



YOUTH COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2026

Early each year the Youth Council is required to establish an annual list of priorities that will guide its strategic direction during that year. The Youth Council have identified three broad priority areas for 2026 that directly relate to young people. The three priority areas are: **Equity and Diversity**, **Access and Participation**, and **Environment and Public Infrastructure**.

Each priority area has a Working Group with three to eight Youth Councillors as members and is chaired by a Youth Councillor who is not a member of the Executive. The role of each Working Group is to explore and develop options for consideration by the Youth Council.

Each Working Group is aligned to the City of Greater Bendigo Youth Council's Terms of Reference, specifically its purpose which states that: *"The City of Greater Bendigo Youth Council is an advisory and advocacy committee whose role is to represent the voice of young people who live, work and/or study in the City of Greater Bendigo. Youth Council achieves this by:*

- + *Providing advice to the City of Greater Bendigo Council on plans, strategies, policies and projects so that they better align to the needs of young people;*
- + *Engaging with young people to identify their priorities; and*
- + *Advocating on issues that directly impact young people."*

Priority One: Equity and Diversity

The Equity and Diversity Working Group encompasses advocacy regarding Greater Bendigo's diverse communities, feeling safe and welcome, social justice, and access and inclusion for all members of the community. The purpose of the Equity and Diversity Working Group is to explore and develop options and/or recommendations for the Youth Council to consider relating to:

- The LGBTQIA+ community,
- Young people including rural young people,
- First Nations members of the community,
- Cultural and linguistically diverse members of the community and refugees,
- Religious diversity,
- People living with a disability,
- People who identify as neurodiverse,
- Homelessness,
- People living with mental illness,
- People from low socio-economic backgrounds,
- Public safety and crime,
- Woman and gender equity; and
- Men's violence and domestic violence.

Priority Two: Access and Participation

The Access and Participation Working Group encompasses advocacy regarding access to Greater Bendigo's educational, economic, and social opportunities for young people in Greater Bendigo. The purpose of the Access and Participation Working Group is to explore and develop options and/or recommendations for the Youth Council to consider relating to:

- Access to educational opportunities,
- Access to volunteer opportunities and youth volunteering,
- Pathways to employment opportunities,
- Participation in local sporting and recreational groups,
- Participation in local cultural and arts groups,
- Access to affordable public transport,
- Access to health services,
- Access to community programs, activities and events; and
- Access to community services and resources including the rural areas of Greater Bendigo.

Priority Three: Environment and Public Infrastructure

The Environment and Public Infrastructure Working Group encompasses advocacy regarding Greater Bendigo's natural environment, people's connection to natural resources and open spaces, and public infrastructure. The purpose of the Environment and Public Infrastructure Working Group is to explore and develop options and/or recommendations for the Youth Council to consider relating to:

- Climate Change,
- Sustainable development that includes environmental, economic and social,
- Biodiversity and conservation,
- Waste management,
- First Nations people and the environment,
- Heritage,
- Public spaces and green spaces,
- Public and active transport,
- Vandalism; and
- Sports and recreational facilities.

