



# Reimagining Bendigo Creek

*Revitalising an urban creek for all*

**A PROSPECTUS FOR ACTION**



# Snapshot of the Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan

The *Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan* marks a turning point in the creek's history by articulating a long-term vision to revitalise the urban creek.

The immediate mission is to “change people’s hearts and minds to take united action, so that in a generation’s time Bendigo Creek will be a healthy, connected and nurturing place.” To guide this, the plan focuses on the three goals of **Catchment, Connections** and **Culture**. Achievement of these goals is underpinned by the following:

## Catchment

A healthy Bendigo Creek by improving the catchment and creating flood-resilient communities.

1. Limit the impact of climate change with water sensitive urban design and traditional ecological knowledge
2. Manage flood risk with appropriate infrastructure, landscape treatments and community preparedness
3. Restore aquatic habitats and ecosystem function of the creek and its tributaries
4. Improve how our city landscape relates to the creek and tributaries

## Connections

Bendigo Creek forms a continuous and integrated public space network for our community to enjoy and move freely through.

5. Connect places and spaces with a network of accessible public corridors

6. Improve the creek’s corridor access
7. Increase creek-based interaction and recreation opportunities
8. Create a safe creek environment for everyone

## Culture

Bendigo Creek embodies our diverse cultures and is actively cared for by the community.

9. Empower Traditional Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung, to practice their cultural traditions and promote their cultural and spiritual connections to the creek
10. Promote positive community perceptions of the creek
11. Foster community caring for the creek
12. Strengthen the diversity of experiences along the creek

A co-design process with Traditional Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung, relevant agencies and the community was employed to develop the *Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan*. The process enabled the Dja Dja Wurrung to articulate their vision for Bendigo Creek, identify the community’s values and aspirations, and build collective commitment to revitalise Bendigo Creek. The *Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan* is available to view online [here](#).

## The Dja Dja Wurrung’s vision for a reimagined Bendigo Creek

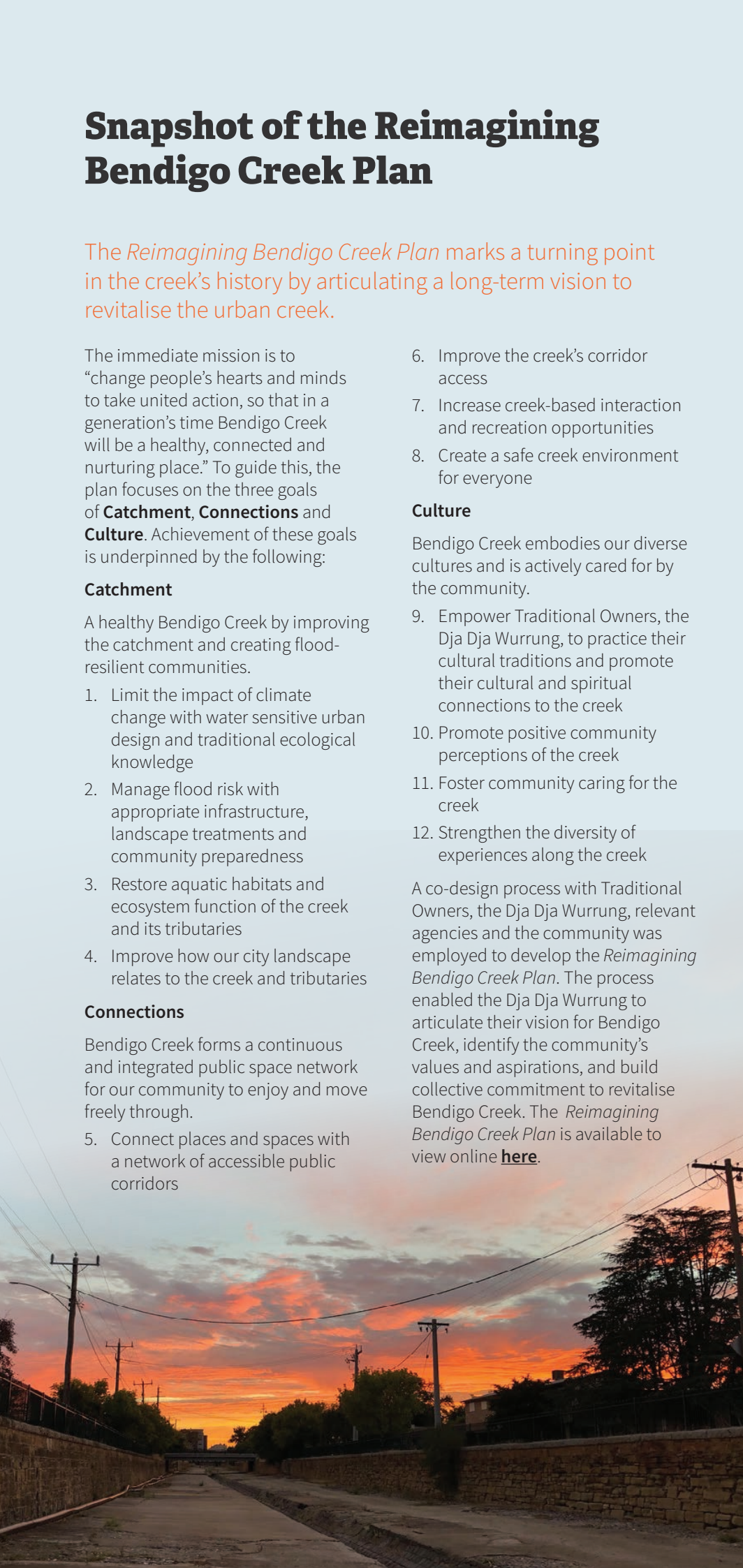
There is a rippling along the Bendigo Creek, there is now undulation. Sounds, when there was none. There is a familiar sense of reawakening as we walk along the banks. There is open, clean water, verged by grasses and reeds that are strong and healthy like us. The Creek is healing and so are we.

Activity and conversation, voices of the community, people and children, looking for and anticipating life and movement within the Creek, hoping for new interactions. We now have a place to gather, to listen and to share.

The familiar sense and smell of smoke is around us, but not heat, a sweetened cleansing smell that is recognisable to us all, not feared, but welcoming and healing. You are amongst Cultural practice.

The ground is clean, and thick with Kangaroo Grass that gently brush against our hands and feet, there are now sensations underfoot, crinkling and crunching in the new life and healing, colours are yellow and as bright as the sun, they are unavoidable in their numbers. What was lost, has now returned.

Cultural practices and ceremony support healing, and encourages cultural interaction, facilitating reconciliation and greater returns to the community.



# A prospectus for action

It's time to chart a new course for the creek and investment is now sought to transform it for the better.

Transformative change has begun to restore the creek and make it an integral part of Greater Bendigo's cultural, ecological and community landscape. This prospectus outlines a plan for action and investment opportunities to build and sustain significant momentum for Reimagining Bendigo Creek. The investment priorities are:

1. **Dja Dja Wurrung leading the way** – \$1.1M over five years
2. **Healing creek and country** – \$3M
3. **Bike to and through the creek** – \$2M
4. **Mobilising the community to act** – \$850,000 over five years

Collectively, the prospectus outlines \$7M worth of projects and actions, including large-scale investment opportunities and discrete individual projects. Importantly, the City of

Greater Bendigo has the financial capacity to co-contribute to the funding requests and there is significant in-kind support from the partner organisations to oversee the delivery of projects and actions.

Investing in the future of Bendigo Creek will transform Greater Bendigo for the better. Investment in urban waterways follows a growing trend across Australia and around the world, as local communities are now recognising how integral waterways are to urban life. Traditional Owners, government agencies, volunteer groups, local businesses and the broader community can all see the benefits. In Bendigo, we are exemplifying this pursuit to create a more harmonious relationship with our creek.

## Strategic alignment

The *Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan* will directly progress many strategic initiatives across all levels of government. Importantly, it will drive forward *Water for Victoria*; *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-2028* and the *Recognition and Settlement Agreement* between the Dja Dja Wurrung and Victorian Government. It will also contribute to the Australian Government's *Strategy for Nature 2019-2030* and *Smart Cities Plan*, and further contributes to *Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable* from the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

## Bendigo Creek in the heart of the city

Bendigo Creek flows through the city centre and connects to community. Revitalising Bendigo Creek by making lasting, highly visible change will lead to enhanced civic pride, activated public spaces, increased tourism appeal, and a more active and healthy community.

## Value proposition

The implementation of the Reimagining Bendigo Creek Plan is being led by the Water Sensitive Bendigo partnership – an alliance of nine organisations to drive water innovation in Bendigo. Collectively, these organizations have the capacity and capability to make a significant difference. The partners are committed and well-coordinated and are now seeking investment to build serious momentum.

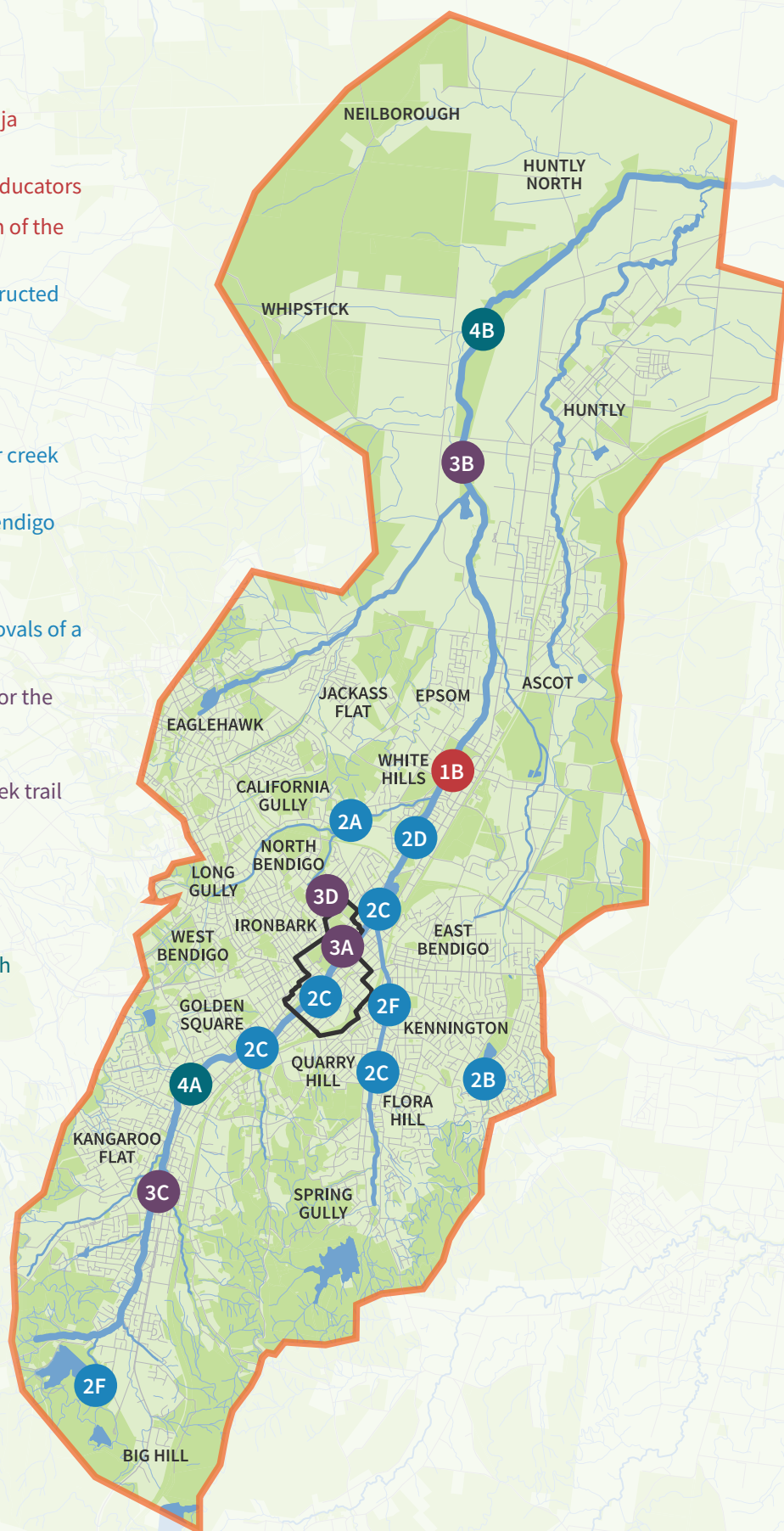
## Water Sensitive Bendigo is a partnership between:





## Actions

- 1A. Employ a Project Officer within Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises
- 1B. Employ local Aboriginal artists and educators
- 1C. Facilitate the continued participation of the Kapa Gatjin
- 2A. Build stage 1 of the Long Gully Constructed Wetlands
- 2B. Undertake erosion control and creek stabilisation in the Grassy Flat Creek
- 2C. Investigate, consult, design, develop business cases and seek approval for creek renaturalisation
- 2D. Undertake in-stream works on the Bendigo Creek
- 2E. Repair high-risk areas
- 2F. Undertake detailed design and approvals of a preferred flood mitigation option
- 3A. Design, consult and seek approvals for the low-line walking and cycling trail
- 3B. Investigate, consult, design and seek approvals for extending Bendigo Creek trail
- 3C. Design and seek approvals to create underpasses and safer crossings
- 3D. Construct successive stages of the Ironbark Gully Trail
- 4A. Expand the North Central Waterwatch Citizen Science Program
- 4B. Provide Landcare and 'Friends of' groups with funds
- 4C. Conduct a targeted education program
- 4D. General community education campaign



## Key

- Bendigo Creek catchment
- Bendigo city centre







## INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1

### Dja Dja Wurrung leading the way

The co-design process for Reimagining Bendigo Creek has benefited greatly from the leadership, wisdom and involvement of the Dja Dja Wurrung. It is fundamental that they are financially supported to continue their leadership role to heal Country and people.

**1A. Employ a Project Officer within Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises** to coordinate implementation activities. Officer responsibilities include coordinate stakeholders, lead engagement activities and oversee delivery of key projects.

Funding sought: \$500,000 (\$100,000 per year over five years)

**1B. Employ local Aboriginal artists and educators** to design, create and install a series of interpretive signs along Bendigo Creek. This initiative will express cultural values in an engaging and respectful way.

Funding sought: \$350,000

**1C. Facilitate the continued participation of the Kapa Gatjin** (water advisory group of the Dja Dja Wurrung) in Reimagining Bendigo Creek. Engagement activities include consulting Traditional Owners about specific projects relating to Bendigo Creek and empowering the group to lead its own projects.

Funding sought: \$250,000 (\$50,000 per year over five years)

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**Total: \$1.1M**

#### Benefits and outcomes of investment

- Support the self-determination of the Dja Dja Wurrung and increase the capacity of Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises to deliver on-ground outcomes
- Create local employment, including Aboriginal employment
- Enable genuine engagement with Traditional Owners
- Enable Dja Dja Wurrung cultural expression and build community awareness of cultural and environmental values





## INVESTMENT PRIORITY 2

### Healing creek and country

A suite of construction, design and investigation projects are ready to be implemented to heal Bendigo Creek and its catchment. Improving the health of the creek will improve the water quality for downstream communities and ecosystems including Ghow (Kow) Swamp and the Murray Darling Basin.

#### 2A. Build stage 1 of the Long Gully Constructed Wetlands.

The first stage is to build a series of wetlands and associated landscaping. The longer-term vision is to create a linear park jointly managed by the Dja Dja Wurrung and the City. Initial investment will be a catalyst for further enhancements

Funding sought: \$500,000

#### 2B. Undertake erosion control and creek stabilisation in the Grassy Flat Creek.

The creek is highly eroded and is contributing to significant sediment in Kennington Reservoir.

Funding sought: \$100,000

#### 2C. Investigate, consult, design, develop business cases and seek approval for creek renaturalisation projects for priority locations:

- Bendigo Creek - Golden Square, between Bay Street and Maple Street
- Bendigo Creek - adjacent to Lake Weeroona
- Back Creek (between Caroline Street and Miller Street)
- Bendigo Creek - adjacent to Londonderry Reserve

Funding sought: \$800,000

#### 2D. Undertake in-stream works on the Bendigo Creek

downstream of Kings Bridge, White Hills. Works to remove the accumulated sediments and contaminants, stabilize creek banks and bed, and add access paths. Works will improve the amenity and function of the creek in a popular area.

Funding sought: \$700,000

#### 2E. Repair high-risk areas

of Bendigo Creek and Back Creek that are at risk of failing. Works include asset renewal and partially renaturalising built sections of the creeks. Projects are shovel-ready and will create construction jobs.

Funding sought: \$750,000

#### 2F. Undertake detailed design and approvals of a preferred flood mitigation option

from the *Kangaroo Flat and Golden Square Flood Study*. The preferred option is to divert flood waters from the upper catchment into No. 7 Reservoir and Crusoe Reservoir. Future works to reduce downstream flooding.

Funding sought: \$200,000

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**Total: \$3M**

#### Benefits and outcomes of investment

- Improve the health of the catchment and urban waterways, including creation of habitats for native fish and platypus, improved water quality, reduced sources of erosion and contamination, and increased storage for floods
- Create significant employment for construction and design consulting industries
- Enable significant on-ground outcomes to showcase investment and progress of *Reimagining Bendigo Creek*
- Enhance amenity, tourism attractiveness and urban liveability. This includes creating more cool, green urban spaces for social gatherings; improved creek to enjoy and explore; and creating quiet places to reconnect with nature. This will enable healthier and happier communities





### INVESTMENT PRIORITY 3

## Bike to and through the creek

An ideal way to link communities to their creek is via new and improved cycling and walking paths. This requires making it safer and easier to commute to and through Bendigo, and to extend the network.

**3A. Design, consult and seek approvals for the low-line walking and cycling trail.** The trail would be within the creek in central Bendigo to allow people to safely and quickly commute into and out of the city.

Funding sought: \$200,000

**3B. Investigate, consult, design and seek approvals for extending Bendigo Creek trail to Huntly streamside reserve.** Trial to connect northern suburb of Huntly to the rest of Bendigo.

Funding sought: \$200,000

**3C. Design and seek approvals to create underpasses and safer crossings** along the Bendigo Creek Trail. The underpasses and crossings will create safer passages and improve user experiences.

Funding sought: \$100,000

**3D. Construct successive stages of the Ironbark Gully Trail.** The trail is a priority path of *Walk Cycle Greater Bendigo*.

Funding sought: \$1.5M (\$500,000 per year for three years)

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**Total: \$2M**

#### Benefits and outcomes of investment

- Build upon the network of paths to get around Bendigo and connect with the creek. Includes developing safer and more comfortable and convenient walking and cycling paths. This will enable healthier and happier communities
- Create significant employment for construction and design consulting industries
- Enables significant on-ground outcomes to showcase investment and progress of Reimagining Bendigo Creek





## INVESTMENT PRIORITY 4

### Mobilising the community to act

Community is at the heart of *Reimagining Bendigo Creek*. Efforts are required to support existing dedicated volunteers to care for their creek whilst also educate those who are less engaged, as there are some negative perceptions about the creek's value.

**4A. Expand the North Central Waterwatch Citizen Science Program** (coordinated by the North Central Catchment Management Authority). Funding to enable additional support for community volunteers and schools to participate in water quality and biodiversity monitoring on the Bendigo Creek.

Funding sought: \$250,000 (\$50,000 per year over five years)

**4B. Provide Landcare and 'Friends of groups with funds** to plant trees and control weeds and erosion. Bendigo currently has four active groups and investment would stimulate greater impact.

Funding sought: \$500,000 (\$100,000 per year over five years)

**4C. Conduct a targeted education program** for developers and construction industry to reduce the amount of litter and sediment leaving development sites. Funding to produce education materials and industry engagement.

Funding sought: \$20,000

**4D. General community education campaign** to change community perceptions and change undesired behaviours (e.g. littering). Funding to develop education materials, including an online presence and media campaign.

Funding sought: \$80,000

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**Total: \$850,000**



#### Benefits and outcomes of investment

- Empower community members, particularly children, to be more aware and act to improve their creek and catchment
- Educate the community to make lasting change by changing negative perceptions and undesired behaviours

### For more information

Contact Liam Sibby from the City of Greater Bendigo on 0490 038 854 or Rodney Carter from Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation on 0419 564 341.