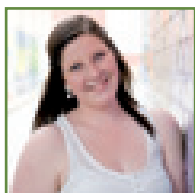
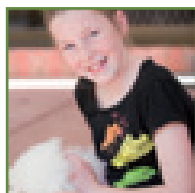


# *The State of Bendigo's Children report*



AN INITIATIVE OF THE BENDIGO CHILD FRIENDLY CITY LEADERSHIP GROUP  
MARCH 2011





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The report framework and content were developed at two workshops auspiced by the Bendigo Child Friendly City Leadership Group and attended by a wide range of organisations that work with children and young people.

The State of Bendigo's Children Report, March 2011

Auspiced by St Luke's Anglicare on behalf of the Bendigo Child Friendly City Leadership Group.

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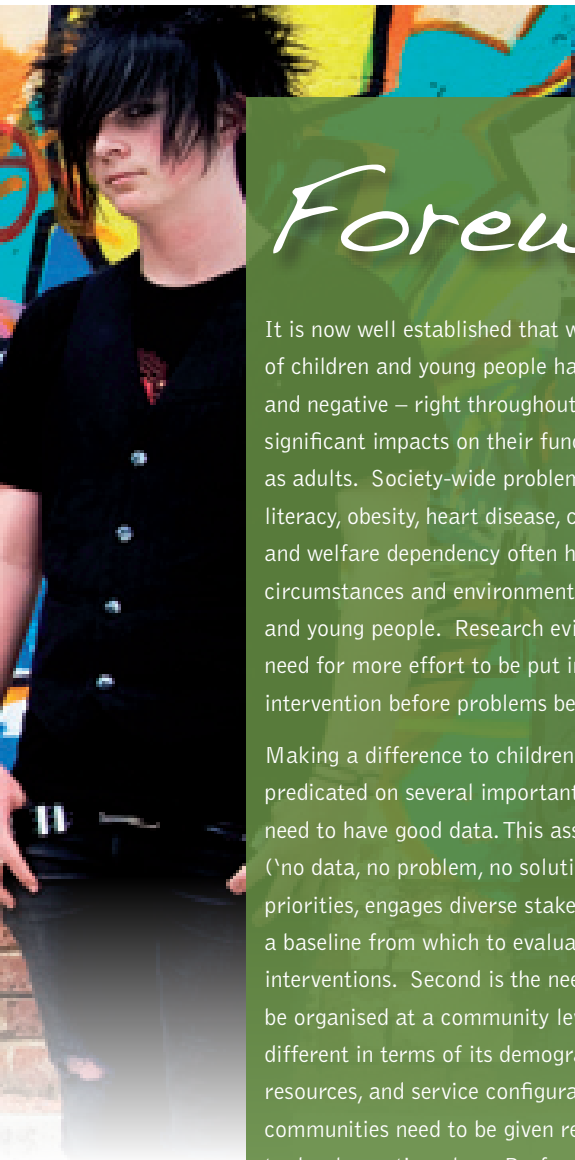
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# Foreword

It is now well established that what happens in the lives of children and young people has consequences – positive and negative – right throughout their life. These have significant impacts on their functioning and opportunities as adults. Society-wide problems such as crime, poor literacy, obesity, heart disease, chronic health problems and welfare dependency often have their origins in the circumstances and environments experienced by children and young people. Research evidence points strongly to the need for more effort to be put into prevention and earlier intervention before problems become entrenched.

Making a difference to children and young people is predicated on several important principles. First is the need to have good data. This assists efforts at advocacy ('no data, no problem, no solution'), helps establish priorities, engages diverse stakeholders, and provides a baseline from which to evaluate the efficacy of any interventions. Second is the need for interventions to be organised at a community level. Every community is different in terms of its demographics, issues, priorities, resources, and service configurations. It follows then that communities need to be given responsibility and resources to develop action plans. Preferably these would be based on evidence that shows what is likely to work, and would follow widespread consultation.

This report is a superb example that uses these principles to develop a comprehensive range of indicators benchmarked against the Victorian average. They have applied an ecological model – children, families and the broader community – to develop a profile that is unique to Bendigo, as well as identifying where more work needs to be done. This profile is an important first step in attempts to make a difference. It will help the community decide where to focus existing resources, make a case for additional resources, and act as a baseline for knowing whether a difference has been made over time. This report serves as an important model that demonstrates how to begin building community capacity to make a long-term sustainable difference to the lives of children and young people.

*Frank Oberklaid*

Professor Frank Oberklaid  
Director, Centre for Community Child Health



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# Executive Summary

In 2007, Bendigo was the first city in Australia to be recognised as a child friendly city by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Building on this status is an aspiration of many people and organisations throughout the Bendigo community. It reflects a shared commitment to creating a place where children feel safe and secure, and are able to explore and learn about the world.

The State of Bendigo's Children Report is an initiative of the Bendigo Child Friendly City Leadership Group, produced through a partnership of the City of Greater Bendigo, St Luke's Anglicare, regional State government agencies, community groups and business leaders. It seeks to assist the Leadership Group and agencies involved with children and young people in Bendigo to further develop a child friendly city and advocate for the needs of children.

The report examines key factors associated with the wellbeing of children and their families. It uses specific indicators to measure how Bendigo is faring compared with the Victorian average. While the report shows that Bendigo's children and young people are doing well in many ways, there is work to be done in other areas.

## Where we're doing well

- Compared to the Victorian average, more children in Greater Bendigo:
  - attend their early years health assessments (4 months and 3.5 years)
  - have parents who participate in their school.
- Significantly more children attend 4 year old kindergarten since 2006.
- Youth unemployment is the same as the Victorian average (but is still higher than for adults).
- Almost all children in Year 3 met reading or writing standards in 2009.
- The number of young people registered as homeless has decreased over time.

## Areas for improvement

- Compared to the Victorian average, more children in Bendigo are:
  - developmentally vulnerable by their first year at school
  - living in low income households
  - living in households that experience time pressures as measured by work/life balance
  - living in households with no internet access
  - not engaged in either learning or earning at age 15 to 19
- Child protection reporting and the number of children and young people counselled at the Loddon Campaspe Region Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) are high.
- A significant proportion of children in Year 9 at school did not meet reading or writing standards.

The report has been developed as a tool for professionals, planners and community members as they seek to improve children's wellbeing. As a next step, children will be asked to consider this information, and to provide a response and recommendations. Community and service leaders will also be asked to respond and outline steps that they will take to improve children's wellbeing, particular against these indicators.

The Bendigo Child Friendly City Leadership Group is seeking to fill data gaps, and has committed to producing this report every two years to monitor our progress in supporting children to develop and thrive.



# Introduction

In January 2007, the City of Greater Bendigo received world-wide recognition from UNICEF as Australia's first child friendly city. It remains the nation's only formally-recognised city of this status.

A child friendly city is a place where children (people aged 0–18 years) feel safe and secure, and are able to explore and learn about the world. It actively engages children and continuously monitors and responds to their needs. A child friendly city does more than smile at children. It is a city that works to ensure that children thrive. Actions include involving children in decision-making, raising awareness of children's rights, producing regular 'City's Children's Reports' and providing independent advocacy for children.

To establish Bendigo as a child friendly city, St Luke's Anglicare, the City of Greater Bendigo, regional State government agencies, community groups and business leaders have formed a Leadership Group. The Group initiated The State of Bendigo's Children Report to support planning and policy making.

The report's content was developed through two workshops, initiated by the Leadership Group and attended by a diverse group of agencies involved with Bendigo's children (including government, community, schools and academia). A framework was developed outlining key factors associated with the wellbeing of children and their families (see Attachment A). The framework outlines the indicators of child and family wellbeing included in this report, and begins to examine the capacity of the Bendigo community to support child and family wellbeing.

This report shows that Bendigo's children and young people are doing well in many ways. They are more likely than the average Victorian to attend early years child health assessments and kindergarten. The number of young people who are homeless is decreasing and parents are more likely to participate in their children's schools.

In other areas there is work to be done. More children than the Victorian average are developmentally vulnerable by their first year of school and more are in families that are not financially secure or where parents experience time pressures. Sexual assault clients and child protection notifications are high. Fewer children have access to the internet at home and fewer 15–19 year olds are engaged in either learning or earning activities.

The findings of this report will help the Leadership Group and agencies involved with children and young people in Bendigo to further develop a child friendly city and to advocate for the needs of children. The report can be built up over time, adding trends and the results of individual research projects, to build up a fuller picture of life for children and young people in Bendigo.

## Report indicators

Children grow and develop in response to support from their family and the broader community. In addition to indicators of children's wellbeing, we've included broader indicators that tell us how well families are faring.

The report's five key indicators of child wellbeing are:

1. Developing well
2. Safe and secure
3. Engaged, learning and earning
4. Happy and healthy
5. Active citizens.

Data for some indicators could not be found, notably in the 'happy and healthy' and 'active citizens' sections. This represents data gaps to be filled in the future.

The report is divided into sections to reflect the indicators used. Each section describes the indicators, includes a time trend (if available) and identifies key population groups affected.

Where available and applicable, data from both Bendigo and Victoria overall is provided for the indicator. Bendigo's data is depicted in a shaded circle that makes a comparison against Victoria – it is coloured green for when we are 'doing well' and red for 'areas that need improvement'.

The full framework of indicators is provided in Appendix B.



A photograph of three children running across a green lawn towards a large, bright green ball. On the left, a boy in a blue and white striped shirt and blue jeans runs. In the center, a girl in a pink shirt and shorts runs. On the right, another girl in a green and blue patterned shirt and shorts runs. They are all smiling and appear to be playing. The background is a soft-focus green field with trees.

# *An overview of Bendigo's population*

## **Bendigo**

The City of Greater Bendigo is located 150 kilometres north-west of Melbourne and has a population of 97,000. It is a major regional centre and is projected to grow over the coming 20 years. The City of Greater Bendigo also describes the local government area, from which data in this report is based unless otherwise stated.





## Our children

At the 2006 Census, over one-third (35%; 33 952) of Bendigo's population were children and young people under the age of 24. These numbers are projected to increase by the year 2026 to 43 331 as the population grows, as shown in the table below. The number of children at every age in 2006 is provided in Appendix A.

Table 1: Recent and projected growth of young people in Bendigo

Age	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
0 to 4	6 015	7 149	7 520	7 709	7 850
5 to 14	13 621	13 967	15 466	17 185	17 834
15 to 24	14 316	14 973	15 537	15 997	17 647

Source: Victoria in Future (DPCD 2008)

## Population groups of particular interest

Bendigo is relatively socio-economically disadvantaged in terms of income, education, occupation, wealth and living conditions. It has an Australian Bureau of Statistics Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage score of 971 compared to the Victorian average of 1 000. Disadvantage, however, is not evenly distributed across the city but concentrated in sections.

Most of the negative outcomes in this report have a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged populations. An area map of disadvantage can be found in DPCD 2011.

Certain population groups are consistently over-represented in disadvantaged statistics. These include: public housing tenants; Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders; single parent families; people with non-English speaking backgrounds; and people with a disability (Australian Government 2009). The table below shows the size of these groups in Greater Bendigo. Some make up very small proportions of the population and may not be well catered for because of their minority status.

Table 2: Over-represented groups in disadvantaged statistics, Greater Bendigo

	Greater Bendigo	Rank amongst local government areas	Victoria
Social housing stock as a percentage of total dwellings	6%	15	4%
Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders	1.2%	14	0.6%
Single parent families	18%	8	15%
Speaks a language other than English at home	2%	60	22%
New settler arrivals per 100 000 population	162	39	550
Disability (core activity need for assistance)	5.1%	36	4.5%

Source: DHS 2009 Local Government Area Statistical Profiles (internal Departmental resource)



# Developing well

“The first years of life shape a child’s brain, chances in life and adult health. Early intervention works. Early intervention is cost effective.”

Dr Sharon Goldfeld – Victorian Government Senior Child Health Medical Advisor



## Children are developing well by age six

The years before six are important in a child’s development. A good, safe, healthy start in life increases success at school and improves social and economic life chances.

### CHILDREN WELL DEVELOPED BY THEIR FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL<sup>1</sup>

Time trend: Unknown – first data collection 2009

VICTORIA  
**90%**

BENDIGO  
**87%**

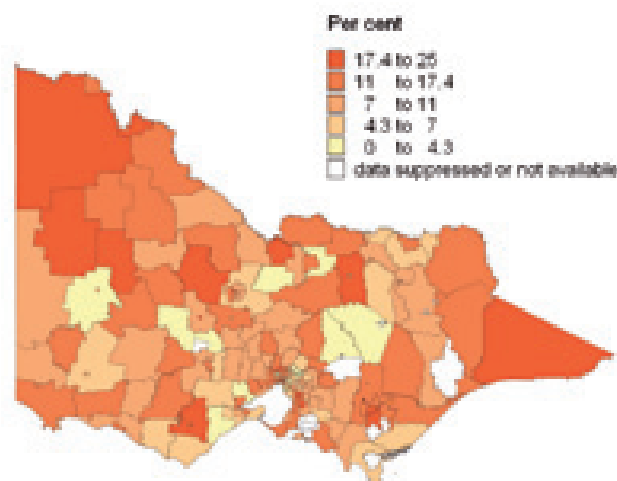
13% (144) of children in their first year of school in Bendigo were developmentally vulnerable in two or more of the following domains in 2009: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills (school-based); communication skills and general knowledge (further data is provided on the following page). **Indicator currency:** 2009.

#### Key population groups affected

Nationally, children who are developmentally vulnerable are more likely to live in socio-economically disadvantaged communities or populations that do not speak English proficiently. Indigenous children are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable in terms of language and cognitive skills.

**Figure 1:** Proportion of children vulnerable on two or more Australian Early Development Index domains within each SLA in regional Victoria, 2009

Source: AEDI (Australian Early Childhood Development Index) 2010





# Australian Early Development Index Domains, 2009

## PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

VICTORIA

92%

BENDIGO

93%

7% (86) of children in their first year of school:

- were not physically ready for the school day (i.e. not dressed appropriately or were hungry or tired)

- were not physically independent (i.e. with independent toilet habits)
- lacked hand preference/coordination
- lacked gross and fine motor skills.

## SOCIAL COMPETENCE & WELLBEING

VICTORIA

92%

BENDIGO

89%

11% (128) of children in their first year of school:

- lacked overall social competence (i.e. ability to play with various children)
- did not consistently display responsibility and respect for others/property

- experienced difficulty in learning activities (i.e. working independently and neatly)
- experienced difficulty complying with classroom routines
- were relatively disinterested in exploring new books, toys or unfamiliar objects or games.

## EMOTIONAL MATURITY

VICTORIA

92%

BENDIGO

88%

12% (137) of children in their first year of school:

- never or almost never showed pro-social and helping behaviour
- were often anxious and fearful (i.e. worried, unhappy, nervous, sad, indecisive or excessively shy)

- often exhibited aggressive behaviours (i.e. physical fights with other children or temper tantrums)
- were often hyperactive, restless and inattentive.

## LANGUAGE & COGNITIVE SKILLS

VICTORIA

94%

BENDIGO

92%

8% (89) of children in their first year of school:

- lacked basic literacy skills (i.e. had problems identifying letters or attaching sounds to them and may not have known how to write their own name)
- showed little interest in literacy, numeracy and memory

- (i.e. books and reading, maths and number games, and may have had difficulty remembering things)
- did not display advanced literacy (i.e. cannot read or write simple words or sentences, and rarely write voluntarily)
- expressed marked difficulty with numbers (i.e. counting, number recognition, shape recognition and time).

## COMMUNICATION & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

VICTORIA

92%

BENDIGO

91%

9% (102) of children in their first year of school:

- had difficulty participating in games involving the use of language

- were difficult to understand and had difficulty understanding others.

Source: Australian Early Childhood Development Index (2009), Teachers completed checklist of all children in their first year of school across Victoria and Australia. [www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au)

## 2 Children visit a Maternal and Child Health Nurse

The Maternal and Child Health Service is a universal service that monitors the health and development of children, and provides support to parents. It conducts ten key ages and stages visits from birth to school age, and focuses on prevention, detection and early intervention of health, wellbeing and developmental concerns.

### CHILDREN HAVE THEIR 4 MONTH ASSESSMENT<sup>2</sup>

Time trend: Improved 2001 – 10

VICTORIA  
**91%**

BENDIGO  
**92%**

### CHILDREN HAVE THEIR 3.5 YEAR ASSESSMENT<sup>2</sup>

Time trend: Improved 2001 – 10

VICTORIA  
**69%**

BENDIGO  
**71%**

Bendigo's children are increasingly supported by child expertise, with 94% seen by a Maternal and Child Health Nurse at the four week assessment, 92% at the four month assessment, 76% at the one year assessment and 71% at the 3.5 year assessment. Over the past eight years the numbers attending the 3.5 year assessment have nearly doubled from 40% (2001). **Indicator currency:** 2010.

#### Key population groups affected

While use of this service in the first year of life is almost universal, participation decreases with age. Those who stop using the service may be the disadvantaged families most likely to benefit from it. For example, participation by Aboriginal families is lower than non-Aboriginal families (DEECD 2009a).

## 3 Children and parents are involved in playgroups

Playgroups promote children's development, build community connections and provide information and support to parents. Children's involvement in playgroups (and other quality early years programs) has been linked to future educational attainment (Pascal 2010).

### SUPPORTED PLAYGROUPS<sup>3</sup>

Time trend: Unknown

BENDIGO  
**0/29**

Supported playgroups aim to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families including Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse, recently arrived, socio-economically disadvantaged and those affected by disability (DEECD 2009a). Of the 29 playgroups in Bendigo listed on the Playgroups Victoria website, none are currently supported (i.e. facilitated by a qualified worker). This is about to change, however, with a pilot about to commence. **Indicator currency:** 2010.

#### Key population groups affected

Currently not reported.

### Reflection

What role does the broader community have in supporting parents to participate in Maternal and Child Nurse visits?

# Safe and Secure

“Children don’t do well when their families are under stress – be that because of violence, drinking, financial stress or because adults do not have time for them.”

David Pugh – St Luke’s Anglicare



## 4

### Children and young people are safe in their own homes

Children and young people need homes free from violence and other physical hazards. Experiences of family violence – particularly when repeated over a prolonged period of time – have been shown to lead to excessive irritability, emotional distress, regressive behaviours, disturbed sleep, poor concentration and depressive symptoms in children and young people (Bromfield & Higgins 2005; DEECD 2010). In the long term this can result in aggressive behaviour, decreased responsiveness, post-traumatic stress disorder and decreased independence (DEECD 2010).

#### REPORTED FAMILY VIOLENCE INCIDENTS<sup>4</sup>

Time trend: Increased 2008–09 to 2009–10

BENDIGO  
**649**

In 2009–10 there were 649 incidents of family violence reported to the police in Bendigo.

This represents a 3.2% increase in incidents since 2008–09 (629 incidents). Across Victorian LGAs, there was an average of 650 recorded family violence incidents reported to police in 2008–09. **Indicator currency:** 2009–10.

**Note:** It is acknowledged that this indicator is sensitive to changes in reporting practice. An increase in incidents may reflect a better detection of cases rather than an increase in crimes.

#### Key population groups affected

Currently not reported.

## CHILD PROTECTION REPORTS (aged 0–8)<sup>5</sup>

BENDIGO  
**600**

## CHILD PROTECTION RE-REPORTS (aged 0–8)<sup>5</sup>

Time trend: Fewer re-notifications 2006–07 to 2008–09

VICTORIA  
**31%**

BENDIGO  
**36%**

Child protection reports refer to allegations made to an authorised department by persons or other bodies of child abuse or neglect, child maltreatment or harm to a child (note: these are reported rather than substantiated cases). There were 600 reports to Child Protection in Bendigo in 2008–09, compared with 558 in 2007–08. A client is classified as re-reported if a prior notification was made in the past 12 months. The total number of notifications has increased between 2006–07 to 2008–09.

**Indicator currency:** 2008–09.

**Note:** It is acknowledged that this indicator is sensitive to changes in reporting practice. An increase in incidents may reflect a better detection of cases rather than an increase in crimes.

### Key population groups affected

Low income, substance abuse, mental health issues and the burdens of sole parenting have been identified as factors that lead some families to contact with child protection systems (DEECD 2009c). In 2008, Indigenous children in Victoria were nine times more likely to be on a care and protection order than all children (AIHW 2010).

# Children and young people are not victims of crime

Physical and sexual assault can have complex short and long-term negative effects on the physical and psychological health of children. These include depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, and diminished educational, social and economic attainment in adulthood (DEECD 2010; AIHW 2010). These experiences in childhood can also increase the risk of some victims becoming perpetrators later in life (AIHW 2010).

## POLICE REPORTS OF YOUNG ASSAULT VICTIMS (AGED 0 to 17)<sup>6</sup>

Time trend: Increased from 2001 to 2005 and then fluctuating to 2010

BENDIGO  
**68**

Sixty-eight children and adolescents (aged 0 to 17) were reported by police as the victims of assault (including family violence) in Bendigo in 2009–10. It appears that cases increased from 2001 to 2007 but then fluctuated to 2010 (see table below). **Indicator currency:** 2009–10.

**Note:** It is acknowledged that this indicator is sensitive to changes in reporting practice. An increase in incidents may reflect a better detection of cases rather than an increase in crimes.

**Table 4:** Number of police reports of young assault victims (aged 0 to 17) from 2001–02 to 2009–10

2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
19	33	37	32	48	67	80	65	88	68

### Key population groups affected

Currently not reported.



## SEXUAL ASSAULT CLIENTS (CASA)<sup>7</sup>

Time trend: Increased 2008–09 to 2009–10

BENDIGO  
332

A total of 332 children and adolescents under 18 years old received counselling services at the Loddon Campaspe Region Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) in 2009–10. Children and young people made up 43% of the Centre's sexual assault clients. The number of young clients counselled at the Centre increased from 299 (42% of their total clients) in 2008–09 to 332 in 2009–10. The real figure of assaulted young people is likely to be much higher than this, as most victims of sexual assault do not seek out a service. **Indicator currency:** 2009–10.

**Note:** It is acknowledged that this indicator is sensitive to changes in reporting practice. An increase in incidents may reflect a better detection of cases rather than an increase in crimes.

### Key population groups affected

Currently not reported.

## Adolescents are securely housed

Homelessness in young people can have negative social and health consequence, including high rates of mental health problems, behavioural disorders and disrupted schooling (Karim et al. 2006; Yu et al. 2008). Homeless young people are at increased risk of assault, poor nutrition and inadequate shelter, and are more likely to engage in risky behaviour (AIHW 2010).

## UNREASONABLE TO LIVE AT HOME<sup>8</sup>

Time trend: Decreased 2006 to 2010

BENDIGO  
92

One of the most reliable indicators of youth homelessness is the number of young people (aged 15–18) who, at any point in time, receive a special Centrelink Independent Youth allowance called 'Unreasonable to live at home'. In Bendigo, this number has reduced from 144 in 2006 to 92 in 2010.





## Families are financially secure

Families that are solely/largely dependent on government for their income have the lowest incomes and fewest resources. Children from these families are likely to be deprived of items considered essential by Australian standards, including access to medical and dental treatment, a substantial meal once a day, school activities/outings, secure housing and warm clothes/bedding (Saunders & Wong 2009). The lack of these resources means children from very low income households are more likely to face lower achievement in education, have worse economic prospects and have poorer health outcomes (DEECD 2010; AIHW 2010). In addition, children in welfare dependant families are more likely to get caught in a cycle of intergenerational disadvantage and welfare dependency (Australian Government 2010).

### CHILDREN IN LOW INCOME FAMILIES<sup>9</sup>

Time trend: Stable June 2006 – June 2008

VICTORIA  
**21%**

BENDIGO  
**24%**

24% (5 149) of children under 16 years old in Bendigo live in families that are either solely or largely dependent on government for their income and other resources. This proportion has remained stable since 2006 (25%, 5 192). **Indicator currency:** June 2008.

#### Key population groups affected

Currently not reported.

### CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS WHERE ADULTS HAVE JOBS<sup>10</sup>

Time trend: Unknown

VICTORIA  
**82%**

BENDIGO  
**83%**

17% of children under 16 years old live in jobless households. Currency: 2006.

#### Key population groups affected

Currently not reported.

Did you know?

### Indicators for a child friendly built environment

The built environment has an important role in improving health and wellbeing for children and young people. Outdoor environments provide places to play, socialise, be physically active, have fun, 'hang out', be in contact with nature, and be free from the challenges of an increasingly adult world.

In 2006, a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment found children's needs were often ignored or overlooked in environmental planning. Building on the Inquiry, the NSW Commission for Children & Young People wrote a resource, 'Built 4 Kids'. It includes a set of indicators to help monitor and improve the built environment for kids, as well as case studies giving real life examples of how children and young people have contributed to their local built environment.

The City of Greater Bendigo is embarking on a project that will select two case study sites to actively engage children in the planning of built and natural environments. These case studies will test a range of community indicators modelled on 'Built 4 Kids'. The aim of the project is to use specific approaches that can measurably influence the design, and build the city in line with its status as the only formally recognised child friendly city in Australia.

# Engaged, learning, achieving

“Children and young people who fail to engage in school, work or further education/training are at risk of school failure, unemployment, risky health behaviours and mental health problems, social exclusion, and economic and social disadvantage over the longer term.”

Public Health Information Development Unit, University of Adelaide



## 8

### Families supportive of learning

Parent/adult support of formal learning at home (reading, interest/enthusiasm for school, helping with homework, ensuring children have eaten breakfast) improves school achievement and completion, and decreases class cutting and behavioural problems (including worried/upset behaviour) (Desforges & Abouchaar 2003; DCSF 2008). Parental support of learning at home has a greater impact on school success than schooling itself at the primary level, and continues to have influence in older children, although by that age this is largely on aspirations and staying at school (Desforges & Abouchaar 2003). Parental participation in school also impacts on success at school, particularly through encouraging engagement (by modelling positive attitudes towards school). This enables parents to better understand the school environment, and helps them support their children's choices in learning and to negotiate the school environment (Desforges & Abouchaar 2003).

#### PARENTS READING TO CHILDREN AT HOME<sup>11</sup>

## DATA GAP

In Victoria, data about parental support of learning at home is not collected in any routine local government data collection. A question was asked in a statewide survey in 2006 and it found that 43% of children aged under 13 years were reportedly read to by parents almost every day. Younger children were read to more frequently than older children (DEECD 2010).

## PARENTS PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOLS<sup>12</sup>

Time trend: Unknown – first data collection 2008, next collection 2011

VICTORIA  
**49%**

BENDIGO  
**57%**

57% of parents of school aged children in Bendigo participate in their children's schools.

**Indicator currency:** 2008.

### Key population groups affected

Rates of parental participation are lower in parents who were born overseas, public housing tenants, and lower socio-economic families.

9

## Children are involved in kindergarten

Kindergarten has been shown to develop children's social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and language abilities, encourage family involvement in learning and help prepare for the transition to school (McCain et al. 2007). In the long term it has been linked to improved literacy and numeracy, higher self-esteem, better employment prospects and improved health outcomes (DEECD 2009b).

## KINDERGARTEN ATTENDANCE AT AGE 4<sup>13</sup>

Time trend: Improved since 2006 (see table below)

VICTORIA  
**95%**

BENDIGO  
**94%**

94% of four year olds in Greater Bendigo attended kindergarten in 2010. The rate of participation in four year old kindergarten has increased from 88% in 2006 (see table below). This is coloured green to reflect the significant improvement over time. **Indicator currency:** 2010.

Table 3: Kindergarten participation rates over time in Bendigo and Victoria

	Participation rate (%)				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Greater Bendigo	88%	97%	90%	95%	94%
Victoria	91%	92%	92%	93%	95%

Source: DEECD Office for Children & Portfolio Coordination

### Key population groups affected

Children from low socio-economic, single parent or Indigenous families, and those who have a disability are less likely to attend kindergarten (DEECD 2009a).

Alert

### Skills shortages in early childcare and family support workers

Improving conditions for children in Bendigo partly depends on families having access to high quality health professionals, welfare workers and teachers. There is a skill shortage in these professions in Bendigo.

Source: Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development; Live in Victoria website: [www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au/working-and-employment/skill-shortages](http://www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au/working-and-employment/skill-shortages)

Reflection

What caused such an improvement in kindergarten attendance in the past 5 years?



# 10 Children and young people are achieving at school

Formal education helps people develop a sense of themselves and others, and fosters a creative and innovative culture. Success at school is also associated with economic and social success, and offers a route out of disadvantage through better jobs, higher incomes and enhanced social welfare.

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN READING Yr 3<sup>14</sup>**

VICTORIA  
**95%**

BENDIGO  
**98%**

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN READING Yr 5**

VICTORIA  
**94%**

BENDIGO  
**95%**

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN READING Yr 7**

VICTORIA  
**96%**

BENDIGO  
**95%**

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN READING Yr 9**

VICTORIA  
**93%**

BENDIGO  
**91%**

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN WRITING Yr 3**

VICTORIA  
**96%**

BENDIGO  
**97%**

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN WRITING Yr 5**

VICTORIA  
**95%**

BENDIGO  
**96%**

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN WRITING Yr 7**

VICTORIA  
**94%**

BENDIGO  
**88%**

**STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN WRITING Yr 9**

VICTORIA  
**89%**

BENDIGO  
**85%**

Note: Government schools only - excludes students who were categorised as exempt or withdrawn/absent

These indicators are a snapshot of four different school levels and do not report how students fare over time. Therefore, they do not show whether students are getting worse with increasing years at school. Instead they show that the younger students appear to be doing better – which is likely to improve results in the later years. Time trends will need to follow each level through the four stages.

Only a very small proportion of children in Year 3 did not meet reading and writing standards (2% and 3% respectively) in 2010. The fact that the younger level has started strongly bodes well for the future.

More than one in ten of children in Year 9 did not meet reading and writing standards (9% and 15% respectively). **Indicator currency:** 2010.

**Key population groups affected**

Not currently available.

**STUDENTS ARE POSITIVE ABOUT SCHOOL**

**DATA GAP**  
AVAILABLE LATE 2011

This data is being collected by schools in Bendigo and a request has been made to fill this data gap.



## Children & young people have access to internet at home

The internet is becoming increasingly important in an economy shifting from manufacturing to services. Children who do not grow up familiar with computers and the internet may find their employment prospects significantly curtailed. In addition, not having the internet may deny young people access to independent learning and interaction in areas of interest.

**CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH INTERNET<sup>15</sup>**

Time trend: Unknown – available 2011

VICTORIA  
**79%**

BENDIGO  
**75%**

One quarter of households with children in Bendigo did not have internet access at home in 2006.

**Indicator currency:** 2006.

**Key population groups affected**

Not currently reported.

# 12 Young people are engaged in learning or earning

Education and employment are key pathways to economic and social success. In addition, employed people are healthier, have greater self esteem, less contact with the justice system and a better standard of living.

## LEARNING OR EARNING AT AGE 15<sup>16</sup>

Time trend: Unknown – next collection 2011

VICTORIA  
**83%**

BENDIGO  
**80%**

In the 2006 census, 20% (1 403) of 15 year olds in Bendigo were neither in school or work, nor further education/ training in 2006. **Indicator currency:** 2006.

### Key population groups affected

Not currently reported.

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT<sup>16</sup>

Time trend: Unknown

VICTORIA  
**15%**

BENDIGO  
**15%**

15% of young people aged 15 to 19 years in Bendigo were unemployed in 2006. While youth unemployment was around twice that of adult unemployment (6.5%), it was an improvement compared to 2001 when 19% of young people were unemployed. **Indicator currency:** 2006.

### Key population groups affected

Not currently reported.

## Reflection

How important are after school jobs and how can our Community assist?



# Happy and healthy

“[Childhood] is a time of play and learning, in which they are loved, respected and cherished... in which their wellbeing [is] paramount, and in which they can develop in health, peace and dignity.”

United Nations



13

## Children have a healthy childhood

Healthy eating is essential for a child's growth, development and long-term health (UNICEF 2010). Eating too much food is associated with a wide range of immediate and long-term health problems including obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. On the other hand, children who go without food are at increased risk of anxiety, hunger and a lack of energy, which could affect their ability to learn (VicHealth 2005). Paradoxically, there is a link between food insecurity in the long term to obesity, particularly in women (DEECD 2010).

### NOT OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE

**DATA GAP**

AVAILABLE LATE 2011

In Victoria, data about children and young people's weight is not collected in any routine local government data collection.

### REGULAR ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD<sup>17</sup>

**DATA GAP**

AVAILABLE LATE 2011

In Victoria, data about regular access to healthy food is not collected in any routine local government data collection. A question about food security was collected in the Victorian Population Health Survey in 2008 and it found that 8% of Bendigo's residents and 6% of Victorians overall had run out of food in the past twelve months and could not afford to buy more. Unfortunately this data cannot be broken down to parents of children in Bendigo.

#### Key population groups affected

Low-income, particularly single parent and unemployed families, are most at risk of food insecurity (DH 2008). These families are more likely to select foods that are perceived to be cheaper but that are of poorer quality, with high fat, salt and sugar content (VicHealth 2005).



# 14

## Children have a physically active childhood

Physical activity promotes physical and mental wellbeing, and has been linked to the development of resilience, confidence and autonomy (Woolcock and Steele 2008). It also helps children learn motor skills and social skills, and is an important way to develop relationships with other children (Woolcock and Steele 2008).

### OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY

### DATA GAP

In Victoria, data about children and young people's weight is not collected in any routine local government data collection.

### PARENTS WHO ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE<sup>18</sup>

### DATA GAP

In Victoria, data about physical activity is not collected in any routine local government data collection. A question about physical activity was asked in the Victorian Population Health Survey in 2008 and it found that 57% of residents in Bendigo and 64% of Victorians were meeting physical activity guidelines. Unfortunately this cannot be broken down to parents of children in Bendigo.

### ACTIVE/MOBILE AROUND THEIR COMMUNITIES

### DATA GAP

In Victoria, data about children and young people being active/mobile around their communities is not collected in any routine local government data collection. The Victorian Population Health Survey in 2008 collected data about using active transport to get to school but this cannot be broken down to parents of children in Bendigo.

Feedback

#### Children's favourite places in Bendigo

In 2006, the City of Greater Bendigo asked children about their favourite places. These were (in order):

- Shops including McDonalds, food shops, toy shops, lolly shops, pet shops and general shops (63)
- Playgrounds/parks/ovals/play centres (33)
- Relatives houses, particularly grandparents' (25)
- Home (24)
- Crèche/childcare/playgroup/kindergarten/school (21)
- Beach/camping/bush/snow (6)
- Zoo/animal park/aquarium (5)

[I like to go to the library] cos you feel safe and people like kids are there.

I have a park near my house. I don't go very often. I'd like to go more.

Six year old from the City of Greater Bendigo consultation

Source: City of Greater Bendigo (2008)

# 15 Children and young people are active in the community

Community participation enriches the social networks that support children and young people, and provides them with a feeling of belonging. In turn, this promotes social and mental wellbeing (Brooks 2007; Muir et al. 2009). Community activity is also an avenue through which children develop relationships with others and build their resilience, confidence and autonomy.

## INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

## DATA GAP

In Victoria, data about children and young people's involvement in activities outside of school is not collected in any routine local government data collection.

# 16

## Families have time for children and young people

Time spent with children and young people is important for development and wellbeing. Parental time builds and maintains balanced routines and provides opportunities for activities such as reading to children, physical activity and socialising. Time availability can be impacted by inflexible work hours and schedules, working unsocial hours and long commutes. Time can also be affected when the sole care giver is responsible for the family income.

### GOOD WORK / LIFE BALANCE<sup>19</sup>

Time trend: Unknown – first data collection 2007, next collection 2011

VICTORIA  
**53%**

BENDIGO  
**43%**

57% of adults in Bendigo reported that work and family life interfere with each other in 2007.

**Indicator currency:** 2007.

#### Key population groups affected

Currently not reported.

### CHILDREN IN SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES<sup>20</sup>

Time trend: Stable trend 2001 – 06

VICTORIA  
**15%**

BENDIGO  
**18%**

18% of families in Bendigo were single-parent families in 2006 – the same proportion as in 2001.

**Indicator currency:** 2006.

While most children in single parent families are well cared for, children in single parent households are more likely to experience disadvantage.

#### Key population groups affected

Single parent families in Victoria are nearly twice as likely to be headed by females or by Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders and public housing tenants (DEECD 2010).

## Reflection

Bendigo employees have a poorer work life balance than the Victorian average. Does this surprise you? What could be done about this in your community?

# Adolescents have good mental health

Good mental health in young people is a precursor to good social development, success at school and improved life chances. It protects against suicide, self-harm, involvement in crime and mental illness later in life (AIHW 2010).

## ADOLESCENTS HAVE GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

**DATA GAP**  
AVAILABLE LATE 2011

In Victoria, data about the mental health of children and young people is not collected by any routine local government data collection.

# Children, young people & families are supported by positive relationships

Positive relationships provide children and young people with practical help, material goods, learning opportunities and emotional support. These resources provide the foundations for moving 'out into the world', learning new skills, taking on challenges and exploring roles and experiences (Pope & Warr 2005).

## SUPPORTED BY POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

**DATA GAP**  
AVAILABLE LATE 2011

In Victoria, data about children and young people being supported by positive relationships is not collected in any routine local government data collection.

## PARENTS NOT SOCIALLY ISOLATED

**DATA GAP**

In Victoria, data about physical activity is not collected in any routine local government data collection. A question about social isolation, however, was asked in the Victorian Population Health Survey in 2008 and found that 6% of Bendigo residents and 8% of Victorians were potentially socially isolated (i.e. could not get help from friends, family and neighbours when needed). Unfortunately this data cannot be broken down to parents of children in Bendigo.

## Understand how children experience Bendigo's built environment

Bendigo is about to participate in a joint Finnish–Australian research project. A new child friendly internet platform will allow children to track their mobility and evaluate the environments they use. The collection of information about children's perceptions of their environments offers a unique opportunity for planners and policy makers to include children's knowledge and ideas in decision-making. Bendigo will be one of the pilot sites and will be compared with the Finnish town of Kauhajoki. The City of Greater Bendigo is a partner in the project.

## Reflection

What are some other ways that children's health and happiness might be measured?

case study

# Active citizens

“Respecting children as citizens can help to build safe, humane, and responsive communities. ... If children are visible, invited to participate, and when their voices are heard, they are much more capable of participating ... The dominant construction of children as vulnerable, problematic, or incomplete beings should be replaced by a view of children as competent and active participants in communities ”

Anne B Smith – Marion Langer award lecture 2010



In order to create a child friendly city, children and young people must have a voice in the decisions made about their communities. This means decision-making organisations need to see them as citizens with the right to express needs, potentials and expectations (Wilks 2010). Organisations must find appropriate ways for children to have input. To participate, children and young people need the skills, confidence and sense of responsibility that comes with a strong education system and engagement with public life (clubs, sport, volunteering). Ensuring a voice in decision-making will not only improve life for children and young people, but will build stronger communities (Smith 2010).

## Children and young people are civically engaged

# 19

**YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL THEY HAVE  
A SAY IN THEIR COMMUNITY**

**DATA GAP**  
AVAILABLE LATE 2011

## Reflection

Give an example of how your neighbourhood, club or organisation is listening to children's opinions.



# Families and the community model good citizenship

## ADULTS ARE MEMBERS OF ORGANISED GROUPS<sup>21</sup>

Time trend: Unknown, next collection 2011

VICTORIA  
**61%**

BENDIGO  
**57%**

57% of adults in Greater Bendigo are members of an organised group such as a sports, church, community or professional group. **Indicator currency:** 2008.

### Key population groups affected

Not currently reported.

taking action

### Reviewing policies from children's perspective

The City of Greater Bendigo is about to review its policies/strategies to determine how meaningfully the Rights of Children have been considered and to make recommendations for future planning. This critical reflection will embed new thinking into how the City of Greater Bendigo can best meet the needs and aspirations of children as active citizens, and will build on the considerable child friendly city work already undertaken (under the UNICEF framework with funds from the federal Communities for Children).



# Next Steps

- This report has been developed as a tool for professionals, planners and community members as they seek to improve children's wellbeing. Schools, community groups, sports groups and government departments may all benefit from using it in their planning and thinking.
- A summary version has been developed for use by the broader community. Citizens are encouraged to use the data to promote conversations about our children and our families. The report can also be used to keep services accountable for improving the well-being of our children.
- Listening to children's opinions and supporting their decision making is a priority for Bendigo. This report uses data available in the public domain but not generally communicated broadly. It is intended that children will be given an opportunity to consider the information in this report and collate their responses and recommendations.
- Community and service leaders will be asked to respond to the report and outline steps that they and their organisation may take to improve children's wellbeing and improve performance against these indicators in particular.
- The Bendigo Child Friendly City Leadership Group will work with academics to fill the data gaps in the report, and has committed to producing this report every two years to monitor our progress in supporting children to develop and thrive.

## Feedback

Your feedback about how we can improve the information and value of this report is welcome.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Australian Early Childhood Development Index 2009, Teacher completed checklist of all children in their first year of school across Victoria. [www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au)
- <sup>2</sup> Maternal & Child Health Service Annual Report 2009–10, [www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/mch/report10annualmr.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/mch/report10annualmr.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> Playgroups Victoria website, [www.playgroup.org.au/](http://www.playgroup.org.au/)
- <sup>4</sup> Sourced from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Office for Children & Portfolio Coordination, 2009.
- <sup>5</sup> Victoria Police Crime Statistics, [www.police.vic.gov.au/](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/), [www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=782](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=782)
- <sup>6</sup> North Central Family Services, Alliance Needs Analysis, November 2009.
- <sup>7</sup> Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP) data, request to Victoria Police Corporate Statistics Unit [http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=782](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=782)
- <sup>8</sup> Centrelink, Newstart Population, 2010.
- <sup>9</sup> Centre Against Sexual Assault, Loddon Campaspe Region, Annual Report 2008–09, [www.casa.org.au](http://www.casa.org.au)
- <sup>10</sup> Public Health Information Development Unit, Social Health Atlas of Australia: Victoria, using data from Centrelink, June 2008 and ABS Estimated Resident Population, 30 June 2008 [www.publichealth.gov.au](http://www.publichealth.gov.au)
- <sup>11</sup> Public Health Information Development Unit, Social Health Atlas of Australia: Victoria, using 2006 Census data. [www.publichealth.gov.au](http://www.publichealth.gov.au)
- <sup>12</sup> Community Indicators Victoria. Bendigo Wellbeing Report. [www.communityindicators.net.au/wellbeing\\_reports](http://www.communityindicators.net.au/wellbeing_reports)
- <sup>13</sup> Census 2006; Census 2001; Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- <sup>14</sup> Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey 2006 <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/>
- <sup>15</sup> DPCD Indicators of Community Strength collected as part of the Department of Health Victorian Population Health Survey 2008
- <sup>16</sup> National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data, sourced from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009.
- <sup>17</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing data, [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)
- <sup>18</sup> Public Health Information Development Unit. Social Health Atlas: Victoria, 2006 Census data, [www.publichealth.gov.au](http://www.publichealth.gov.au)
- <sup>19</sup> Department of Health, Victorian Population Health Survey 2008, [http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/vphs\\_current.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus/vphs_current.htm)
- <sup>20</sup> Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS) 2008, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/vcams/>
- <sup>21</sup> DPCD Indicators of Community Strength collected as part of the Department of Health Victorian Population Health Survey 2008.

# Looking for more data?

For more information about children and young people, refer to the following data sources.

## **The Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS).**

The Office for Children (Victorian government) collates data from a range of sources on the safety, health, development, learning and wellbeing of children and young people in Victoria. Data for Victoria is released in two reports: *The State of Victoria's Children* and *The State of Victoria's Young People*. The Office is working to create local government area reports and to make this data available online. Watch their website for details.

[www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/children/default.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/children/default.htm)

## **Growing Up in Australia.**

The Australian Institute of Family Studies *Growing Up in Australia* provides data from a longitudinal survey based on a nationally representative sample of children (longitudinal surveys follow the same people over time). It provides data at the national and state level on topics such as family functioning, health, children's development, non-parental child-care and education. A limited amount of information is available online, with more available by order.

[www.aifs.gov.au/growingup/](http://www.aifs.gov.au/growingup/)

## **National Survey of Young People.**

Every year Mission Australia runs a survey of around 50 000 young people aged 11 to 24 across Australia. The survey examines their concerns, the issues they identify for the future and how they participate. The surveys provide results for Victoria and the 2001 survey is the ninth in the series.

[www.missionaustralia.com.au/downloads/214-national-survey-of-young-australians](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/downloads/214-national-survey-of-young-australians)

## **The Australian Bureau of Statistics website.**

The website presents an array of free data about Victoria from various surveys. Some data is available at the local government level (such as census data and unemployment estimates)

[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

## **The Social and Health Atlases of Australia – Public Health Information Development Unit.**

The Unit creates online and hard copy atlases of social and health data. It collates data from a range of sources, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics collections and the national health data collections. The group has an interest in child health and wellbeing, but has only created child specific atlases for South Australia to date. The interactive mapping website is a good way to find fast stats about local government areas.

[www.publichealth.gov.au/](http://www.publichealth.gov.au/)

## **Community Indicators Victoria.**

This University of Melbourne resource compiles data from a range of sources to create wellbeing reports of 70 indicators for local government areas under five themes: Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities; Dynamic, Resilient Local Economies; Sustainable Built and Natural Environments; Culturally Rich and Vibrant Communities; and Democratic and Engaged Communities. It currently contains little child specific data but can provide context about the local government area.

[www.communityindicators.net.au/](http://www.communityindicators.net.au/)



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# Appendix A.

## The age of children in Greater Bendigo

Table 5: A population count of children and young people in the City of Greater Bendigo

	Males	Females	Persons
0	567	595	1,162
1	554	543	1,097
2	557	563	1,120
3	611	533	1,144
4	648	610	1,258
5	675	592	1,267
6	644	604	1,248
7	649	613	1,262
8	683	621	1,304
9	631	646	1,277
10	677	643	1,320
11	724	709	1,433
12	652	674	1,326
13	704	728	1,432
14	703	725	1,428
15	730	686	1,416
16	737	672	1,409
17	696	663	1,359
18	676	744	1,420
19	653	751	1,404
20	728	800	1,528
21	689	738	1,427
22	603	664	1,267
23	575	589	1,164
24	516	552	1,068

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census (2006)

Table 5: Projected age changes 2006 to 2026

Age Group	2006 No.	%	2011 No.	%	2016 No.	%	2021 No.	%	2026 No.	%
0-4	6 015	6.2	7 149	6.7	7 520	6.5	7 709	6.1	7 850	5.8
5-14	13 621	14.1	13 967	13.2	15 466	13.4	17 185	13.7	17 834	13.2
15-24	14 316	14.8	14 973	14.1	15 537	13.4	15 997	12.7	17 647	13.1
25-34	11 558	11.9	12 562	11.8	13 034	11.3	13 306	10.6	13 943	10.3
35-49	20 105	20.8	21 053	19.8	22 114	19.1	23 892	19.0	24 989	18.5
50-59	12 565	13.0	13 977	13.2	14 978	12.9	15 565	12.4	16 257	12.0
60-69	8 462	8.7	11 002	10.4	13 506	11.7	14 972	11.9	15 963	11.8
70-84	8 302	8.6	9 183	8.7	10 751	9.3	13 833	11.0	17 002	12.6
85+	1 797	1.9	2 281	2.1	2 799	2.4	3 137	2.5	3 650	2.7
Total	96 741	100.0	106 146	100.0	115 706	100.0	125 597	100.0	135 135	100.0

Source: Department of Planning and Community Development, Victoria in Future.



# Appendix B. The indicator framework

## *In a child friendly city ...*

### *Communities have ...*

#### **Quality organisations, services, programs**

- Young people feel they can access services when needed
- Early years provision (e.g. childhood programs, parental capacity programs)
- Activities that match the interests, needs, demography of children and young people
- Quality schools and flexible delivery models
- Family friendly schools (forthcoming)
- Family support and counselling services

#### **Capacity**

- Planning capacity and time to plan
- Information and data
- Skills shortages in community and welfare workers, school teachers, health professionals
- Training and workforce development
- Evidence base about what works
- Research

#### **Quality infrastructure**

- Playgrounds and recreation spaces (including pocket parks)
- Libraries
- Schools
- Broadband
- Transport

### *Families are ...*

#### **Providing a positive lifestyle**

##### **Physically active**

- Parents physically active (Vic: 64%): DATA GAP

##### **Supported by networks**

- Parents not socially isolated (can get help from friends, family and neighbours when needed): DATA GAP

##### **Regular access to healthy food**

- Children (0–12yrs) from families that ran out of food and could not afford to buy more in the previous 12 months and could not afford to buy more (Vic: 6%): DATA GAP

##### **Able to spend time together**

- 57% adults feel work and family life interfere with each other (Vic: 47%)
- 18% of families with children are single parent families (Vic: 15%)

#### **Supported by child expertise**

- 92% participated in the 4 month old assessment (Vic: 91%)
- 71% participated in the 3.5 year old assessment (Vic: 69%)
- 0/29 playgroups on Playgroups Victoria website are supported

### *Children are ...*

#### **Happy and healthy**

- **Supported by positive relationships** (friends, family, neighbours, significant others): DATA GAP

##### **Healthy:**

- Overweight or obese: DATA GAP
- **Opportunities to play:** DATA GAP
- **Active/mobile around their communities**
- Using active transport to get to school: DATA GAP
- **Involved in activities outside of school:** DATA GAP
- **Have good mental health (adolescents):** DATA GAP

#### **Developing well**

Well developed by their first year of school:

- 13% (144) developmentally vulnerable on two or more of the following domains (Vic: 10%):
- **Physical health & wellbeing:** 7% not healthy, independent, ready each day (dressed, not hungry, not tired) (Vic: 8%)
- **Social competence & wellbeing:** 11% not able to play, get on with others, share, have confidence (Vic: 8%)
- **Emotional maturity:** 12% not able to concentrate, help others, be patient, not be angry/aggressive (Vic: 8%)
- **Language & cognitive skills:** 8% not interested in reading/writing, cannot write, recognise numbers/shapes (Vic: 6%)
- **Communication skills & general knowledge:** 9% cannot tell a story or communicate well with others (Vic: 8%)



### Engaged, learning and earning

#### Positive about school

- Positive about school: DATA GAP

#### Achieving at school

- Students achieving national minimum standards in reading/writing
  - Year 3: 97% (Vic: 96%)
  - Year 9: 85% (Vic: 89%)

#### Engaged

- 80% not learning or earning at age 15 (Vic: 83%)
- 15% youth unemployment (15–24 years) (Vic: 15%)

### Creating a positive learning environment

- 94% kindergarten attendance at age 4 (Up from 88% in 2006)
- Parents reading to children at home (Vic: 43%): DATA GAP
- 57% parents participate in their children's schools (Vic: 49%)
- 25% of households with children have no internet 2006 (Vic: 21%)

### Broad networks

- To spread of information about child-friendly practice
- Opportunities to participate (e.g. clubs interests)

### Well planned, safe environments

- -4% crime rate change 2008–09 to 2009–10
- 98% residents feel safe on the street during the day (Vic: 96%)
- A set of child friendly indicators for the built environment are currently being developed (Council)
- Healthy neighbourhood design
- Quality natural environment
- Toxins/pollution
- Road safety

### Community, government and business working together

- Partnerships undertaking strategic planning
- Joint use/integrated service delivery
- Non-competitive funding models
- Child Friendly City Businesses

### Mechanisms for involving children's voices, and those working with children, in decision-making

- Council consultations with children and young people
- Upcoming Council SOFTgis project with Finland mapping children's activity
- Place of our children in community building

### Safe and secure

#### Safe in their own homes

- 600 child protection reports
- 36% child protection re-reports (Vic: 31%)

#### Securely housed (adolescents)

- 92 young people aged 15–18 receive homelessness assistance

#### Free from sexual assault

- 332 (43%) of Loddon Campaspe CASA clients were children or adolescents in 2009–10

#### Free from assault

- 68 young victims of assault

### Safe

#### Free from violence

- 649 family violence incidents (2009–10 increase of 3% from 2008–09)

#### Financially secure

- 24% children in welfare-dependent or other low income families (Vic: 21%)
- 17% (under 16) living in jobless households (Vic: 18%)

### Active citizens

- Civically active (have their voices heard in planning/decision-making and are respectful/responsible): DATA GAP

### Modelling good citizenship

- 57% of the adults in the community are members of organised groups such as sports, church, community groups or professional associations (Vic: 61%)

*[www.childfriendlycity.com.au](http://www.childfriendlycity.com.au)*

