

Bendigo Showgrounds

April 2025

What is being delivered at Bendigo Showgrounds?

Development Victoria is delivering significant upgrades to Bendigo Showgrounds as part of the Victorian Government's Regional Sports Infrastructure Program.

The upgrades* will include:

- Improvements to the grass arena, including upgraded lighting and upgraded perimeter track.
- Construction of a new multipurpose pavilion featuring an event space, storage, and associated amenities.
- Upgrades to existing entries with new fencing and gates.
- Remove and replace sections of perimeter fencing.

The upgrades to Bendigo Showgrounds will boost local jobs and businesses during project delivery and will support the continued growth of the Bendigo region for years to come.

Works on this exciting project are set to commence in August 2025.

*Subject to planning approval and the outcome of a procurement process

What is the vision for the project?

The Bendigo Showgrounds is regional Victoria's leading Showgrounds and multipurpose events facility.

The Showgrounds caters to a significant number of diverse events, from large-scale festivals to one of regional Victoria's most visited markets. The Showgrounds is a highly valued community asset, providing significant social, community and economic benefits to the local and regional economy.

The vision for the Bendigo Showgrounds project is to create a modern, accessible, and resilient venue that fosters community connection, boosts local economic activity, and supports diverse events. The upgrades aim to enhance opportunities for participation in agricultural, recreation, and community activities while ensuring the venue remains a valued asset for future generations.

This project is being delivered by Development Victoria in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria and has involved close collaboration with the City of Greater Bendigo and the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society to ensure the Bendigo Showgrounds upgrades cater to the local community and deliver positive outcomes for the region.

Where is the project located?

The Bendigo Showgrounds is located at Holmes Road, North Bendigo, Victoria. This site is a key regional community, cultural, and agricultural events venue, serving as a central hub for the local community and surrounding areas. Its strategic location ensures easy access for

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residents and visitors, further strengthening its role as a cornerstone of regional activity and engagement.

What is the timeline for delivering this project?

Procurement for a head contractor is currently underway, with the Request for Proposal phase commencing in early 2025. A head contractor is expected to be appointed in mid-2025.

Construction is scheduled to commence in August 2025, and the project is expected to be completed by late 2026.

What are the benefits of this project?

The project will help increase community, cultural, and agricultural events in Bendigo and the region thereby supporting local businesses and communities.

The delivery of this project will help to boost the region's economy through the creation of local jobs, utilising local supply chains and creating opportunities for local businesses.

What are the project objectives?

- Improve the health of regional communities – Particularly those which are disadvantaged, by creating accessible and inclusive opportunities for participation in community events and recreation.
- Improve the capacity of local councils and venue operators to hold more events – Relevant to the scale of the facility.
- Provide a positive impact on the local economy – Through the planning, building and operating of community events and recreation facilities.
- Respond to the need to plan, build and operate regional community event and recreation infrastructure – That can reduce operational costs and environmental impacts while increasing building resilience and more broadly, benefit neighbourhood liveability.

What is the Regional Sports Infrastructure Program?

The Victorian Government is delivering 16 sports infrastructure projects to make Victoria's regional communities even better places to live, stay and play for generations to come.

The projects are spread right across regional Victoria, with 11 sites to be upgraded and five brand new venues to be constructed for local communities.

What is being delivered in Bendigo under the Regional Sports Infrastructure Program?

As part of the Victorian Government's investment in making regional communities an even better place to live, stay and play for generations to come, the Bendigo Sports Package was announced in May 2024 as part of the Regional Sports Infrastructure Program.

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In addition to the Bendigo Showgrounds upgrades, Bendigo Stadium will see the development of new two court annex, refurbishment of Courts 9 and 10, compliant lighting to outdoor netball courts, carpark improvements, and upgrades to improve the existing stadium including accessibility upgrades to the entrance, back-up generator, main switchboard, installation of solar.

The Bendigo Bowls Club and Bendigo Croquet Club will also receive substantial upgrades, including the refurbishment of four bowls greens and two croquet greens, as well as a revitalised clubhouse with improved accessibility and circulation features.

How is this project being funded?

The project is being funded through the Victorian Government's Bendigo Sports Package as part of the Regional Sports Infrastructure Program.

What procurement opportunities will there be on this project?

The Expression of Interest (EOI) for a Head Contractor to deliver the Bendigo Showgrounds upgrades was released in September 2024, with details available on the Buying for Victoria website. Following the EOI phase, a Request for Proposal process commenced in March 2025 and a head contractor is expected to be appointed in mid-2025.

Suppliers who are interested in providing goods or services, should register their details on the ICN Gateway Page.

Who has been appointed as the design consultants for the upgrades to Bendigo Showgrounds?

City Collective was appointed as the Principal Design Consultant for the Bendigo Showgrounds upgrades in 2024. The design team was chosen following an extensive and robust selection process managed by Development Victoria, the Victorian Government's major projects agency and delivery partner for the upgraded Bendigo Showgrounds.

City Collective has partnered with local Bendigo-based consultants, including RMG Civil & Structural Engineers and Trident Building Surveyors, to ensure the project is grounded in the local community. The design phase is well underway, incorporating community feedback and sustainable design principles.

What opportunities will there be for local businesses and suppliers to get involved in this project?

We support Victorian businesses and workers by ensuring that small and medium size enterprises are given a full and fair opportunity to compete for both large and small government contracts.

On 13 February the project team presented at the Bendigo ICN Regional Showcase, sharing information on the project and opportunities to get involved, with local businesses and suppliers. Attendees also had the opportunity to connect with a several of the shortlisted bidders for the head contractor role during this event.

Suppliers can register with ICN for opportunities to supply goods and services to the project.

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For more information on how to register, local businesses and suppliers can visit the ICN Gateway.

Does this project have planning approval?

The Minister for Planning has been asked to consider the project as a State Project under Clause 52.30 of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme.

The first stage of the planning application has been submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning with approval on track for mid-2025.

Written submissions on the project were received through an Engage Victoria survey which was open from Wednesday 5 March to Thursday 3 April 2025. This was the final opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the project.

While designs are well-progressed, all feedback received will be considered as part of the final stages of project planning and delivery.

What is the planning pathway for this project?

The Minister for Planning has been asked to consider the project as a State Project under Clause 52.30 of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme.

This is a State Government planning pathway but still takes into account all of the usual planning requirements, including flood levels, elevations, environmental controls, parking, traffic, landscaping, cultural heritage and ecology.

Has the community had the opportunity to provide feedback on this project?

In March and April 2025 the community had the opportunity to attend a series of information sessions, including a drop-in session at Bendigo Showgrounds, and an online webinar.

Community members were also invited to provide a written submission on the project. Written submissions were accepted through the Engage Victoria website at engage.vic.gov.au/bendigo-showgrounds-upgrades which was open from Wednesday 5 March to Thursday 3 April 2025. This was the final opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the project.

Community members unable to attend the sessions are able to ask questions about the project by email using the BendigoShowgroundsComms@development.vic.gov.au email address.

What will you do with my feedback?

While designs for the Bendigo Showgrounds upgrades are well-progressed, we will consider any feedback which is provided during the consultation period, as we continue to finalise the design and delivery approach for the project.

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Why is consultation occurring when designs have already been prepared?

The consultation occurring in early 2025 allows for feedback to be considered prior to the finalisation of designs, and where appropriate, refinements may be made in alignment with the defined scope. Feedback received during the consultation process has been shared with the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society and relevant authorities.

Which user groups have been consulted during the design of the upgrades?

Sport and Recreation Victoria and Development Victoria have been working closely with Bendigo Agricultural Show Society, as the venue operator and the City of Greater Bendigo to ensure the upgrades cater to the local community and deliver what is needed for the region.

- Bendigo Agricultural Show Society has consulted with a range of regular user groups including: Major events users - including the Sheep and Wool Show, the Swap Meet, and festival organisers.
- The Showgrounds Committee of Management – which includes representatives from various user groups, and events.

What is Council's role?

The City of Greater Bendigo is the Local Authority and will provide local expertise and advice to assist with the delivery of the Project. Council is also an important stakeholder on this project and has been involved with the design of the Showgrounds upgrades.

Development Victoria and Sport and Recreation Victoria have been working closely with officers from City of Greater Bendigo to ensure the upgrades cater to the local community and deliver what is needed for the region.

What role will Traditional Owners play in this project?

Through ongoing conversations with DJAARA, we have discussed opportunities for their involvement in the design and construction of this project.

Is there a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the project site?

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been prepared and approved for the site.

What sustainability features does this project have?

The design of the Project will be developed in line with best practice sustainable design strategies and compliance against the National Construction Code (NCC) 2022.

These features include:

- **Orientation** - the building mass and form have responded to the solar orientation of the site and will incorporate appropriate materials and shading elements to control the thermal performance of the building.
- **Materials** - selection of locally sourced materials with low embodied energy will be prioritised.

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- **Stormwater Reuse & Management** - Capture of roof drainage for reuse within the wet areas and connections to existing site infrastructure.
- **Water Sensitive Urban Design** - integration of swales within the new landscaping & carparking to manage the drainage and treatment of stormwater.
- **Shade Planting** - Integration of landscape to the perimeter of the arena to reduce heat island effect of additional hard surfaces.

Has water sustainability been considered for the arena, such as repurposing water?

This is not included as part of the scope of works. However, the broader upgrades do include a number of water sustainability features, including:

- **Stormwater Reuse & Management** - capture of roof drainage for reuse within the wet areas and connections to existing site infrastructure.
- **Water Sensitive Urban Design** - integration of swales within the new landscaping and carparking to manage the drainage and treatment of stormwater.

Will you be removing any trees to deliver the upgrades to Bendigo Showgrounds?

Yes, there are existing trees in the area where the pavilion is being constructed and the western end of the arena that will need to be removed to deliver the scope of works. However, new trees are being planted and there will be an overall net gain of trees to the Bendigo Showgrounds.

What will you be doing about traffic, car parking and access to the site?

Traffic movements, car parking locations and access to the Showgrounds are not expected to be significantly impacted during these works. The upgrades will see improvements to access and connections throughout the site.

The Bendigo Showgrounds will remain open throughout the upgrades, and we will work hard to minimise any potential impacts for users during this time. If there are any changes regarding access to certain spaces, this will be communicated with users in advance.

How will you manage disruptions to nearby residents and businesses during construction?

We will work hard to minimise any impacts for the local community. Works notices will be distributed to residents and businesses adjacent to the Bendigo Showgrounds when main works commence and throughout the construction process whenever planned disruptions or traffic management activities are scheduled.

What are the changes to the arena?

The grassed arena will not be changing in size and will remain one of the largest arenas in Victoria.

The grassed arena will be upgraded to include resurfacing, lighting, and drainage. The

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upgrades to the surface will make this arena more suitable for a range of users.

What is happening to the arena fence line during these upgrades?

The current perimeter fence of the arena will be removed and a new fence will be installed around the perimeter of the grassed arena. There will be no change to the size of the grassed arena.

Will the new fence impact arena functionality?

It is expected that there will be some changes to the way users interact with the arena as a result of these upgrades, with a range of benefits. The grass arena size will not be impacted and will remain at its current size. Any changes will be communicated with users as works progress.

What will happen to the sand track around the arena?

The sand track will be converted to allow for a range of uses.

With the repurposing of the track, the Showgrounds will gain landscaped areas, improved gradient and drainage, green spaces and shading for the comfort of visitors, asphalted road to provide additional parking and improved vehicle movements around the site.

Will the pavilion be completed before the arena?

Delivery of the upgrades will be staged, with construction commencing in August 2025. It is anticipated that the arena will be completed prior to the pavilion.

Are the stables being upgraded?

No, the stables are not included in the scope of works. Sport and Recreation Victoria and Development Victoria have been working closely with Bendigo Agricultural Show Society, as the venue operator, and the City of Greater Bendigo to ensure the upgrades cater to the local community and deliver what is needed for the region.

Will the upgrades encourage more horse competitions?

While the scope does not include specific horse competition facilities, the improved arena conditions will make the arena more suitable for a range of users.

Will the Agricultural Show and horse events be impacted?

Bendigo Agricultural Show Society will continue to support equestrian events and competitions at the Bendigo Showgrounds.

I am an event organiser - how will these upgrades benefit my event?

Event organisers are able to contact secretary@bendigoshowgrounds.com.au if they have questions about how the upgrades may benefit specific events.

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Will alternative warm-up spaces be provided?

Event organisers can work directly with Bendigo Agricultural Show Society to establish what their event needs are, and how these can be managed following the upgrades.

What is Development Victoria's role in the Bendigo Showgrounds?

Development Victoria is delivering the Bendigo Showgrounds upgrades on behalf of Sport and Recreation Victoria.

Is Development Victoria delivering any other sporting infrastructure projects in Bendigo?

Development Victoria is responsible for delivering the upgrades to Bendigo Stadium.

What other regional sports infrastructure projects will be delivered by Development Victoria?

Of the 16 new and upgraded sports facilities which are being delivered by the Victorian Government across regional Victoria, we will be delivering eight projects in total, with local councils to deliver the remaining projects.

We are delivering:

Ballarat – Ballarat Major Events Precinct upgrades.

Bendigo – Bendigo Showgrounds and Bendigo Stadium upgrades.

Geelong – the new Armstrong Creek Sports Centre and Waurin Ponds Sporting Complex, as well as upgrades to the Stead Park hockey facilities.

Gippsland – Upgrades to Gippsland Sports and Entertainment Park, and Morwell Gun Club.

What experience does Development Victoria have delivering projects in Regional Victoria?

In recent years, we have significantly increased our regional portfolio, delivering projects of state significance, including the Ballarat GovHub, Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub, and the Geelong Arts Centre.

We are in the process of delivering Junction Place Wodonga, the new 12 Apostles Visitor Centre and Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre.

What experience does Development Victoria have delivering sports infrastructure projects?

We are in the planning and early delivery stages for eight regional sports infrastructure projects across Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Gippsland.

We have also delivered the State Basketball Centre, recent upgrades to Melbourne Park, and the State Netball and Hockey Centre. These projects are not part of the Regional Sports Infrastructure Program, but are vital pieces of sporting infrastructure being funded by the

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Victorian State Government.

State Basketball Centre – The Victorian State Government’s \$132 million upgrade of the State Basketball Centre in Wantirna South is now complete.

The project has created one of Australia’s leading basketball facilities that will support the continued growth of basketball and gymnastics at local and elite levels.

The redevelopment included:

- 12 new indoor community courts for local basketball competitions for a total of 18 courts
- Comprehensive training facilities for high-performance basketball including WNBL and NBL teams
- New gymnastics facilities
- New administration facilities to support sports organisations and clubs
- An outdoor town square space and new cafe.

Melbourne Park – Thanks to the nearly \$1 billion Melbourne Park Redevelopment funded by the Victorian Government, Melbourne Park will remain the home of the Australian Open until at least 2046, providing the best facilities and amenities for players and fans alike, including three operable roof and air-conditioned arenas effectively weatherproofing the tournament.

The project includes a strong emphasis on the comfort of patrons with more open space and shade, increased seating capacity, better connections to public transport and the city, and easier movement into and within the precinct.

State Netball and Hockey Centre – Now known as Melbourne Sports Centres – Parkville Stadium, the \$64.6 million State Netball and Hockey Centre (SNHC) redevelopment is the centrepiece of the Victorian Government’s record investment in women’s sport.

We delivered six new indoor netball courts, a new indoor hockey pitch, hot and cold recovery pools, a creche for parents playing at the centre, and a high-performance strength and conditioning gym.

The netball arm of the centre now has 11 indoor courts – creating greater capacity for year-round play. The new indoor hockey court similarly provides more opportunities and pathways for players.

The expanded centre will also allow for more use by volleyball, basketball, futsal, badminton and table tennis players and will be home to the Women in Sport Leadership Centre.

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