



CITY OF BALLARAT

Municipal Early Years Plan 2022–2026



Family
& Children's
Services





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

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

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Ludowyk Evaluation would like to thank the City of Ballarat staff, external stakeholders, children, and families of Ballarat, including Traditional Owner families, who contributed to this work. Thanks to Sebastopol Primary School, Ballarat Primary School (Dana Street) and Lucas Primary School students and staff for their contribution to this plan.



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2. Message from the Mayor of Ballarat



The Municipal Early Years Plan lays out our community’s vision and priorities for Ballarat children, and for being a child friendly city for every child that lives, learns, is cared for and plays here. Our vision is informed by what children in Ballarat have told us is important to them through our 2020 Children’s Consultation, and engagement with children and parents in the second half of 2021.

This plan outlines our roadmap for delivering this vision over the next four years. It states very clearly what the City of Ballarat will do to ensure Ballarat is a child friendly city for all children, with a special focus on COVID-19 recovery, while being realistic about what we can deliver. The focus is on providing leadership, practising good governance and advocating for our community. We are committed to making informed decisions based on the best available evidence and community engagement and will work in partnership with our community to deliver our services, programs and information.

In 2018, Ballarat City Council acknowledged the climate emergency and the need for urgent action by all levels of government and, in March 2021, the Council supported an ‘in principle’ aspirational community-wide target of zero emissions by 2030.

In recognition of the importance of our rich cultural heritage and the critical part it plays in our identity as a city, we will work to ensure it is recognised, respected and celebrated while balancing the need to conserve our historical assets with the need and desire to progress as a modern regional city.

We sincerely thank every individual and group who provided input into this process – your participation reflects an engaged and empowered community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Daniel Moloney". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey background.

Cr Daniel Moloney
Mayor, City of Ballarat

3. Ballarat – A leading child friendly city



Children are a big part of our community. There are more than 20,000 children in Ballarat, and children aged 13 years and younger make up approximately 20% of our population¹ and this is growing.

Ballarat is a signatory to the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter. The charter recognises that, without voting rights, the ability of children to influence the communities they live in is limited to the opportunities afforded to them by adults. As a Child Friendly City and aligned with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the City of Ballarat is committed to engaging children in the life and decision-making of our city.

Fundamental to positive health and wellbeing is the right for children to experience environments that consider their needs. Our children are valued members of communities, and we commit to these principles:

- Act in the best interests of the child
- Freedom for children to express their individual opinions and right to have these considered in decisions that affect them
- Create equity for all children based on their needs

In October and November 2020, the City of Ballarat conducted a children's consultation which further demonstrated children's desire to have their voices heard as the children told us what they love about Ballarat.

This Municipal Early Years Plan 2022-2026 sets out our goals and priorities for children in our municipality with a particular focus on children aged 0-8 years, and the work we will undertake towards them. It presents our commitment to ensuring every child in Ballarat has access to high quality facilities, services and programs that meet their needs, and ensuring this standard is delivered across our growing municipality, for both our new and old neighbourhoods. It recognises that supporting children also means supporting their families and working to address inequality across our municipality.

> 3.1 CHILDREN ARE AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY VISION

Our Community Vision – developed with the Ballarat community through deliberative engagement – is to lead the way as a sustainable, innovative and inclusive community, and achieving this requires a focus on our children.

Inclusive – One fifth of our community is aged 14 or younger. Being inclusive means our community is designed for the needs of children, and they participate in local decision making.

Innovative - Children bring new ideas and understandings of the world. We listen to our children and build our community together.

Sustainable – Children are future-focused. By listening to our children and meeting their needs today, we are securing our future prosperity and wellbeing.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2016); Census quick statistics – 3350; https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/POA3350?opendocument



OUR VISION FOR CHILD FRIENDLY BALLARAT

All children and young people are thriving and are active participants in shaping the future of our city. Our families are provided with choice and opportunities to nurture their children.

City of Ballarat will understand, listen to, and deliver for the needs of all children and their families, as an everyday part of the way we do business. We will be renowned for the way we value our children.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

“Ballarat is an inclusive city where diversity is not only accepted but welcomed and celebrated. Our city values the contribution of all people and our spaces, places, programs, events and services are designed to be welcoming and accessible to all. We recognise not everyone has the same experience and we work to make sure that people receive the support they need to ensure that no one is left behind.”



**> 3.1.1
The importance of a connected community**

Connection is key to a healthy, resilient community, and children and families have consistently told us about their desire for increased connectedness. This plan seeks to strengthen connection for children and their families in four key domains:



**> 3.2
THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF BALLARAT**

The City of Ballarat works at multiple levels:

-  **Community leader and advocate**
-  **Funding and delivering services for children and families**
-  **Informing the community about services and opportunities** and providing support and advice
-  **Planning and delivering community infrastructure** including facilities for children and families across the fast growing municipality
-  **Facilitating partnerships** and working as a collaborative partner with all levels of government and for community initiatives.

We are a key employer and provider of health, community and early years services for children and families. Including:

- We employ 27 Maternal and Child Health nurses who provide health and wellbeing support to children across the municipality from infancy until six years old, at six centres across the municipality
- Provision of childhood and school immunisation
- Parent Place – a one-stop hub for parents who can drop in to use feed and change facilities, participate in activities with their child, and seek support and information from City of Ballarat early years staff and external partners
- Children's Services incorporating long day care, sessional kindergarten, occasional care and family day care
- Central Kindergarten Registration Scheme
- Supported playgroups
- Libraries, including Story time and early years programs
- Infrastructure planning including kindergarten and community infrastructure for children and families.

**> 3.2.1
Our Partners**

In addition to the services we deliver, the City of Ballarat works in collaboration with all levels of government, as well as community services and organisations. Current partnerships and initiatives include:

- Best Start – we are partnering with the Victorian Government and local organisations to provide prevention and early intervention support for children experiencing vulnerabilities, from conception through to transition to school.
- Educational Leader Network – the City of Ballarat leads a network of early years educators across the municipality to share and promote best practice and knowledge.
- VicHealth Local Government Partnership: Young people leading healthier communities, which focuses on the health and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-25.

- Alliance member of the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee
- Central Highlands COMPACT between Department of Education and Training, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Multicultural Affairs Victoria.
- Koorie Engagement Action Group member
- Partnering with external agencies to deliver responsive services
- Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership

> 3.2.2

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The plan encompasses work across all aspects of the City of Ballarat and will be integral to the delivery of our long term strategic agenda. This includes our 2030 Community Vision and 2030 Health and Wellbeing Plan, as well as our 2025 Council Plan, and supporting plans and strategies.

The plan builds upon the work of the previous Municipal Early Years Plan and links with other plans and strategies in the City of Ballarat strategic framework, including:

10 Year Horizons

- Community Vision 2030
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031
- Community Infrastructure Plan 2021-2036

Four Year Horizon

- The Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Other relevant plans, strategies and frameworks

- Ballarat Strategy 2015
- Ballarat Planning Scheme
- Community Engagement Framework
- Intercultural City Strategic Plan 2018-2021

- Playspace Management Plan 2021-2025
- Libraries and Learning Strategy 2022-2027
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024
- Ballarat Integrated Transport Plan 2020
- Ballarat Prosperity Framework 2020
- Circular Ballarat Framework 2021
- Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan 2019
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019-2022
- Active Ballarat Strategy 2020
- Active Women and Girls Strategy 2018
- Ballarat Creative City Strategy 2019
- Ballarat Cycling Action Plan 2017-2025
- Ballarat Event Strategy 2018-2028
- Ballarat Heritage Plan 2017-30
- Food Strategy 2019-2022
- Road Management Plan 2021
- Urban Forest Action Plan 2019

Please refer to the latest plan, strategy and framework.

> 3.3

HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

- Review of previous community and children's consultations
- Review of current City of Ballarat plans and strategies
- Population data analysis
- Iterative consultation with community stakeholders, children, parents, and carers
- Engagement with City of Ballarat staff to design actions for this plan

A snapshot of Ballarat

> 3.4

SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN BALLARAT²

> 3.4.1

Our Community



20%

Population is aged 14 years or younger

(Census (2016))



4188

Additional children in the city by 2026

(Census (2016))



7441

Households with children aged under 15

Lucas-Cardigan fastest growing areas (Census (2016))



2553

Single parent households with children aged under 15

Greatest proportion in Sebastopol (Census (2016))



2.4

Average number of children in Ballarat families.

One quarter of households (24.6%) have one or more children aged 14 or less (Census (2016))



1250

Births in 2018

The number of births are increasing each year (Maternal and Child Health Nurse data set)



7.7%

Babies born with a low birth weight

2017/2018 (Maternal and Child Health Nurse data set)



1.1%

Ballarat women aged 15–19 became mothers

Twice the rate of that across Victoria (0.5%) (CHPCP)



15%

Ballarat mothers smoked during pregnancy

Compared with 8% Victorian average (CHPCP)



High level of infant mortality

Ballarat's infant mortality rate is double the Victorian average

(0.45% in Ballarat compared with 0.28% for Victoria) (CHPCP)



Higher level of disadvantage

Ballarat has higher levels of disadvantage compared with Victoria as a whole.

Wendouree has the highest degree of disadvantage households (CHPCP)



18%

Ballarat residents arrived in the last five years

(Census (2016))



11%

People in Ballarat speak a language other than English at home

(Census (2016))



4%

5–14 year olds have a disability requiring assistance with daily living

0–4 year olds (1%) (Census (2016))



744

Children experienced family violence in Ballarat in 2020

Family violence rates increased 42% in the year ending 2020. 33% higher than Victoria rate (Crime Statistic Agency)



369

Children aged nine years or younger were homeless in 2018

One in seven children in Ballarat aged 14 or younger lived in a jobless household Source: (Census 2016)

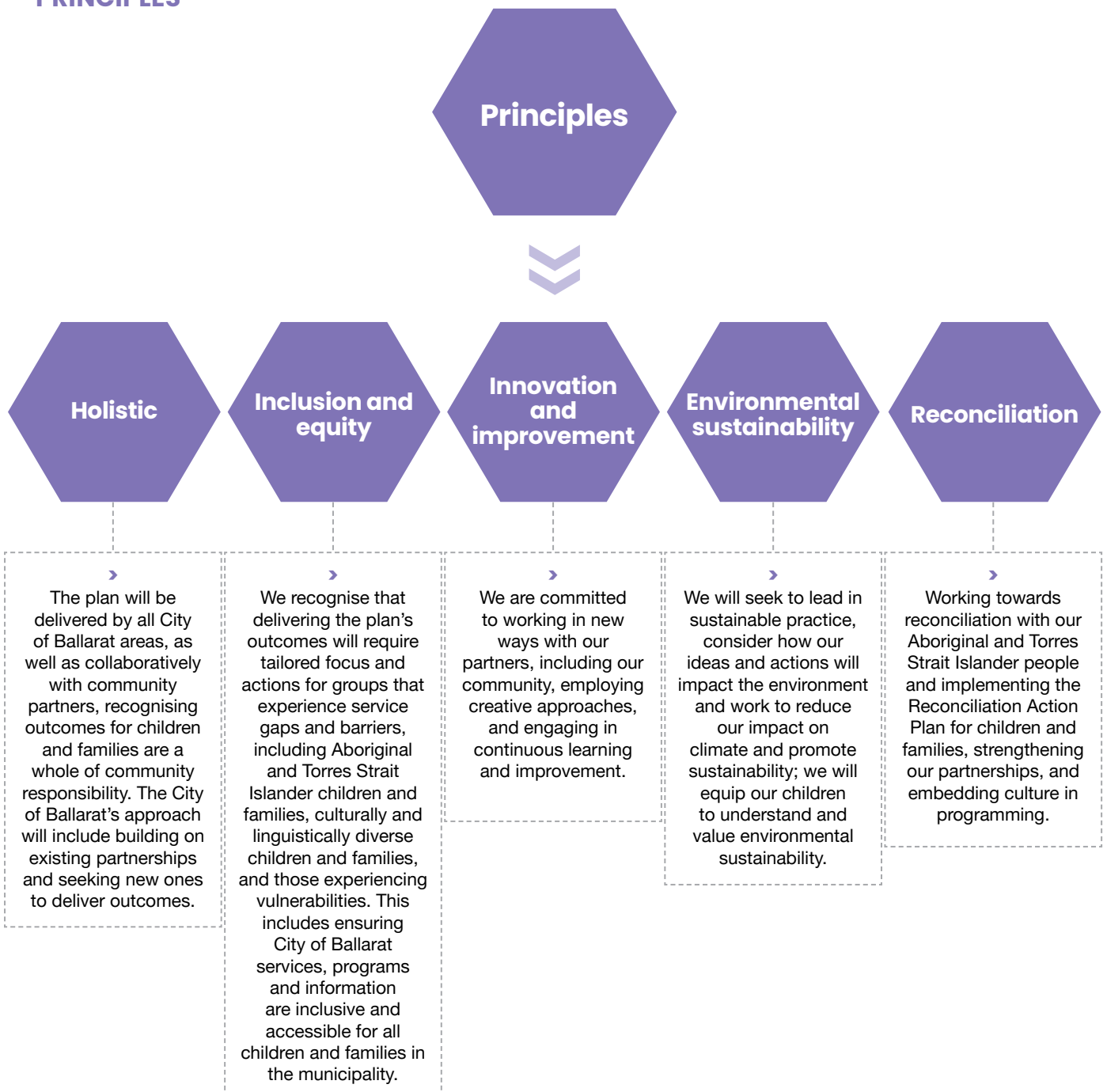
² Data has been sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Census (2016), Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership (CHPCP), City of Ballarat Maternal and Child Health data, the Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS), Victorian Crime Statistics Agency, and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The pandemic has produced additional pressures for every single family and made it harder for children and their families to be connected to each other, to their community, to learning, and to the services and organisations that support and enrich their lives. It has particularly exacerbated pre-existing disadvantage and has disproportionately affected our most vulnerable children and families. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, it has been harder to be connected

to culture. Children commencing school in 2022 will have had two years of disrupted pre-school education, prior to transitioning to school. While these and other pandemic impacts on children and families are anticipated and addressed in this plan, the City of Ballarat will continue to work with the community to identify emerging needs and issues for children and families and respond to them.







> 3.5 PRINCIPLES



Our Goals

Our plan has six goals that have been identified in the Nest, Australia’s first evidence-based framework for child and youth wellbeing, developed by the Australian Research Alliance of Children and Youth. The goals for children are:

> 3.6
OUR GOALS

GOALS FOR CHILDREN	
	1. Valued, loved and safe
	2. Having material basics
	3. Being healthy
	4. Children are learning
	5. Children are participating
	6. Positive sense of culture and identity

The work we will do towards these goals is outlined in the following pages.



Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten

15 hours a week FREE kindergarten
is available for your child.
Pre-arranged places, subject to availability. Free transport
for eligible children, and full meals for babies.
Enrol today.
Contact your local Kindergarten to book places

Motherhood. It isn't always easy.

Be informed and
feel reassured.
Sign up to receive
free supportive emails
throughout pregnancy
and early motherhood.

4. Goal 1: VALUED, LOVED AND SAFE



“It means to me like feeling important, like when someone in my family says let’s go for a walk.”

Sebastopol Primary School student

“It’s having crossing people to help you cross the road safely. And traffic lights.”

Sebastopol Primary School student

> 4.1 OUR PRIORITIES

1. Home is a safe place for children
2. Children are safe in their communities
3. Parents and carers have the supports they need to nurture their children
4. Children feel positive about their future

The Nest framework describes this as:

Being valued, loved, and safe means having loving, trusting relationships with family and friends. It involves a child or young person feeling valued by teachers and other adults in their life and knowing they are important to others and that others are caring and supportive of them. It involves feeling safe at home, in the community and online. Safety also means feeling safe about their future, which includes the knowledge that the environment and climate are a priority and are being protected.

What children in Ballarat have told us:











Children told us they feel safe and valued when people are friendly and kind, they can enjoy their neighbourhoods, navigate crossing roads and traffic safely, and enjoy green space and the outdoors with their friends and family.

Ensuring children are valued, loved and safe means actively planning for and prioritising the needs of children and families across our municipality and in our rapidly growing neighbourhoods.

The Infrastructure Plan, Housing Strategy, Net Zero Strategy, and Playspace Management Plan guide the way we will plan and deliver child friendly neighbourhoods. We will deliver our work in this area in alignment with our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, LGBTIQ+ Action Plan, Intercultural City Strategy and Reconciliation Action Plan to ensure all children in Ballarat are valued, loved and safe.

Delivering this goal also means being able to identify those who are experiencing harm and vulnerabilities, and linking them with the right services. Responses to family violence will continue through the ongoing implementation and embedding of the MARAM framework and Child Safe Standards, ensuring staff across all areas of the City of Ballarat and the early years sector know violence is everybody’s business, and understand how to recognise and respond to children experiencing violence. We do this in collaboration with health, social and early years services. This work is led, in particular, by our Maternal and Child Health team and early years’ staff, through engagement with parents, carers and children in our programs and initiatives such as the co-location of early years staff with The Orange Door. Enhanced Maternal Child Health and other programs will also continue to provide additional support for children with vulnerabilities and their families. This work will be further supported through the implementation of our Health and Wellbeing Plan.

> 4.1
OUR PRIORITIES

WHAT WE WILL DO	CITY OF BALLARAT'S ROLE	KEY CONNECTIONS
Ensure City of Ballarat activity is child friendly and child safe with child friendly initiatives and opportunities		
Develop our neighbourhoods to ensure all children can move safely to play, walk, ride bikes, and commute to school, kindergarten and early learning environments, health settings and recreational activities.		
Provide parents and carers with opportunities to strengthen parenting skills, resources, and capacity		
Identify and support children at risk of harm in alignment with the MARAM framework		
Ensure children and their families are aware of the work being done to plan and provide for a sustainable and secure future		



Deliver



Partner



Advocate



Connected to community



Connected to the City of Ballarat, services, and organisations



Interconnected service sector



Connected to place and country

> 4.1.1
HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Develop and implement a Child Friendly assessment framework for City of Ballarat projects and planning in Ballarat		✓	✓	✓	✓	Business case to be developed according to implementation plan	
Ensure amenities and services are walkable and accessible	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Linked to business case identified in Community Infrastructure Plan	
Implement and embed the MARAM framework and Child Safe Standards across all City of Ballarat services, policies and frameworks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent and funded via State Government implementation initiatives	
Increase the accessibility of Parent Place and early years information for all families in the municipality, including outreach and co-delivery with community organisations	✓	✓	✓	✓		Business case to be developed according to implementation plan	
Collaborate with antenatal care providers to link vulnerable parents with early years services earlier	✓	✓	✓	✓		Recurrent	
Communicate about climate change planning and initiatives in ways that are meaningful to families and children			✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Engage the business and commerce sector in child friendly initiatives				✓	✓	Business case to be developed, anticipate approximate program costs of \$30,000	

- Engaged Communities
- Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)
- City Design
- Development Facilitation
- Infrastructure
- People and Culture
- Waste and Environment
- Communication and Design
- Economic Growth
- Arts and Events
- All areas of Council



5. Goal 2: HAVING MATERIAL BASICS



“I like riding my bike around to get to school. Everyone should have a bike.”

Sebastopol Primary School student

> 5.1 OUR PRIORITIES

1. **Parents and carers can access the information and resources they need to provide for their children**
2. **Children’s future security, including food, water, transport, housing, access to internet and timely services, is being actively planned**
3. **Children live in environments which enable them to thrive**

The Nest framework describes this as:

Children and young people who have material basics have the things they need. They live in suitable, secure, stable housing, with appropriate clothing, nutritious food, clean water, and clean air. They have access to transport, to required local services (e.g. plumbing) and to open spaces in nature. Their family has enough money for necessities. They have the material items needed to develop as an active member of society such as school supplies, suitable technology, or sporting equipment.







What children in Ballarat have told us:

Children told us having material basics means having the things a person ‘should’ have, and a community where kids have material basics including parks and playgrounds, public sports grounds, and helpful people who will look after you if you’re in need.

The City of Ballarat supports children to have material basics by connecting children and families to the services they need, empowering parents and carers to identify opportunities for support, and providing accessible information that parents and carers know how to find. Community facilities and libraries play an important role for children and families, providing access to safe environments to access to things that children need, including a place to learn, play and connect with others, enjoy nature and the outdoors, access books and information, the internet, and technology. As a provider of children’s services, the City of Ballarat is dedicated to providing high quality environments for children that set a high standard for children’s services and provide a consistently high-quality experience for all children in the municipality.

Supporting work of the City of Ballarat that will contribute to this goal includes the implementation of our Community Infrastructure Plan, Diverse and Affordable Housing Discussion Paper, the Libraries and Learning Strategy, Active Ballarat Strategy, the Playspace Management Framework, and the Circular Ballarat Framework.

> 5.1 OUR PRIORITIES

WHAT WE WILL DO	CITY OF BALLARAT'S ROLE	KEY CONNECTIONS
Provide families with access to the social and other services they need		
Provide families and children with access to the information they need		
Ensure City of Ballarat facilities, including open space, are high quality and facilitate best practice service models		



Deliver



Partner



Advocate



Connected to community



Connected to the City of Ballarat, services, and organisations






Interconnected service sector



Connected to place and country

> 5.1.1 HOW WE WILL DO IT

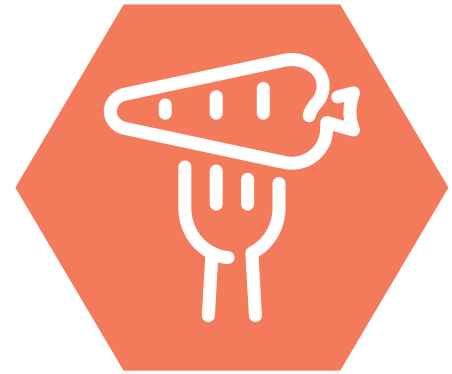
ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAM
Planning for our growing municipality, informed by a child friendly assessment framework		✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Plan, deliver, and advocate for services for families and children in more locations across the municipality, including Parent Place outreach delivery with partner organisations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Business cases to be developed as outlined in the Community Infrastructure Plan	
Review and renew license agreements for City of Ballarat facilities to ensure high quality facilities designed to support the delivery of models of best practice;		✓	✓			Business case to be developed according to implementation plan.	

Review current information content and channels provided to families and children, and increase access to information for culturally and linguistically diverse children and families	✓	✓				Recurrent	
Develop an online family, youth and children directory		✓	✓	✓	✓	Business case to be developed according to implementation plan.	
Advocate for, support, and provide investment in new and improved infrastructure where needed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Business cases to be submitted as outlined in Community Infrastructure Plan	
Delivery of free wi-fi in City of Ballarat run spaces and advocate for the provision of free Wi-Fi in public spaces across the municipality		✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	

- Engaged Communities
- Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)
- City Design
- Development Facilitation
- Infrastructure
- Strategic Planning
- Business Improvement
- Communication and Design
- Sustainable Growth
- Information Services
- Property and Facility Maintenance
- Libraries and Lifelong Learning



6. Goal 3: BEING HEALTHY



“In a healthy community there would be kids outside practicing sports most of the day, and you’d hear kids cheering each other on and staying positive, showing sportsmanship.”

Lucas Primary School student

“And planting trees on every street. I think that would help make it healthier for the community, and also showing kids good things to do that they might then copy when they grow up.”

Dana Street Primary School student

> 6.1 OUR PRIORITIES

1. Children have access to diversity of play space that meets their needs
2. Children access the right services at the right time to support their health and wellbeing
3. Children and families are engaged in climate adaptation and sustainability
4. Children are supported through the disruptive impacts of COVID-19

The Nest framework describes this as:

Healthy children and young people have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met. All of their developmental health needs are provided for in a timely way. They receive appropriate health services, including preventative measures to address potential or emerging physical, emotional, and mental health concerns.
















What children in Ballarat have told us:




Children told us that being healthy is as much about feeling positive, having encouragement and supportive relationships as it is about being in the fresh air, eating healthy food, exercising, and playing sport. Children also recognised the importance of healthy environments which included natural assets.

Being healthy also means being supported to recover from continuing COVID19 impacts by ensuring all children have opportunities for active recreation and social connection, and to participate in the community, and that sport and recreation facilities and play spaces are inclusive and designed for all children. For many, it will also mean re-connection or connecting with services for the first time, including for mental health and wellbeing support. Our Integrated Children’s Centres, Parent Place, supported playgroups and new parents’ groups play a critical role in fostering opportunities for children and families to connect with services and with each other.


Strategies and frameworks that link to this work include the 2021-2031 Health and Wellbeing Plan that includes long term objectives for children and young people, the Active Ballarat Strategy and the Active Women and Girls Strategy, the Ballarat Cycling Action Plan, the Play Space Management Framework and the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

> 6.1
OUR PRIORITIES







WHAT WE WILL DO	CITY OF BALLARAT'S ROLE	KEY CONNECTIONS
Increase safe, inclusive green space and active play space across the municipality		 
Increase the inclusivity of community and sporting clubs and organisations for children		 
Partner with the community to deliver initiatives in identified areas of need, including physical health and activity, mental health, dentistry		 
Provide opportunities for social connection for all families and children, including positive social and peer supports for parents, carers, and children	 	
Children and families are engaged in sustainability and care for the environment		 

 Deliver
  Partner
  Advocate










 Connected to community
  Connected to the City of Ballarat, services, and organisations

 Interconnected service sector
  Connected to place and country

> 6.1.1
HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAM
Deliver new and improved play space throughout the municipality		✓	✓	✓	✓	Business cases developed as outlined in Active Ballarat and the Playspace Management Plan	     

Deliver community health initiatives including the Smiles for Miles and Healthy Together Achievement programs	✓	✓	✓	✓		Recurrent	
Collaborate with and lead community initiatives, to provide a range of need-based programs and interventions for children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Continue to review and improve the accessibility, cultural safety, and inclusivity of Maternal and Child Health services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Ensure relevant community events include opportunities to facilitate interactions with peers for children of all abilities, and their families	✓	✓	✓	✓		Recurrent	 
Increase opportunities for children with additional needs to access early years programs	✓	✓	✓	✓		Recurrent	 
Engage with community organisations to promote the inclusivity of community and sporting clubs and organisations, including promotion of community grants to support this	✓	✓	✓	✓		Recurrent and business cases developed as outlined in the Active Ballarat plan	   
Engage children and families in the move to the Ballarat circular economy		✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 

-  Engaged Communities
-  Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)
-  City Design
-  Development Facilitation
-  Infrastructure
-  Waste and Environment
-  Arts and Events
-  Property and Facility Maintenance
-  Recreation Services



7. Goal 4: CHILDREN ARE LEARNING



“In my ideal learning community everyone would be outside with a couple of tables and in small groups, lots of teamwork and communication.”

Dana Street Primary School student

“You can say anything without being judged.”

Dana Street Primary School student

“When people are learning it’s noisy but in the good way, like having a fun time and laughing.”

Dana Street Primary School student

> 7.1 OUR PRIORITIES

1. **Children and families are supported through key transitions including to kindergarten and school**
2. **All children have access to quality early learning, kindergarten and schooling that meets their needs**
3. **Children are supported to understand reconciliation, diversity, and social inclusion.**

The Nest framework describes this as:









Children and young people learn through a variety of experiences within the classroom, the home, and the community in which they live. Their individual learning needs are addressed to allow them to realise their full learning potential. Families are engaged in their child’s learning. Children and young people are supported and encouraged to learn in a wide variety of settings, including formal education. They have opportunities to participate in a breadth of experiences where their learning is valued and supported by their family and in the wider community.




What children in Ballarat have told us:



Children told us they enjoy stimulating learning environments that are colourful and joyous, and that learning together with a diversity of people was important to them. Children value and are eager to learn about Ballarat’s Aboriginal culture and colonial history.



City of Ballarat supports children’s learning from birth, through services to support parents to provide a rich learning environment in the home, as a key provider of early learning through its centre-based day care and kindergarten services, by providing information that supports all families to exercise choice and navigate transitions, and through advocacy for primary and secondary schools that meet the needs of all families in the municipality. Opportunities for children’s learning are also supported in numerous informal environments, including libraries, art galleries and at community events, and are supported by our Libraries and Learning Strategy and our Creative City Strategy.

> 7.1 OUR PRIORITIES







WHAT WE WILL DO	CITY OF BALLARAT'S ROLE	KEY CONNECTIONS
Strengthen supports for children and families through key transitions		
Continue to foster engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGBTIQ+ communities and early learning services, kindergartens, and schools, to facilitate the continuous development of cultural competencies		
Continue leadership of best practice in the early years sector		
Deliver and fund MCH, early learning and kindergarten, and advocate for schools that are inclusive, accessible, affordable, within local neighbourhoods and of a consistent quality and standard across the municipality.		

 Deliver
  Partner
  Advocate


 Connected to community
  Connected to the City of Ballarat, services, and organisations

 Interconnected service sector
  Connected to place and country

> 7.1.1 HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAM
Continuous review planning, funding and advocacy for children's services, kindergartens and schools that meet the need of our growing municipality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent and business cases developed as outlined in the Community Infrastructure Plan 2021-2036	   
Identify and facilitate transition support between programs and organisations, including early learning and school, for all children and families.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 

Families are supported to participate in two years of funded kindergarten from 2022	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent with possible business case to assist with administration and review of Central Kindergarten Registration scheme as necessary	 
All City of Ballarat run early years programs are evidence based	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	  
Continued facilitation and participation in early years networks to promote leadership and best practice across the early childhood sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Implement dual language Aboriginal and English signage in City of Ballarat run early years facilities			✓	✓	✓	Business case to be developed	 
Promote and advocate for STEAM initiatives for children			✓	✓	✓	Recurrent and business case linked to Creative City Strategy to be developed	  

 Engaged Communities	 Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)	
 Arts and Events	 Development Facilitation	 Economic Growth
 Libraries and Lifelong Learning		



8. Goal 5: CHILDREN ARE PARTICIPATING



“A city where every kid is participating looks, at worst, like kids getting involved in activities like the tree planting and sports like they already do, and at best it would have a kid member of parliament.”

Dana Street Primary School student

“It’s important everywhere since your voice is important and discussing your feelings with others is also important”

Lucas Primary School student

> 8.1 OUR PRIORITIES

1. Children feel part of the community
2. Children have opportunities to participate in their community
3. Children are empowered to speak up and be heard on decisions that matter to them and impact them
4. Children are supported to engage and connect with their communities throughout COVID-19

The Nest framework describes this as:










Participating is about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and taken seriously within their family and community. It means having a say in decisions that impact them. It is being empowered to speak out and express themselves. Participating includes involvement with peers and groups through a variety of activities, including online communities.

What children in Ballarat have told us:

Participating means being an active member of society. Children told us participating means being able to do things you enjoy and getting to meet like-minded people. They recognised the importance of inclusivity so that everyone could participate, and they want to have a voice and influence decisions that matter to them.

As a Child Friendly City, Ballarat recognises engaging children in decision making is as important as any other group in the community; we have an established history of consulting children and we will continue to strengthen children’s consultation practice across all areas. City of Ballarat is also well placed to fund and deliver programs, community events and festivals that are inclusive of children and families and facilitate opportunities for play and interaction. Our work in this area is also delivered through our Creative City Strategy, Intercultural City Strategy, Disability and Inclusion Action Plan, Active Ballarat and Active Women and Girls Strategy and underpinned by our Community Engagement Framework.

> 8.1 OUR PRIORITIES

WHAT WE WILL DO	CITY OF BALLARAT'S ROLE	KEY CONNECTIONS
Support children and families to remain engaged and connected to their communities throughout COVID-19		
Ensure facilities, amenities, open spaces, and places in the municipality are inclusive and meet the needs of all children and families		
Children are consulted on key City of Ballarat decisions and listened to with respect		 
All new residents are welcomed into the community		



Deliver



Partner



Advocate



Connected to community



Connected to the City of Ballarat, services, and organisations
































Interconnected service sector



Connected to place and country

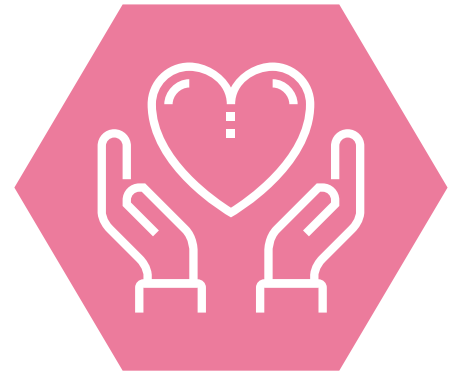
**> 8.1.1
HOW WE WILL DO IT**

ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAM
All City of Ballarat community events are child and family friendly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Develop and promote a Children and Youth web page to support active citizenship and engagement in relevant decisions		✓	✓	✓	✓	Business case to be developed linked to implementation plan	  
Convene a Children's Brains Trust for input into decisions that impact them		✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent Business case to be developed linked to implementation plan	 
Increase opportunities for engagement by including children in consultations across the City of Ballarat, including routine surveys and feedback processes, and liaising with schools and learning environments to promote opportunities for participation and engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Business case to be developed	        
Promote inclusive opportunities for connection for new residents, including delivering new resident sessions for families with younger children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	  

 Engaged Communities	 Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)	
 City Design	 Development Facilitation	 Communications and Design
 Strategic Planning	 Arts and Events	 Libraries and Lifelong Learning
 Recreation Services	 Customer Service	



9. Goal 6: POSITIVE SENSE OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY



“It means that people support you. Being respected. Fitting in and being included.”

Dana Street Primary School student

“It would feel really good if everybody got together one day, just to celebrate different cultures.”

Dana Street Primary School student

> 9.1 OUR PRIORITIES

1. Children feel connected to place
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are connected to country
3. Ballarat celebrates children’s diverse cultures and identities
4. Children have opportunities to understand and build their cultural identity
5. Children feel safe to express their identity

The Nest framework describes this as:












Having a positive sense of identity and culture is central to the wellbeing of all children and young people. This is important for all, regardless of background, but in Australia, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. It encompasses having spiritual needs met, a sense of cultural connectedness, belonging and acceptance at home and in the community – and confidence that their identity, culture, and community is respected and valued. It involves feeling safe and supported in expressing one’s identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture, or language.

What children in Ballarat have told us:

Children told us a positive sense of culture and identity involved learning about and celebrating lots of different cultural identities, being kind and not excluding anybody, feeling respected and peaceful.

City of Ballarat’s work in this area is driven by the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Disability and Inclusion Action Plan, the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan, and until recently, the Intercultural Strategic Plan, and well as in our relationships with our cultural partners at BADAC and BRMC. Our work is further supported by the Libraries and Learning Strategy and the Creative City Strategy.

> 9.1
OUR PRIORITIES

WHAT WE WILL DO	CITY OF BALLARAT'S ROLE	KEY CONNECTIONS
Children engage in reconciliation		
All children see themselves and their culture celebrated in their community, events, public art, green and open spaces		 
City of Ballarat identifies further opportunities to integrate the delivery of programs and services with cultural and community partners		
City of Ballarat public institutions, children's services and learning environments are culturally welcoming		
Continually reassess and strengthen cultural competence and cultural safety across all areas of City of Ballarat and children's services		



Deliver



Partner



Advocate



Connected to community



Connected to the City of Ballarat, services, and organisations















Interconnected service sector



Connected to place and country

> 9.1.1
HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAM
Ensure City of Ballarat run children’s and family services are culturally safe and culturally appropriate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week and Harmony Day are promoted as a core calendar items on all early years learning programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Identify opportunities for publications, public art and other initiatives for child audiences that celebrate diverse children and families	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Business case to be developed linked to Creative City Strategy	  
Co-deliver services for children and families with cultural partners and organisations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Delivery of child and family initiatives in the Reconciliation Action Plan		✓	✓	✓	✓	Business case to be developed linked to RAP	 
Enable self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, by offering choice of services and referral to community organisations and services where preferred	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 






 Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)

 Engaged Communities  Arts and Events



10. How we will measure our success

Additional indicators may be identified throughout the four years of the Plan.

1. Valued, loved and safe	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families supported through co-location of Maternal and Child Health at the Orange Door • Community supported by Parent Place
2. Having material basics	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental employment status • Reduction in housing stress (rental stress/mortgage stress) • Access to Families, Youth and Children Directory
3. Being Healthy	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low birthweight babies • MCH visit rates • Participation in First Parent Groups and Sleep and Settling programs
4. Children are learning	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten participation rate (3 and 4 year old) • Proportion of children ready for school (AECD) • Children attend and enjoy kindergarten (absentee data) • Proportion of children read to every day
5. Children are participating	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to internet at home • Participation in children’s consultations • Opportunities to be involved in activities that meet their needs
6. Positive sense of culture and identity	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined in consultation with cultural organisations • Children feel safe to express their identity

A review will be conducted at the end of 2023 to assess implementation and update actions in the plan in response to emerging needs and issues.



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