



SUMMARY PAPER

FINDING MY NEIGHBOURHOOD

*IN OUR PEOPLE, CULTURE & PLACE:
A PLAN TO SUSTAIN BALLARAT'S HERITAGE 2017-2030*

WHAT ARE OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS?

Ballarat is a vibrant and growing regional centre, which includes a rapidly growing urban core, set within a picturesque and highly productive rural hinterland. It is the combination of the urban and rural components of the municipality that are central to Ballarat's unique identity and character.

Ballarat's neighbourhoods can be found in many outlying townships and suburbs.



INTRODUCTION

Heritage is of critical importance to the Ballarat community and our city's future. In whole-of-city consultations, the people of Ballarat said that of all the things they value about Ballarat, they love its heritage the most and want to retain it. They also told us they want Council to show leadership to achieve this vision. **Our People, Culture & Place: A plan to sustain Ballarat's heritage 2017-2030** (the heritage plan) provides a best practice platform for making it happen. The plan is a living document that will continue to evolve over time as new opportunities and challenges appear. It commits us to stepping up our efforts to sustain Ballarat's heritage and ensure it is vibrant and celebrated into the future.

The heritage plan builds on *Today, Tomorrow, Together: The Ballarat Strategy* (2015) that committed to delivering a new approach to managing change in our historic city and rural landscape, local plans for local communities, a network of complete local neighbourhoods and embracing the urban and rural landscape, among others. The plan contains several actions that contribute to these goals and are relevant to our city's diverse neighbourhoods.

This summary paper aims to assist local communities in understanding how the heritage plan will deliver on-the-ground outcomes where they live.



OUR COMMITMENT

Through the plan:

We will not just protect but constructively work to sustain Ballarat's heritage

We will help deliver The Ballarat Strategy by prioritising and celebrating the elements of our city that our citizens love and value most

We will deliver the Council Plan goals:

Liveability: Making sure local people are central to our work in delivering the heritage plan

Prosperity: Aligning economic, social and heritage conservation goals

Sustainability: Safeguarding our heritage resources in times of rapid change

Accountability: Continuing to meet and expand on our legislative responsibilities and making transparent decisions to meet our community's expectations.

OUR SUBURBS

BALLARAT'S SUBURBS INCLUDE:

Alfredton, Bakery Hill, Ballarat Central, Ballarat East, Ballarat North, Black Hill, Brown Hill, Canadian, Cardigan, Delacombe, Eureka, Golden Point, Lake Gardens, Lake Wendouree, Lucas, Magpie, Mitchell Park, Mount Clear, Mount Helen, Mount Pleasant, Mount Rowan, Nerrina, Newington, Redan, Sebastopol, Soldiers Hill and Wendouree.

Local suburbs are valued by residents for their places to work, live and relax. They include a variety of housing styles, services, public parks and open spaces and each has its own distinctive stories and character. The histories of Ballarat's suburbs vary. Many were established during the goldrush era and some before it, while others were part of Ballarat's post-war boom – and more new suburbs are being created today.

WHAT OUR COMMUNITIES SAID THEY LOVE ABOUT BALLARAT'S SUBURBS

Our suburbs' history and heritage, parks, open spaces, old buildings, lakes, playgrounds, greenery, wide streets, beautiful gardens, streetscapes with their bluestone channels, wide streets, gravel shoulders and old established trees, landscape and views, native flora and fauna, accessible trails and special places like Lake Wendouree, Sovereign Hill, Lake Esmond, Canadian Forest, stadiums, Black Hill, Yarrowee trail and Yarrowee Creek.



OUR TOWNSHIPS

BALLARAT'S TOWNSHIPS INCLUDE:

Buninyong, Burrumbeet, Cardigan Village, Learmonth, Miners Rest and Warrenheip.

These townships are valued by residents for their character, sense of community and liveability. They represent a different style of living to urban Ballarat and contribute to the diversity of lifestyle and choice in the municipality. Their histories vary, as site selection was dependent on the geography and topography of each district. Early settlement sprung up around river crossings or at the end of a day's journey along major link roads, usually near permanent water. Many of these locations and travel routes echo those utilised by the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal peoples for at least 50,000 years, who selected places to live for similar reasons as did the European settlers. The Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung continue cultural connections to their traditional lands today.

WHAT OUR COMMUNITIES SAID THEY LOVE ABOUT BALLARAT'S TOWNSHIPS

In the 2013 Ballarat Imagine whole-of-city community consultation program, people told us that they love our townships' landscapes, views, bushland, native flora and fauna, parks and gardens, lakes, treed avenues, history and heritage, accessible trails, open spaces, views, parks and playgrounds and special places like Canadian Forest, Lake Burrumbeet, Lake Learmonth and Mount Buninyong.



WHAT WE LOVE AND WHAT IS VULNERABLE

WHAT WE LOVE

Our neighbourhoods' natural, cultural and historic heritage is both a rare legacy and living resource. If conserved and harnessed positively, it can contribute greatly to their futures. While our story is evolving over time, there are things locals and visitors love about our neighbourhoods now and don't want to lose.

From the results of Ballarat Imagine, we know that heritage is top of our community's list when it comes to the things they value about the places they live. It is precisely because it has such high intrinsic value that heritage becomes vulnerable in the face of change. We need to understand what exactly is of most value and therefore most vulnerable so that we can target how we best sustain heritage into the future.



WHAT MAKES HERITAGE VULNERABLE

Many things make heritage vulnerable, including population growth, climate change, a changing economic future, overdevelopment and inappropriate development and demographic and cultural change. Elements such as our neighbourhood's sense of place, waterbodies, significant views and landmarks, sense of place, rural and urban landscapes and even colours are vulnerable to these challenges.

To help make sure Ballarat's heritage is sustained into the future, we need to understand how well our current policies, practices and tools are working and what, if anything, needs to change.

Results of a holistic assessment of Ballarat's policy and practice environment tells us that conservation in our city has resulted in a rich and highly significant historic landscape and strong sense of place but we need to better target our policies, practices and tools for more inclusive and sustainable results (see pages 12-16 of the heritage plan for full results).

The City of Ballarat's heritage practice has evolved greatly over time to deliver best practice. This work provides a strong foundation to build upon for addressing future challenges (see pages 21-22 of the heritage plan).

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Given that Ballarat's population is set to grow by up to 60% by 2040, the critical question then is:

How do we facilitate change whilst safeguarding our heritage and the things we love about our municipality, now and into the future?

THREE PRIORITY AREAS

By setting priorities, all stakeholders can work together to more effectively achieve heritage conservation goals.

The heritage plan outlines actions in three priority areas, of equal importance, which apply to Ballarat's neighbourhoods.

They are:

1. Regeneration
2. Celebrating and inspiring with Ballarat's stories
3. Managing change and safeguarding heritage



PRIORITY AREA 1: REGENERATION

Ballarat's neighbourhoods have changed and adapted overtime with new generations of people making them their home. Today, our suburbs demonstrate the stories of all the people who have come and gone through Ballarat's periods of boom and bust. Some areas have grown while others have declined.

Regeneration is a conservation method that can bring back life, activity, relevance and function to places and strengthen the identity of local communities. Regeneration makes our heritage more resilient to change.

Actions relating to Ballarat's neighbourhoods:

- While focused on the CBD, the **CBD streetscape regeneration program** includes trying out new ways of working with owners and businesses. Lessons from this program will inform our approach to regeneration in other areas of Ballarat, including our city's diverse neighbourhoods (see page 30 of the heritage plan).

- **Strengthened financial and investment packages** to provide funding for owners of heritage places to undertake conservation works (see page 33 of the heritage plan).
- The **Urban Forest** initiative delivering 40% tree canopy cover for Ballarat by 2040, beginning with the city's public spaces (see page 35 of the heritage plan).
- Encouraging **new cultural events** to come to our city and evolving the **Ballarat Heritage Awards** into a statewide program to help locals and visitors celebrate Ballarat's heritage and bring it to life. The heritage awards are open to everyone in the municipality (see page 37 of the heritage plan).
- **World Heritage listing** of the Central Victorian Goldfields is being sought to spur social and economic regeneration of the entire region underpinned by our rich heritage assets. Local places like the Eureka Stockade Gardens in Ballarat East are already on Australia's heritage list and help tell an internationally relevant story about the central Victorian goldfields (see page 39 of the heritage plan).

PRIORITY AREA 2: CELEBRATING AND INSPIRING WITH BALLARAT'S STORIES

Our municipality is gifted with the legacy of many different people, who have left a vast and diverse range of stories to tell. Local people have told us, time and again, that there is a need to interpret these stories. **Storytelling – also known as interpretation – is a valuable tool. Successful interpretation has the potential to pass on knowledge and enhance heritage experiences. It can also create employment and attract niche businesses to the municipality.**

Actions relating to Ballarat's neighbourhoods:

- A **digital knowledge base** to help bring together dispersed knowledge about our municipality, to provide content for engaging with stories of local people and places (see page 44 of the heritage plan).
- **Storytellers Network and Digital Toolkit** to build the capacity of local people and businesses to do their own storytelling and grow appreciation for and linkages with Ballarat's heritage (see page 47 of the heritage plan).

- **Finance and incentives package** of targeted heritage grants for storytelling, research into Aboriginal cultural heritage, as well as assessments and conservation for local historical collections across the city (see page 49 of the heritage plan).
- **One-stop-shop heritage hub** delivering new ways for visitors to experience heritage, provide support for collecting organisations (like local historical societies), as well as documenting and celebrating the City of Ballarat's historical collections. Our city's many historical collections can be found in places like the former Ballarat Shire offices in Learmonth and the Buninyong Town Hall, held with local historical societies, in private ownership and kept in larger institutions like the Gold Museum in Golden Point (see page 51 of the heritage plan).
- **Revitalised cultural tourism package** to provide new experience-based offerings across our municipality that draw on Ballarat's underutilised stories, spaces and people to make the most of our heritage for locals and visitors (see page 53 of the heritage plan).

PRIORITY AREA 3: MANAGING CHANGE AND SAFEGUARDING HERITAGE

Ballarat is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria. There is a lot we can do to better inform development decisions in local areas and safeguard our municipality's heritage and identity. To help, our planning tools and practices are evolving.

Actions relating to Ballarat's neighbourhoods:

- Local plans for local communities aiming to safeguard the distinctiveness of local areas, provide clarity for developers about desired approaches to change, and address heritage protection gaps. They have been completed or are being undertaken in Learmonth, Cardigan Village, Burrumbeet, Miners Rest and Ballarat East and will be progressively rolled out in other areas across Ballarat. They give the community a voice in planning for the future of their neighbourhoods (see page 61 of the heritage plan).
- Aboriginal cultural heritage planning relates to all areas of our municipality. This action aims to achieve best practice planning in this area, for the City of Ballarat (see page 60 of the heritage plan).
- Urban renewal projects that aim to help transform specific sites in local areas that can be improved to match community aspirations with alternative uses and futures (see page 63 of the heritage plan).
- Planning Scheme Review will occur to ensure the Ballarat Planning Scheme progresses current policy objectives (such as the Ballarat Strategy) and the community's vision. It relates to all areas of Ballarat (see page 64 of the heritage plan).
- Digital decision making and engagement tools (e.g. 3D) will assist planners and engage with owners, developers and local citizens. It will be municipality-wide and strengthens tools like:
www.visualisingballarat.org.au (see page 67 of the heritage plan).

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE HERITAGE PLAN

The methods we use for implementing this plan are critical to its success.

Four fundamental principles – both operational and aspirational – will guide our approach (see page 72 of the heritage plan):

1. Leading the way
2. Effective, people-centred approaches and public participation
3. Comprehensive knowledge of what makes Ballarat, Ballarat
4. Vibrant partnerships and collaboration

Monitoring our progress, outcomes and reporting will occur every two years.



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