Thought Leaders

Future Shapers

Annual Report 2020–21

committee for ballarat

thinking ahead

Our Purpose

To inspire diverse thought leadership and unlock potential

Our Vision

A thriving and vibrant regional community recognised for its liveability, sustainability, and inclusiveness

Our Values

Vision, Respect, Empathy, Inclusion

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A Collaborative Approach

From the Chair

Damian Ross was appointed Chair of Committee for Ballarat in February 2021.

Born and raised in Ballarat, Damian has had a distinguished career in the manufacturing industry, most recently at Mars Wrigley where he was a Director.

Now running his own boutique consulting business, Damian is passionate about our region and looks forward to the contribution he can make through his role at Committee for Ballarat.

Over a chat and coffee, Damian Ross reflected on his role as Chair of Committee for Ballarat.

At a time when pressures in business and industry (and the community) have been significant, you agreed to take on the role of Chair of Committee for Ballarat. Why?

I have always viewed the work of Committee as being essential in building a better Ballarat and region. What's been achieved by Committee has been significant. When you look at who's been involved with Committee, Ballarat has been fortunate. With that in mind, I wanted to do whatever I could do to support business, industry and the broader community. Ballarat is a great city and the region has so much going for it. Our history is celebrated, but our future is up to us.

This is the second time you have taken on a leadership role with Committee, having been on the Board from 2017–19. What differences have you noted in the organisation and the work it does?

When I was on the Board previously representing Mars, I had more of an industry lens. Whereas this time, I have a broader perspective and feel more connected to what's important to Ballarat and the region. Committee is now very focused on its members and bringing the "outside in" to shape its focus and initiatives. Led by Michael Poulton and the Executive team, there is a genuine commitment to work with and across our stakeholders. The strategic action plan defines our work, focusing on Liveability, Connectivity and Leadership, with specific initiatives and projects aligned to them.

What has been the most satisfying aspect of the role to date?

I am really enjoying the collaborative approach, working with key stakeholders to find ways to best serve Ballarat and the region. That said, we are not always going to agree on all things. However, having the maturity to listen and understand will deliver a better outcome. The Board is made up of great leaders across business and industry and that provides diversity in thought and perspective to our work. I really enjoy that.

What would you see as Committee's most important contribution to the region over the past year?

Whilst there are a number of transitional and transformative projects being pursued, I think the COVID-19 vaccination program is one that we will look back on as being pivotal in keeping Ballarat and the region safe and open for business.

If you were asked to describe (the role of) Committee for Ballarat in three or four words, what words would you choose?

Focused, balanced, relentless and compassionate.

Chair, Committee for Ballarat

The Board
June 2021

Damian Ross
Chair

Rodney Walton
Haymes Paint
Deputy Chair

Bill Mundy
Community Member

Bridget Aitchison
Australian Catholic University

Chris Wright
Mars Wrigley

Dale Fraser
Ballarat Health Services
Governance Committee Chair

Daniel Moloney
Mayor, City of Ballarat

Duncan Bentley
Federation University Australia

Elizabeth Lacey
Lacey & Co
LBWR Committee Chair

Luke Rieniets
Bendigo Bank
Finance, Audit & Risk Management
Committee Chair

Paul O'Donohue
Central Highlands Water

Phillip Lee
Ray White Ballarat

Ron Selkirk
Selkirk Pty Ltd

Sara Quon
Sovereign Hill

Simon Coghlan
Bayside Bistro

Stacey Grose
BJT Legal

As well as strategic leadership, each Director brings a unique skill set and perspective to Committee's work.

Their commitment and important contributions to Committee's work are valued.

The following Directors stepped down or retired by rotation during the past year.

Ben Taylor, City of Ballarat
Stephen Byrne, BJT Legal

We thank them for their contribution to the work of Committee for Ballarat, and for the passion, insight and experience they brought to the Board table.

Thanks are also extended to Rodney Walton who stepped into the role of interim Chair for the first seven months of the year. The Board appreciated Rod's leadership, wisdom and support during this period.

Deputy Chair, Rodney Walton (Haymes Paints) with Stacey Grose (BJT Legal) who joined the Board in October 2020

committee for ballarat
thinking ahead

Who we are

A visionary membership body with a strategic, long-term focus that transcends political cycles.

A strong collaborator working with the three tiers of government and key stakeholders from across the region.

A non-partisan advocate for sustainable and responsible development for our region.

David Haymes
A Tribute

David Haymes was a local icon whose passion and vision for Ballarat as a thriving and vibrant regional community was instrumental in helping establish Committee for Ballarat.

David passed away in June 2021, aged 77, after steering the Haymes Paint business for more than five decades, making it a household name nationally.

While he stepped down from the day-to-day operations of the business in 2008, handing over to the next generation of the Haymes family, he remained a central part of the business in his role as Chairman of the Haymes Paint Board.

David was committed to Australian-owned businesses and manufacturing and was extremely proud to see Haymes Paint become the largest Australian-made and owned paint manufacturer.

Throughout his life, David played an active role within his local and the wider business communities. His willingness to step outside his own organisation and provide true community leadership inspired us all to do more, to do better. This was the driver for Haymes Paint to be an inaugural member – and David a Board member – of Committee for Ballarat.

It is said that a society grows great when men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit. This was certainly true for David. Our community has become richer because of his integrity, insight, and passion for Ballarat.

David's leadership and passion for Ballarat and the region were instrumental in the formation of Committee for Ballarat. The respect that David carried within the Ballarat business community made it compelling for the city's business leaders to understand the importance of having an apolitical thought leadership organisation that would advocate for the best long-term outcomes for our region. David was a significant influence in the early years of Committee for Ballarat and will always be remembered as an icon of the Ballarat business community.

– Luke Rieniets, Committee for Ballarat Board Director

Strategic Action Plan

Strategic Priorities 2020–22

Launched in October 2020, the Strategic Action Plan 2020–22 is the foundation for Committee's work as it advances its vision *for a thriving and vibrant regional community recognised for its liveability, sustainability, and inclusiveness.*

Planning for future population growth is central to the plan with its focus on liveability, sustainability, connectivity and leadership.

Committee will work with business, government and the community to take this opportunity to shape our future and ensure the region continues to be a desirable place to live, do business in and visit.

LIVEABILITY

A clear, long-term vision for sustainable development that ensures our economy, community and environment thrive

CONNECTIVITY

Advocate for key infrastructure developments that embrace innovation and will enhance our liveability, prosperity and safety

LEADERSHIP

Deliver transformative leadership programs that unlock the potential of our participants to benefit our region

Planning for the Future

Big Ideas Forum

With Federal and State elections and budget cycles on the horizon, it was important to develop a united and aligned plan to help influence decision-makers across all three tiers of government as part of the short, medium and long-term planning for the region.

Held at Sovereign Hill, the Big Ideas Forum was Committee's first step in contributing to the development of this plan.

The interactive workshop involved some 70 members and student representatives from member schools – Phoenix Community College and Ballarat Clarendon College – in a process of collaboration to facilitate the generation of ideas, and to identify opportunities for our region and the city.

In total, some 300 ideas were collated from the forum and the December 2020 Member Survey. All ideas were aligned to Committee for Ballarat's strategic priorities of Liveability and Connectivity. Of these, 60% were categorised into our Liveability agenda.

In an interview with *The Courier* following the workshop, Phoenix Community College house captain, Abigail Merry, said it was an awesome opportunity to share her ideas and hear people's different visions for the future of Ballarat. "As young people, and being from a different generation, we ... see things slightly differently. We can say this is what we want in the future because it is going to affect us in this way."

Committee for Ballarat CEO, Michael Poulton, said the youth voice was critical to Committee's role as a thought leader. "Leaders of the next generation are going to be looking back on the legacy we leave them and how they are going to manage it," he said. "It is absolutely vital we hear the youth voice as part of this conversation about what the future looks like."

Members
June 2021

Executive

Ballarat Health Services
Putting your health first

Central Highlands Water

City of Ballarat

Build with Selkirk

Corporate Gold

ACU

Ballarat Community Health

Bendigo Bank

Federation University

Haymes Paint

Mars Wrigley

McCain

Mercure Ballarat Hotel and Convention Centre

Western Bulldogs

3BA

Committee for Ballarat members are business and community leaders drawn from a range of sectors. Their organisations are a significant representation of the total employment and business investment in Ballarat and the region.

Corporate

Adroit Insurance Group
Baird and McGregor, Solicitors
Ballarat Cemeteries
Ballarat Clarendon College
Ballarat Gold Mine
Ballarat Grammar
Ballarat Motor Holdings
Ballarat Regional Industries
Ballarat Turf Club
Beveridge Williams & Co Pty Ltd
BJT Legal
Bolton's
C E Bartlett Pty Ltd
CAFS
CardnoTGM
CDC Ballarat Pty Ltd
CHS Broadbent Pty Ltd
Colliers International
Commonwealth Bank
Craig's Royal Hotel
Eureka Concrete
Findlay Engineering
Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute
G Gay & Co Mitre 10
Gekko Systems Pty Ltd
Golden Plains Shire Council
Heinz Law
Hepburn Shire Council
Integra Land Pty Ltd
JK Personnel
Lake Imaging
Loreto College
MaxiTRANS Australia Pty Ltd
Mercy Place Ballarat
Morton Dunn Architects
Mulcahy & Co Accounting Services
National Australia Bank
nbn Local
Nevett Lawyers
Nicholson Construction
North Ballarat Sports Club
People @ Work & Gforce
Phoenix P12 Community College
Porter Plant
Powercor Australia Ltd
Pyrenees Shire Council
RACV Goldfields Resort
Ray White Ballarat
Red Lion Hotel
RSM Australia Pty Ltd
Sovereign Hill
Spiire Australia
St Patrick's College Ballarat
Telstra Country Wide
The Courier
The Forge Pizzeria
UFS Dispensaries
UGL Rail
WDEA Works
Western Victoria PHN

Small Business

A Leader's Impact
Ballarat Agricultural & Pastoral Society
Ballarat City Football Club Inc
Bayside Bistros Pty Ltd
Hygge Property
Inspire HQ
Kaufmann Property Consultants
Lacey & Co.
Minerals Council of Australia
Victorian Division
VicWest Telco
W M Flynn Pty Ltd
61 Design

Associate

AICD
Australian Industry Group
Commerce Ballarat
Victorian Chamber of Commerce
and Industry

Honorary

David Battersby
David James
Judy Verlin AM
Tony Chew

LBWR20

Adrian Borg
Angela Verstage
Anusha Raveendran
Caitlin Clark
Carlee Grant
Chandru Vengadasamy
Chris Hunter
Claire Shaw
Clare O'Connor
Dan Davidson
Darlene Rumler
David Collins
Dylan Billington
Fiona Sharman
Gerard Kennedy
Heather Lord
Hope Lemm
Jessy Edmonston
Karen Pinkus
Luke Noether
Matt Burns
Melissa Knight
Mick Ryan
Mikala Bailey
MJ Goulopoulos
Nicole McGrath
Sean Leyland
Sean Ludeke
Tara Leaf
Wiremu Rennie

Future Shapers 21

Anna Watts
Caroline Amirtharajah
Caylene Vincent
David Waldron
Fiona Murphy
Grant Berriman
Kasey Cornwell
Kayla Manning
Kim Halbert-Pere
Nicole Snibson
Owen Harris
Pamela Sutcliffe
Rochelle Kirkham
Shelley Wood
Suzanne Liu
Tabitha Rickard

Community

Angela McLachlan
Bill Mundy
Damian Ross
Kate Davis
Mark Hemetsberger
Nick Clare
Nicole Ashby
Ray Davies
Sally Kennedy
Sarah Myers

Bringing a diversity of views

Appreciating that not all those potentially able to make a contribution to Committee for Ballarat's work are to be found in current member organisations, Committee introduced its Community Membership category in 2014 to enable those with vision and passion to participate in and support Committee's activities.

CEO Michael Poulton said, "With differing experiences and backgrounds, Community members have added a diversity of view to Committee's work."

Appointed in January 2021 for a two-year period, new community members (pictured above) – Angela McLachlan, Kate Davis, Mark Hemetsberger (absent from photo), Nick Clare, Nicole Ashby, Ray Davies, Sally Kennedy, and Sarah Myers – are looking forward to their involvement with Committee and to making a difference.

Ray Davies has an interest in the impacts of climate change and the opportunities for new industries and jobs in the renewable energy sector. "My role in economic development at the Pyrenees Shire has also given me a regional perspective of the issues facing the Central Highlands, and, through this background, I feel I can make a positive contribution to Committee for Ballarat."

Transforming Our City

The changing CBD landscape

On 14 April 2021, Committee members were treated to a rare insight into GovHub with a tour of the new building and presentation from the key players.

The breakfast forum included short presentations from Anthony Schinck (RDV), Luke Jarvis (Lead Architect from John Wardle Architects) and Richard Nicholson (Nicholson Construction).

Nicholson Construction has been building Ballarat for generations and, in his presentation, Richard Nicholson gave an insight into the technical detail and construction challenges. What was evident was the great pride Richard had in the skills and talents of his team in delivering a significant building for Ballarat.

Luke Jarvis highlighted the building's cutting-edge design and sustainability features. "The distinctive windows which have been much talked about, have been designed in such a way as to 'frame' Ballarat's best views and enhance energy efficiency," he said.

As one of the champions of the project, RDV's Anthony Schinck outlined the importance of GovHub to the region. It will generate jobs and economic value to the CBD. During its construction, the build generated approximately 500 construction jobs, had local content of some 91% and contracted 60 regional suppliers. When completed, GovHub will have the capacity to house 1000 staff right in the heart of the CBD, generating economic activity and bringing life to the centre of the city. The growth of the hospitality sector in the surrounding areas has already been seen and is a direct result of GovHub.

Ron Selkirk – Chair of the CBD project team which advocated over a number of years for a government department to be relocated to Ballarat – commented, "Our city is renowned for its beautiful buildings and boulevards, and GovHub and its surrounding streetscapes will add another important layer to the rich narrative of our city."

The Insights Forums, with specific themes, have provided members the opportunity to be "front and centre" of the conversation.

– Damian Ross, Chair

In hosting these Insight Forums, Committee aims to raise awareness of issues and highlight the work of members in key strategic areas. The challenge then is to determine what role, if any, Committee can play in influencing policy development, resources, support and/or any government advocacy needed to bring initiatives to life.

– Michael Poulton, CEO

Urban growth challenges

At an Insights Forum in June 2021, presentations from Natalie Robertson (City of Ballarat) and Evan King (City of Ballarat), Joseph van Dyk (Hygge Property) and Nick Grylewicz (Integra) provided some important background as well as highlighting the challenges Ballarat is facing as a growing regional city.

Key points raised in the session were:

- the importance of a mix of greenfield and infill development
- that diversity in housing stock will be critical if we are going to cater for the demands of a growing population and a diverse regional economy

Ballarat is retaining more youth than ever and experiencing the largest wave of population growth since the gold rush in an economic climate with historically low interest rates and very strong income growth. Coupled with low levels of housing stock and diversity, these factors are causing rapid house price growth and a-once-in-a-generation opportunity to regenerate our city.

To facilitate the outcomes called upon by the Ballarat 2040 Strategy, and to ensure we create a city that continues to thrive, we must create more diverse housing stock within walking distance to critical infrastructure. Council and other major landowners must become catalysts and participate in the market to stimulate growth and promote new and varied housing models.

– Joseph van Dyk, Hygge Property

An example of infill development – Nightingale Project in Davey Street, Central Ballarat (main picuture – artist impression; inset – building nearing completion)

Skills for the Future

The announcement to build Australia's first wind turbine training tower at Federation University Australia's Mt Helen campus was made in June 2021 by Minister for Higher Education, Skills and Training Gayle Tierney and the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio.

In addition to the training tower, the project involves a new short course – Federation TAFE has signed an exclusive agreement with the BZEE Network in Germany to deliver the globally recognised post-trade turbine technician training course that will provide the much-needed skills for a workforce in the wind energy industry.

In mid 2017, Committee's Innovation and Sustainability Project Team identified the need for appropriate skills for the growing renewable energy sector in our region. Together with Federation University Australia, Committee sought funding for a business case which was granted in August 2018.

Due to the tenacity of Bill Mundy and the team at Federation University, the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre (APRETC) will now become a reality.

Delighted with developments, Bill Mundy said, "The Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre will provide significant workforce development value to the wind energy sector. Not only will it offer a world-first Apprenticeship for Blade Repair Technicians and, under licence, deliver to Australia for the first time the globally recognised BZEE Turbine Technician Training course, it will also provide a high-risk training centre for both maintenance and construction workers alike.

"When coupled with Federation University's significant capability in energy research and higher education offerings in the engineering area, it's a game changer."

Mt Mercer Wind Farm

A *New Energy* Future

A clear, long-term vision for sustainable development that ensures our economy, community and environment thrive is the focus for Committee for Ballarat's Liveability agenda. Sustainable development must be positioned at the core of our decision-making as we plan for inevitable population growth.

Our youth are telling us they want to see a more sustainable world. A renewable energy future will have a positive impact on our economy, our environment and the health and wellbeing of our community. It also has the opportunity to create a key differential for our city and region as one that leads regional Australia in the generation, transmission and distribution of renewable energy.

The Central Highlands has an abundance of renewable energy, with the capacity to power the entire region. We need to ensure that our region is well placed to maximise the opportunity that renewable energy presents to our economy, our way of life and our environment.

Ballarat Energy Network

Decentralised energy markets will emerge as part of Australia's new energy future and Committee's work as part of the GNet project in 2019–20 highlighted this opportunity.

Committee for Ballarat is committed to investigating a Ballarat Energy Network (BEN) in collaboration with all business, industry and the community. The BEN will be a customer-centric, community energy market which supports an aggregated, decentralised model that shares the generation, distribution and storage of renewable energy.

Bio-energy on the Agenda

Bio-energy – including waste to energy – is also on the agenda, with a number of members interested in pursuing the notion of a Bio-Energy Centre of Excellence to supplement the transition to a new energy future for our region. Bio-mass and waste to produce energy will be a feature of the circular economy and Committee, together with its members, is looking for opportunities that will help replace natural gas as a source of heat and steam for industrial and residential purposes.

NAB Immersion Project Provides Rich Data

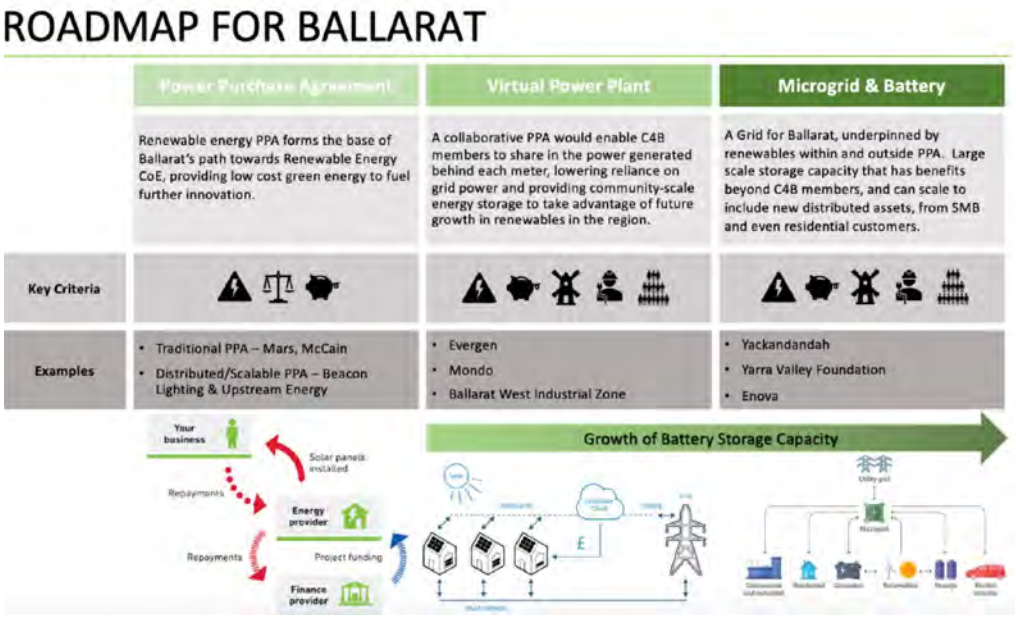
To gain a better understanding of the types of projects and financial models that will attract financial investment, Committee for Ballarat (through Beyond Zero Emissions, a key contractor in our GNet project) was afforded an opportunity to work with a NAB immersion project.

The project team, over four months from late 2020 to early 2021, worked with local industry stakeholders and decision-makers in the community to identify feasible mechanisms and funding pathways to reduce/eliminate Ballarat's industrial emissions.

The deliverables from this project are being used by Committee for Ballarat to assess the feasibility of Ballarat becoming a key city within the state government's Renewable Energy Zone as well as exploring the potential of a Ballarat Energy Network.

The report identified Ballarat's emissions and conservatively costed our city's electricity use at $225 million per year.

The project also delivered an indicative roadmap (see diagram below) for Ballarat's transition to a 100% renewable energy city.



Committee for Ballarat has placed its support behind the *Roll Up Your Sleeve* campaign to encourage those in the Ballarat region, who are eligible, to get fully vaccinated so that our community and our businesses are able to find our "COVID-normal".

Roll up your sleeve
We're in this together

Roll Up Your Sleeve

Vaccination is the key to recovery

Through the summer of 2020–21, we had cause for optimism, and economically and socially we were enjoying the benefits of being COVID-free. When the pandemic again impacted our lives, it became apparent that Australia was lagging behind the rest of the world in relation to vaccination.

In May 2021, Committee, along with its members, commenced a push for 80%+ of our regional population to get vaccinated. The campaign had begun. Beginning as a feature in *The Courier*, Michael Poulton and Rodney Walton went public with the message:

Ballarat, bare our arms and get vaccinated. Let's get at least four out of every five proud Ballaratians vaccinated and be the safest regional city in the country.

– Rodney Walton, Haymes Paint

80% of our eligible population vaccinated with at least one dose, by the end of July, will be an incredibly momentous step towards the future we all yearn for, and we can achieve this. We can also tell the world about our ambition and encourage others to follow. Quickly word will spread to other regional Australian communities and our metropolitan cities won't want to be left behind. It can be a competition that every city in the country will want to win. It is a race and getting left behind the rest or the world cannot be an option.

– Michael Poulton, CEO

The *Roll Up Your Sleeve* campaign has involved many members and a number of very successful video clips have been shared on social media. Sovereign Hill's *Winter Wonderlights* was the theme of our first video and featured the crowds of people mixing freely and loving the sound, light and snow show.

Ballarat Health Services, UFS, Ballarat Community Health and our GP clinics through the Primary Health Network, have done a remarkable job to get jabs in arms.

The vaccination story might just go down as the most significant COVID-pivot of all.

Advocacy

A nuanced approach to lockdowns

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted heavily on our regional economies as well as people's lives and livelihoods. Recognising the pandemic will be with us for some time, Committee for Ballarat, together with Ballarat Regional Tourism, Commerce Ballarat and the regional Committees for Cities network, has advocated strongly for a more nuanced approach to lockdowns in regional Victoria.

While acknowledging the efforts of the government in managing the pandemic, we believed there were measures that could be taken to reduce its impact. In letters to the Premier and representation to parliamentarians, we requested that the government consider more directly the needs of regional Victoria in its future COVID-19 responses, including:

- a more nuanced approach when shutting down areas and regions. A total shutdown of the economy cannot be the only answer if we are to live with some levels of the virus in the community into the future
- greater clarity and consistency on the restrictions imposed at each stage
- relevant departments must be better equipped to handle the enquiries of business and the community
- greater clarity for border communities

Regional Victoria is a key contributor to the state's economy and its social fabric. As leaders in our business communities, we wanted to ensure the health and the economic interests of regional Victoria were assured as we faced the ongoing challenges of COVID-19.

Greater clarity regarding the range of restriction levels, a nuanced response to outbreaks, and more consistent, accurate and timely communication would enable continued improvement of the management of, and our fight against, the impacts of this virus.

It was pleasing to see government policy and practice change to adopt a more nuanced response with different levels of restrictions for regional Victoria.

GeVentor: Twelve Months on

Last year's annual report told of Gekko's story where, in eight short weeks, Gekko had developed and built a fit-for-purpose ventilator prototype called the *GeVentor*.

And twelve months on ....

Gekko Medical has garnered interest for the *GeVentor GEV-019* ventilator from countries such as India, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka. It is looking to supply ventilators into field hospitals, regional hospitals, and university hospitals. Gekko Medical has also been working extensively with Austrade and various humanitarian organisations to supply GeVentors to hospitals that have had difficulty receiving medical devices.

With help from Committee for Ballarat, Gekko Medical received and completed an order of 170 *GeVentors* to the Victorian Government to shore up the supply of ventilators in the state through the COVID-19 Ventilator Exemption program. Gekko Medical has also supplied ventilators to North West Hospital in Tasmania through a generous donation from the Elphinstone Group and Dale Elphinstone.

Pivot, Adapt, Innovate

Social connection important

Of all the things we have come to value in our experience through the pandemic, the things that stands out the most are the benefits of a collegiate office environment. While video-conferencing facilities have been invaluable and will continue to feature in our post-pandemic working life (assuming such a thing exists!), nothing compares to being able to walk into colleagues' offices to speak about a matter and bounce ideas off them. That is also true of the daily social interaction that comes so naturally in a physical working environment. Hopefully we can all get back soon!

James Remington, Director, Nevetts Lawyers

Focus on what matters most

The coronavirus pandemic has taught us the value of what matters the most – our people, our workforce. At Phoenix we have adopted the mantra *Go Slow to Go Fast* and we mean it. The focus is to take all our workforce with us as they will be needed when we get to the end of this pandemic. And we will need them to be at their absolute best. With this in mind, we have expanded our intentional focus on staff wellness so that we:

1. boost help-seeking skills
2. increase health and wellbeing literacy
3. boost support to each other

Karen Snibson, Principal,
Phoenix P-12 Community College

Resilience and compassion

At Ballarat Community Health, our responsibility through the pandemic has been to ensure our community receives accessible, safe, high-quality and effective clinical care despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Service continuity is an imperative to ensure not only that we test and vaccinate against COVID-19, but also simultaneously ensure we support, holistically, a wide range of physical and mental health and wellbeing services.

Like all businesses, our organisation has transformed and adjusted according to community needs and government directions, with effective implementation of telehealth and community care being delivered differently.

Our workforce has exercised wonderful resilience, compassion and skill to deliver impactful, meaningful and much-needed clinical health care to our community. We continue to focus on promoting good health and wellbeing, preventing illness, and ensuring accessible services for all members of our community.

Sean Duffy, Chief Executive Officer,
Ballarat Community Health

Creating new ways to connect

ACU, like other higher-education institutions, had to pivot and change as a result of the global pandemic. Just before Easter 2020, we moved to online learning in one week, nationally. It was an extraordinary effort that has continued to serve us well into 2021. Online learning has presented some challenges, with students and staff missing out on many of the social aspects of campus life and on-campus support systems. So, our attention turned to finding ways of extending student services to virtual modalities.

We created new ways to connect to each other and help one another. We prioritised final-year students and worked hard to provide practical classes and placements in COVID-safe ways. As a result, we were able to successfully graduate all nursing, paramedicine, physiotherapy and education students in 2020 and get them into the workforce where they were so urgently needed.

Professor Bridget Aitchison, Campus Dean (Ballarat), Australian Catholic University

Learnings from COVID-19

Member Responses

A plan for the next twenty years

Sovereign Hill's prospect of a long pandemic recovery phase was evident before the gravity of this crisis was universally clear. It was critical for our organisation to balance its thinking and invest in both short-term survival and long-term rejuvenation.

Our approach? An incredible project to deliver a 20-year master plan that will guide the next phase of our growth and evolution. With feedback from our community's youth, disability advocates, government stakeholders, local businesses, educators, our staff, board and volunteers, but most critically that of our visitors and potential visitors in hand, we embarked on our journey.

The resulting Sovereign Hill Master Plan 2020–40 defines what we will become and how. The power of using a challenging time to channel energy into an optimistic, creative and strategically important project has been immense.

Sara Quon, Chief Executive Officer, Sovereign Hill

Supporting local communities and economic recovery

2020–21 saw a significant disruption to Federation TAFE's vocational education and training program delivery due to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. As restrictions came into effect, Federation TAFE teaching and specialist support staff rapidly implemented innovative blended learning delivery options, comprising online remote delivery and restricted on-campus learning. Qualifications critical to local communities and economic recovery were prioritised, as was apprenticeship and traineeship delivery. A COVID-19 TAFE Special Assistance Scheme was developed to support vulnerable students: it included financial support and access to a laptop loan scheme to help TAFE students move to online learning.

We will continue to grow blended learning across TAFE – it provides flexibility to meet the needs of our learners and industries whilst building digital confidence.

Liam Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Federation University TAFE

Support a confidence boost

Social distancing flies directly in the face of everything hospitality stands for. But the past 18 months have provided a chance to re-focus and an opportunity to improve business efficiencies. Such things include takeaway innovation (including packaging and use of technology), better people management, booking times and the use of spaces within a venue.

As shutdowns have come and gone, hospitality has only ever returned to 50% capacity. But patrons returned in great numbers. Each time operators have re-emerged, the support has been overwhelming which has filled us with great confidence.

David Canny, Proprietor, Red Lion Hotel

New ways of working

Ballarat Cemeteries is a not-for-profit self-funding organisation that manages two cemeteries – the Old and the New.

To ensure that we could continue our operations during the pandemic, we separated work teams to safeguard our services if we had a COVID-19 case. We now provide videos online of our locations for people to view, and we provide tours via convoy and phone conversation rather than face-to-face with families.

Thank you to our community for its understanding of these restrictions. Thank you to our staff who have continued to provide a compassionate and professional service to families.

Annie De Jong, CEO, Ballarat Cemeteries

Community Leadership Program

Investing in our region

Volunteer contribution	2006 - 2013[1] 8 cohorts Review 1	2015 - 2019[2] 5 cohorts Review 2	2006 - 2019[3] 14 cohorts[4] Extrapolated Data
Number of Graduates	212	138	380
Volunteers hours reported per participant per year	204	101	Average of 160
Accumulated hours over the reporting period	192,372	40,703	379,727
Value of Volunteer Hrs (State Gov measurement)	$45	$45	$45
Financial Impact	$8,656,740	$1,831,635	$17,087,715

1. Review 1: *What is the impact of Leadership Ballarat and Western Region?*, July 2014
2. Review 2: *Community Leadership Impact Study*, May 2020
3. The information provided is based on the findings of Review 1 and Review 2 and assumes that: graduates from 2006-2013 continue to volunteer in their regional communities; their volunteer hours for the period 2014-2019 conservatively estimated at 101 hours per year
4. Volunteer hours for graduates from 2014 program estimated at 101 hours per year

$17,087,715

Total value delivered
as reported in volunteer community hours, inspired by Community Leadership programs

$1,892,500

Total funding received from State Government
2006 - 2019

Return on Investment

$1 invested = $9 returned in community capability

Community Leadership influences the volunteering[1] contribution of program graduates

47.4% increased volunteer hours **BY 50%**

18.4% **DOUBLED** volunteer hours

7.9% **TRIPLED** volunteer hours

Transforming Leadership

Developing, Connecting and Inspiring Ballarat's Thought Leaders and Future Shapers through Transformative Community Leadership Programs and Alumni Events

In 2020, Leadership Ballarat & Western Region (LBWR) experienced its own transformation. After 15 years of success, we re-branded our flagship community leadership program as Future Shapers and fully integrated leadership into the broader Committee for Ballarat team and strategy.

Our Flagship Program, Future Shapers

Future Shapers builds on the legacy of LBWR, the contribution it has made to the development of leaders in our region, and the goodwill that it has generated across an extended network of stakeholders and supporters – a network that touches almost every local organisation and institution.

The Future Shapers program incorporates four pillars – Program Days, Community Projects, Learning Partners and Workplace Integration. Its goal remains to shape and support emerging local leaders to ensure our regional community is thriving, resilient and well connected, but we have elevated our focus on active engagement in both community and local organisations through participant-driven program days and community projects.

In March 2021, we officially launched the inaugural Future Shapers program with 16 participants from eight industries and sectors.

Engaging our Alumni

Over 400 individuals across our community are now alumni of Committee's leadership programs. This is a wide and varied network with a passion for community development; a network that can only be strengthened through regular connection. In 2021, we launched our bi-monthly email newsletter, *Thinking Leadership*. It provides alumni with updates on Committee leadership programs, promotes community leadership opportunities and connects alumni across cohorts through stories and interviews.

We have also held the first in a series of *Leading at Lunch* alumni networking events. These Q&A panel-style sessions provide our alumni with the opportunity to reconnect and be inspired by stories of peers' professional and community leadership experiences, activity and successes.

Future Shapers 21 program day on sustainability

Alumni Interview: Damon Minotti

Leadership program year:
2019

Role when you completed the program:
Manager Education and Operations Narmbool, Sovereign Hill

Current role:
Associate Director, Ballarat Tech School

Most memorable experience from your program year?
It was probably the chance to travel together to Canberra for three days. Not only did we get a unique insight into parliament and leadership styles of a number of our prominent politicians but perhaps, more importantly, it gave us the opportunity to cement already strong relationships within our own group.

Tell us about your community leadership activities:
Since we completed LBWR19, the world has changed in a way that nobody foresaw or thought possible. We have really seen how different community leadership styles have resulted in vastly different experiences for all of us living through the pandemic. My leadership activities have really been limited to ensuring the survival of local and state community sport that I am involved in. I have been working with various committees to ensure financial sustainability and membership engagement during lockdown.

Community leadership all comes down to?
For me, any sort of sort of leadership comes down to authenticity, transparency, consistency and consultation.

To lead in any environment, people have to know the why of your involvement and your decision-making, feel like they are part of the process and the journey, and know that they can trust you to say what you do and do what you say. You can't exercise leadership if no one is prepared to follow!

Breaking down stigma

Future Shapers 21 Participant Reflection: Hopkins Prison Visit

The experience of visiting Langi Kal Kal, and in more recent times, the Hopkins Correctional Centre, is now considered a hallmark of the program. Our Future Shapers 21 were fortunate enough to visit Hopkins just prior to a state-wide lockdown.

On arrival at the Hopkins Correctional Centre, we heard from general manager, Scott, that Hopkins is one of the biggest prisons in Victoria. It caters for people of a diverse age range and from diverse cultural backgrounds. “Whatever you find in the community you will find in Hopkins,” Scott said.

Rehabilitation is a big focus of the prison. Being separated from the community was the punishment and the prison’s job was to prepare a prisoner to be law abiding when they are released back into the community. “The only way I can protect you is to give them opportunities to rehabilitate,” Scott said. “If people don’t get parole, it is because we failed and it means we didn’t get them ready for release.”

A staff member spoke about the big issues for prisoners upon their release: housing and employment. Prisoners are put onto social housing lists as soon as they enter prison, but it can take up to 10 years to be offered a place due to lack of housing supply. Prisoners worry about where they are going to live upon their release and they usually need an address to be granted parole. They also worry about who will employ them with a criminal record.

I am so grateful for this experience. It highlights how powerful experiences like this can be in breaking down stigma and changing your mindset. Compassion is so important in helping address issues in the community.

Leading in Community

When I started to establish myself in Ballarat, the leadership program was something that kept coming up in conversation. A lot of people I was meeting had done the program or were involved in the program at that time and it just came onto my radar as a point of interest.

Any sort of leadership training I’ve done has been through my workplace and not so community focused. I realised it was a really diverse community and to be able to lead in a community, you really have to understand it.

I want to add something to this community. I really want to become a part of the positive stuff that’s happening, but I have to understand the community to be able to do that.

– Tara Leaf, LBWR20
taken from the *Thought Leaders Future Shapers* podcast series

A story of authentic, unwavering leadership

March 2021 Round Table Dinner

In unprecedented times, Committee's Round Table Dinner made a welcome return in March 2021. *Making the Impossible Possible* was an appropriate theme.

Recognised as one of Australia's most innovative and forward-thinking chief executives, Tennis Australia CEO Craig Tiley set the scene by sharing his story of the staging of the 2021 Australian Open.

Craig highlighted the incredible complexity of stakeholder engagement in the face of a pandemic, the importance of a clear set of organisational values and the exceptional skills required of leaders in times of crisis. He highlighted humility, care and authenticity as key elements of leadership and demonstrated how these qualities inspire others to *make the seemingly Impossible Possible!*

Craig said that sticking to core organisation values and being real kept his team together, key partners on board and, ultimately, enabled the delivery one of the biggest events in the Asia-Pacific region.

Pleased to be able to "round table dinner" again, members were inspired by Craig's story of authentic and unwavering leadership and for what could be possible in our region.

Embracing change

Leadership Learnings

A senior leader in professional sport, CEO of the Gold Coast Suns Mark Evans has led organisations through periods of significant change. And what a significant challenge COVID-19 has presented to the AFL.

In a *Leadership Learnings* webinar for members and LBWR alumni, Mark shared his leadership experiences in times of disruption and great change and discussed ways in which organisations can become stronger, more resilient, and ultimately more successful as a result.

Introducing *Thought Leaders Future Shapers* Podcast Series

Committee for Ballarat is privileged to hear amazing stories of leadership and innovative thinking in its interaction with members and through its work.

To capture and share these stories, Committee launched the *Thought Leaders Future Shapers* podcast series in 2020.

The first eight episodes in the series, available on the website and where podcasts are usually sourced, are inspiring. The series featured:

- Tara Leaf, Design and Creative Manager, Haymes Paint
- Judith Potter, former Principal, Loreto College
- Eugene Duffy, Editor, Ballarat Courier
- Belinda Glass, CEO, Ballarat Turf Club
- Troy Beaston, General Manager, Eureka Concrete
- Ange Connor, Director, Inspire HQ
- Richard Nicholson, Director, Nicholson Constructions
- David Deutscher, former Chair, Committee for Ballarat

In Episode 8 of the podcast series, we were joined by Tara Leaf who spoke of her work with Ballarat Evolve.

When we talk to people about Ballarat, changing the Bridge Mall is often what is brought up. I feel that it's an area of Ballarat that is prime for activation. Ballarat Evolve effectively acts as a conduit between creative and space, to try to bring some different life into the city centre.

It's sort of a double-edged sword because we're also helping the owners and landlords of spaces that have been impacted by the change in retail, and also right now impacted by COVID-19. So, you're helping the creative community, but you're also helping the business community.

Fresh Approach

Committee for Ballarat launched its new website in October 2020.

The new site has a fresh approach to sharing important stories and showcasing Committee's work.

A *Connected* Region

Connectivity has for some years been a pillar of Committee's work and, most recently, there has been a strong focus on connectivity to Melbourne via fast, high-frequency and reliable regional rail.

This will not change. Despite the current significant shift away from mass transport, in time commuters will again turn to the train as an alternative to the car, and we will continue to push for investment in rail infrastructure.

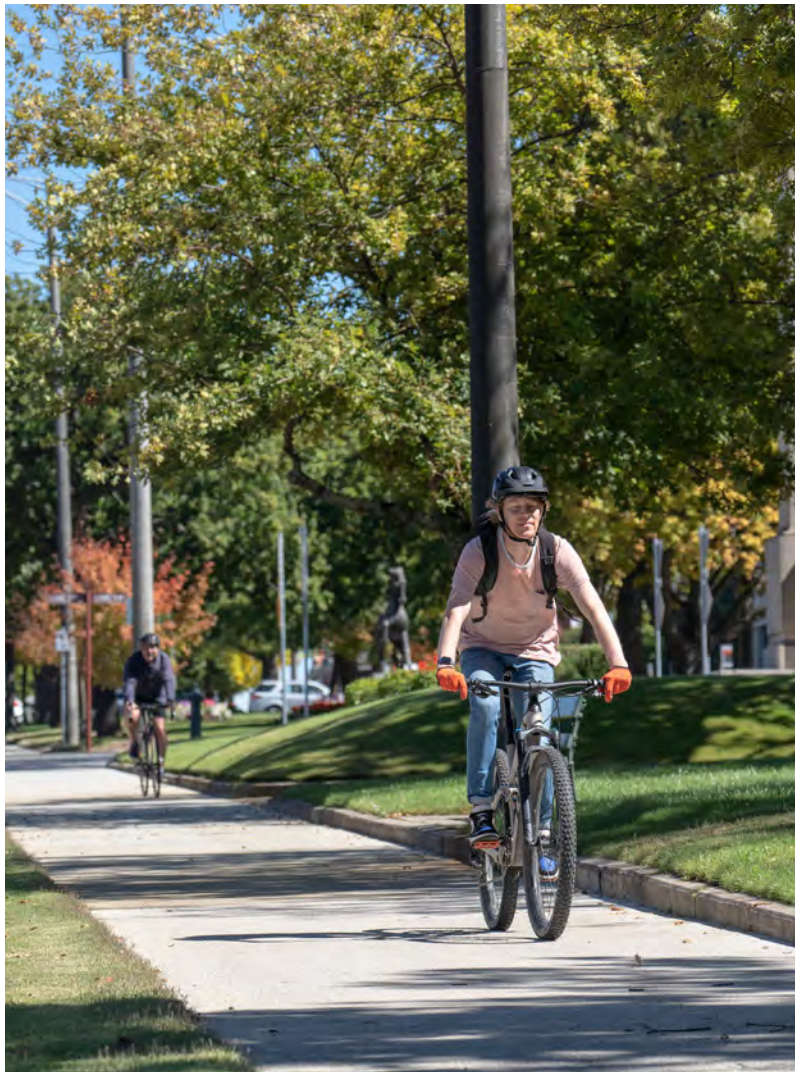
Connectivity is also about how we move around the city and the region.

The City of Ballarat's Integrated Transport Plan, strongly shaped by community feedback, was adopted by the City of Ballarat in August 2020. It outlines 16 key future directions for the city over the long-term and includes six immediate priorities:

- reviewing and overhauling Ballarat's bus network
- advocating for city shaping infrastructure upgrades
- advocating for seamless, reliable and convenient fast rail between Ballarat and Melbourne
- focusing on current projects to deliver safe, accessible, enjoyable walking and cycling routes
- piloting new transport options and opportunities
- supporting regional transport advocacy initiatives

Committee's connectivity agenda aligns very closely with these priorities and we will continue to advocate for these initiatives.

Designated cycle lanes must feature in planning if we are going to enable people's desire for active transport and reduce traffic congestion. New housing developments must include provision for walking tracks, open space and localised neighbourhood hubs that act as a catalyst for small business and communities.



In the longer term, the city can embrace innovative technologies such as the next-generation trams, electric powered without the expense and clutter of overhead lines. Such technology is available now and the Newcastle example demonstrates how it has helped reshape that regional city.

We must start planning now for the establishment of an intercity regional rail network. Resuming passenger services to Geelong and Horsham, and more frequent services to places like Beaufort, Creswick and Maryborough are important facets of a connected region.

All this, of course, requires planning and investment – investment in new infrastructure that does not prioritise cars as the preferred mode of transport.

Regional development, enabled by investment in new infrastructure, will energise and connect regional cities and towns, including Ballarat, and take enormous pressure off major cities, including Melbourne.

We need to plan and build the infrastructure that will sustain the unique features of Ballarat and the region and enhance connectivity. This may require some brave, bold thinking.

The challenge is to embrace innovation and new technology and to plan for a connected city and region, with transport offerings that make it easy to leave the car at home.

Fast Regional Rail

Still on the Agenda

Ballarat airport link

Committee for Ballarat has long advocated for the regional link to Melbourne Airport via Sunshine. In November 2020, the state government confirmed the route, with the project to be completed by 2029.

Having rail access to the airport is a win for Ballarat and regional travellers. When going to the airport, there is now an option of leaving the car at home: take a train from Ballarat to Sunshine, then one change to an express train to Tullamarine.

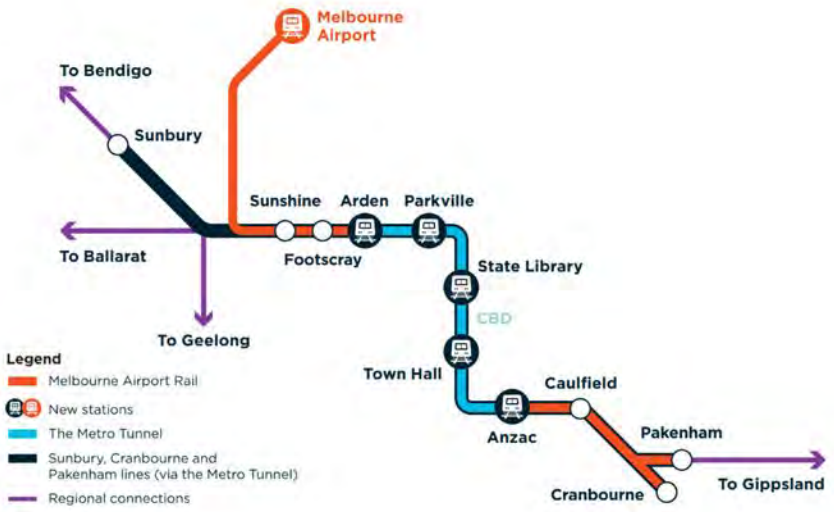
Committee for Ballarat, the Stronger Together Alliance, and Rail Futures Victoria have advocated for an airport rail link (MARL) with a designated tunnel for airport and regional trains from the cities of Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Shepparton. This solution provided opportunities for fast regional rail.

With the solution announced by the government not including a tunnel, the avenue for delivering fast regional rail now will require a different approach.

Together with the City of Ballarat, Committee for Ballarat will continue to advocate strongly for the commitments the government has made in the Western Rail plan, especially those elements that enable the separation of regional rail and metro services. This includes the electrification and the subsequent new tracks to Melton, and taking commuters and the new stations on the city side of Melton off the V-Line network.

Our region is expected to grow to 210,000 by 2036 (*Victoria in Future, July 2019*). This provides enormous opportunity. A very detailed and credible economic analysis found the state's productivity will grow by 5% and by 40% in the key regional cities, including Ballarat, with investment in fast regional rail (*National Institute of Economic and Industry Research July, 2020*).

Regional productivity is enabled by fast regional rail. Committee continues to hold the view that regional rail will "unlock the potential" for Ballarat and the region. Further investments in projects that bring travel times down significantly will change the game for the whole of the state.



Project map

Ballarat line upgrade

Improvement in rail connectivity and infrastructure have been a key focus for the past ten years through Committee's *Fast Track Ballarat* and *59 Minute Ballarat* campaigns.

With an investment of some $580 million by the state government over the past five years, the Ballarat Line Upgrade project now has been completed.

The project has delivered the infrastructure needed for new services, including track duplication, passing loops at Ballan and Millbrook, signalling upgrades, and station upgrades at Ballan and Wendouree.

It has enabled 135 extra services in total along the Ballarat Line (100 new weekly services for passengers to and from the Ballarat Station), including trains every 20 minutes during peak periods and 40 minutes between the peaks, to service the growing communities in the region.

Phillip Lee (Ray White Ballarat) and Sam Henson (Federation University Australia) at the upgraded Wendouree Station

Gateway to the City

Southside Station Precinct

Ballarat Railway Station is a key gateway to our city with its Southside Precinct a critical piece in the ongoing revitalisation of the CBD and the city more broadly.

In February 2021, members and key stakeholders met with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to discuss the draft master plan for the Southside Station Precinct. Issues raised included the station's forecourt, all-ability access, regional bus hub, and the connection of the southside of the station with the planning and development for the northside of the station.

Members also raised the station's architectural significance and commented that this should be evident as a vista along Lydiard and Mair streets. "Lines of sight" should be directed to the station's main arrival hall and tower and not be impeded by any development immediately to the south of the station.

CEO Michael Poulton stated in Committee's subsequent submission to the VPA that a revitalised Ballarat Station Southside Precinct would greatly enhance the traveller experience for locals and visitors. A grand entrance and the station's connection to the CBD would maximise the unique and historic nature of the station, facilitate private sector investment in the area, enhance environmental outcomes and improve safety and security.

For many years, Committee for Ballarat has been committed to the revitalisation of Ballarat's CBD. This master plan can ensure an exciting future for the precinct, one that maximises the current assets and links it seamlessly to the city.

Financial Report

Abridged Financial Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021

The following statements have been extracted from the annual audited accounts of Committee for Ballarat Inc.

Full audited accounts are available on request.

The auditor for Committee for Ballarat Inc is CountPro.

Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 $	2020 $
Revenues from Ordinary Activities	870,554	1,340,266
Expenses from Ordinary Activities	(843,042)	(1,311,794)
Net Profit (Loss) from Ordinary Activities	27,512	28,472
Other Comprehensive Income	–	–
Net Comprehensive Income (Loss) Attributable to the Entity	27,512	28,472

Statement of Changes in Equity

for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 $	2020 $
Total Equity at the Beginning of the Year	720,596	656,133
Profit (Loss) for the Year	27,512	28,472
Adjustment to Revenue as a Result of Adoption of AASB 15 and AASB 1058	-	35,991
Other Comprehensive Income	748,108	720,596

Balance Sheet

for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 $	2020 $
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	985,591	1,005,000
Receivables	228,549	213,015
Other Current Assets	2,084	2,084
Total Current Assets	1,216,224	1,220,099
NON CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant and Equipment	12,989	2,238
Total Non-Current Assets	12,989	2,238
Total Assets	1,229,213	1,222,337

	2021 $	2020 $
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Payables	24,538	26,903
Tax Liabilities (inc GST)	65,066	47,063
Employee Entitlements	48,868	54,171
Income in Advance	300,580	325,189
Scholarship Funds	39,812	44,176
Total Current Liabilities	478,864	497,502
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee Entitlements	2,241	4,239
Total Non-Current Liabilities	2,241	4,239
Total Liabilities	481,105	501,741
Net Assets	748,108	720,596
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Retained Profits	748,108	720,596
Total Members' Funds	748,108	720,596

Collaboration *is key*

We are ALL Ballarat

A new city-wide marketing campaign called BALLARAT was launched in March 2021. Committee for Ballarat has worked closely with the City of Ballarat, Commerce Ballarat and Ballarat Regional Tourism to deliver a toolkit that will promote the three key pillars of:

Community – We are ALL Ballarat
Tourism – Visit Ballarat
Growth – Live, Work, Invest, Study Ballarat

Committee's *More Than Gold* project added to the inspiration for this campaign and some of the assets developed through the project have been utilised as part of this new platform.

We are Ballarat, We are all Ballarat
And together we will do great things

committee for ballarat
thinking ahead

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