

CONTEXT

The City of Greater Bendigo is located in north central Victoria, 150 kilometres north west of Melbourne, and covers an area of approximately 2995 square kilometres. Greater Bendigo adjoins the municipalities of Campaspe, Strathbogie, Mitchell, Mount Alexander, and Loddon.

Bendigo is Victoria's third largest urban centre outside metropolitan Melbourne and is the major centre for north central Victoria.

Greater Bendigo is growing rapidly with a projected population of over 150,000 people by 2036 (Victoria in Future, 2019) and a population target of 200,000 by 2041 (Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan, 2014).

This growth is creating an increasingly culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse community. Most people live within the urban area of Bendigo. About one in seven people live in townships and rural areas outside the Bendigo Urban Growth Boundary.

The Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people are the traditional inhabitants of the Greater Bendigo region and were present for at least 30,000 years prior to the arrival of European settlers.

Gold was discovered in the early 1850s and Bendigo became the second biggest goldfield in Australia and contributed significantly to the development of Melbourne. The gold rush left a legacy of fine Victorian buildings, and Bendigo has one of the highest concentrations of properties registered on the Victorian Heritage Register in the State.

The gold rush brought a diversity of traditions and cultural practice including large numbers of Chinese, Cornish, and German miners.

Greater Bendigo is strategically positioned with a well-connected network of highways and railways that provide important social and economic links. It is located within the Murray-Darling Basin, the North Central Catchment region and the catchments of the Loddon and Campaspe Rivers.

Greater Bendigo has a large range of natural features that contribute significantly to the municipality's character and appeal, including an extensive network of state, regional and national parks and Big Hill and the Loddon and Campaspe Rivers. Bendigo is in a unique situation of being a regional city surrounded by forest. This requires particular management along the interface to protect environmental values and provide a safe place to live and work.

Greater Bendigo performs a regional service role with construction, manufacturing, health care, education and financial services being the major contributors to economic output, along with mining, retail and tourism.