Markey

The Jury met six times over 11 weeks, for a total of 30 hours, with each session open to the community to attend as observers. The Jury was provided with a general introduction to the operations and services provided by the City of Greater Bendigo, opportunities and challenges, and the organisation's overall financial position and annual budget allocations.

Various community representatives presented to the Jury in person including:

- Councillors
- Submitters
- Community members
- External organisations including: Bendigo Business Council, La Trobe University, REMPLAN, Heathcote Hospital, Bendigo Senior Secondary College and Bendigo Community Health Services.

The Jury completed their report and provided Council with 44 recommendations.

At a forum on October 5, 2016 the former Council met with the jurors and received the Citizens' Jury Report. Council resolved to:

1. Accept the Citizens Jury Report
2. Refer the report to the new Council for consideration of the recommendations
3. Congratulate the Jury members and thank them for their commitment to this process and their final report



The Jury's report was released to the public on October 10, 2016.

The new Council has met with members of the Citizens' Jury who presented their report. Councillors have considered all the recommendations and determined a position on each.

Councillors have noted that the Jury's report has been highly influential in shaping the new 2017 - 2021 Community Plan. The Citizens' Jury report has provided important advice from the community for the development of the Plan, in setting priorities and in formulating Council's new budget. Both processes are required to be completed by June 30, 2017.

Council places great importance on community engagement and using innovative techniques to achieve this.



EXCERPT FROM THE CITIZENS' JURY REPORT

The deliberations of the Citizens' Jury, which consisted of a randomly-selected group of individuals, have been consolidated in this report. Though diverse, the men and women on this Jury have in common one desire: to see their community develop supported by an active, forward-thinking, resourceful and resourced council.

The Jury's recommendations have been intensely debated, meet the Jury's own decision making criteria and have the support of the majority of the group (>80 per cent consensus).

We the Jury worked collaboratively with a shared belief that this report, which takes into consideration the reality of competing priorities, will assist council in their deliberations, decisions and planning for the future: to ensure Bendigo is the most liveable rural city in Australia.

In order to decide what we want Council to spend our money on to shape the community's future, the Jury decided that each proposed recommendation must

meet two criteria; we developed a simple set of criteria for the recommendations. Each recommendation we put forward must meet both criteria.

The two criteria we decided on are:

- Is the issue within Council's operational responsibility or somewhere where Council has an advocacy role?
- and
- Does the issue provide an economic, social or environmental benefit to the people of the City of Greater Bendigo?

The Jury submits in its report the following themes for Council's serious consideration when planning to make Bendigo the most liveable city in Australia: Arts, Business, Community, Efficiency, Environment, Health, Innovation and Youth.

The Jury's report contains 44 recommendations.

Council has considered all the recommendations and has provided the following response to them.

NO:	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1	Better market the arts success story in the City of Greater Bendigo to the community	AGREE - Increase the level of marketing of arts/culture success to the Greater Bendigo community, as this reinforces one of the key findings of the Communications and Marketing service review, which was supported by EMT
2	Keep the arts status quo	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
3	We want Council to fund community-based art programs	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
4	Connecting the arts with Greater Bendigo's young people	AGREED - Council is continuing this process as a priority action
5	Recognise the crucial importance of business and establish Bendigo as a business innovation powerhouse, promoting, advocating and resourcing business growth locally, nationally and internationally for the coming decades	NOTED - Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services
6	Rectify disproportionate funding by council for business development. More actively engage with City of Greater Bendigo-based small business to promote employment growth by employing increased numbers of professional and qualified business development staff within the next 12 months	NOTED - Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services

NO:	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
7	Appreciate emerging businesses and create a small business incubator within 12 months	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
8	Position strategically for the future and host a future thinkers group to identify new opportunities within 12 months	NOTED - Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services. The idea of engaging local 'future thinkers' / community leaders etc in some sort of futures thinking workshop, perhaps on a regular basis will be discussed by Councillors
9	Work cleverly and review available data for business opportunity	NOTED - Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services. Council's IT Strategy and new Open Data Policy are also a great mechanism for making Council data of any kind available to share with the public and businesses
10	Value the work and commitment of local people and communicate in person with businesses	NOTED - Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services
11	Incentivise business investment	NOTED - Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services
12	As an immediate priority, prioritise local trades for works and services supplied in Bendigo	NOTED - Council's current procurement and contract arrangements give a priority weighting of 10% to local businesses, and we are continuing to strengthen these provisions

NO: RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
13 Survey registered businesses for useful, qualitative and quantitative data	NOTED - Council's Economic Development Unit undertakes extensive surveys of small and local businesses. Council recognises the critical role played by the thousands of small and local businesses. Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services
14 Target business events to participant-driven topics	NOTED - Council has made it a priority to review how it relates to and supports local / small businesses and establish the most effective structures and services
15 Help businesses in small towns to grow by exporting products using the Bendigo Airport	NOTED - This recommendation will be referred to the City's Farming Advisory Committee and region wide organisations for consideration
16 Advocate to attract social enterprises to alleviate demand on Council coffers by delivering services	NOTED - Work is currently underway in Council's procurement team to foster better ways to partner with and develop local social enterprises. This is also an action within the Reconciliation Action Plan
17 Support the growth of the creative economy for export by advertising and advocating for it	NOTED - Council is working closely with the Bendigo Business Council on a Smart Cities bid - a number of events and forums are taking place that will assist in delivering this recommendation
18 We want Council to continue family and community days	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations

NO: RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
19 We want Council to review and evaluate public transport between Bendigo city and smaller towns	AGREED - Council is establishing a Local Transport Forum with the support of Transport for Victoria and Public Transport Victoria focused on needs for smaller towns and rural communities
20 We want Council to promote community connectivity through community hubs and programs	AGREED AND NOTED - Council is working with a number of communities on proposed hubs - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
21 We want Council to establish and develop Community Gardens for citizens' use	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
22 The City shall make available ongoing professional development for councillors such as in the areas of conflict resolution, interpreting documents and strategies	NOTED - The new Councillors have invested significant time in undergoing an extensive induction program and will continue to work towards delivering on this recommendation
23 Council shall continue to review facilities and buildings to determine that they meet current community needs and expectation. Investigate the selling of unnecessary facilities or offsetting costs through leasing or hire	NOTED - This is an ongoing consideration of Council and Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
24 Council shall continue with the internal review process of all City departments	AGREED - Council is continuing this process as a priority action
25 We want Council to continue to protect local natural environment	AGREED - Council is continuing this process as a priority action as part of implementing the adopted Environment Strategy

NO: RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
26 We want Council to encourage energy efficient and sustainable house and property designs	AGREED - This is an important element of Council's Housing Strategy, which is being developed
27 We want Council to encourage investment in a solar farm	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
28 We want Council to adopt more advanced waste technology systems	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations. This recommendation requires considerable investigation - Council has identified long-term waste management arrangements as a high priority
29 In support of the initiatives as stated above within the environment theme, "we want council to adopt more advanced waste technology systems", council to consider an innovative approach to waste management, perhaps through public private partnerships, promotion and engagement with neighbouring councils, and lobbying of State and Federal Governments for financial support to establish a waste-to-energy plant in Greater Bendigo	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
30 Facilitate more immunisation clinics sessions after-hours, on weekends and at different locations	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
31 Utilise Maternal and Child Health Nurses to deliver immunisations during home visits	NOTED - This is being examined.

NO: RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
32 Translator/ cultural liaison to work with non-english speaking background population to increase immunisation participation	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
33 Employ more workers to speed up intake process for HACC services	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
34 Extend available basic HACC services to families in the '1st Quarter'	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
35 Work with user groups to: Develop a bike path network in new neighbourhoods; Connect current bike paths; Provide a purpose-built bike path from the CBD to La Trobe University; Increase built bicycle infrastructure at shopping centres, tourist spots and transport hubs	AGREED - Council is continuing this process as a priority action. Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
36 Pursue the '10 minute neighbourhood' concept	AGREED - Council is continuing that process as a priority action
37 Advocate for a dementia care 'village' site within Greater Bendigo	NOTED - Council is undertaking extensive liaison with relevant organisations in Heathcote to determine the best way possible to proceed with this important project

NO: RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
38 We want Council to establish and foster an innovation team within the City, and to provide support an operating budget for funding their initiatives and provide links to industry and innovation experts	NOTED - council is factoring this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations. Council is keen to act on this recommendation as a priority and will seek to establish an innovation function within Council in the short term
39 We want Council to establish an "on-line" register, which the public can access to suggest ideas and upon which local residents can vote for those ideas they want council to sponsor and / or adopt	NOTED - Council is exploring cost effective ways of gaining online community input to increase opportunities for participatory democracy such as the initiative set up by the City of Wodonga
40 We want Council to develop an online platform that allows the community to crowd fund or contribute to projects put forward to / by the City	NOTED - Council is exploring cost effective ways of gaining online community input to increase opportunities for participatory democracy such as the initiative set up by the City of Wodonga. Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
41 We want Council to take a strong advocacy role to facilitate a housing project for the elderly, disabled, disadvantaged and homeless within the Greater Bendigo community	NOTED - Council is working with a number of organisations on a series of projects and expects to be able to make some announcements in the near future. Plan Greater Bendigo - Council's 25 year view of infrastructure projects needed to support Bendigo's growth, which is being funded through the Victorian Planning Authority, has listed this as a high priority
42 We want council to implement a Youth Hub (Build or Provide Building Space)	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations

NO: RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
43 We want Council to provide a facilitator to develop a youth mentoring program	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations
44 Council to advocate for opportunities for youth to engage in new pursuits that build their creativity, interests and job readiness	NOTED - Council will factor this recommendation into its consideration of its four year Community Plan and budget allocations



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