



Compassionate Ballarat
2021 REPORT

DECEMBER 2021



COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT

creating a nurturing city

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1. COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT

1.1 ABOUT

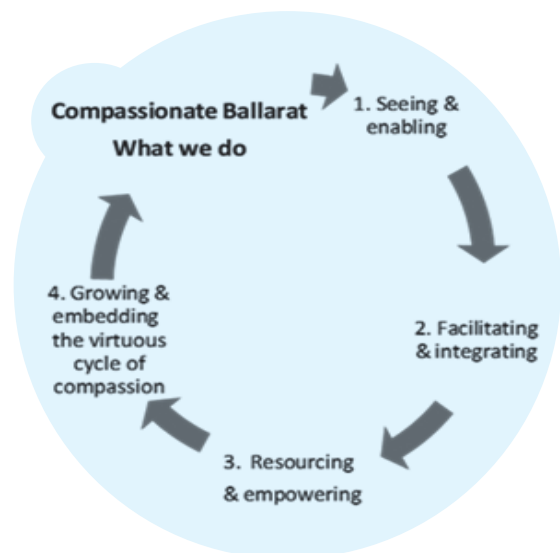
Compassionate Ballarat is a member of the Australian and Global Charter for Compassion movements. Ballarat has completed the process of formally signing the global Charter, and in so doing it joins the over 430 compassionate cities around the world in its pledge to identify and solve social issues, through compassionate action.



One of the Charters foremost programs is its compassionate cities program. Compassionate cities support the physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing of residents – and they do so on the basis that there is now considerable evidence that when people are caring towards others, and feel cared for by others, their physical and mental health improves.

1.2 COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT STRATEGY

- **See and Enable** = grow the capacity of people to see and respond to the suffering and common humanity in others.
- **Facilitate and Integrate** = bring people together to share and apply the evidence base of compassion across disciplines, sectors and our city, by growing supportive alliances and partnerships.
- **Resource and Empower** = deliver global research, resources and promote inspiring local case studies, events, and training to support the adopting of compassion as a motivation.
- **Grow and Embed the virtuous cycle of compassion** = share and apply the Compassionate Cities framework for Ballarat to become a leading compassionate city within the global movement.



1.3 OUR STRUCTURE

The work of Compassionate Ballarat is overseen by a Steering group auspiced by Ballarat Health Services (BHS). CB Steering group formed to develop and implement a strategic approach to develop Ballarat as a Compassionate City and to contribute to the global Charter initiative. The committee meets six times a year to review issues, initiatives, and plan projects.



The 2021 Steering Group included: Ben Kelly, (Chair) and members: Annie De Jong; Dr Mary Hollick; Dr Lynne Reeder; Denise White; Sam Luxemburg; Dr Kerrie Shiell.

This year saw several membership changes, with Superintendent Jenny Wilson transferring to a metropolitan region, leaving Compassionate Ballarat with a clear example of what community-based leadership is all about. And we welcomed Ballarat General Cemetery Trust Chief Executive, Annie DeJong, and Ballarat Health Services Senior Neuropsychologist Dr Kerrie Shiell. Both Annie and Kerrie have added great expertise and community-minded experience to the group, and we look forward to working collaboratively in the coming years. More recently, Denise White has notified her intention to stand down from Compassionate Ballarat as she is moving out of Ballarat. Denise has made an enormous contribution over the past three years and has been the driving force behind our newsletters and social media presence and will be greatly missed.



1.4 INDIGENOUS ADVISOR - AL HARRIS

Al Harris is the aboriginal advisor to Compassionate Ballarat and has worked with us on several events including the January ICAN peace forum and a global read with Tyson Yunkaporta. This year Al's group Western Creation in conjunction with Raintree Arts, he and his wife Leonie launched a new and exciting program titled: "Indigenous Yarns by the Campfire to discover the amazing connections Indigenous Australians have to this Land. "Hear some Dreamtime Stories as old as time itself" "Learn how Indigenous Culture and Astrology are combined". Al's input is essential to the work of Compassionate Ballarat.

1.5 2021 COMPASSION HERO (S)

This year the Compassion Hero award celebrated the contribution of two Loreto students, Chloe and Eliza, who with Compassionate Ballarat, developed the 'Compassion Heroes Ballarat' book.

At a time when many Year 12 students were struggling to cope with their final year of study in this COVID year, Eliza and Chloe willingly added to that heavy load, the creation of this Compassion Heroes book. They provided the youth perspective on every aspect of the project including design of the book.

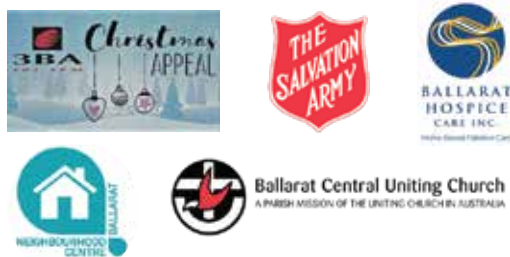
As Eliza and Chloe write in their introduction '*...the stories in this book have meant so much to everyone involved in them, and we hope that by collating and sharing them we can spread a sense of hope and positivity about the future.*

Well done Eliza and Chloe the Compassionate Ballarat Heroes for 2021. – you join Ethan Scully, Ailish Ryan, and Nick Locandro as previous winners of this award.



1.6 PROMOTING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Throughout 2021 Compassionate Ballarat promoted the compassionate work occurring across Ballarat including the work of groups such as - Ballarat Hospice volunteer recruitment and training; Ballarat Neighbourhood House Community events; the work of Salvation Army, Ailish Ryan's Sunshine Letters letterbox, the 3BA Christmas Appeal and Uniting Care among others.



2. OUR WORK WITH THE BALLARAT CITY COUNCIL

The Ballarat City Council formally signed the Charter in 2019 and in so doing joined over 430 cities across the world who are part of the Global Charter's cities work.

Since signing the Charter, the Council has recognised that commitment in several of its City Strategies, including this reference in its Prosperity Strategy that Ballarat is

- *'...a compassionate city powered by a community with a high level of emotional intelligence - where community connection, health and wellbeing is one of the highest priorities, and this in turn enables strong civic participation, open-mindedness, and self-perpetuating success'*

Members of Compassionate Ballarat have regular meetings with the CEO and other senior staff across the city.



2.1 INTERCULTURAL CITIES SUMMIT

Compassionate Ballarat was invited to speak at the recent intercultural cities summit to pull together the perspectives of Intercultural and compassionate cities. The Intercultural conversations panel explored Ballarat's diversity through stories, experiences to identify insights into its old and new migrants.

MC Intercultural Ambassador Bobby Mehta led the discussion with panel members: Chez Dichiera (Italian born), Meeta Narsi (Indian descent from South Africa), Luna Folly (from Togo) and Ita Rahmawati (Indonesian born) and Karissa Cribbis (Born in Hong Kong). Dr Lynne Reeder thanked the Intercultural Cities team for the opportunity afforded to Compassionate Ballarat, to finish the day with a reflection on why stories are important and on why threading them together with compassion is even more important.

2.2 YOUTH AWARDS – 2021 COMPASSION AND CARE AWARD

The 2021 City of Ballarat Youth Awards were held via a virtual awards presentation on 26 November to share powerful stories of resilience, compassion, and leadership.

As in-kind sponsor of the Compassion and Care Award, Compassionate Ballarat was delighted to congratulate the 2021 recipient, Will Tasic. Will, now 14, was diagnosed at 9 years old with a rare neurological condition called optical neuritis. In 2017 the Tasic family started the Wills Wish Foundation and have since raised over \$10,000, including \$2050 from an online raffle during the pandemic last year. Funds are donated to the RCH and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.



2.3 BE KIND BALLARAT CAMPAIGN

Compassionate Ballarat was invited to contribute to the Be Kind Ballarat Campaign – a city-wide initiative that was designed to support residents during the lock downs of COVID. Compassionate Ballarat members took part in all meetings and were able to input compassion thinking into this initiative - in particular, on how to engage people in being kind to local businesses, who were experiencing a lot of stress during the lockdowns of 2021.

3. OUR WORK WITH THE AUSTRALIA COMPASSION COUNCIL



The Australian Compassion Council governs the work of the Charter in Australia – by Deep Dreaming Australia: A Continent of Compassion to both recognise the good work already undertaken by many Australian organisations and add to that through its three key activities: 1) Compassionate Cities 2) Sector Initiatives 3) National Day of Compassion.

3.1 CONTRIBUTING TO THE NATIONAL DAY OF COMPASSION

The Australian Compassion Council's National Day of Compassion included a live event at 7am, with members from the Charter including the Charters' global Chair, Cristina Gonzalez, and its CEO, Marilyn Turkovich. This live event also



included the Australian Ambassadors Hugh MacKay, Dr Ursula Stephens, and Al Harris. It was followed by live streaming of video conversations with the ACC ambassadors, and leaders from cities across Australia and from people applying compassion in the arts, healthcare, business, education, environment, peace, inter-spirituality, social justice and in research. These conversations were held with over 60 individuals, and Ballarat was represented by Cr Belinda Coates, Ben Kelly, Dr Mary Hollick and Madonna Quixley who are all featured in the video stories streamed over twelve hours throughout the day. www.facebook.com/CharterforCompassion

3.2 ACC SCHOLARS 2021 CONFERENCE

The Compassion research is an emerging field which is being investigated across many disciplines and Federation University's Dr Lynne Reeder was the moderator for the 2021 ACC Scholars Conference.



Body, Heart and Mind in Business Research Group

This research conference brought together the Australian Compassion Council Scholars' Network in partnership with the University of Sydney's, Body, Heart and Mind in Business Research Group to showcase and share the wide diversity of compassion research taking place in numerous institutions around Australia and the world.

The International Speakers included:

- Prof Paul Gilbert, Founder of the Compassionate Mind Foundation, University of Derby, UK; Prof Tania Singer Social Neuroscience Lab, Max Planck Society, University of Berlin

The Australian Speakers comprised:

- Professor Alasdair Foster, School of Public Health, The University of Queensland ; Dr Tara Hickey - Monash University; Dr James Kirby University of Queensland; Dr Susan Sumskis Nan Tien Institute, Wollongong. These presentations can be accessed at:
<https://business.sydney.edu.au/events/research/2021/bhmb/acc-compassion-research-conference-2021>

4. OUR WORK WITH THE GLOBAL CHARTER

Compassion provides an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships worldwide. The Charters global mission is to bring to life the principles articulated in the Charter for Compassion through concrete, practical action in a myriad of sectors.

4.1 GLOBAL READ – SAND TALK

Our Indigenous Advisor Al Harris joined Aboriginal writer and academic Dr Tyson Yunkaporta in a global read. Elder Al Harris, who lives in Ballarat discussed Tyson's book - Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World. This book looks at global systems from a unique perspective, one tied to the natural and spiritual world and some of the issues that Al and Tyson discussed included, how contemporary life diverges from patterns of creation and we can we do things differently? In the global read Al reminded us '...that it's not possible to be an observer of a system – we have to place ourselves within the systems that surround us in order to see them in their three dimensionality and to be able to move and connect within those systems.'



4.2 COLLECTIVE TRAUMA FORUM

In conjunction with the Art Gallery of Ballarat's, Out of Darkness exhibition - Compassionate Ballarat organised an international forum to explore how cities can heal after community-wide trauma. We invited speakers from the global Charters' network, and they included:

- Frank Liddy from Compassionate Belfast
- Dr Laura Burgis, Director, Human Values Centre, USA
- Professor Tim Chapman, Chair, EU Restorative Justice Group
- Prof Kath McPhillips, Newcastle Uni.



A report with recommendations is currently being written and the final copy will be distributed to the City Council and members of the CEO group.



4.3 THE GLOBAL CHARTER'S COMMUNITY WEBINAR SERIES

During 2021 the global Charter for Compassion has been highlighting the work of Charter cities around the world via a monthly webinar series. In October the work of the Charter in Australia was featured which included the work that is happening here in Ballarat. You can watch this presentation here: <https://charterforcompassion.org/communities-webinar-australia>

5. OUR WORK IN THE CHARTER SECTORS

5.1 ARTS

Creativity is fuelled by imagination, which allows us to grow and stretch beyond our boundaries. Our creative selves open us up to the wonder and awe that surround us. Studies of awe have revealed that experience wonderment can make us feel part of something larger than ourselves and focus more on our community than on ourselves. Art helps to foster empathy, the ability to understand or feel the experience of others.

5.1.1 CAFÉ CONVERSATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE OUT OF DARKNESS EXHIBITION



Compassionate Ballarat offered conversations to those who visited the Gallery's *Out of the Darkness* exhibition. These conversations were held over a complimentary coffee to discuss what role the Arts can play in supporting individual and social trauma with questions such as: What was your overall response to the exhibition? What role might art and creativity play in social healing? How can contemporary art galleries and museums contribute to community wellbeing?

5.1.2 ARTS AND WELLNESS STRATEGY

Members of the CB Steering Group were invited to participate in the strategic thinking behind the Art Gallery of Ballarat's art and wellness strategy. The evening before the strategy meeting Steve Pozel, one of Australia's leaders in creative programming, gave a talk on art and wellness programs championed by museums and galleries internationally and in Australia. He highlighted new research in contemplative inquiry and drawing on his own work exploring the connections between creativity, innovation, and mindfulness as we re-imagine how our museums and galleries might go forward into a post-COVID world.



5.3 BUSINESS

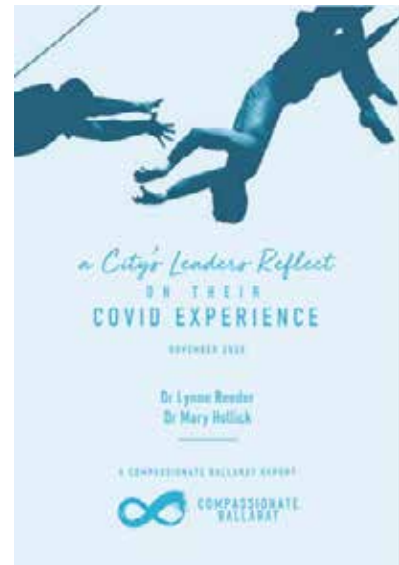
In their book *'Awakening Compassion at Work'*, Prof Jane Dutton and Dr Monica Worline state that we need to develop compassion competence – so that we are capable of noticing, interpreting, feeling, and acting in effective ways when alleviating suffering in the workplace.

5.3.1 CEO GROUP

One of the strategic roles of Compassionate Ballarat is to resource senior Ballarat CEOs in the evidence base for compassionate leadership. This year we held a number of forums and distributed relevant articles on the science of compassionate leadership.

These resources included this article, *The Only Safe Assumption in 2021: We Need Compassionate Leadership*. This article from a global consultancy group states that '2020 made it clear that compassionate leadership needs to be brought explicitly to the forefront of the leadership agenda in order to successfully navigate 2021 and shape a better future'. This short article states that we need to move from:

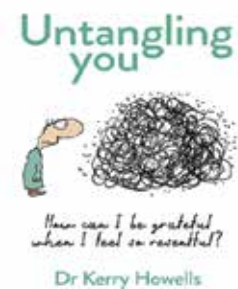
- Work/Life Balance to Making Life Work
- Command & Control to Empower the Edge
- Development by Default to Development by Design
- Physical Serendipity to Virtual Serendipity
- Change as a Journey to Change as a Flow



5.3.2 RESOURCING COMPASSIONATE LEADERS - FORUMS BY HUGH MACKAY AND DR KERRY HOWELLS

On 18 May 2021, social psychologist Hugh Mackay was in Ballarat at the invitation of Compassionate Ballarat to speak about the book he wrote during the lockdown of 2020 to demonstrate how crises often turn out to be the making of us. Entitled *The Kindness Revolution: How We can restore hope, rebuild trust and inspire optimism*. Hugh noted in his presentation that community and cooperation had never been so clearly important as during the past 18 months. Hugh concluded that we're not meant to be alone; we're meant to work together – which has significant implications for the ways in which we organise our workplaces.

In the lead up to the National Day of Compassion and the International Day of Peace - Compassionate Ballarat and Let's Talk Peace Ballarat organised for Dr Lynne Reeder to be in conversation with Dr Kerry Howells - a global gratitude expert, award-winning educator and experienced gratitude researcher. Dr Howells stated that she wrote this book because in nearly all the discussions she's had about gratitude over the past few decades, with thousands of people from across the globe, a theme has consistently revealed itself: "how can I be grateful when I feel so resentful?" In this difficult time when we often resent what COVID is asking of us, this conversation offered beneficial and supportive resources to promote individual attitudes that can create and sustain peaceful communities.



5.4 EDUCATION

Cultivating compassion in educational settings and creating the kind of culture where it is a norm of student and staff behaviour, may seem at first a noble ideal: a nice-to-have, something to be undertaken only when all other priorities are met. Yet we now have the evidence to show that a school's ability to foster real learning, indeed, to fulfill its fundamental purpose, depends on its ability to do just that. More and more schools and educational organizations/groups are acting on this evidence and creating compassion-filled learning environments.

5.4.1 COMPASSION HEROES BOOK

In 2021 Compassionate Ballarat and Loreto College were delighted to launch the Compassion Heroes Ballarat - a book of stories from local school children who have initiated projects of extraordinary kindness and compassion. The stories in this book recognise the actions of compassion from school students across Ballarat.

From early primary school through to final year secondary students the booklet tells the stories of compassion, demonstrating what a difference all of us can make by recognising suffering, and choosing to do something about it. These stories are being distributed across Ballarat, Australia and globally through the Charter for Compassion. CB is planning to create an even bigger book of these stories for next year.



5.4.2 THINK EQUAL

Through a direct link to the global Director of the Charter, Dr Lynne Reeder and colleagues from FedUni have been involved in a study of around 300 Australian children of a compassion framework for early childhood – as part of a global evaluation of the Think Equal program being conducted by Yale University. Think Equal is an international early year's social and emotional learning program that has now been implemented and evaluated in several countries including Singapore, Canada, and Botswana. Researchers at Federation University, Australia partnered with Yale



University to conduct an Australian randomised control trial (RCT) to determine the changes in children's social and emotional behaviour after participating in the 30-week program. The research underpinning compassion comes from psychology, neuroscience, and emotional intelligence studies and the findings from this quantitative study found that overall, the children who went through the Think Equal program were more emotionally regulated ($d = 0.38$), less emotionally dysregulated ($d = 0.32$), less anxious and withdrawn ($d = 0.33$), demonstrated greater effortful control ($d = 0.45$), demonstrated greater extraversion ($d = 0.24$), and had lower negative affect ($d = 0.37$). In addition, this year an application was submitted to Beyond Blue for Think Equal to be recognised as one of BB's recommended education programs.

5.5 HEALTHCARE

A compassionate healthcare system provides holistic care that recognizes the immense importance of healing relationships and pays attention not only to physical disease, but also to emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual wellbeing of patients and their families. Attending to compassion and relationships in healthcare significantly improves quality, outcomes, satisfaction, and experience of care.

5.5.1 INFANT MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

To coincide with the announcement of the Victorian Government's intention to establish an Early Parenting Hub in Ballarat, in May 2021 Compassionate Ballarat organised a forum entitled Recent Developments in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. It did so on the basis that nurturing and loving relationships with infants have been shown to increase and sustain lifelong benefits in their cognitive and emotional well-being and development. This forum examined some recent initiatives that support infant and early childhood mental health and



speakers comprised - Sue White, CEO, QEC - Driving Cultural Change in Early Parenting Services; Dr Rosemary King, FedUni - Up-skilling in Perinatal & Infant Mental Health; Natasha Lindros, COPE - Advanced Online Perinatal Resources; and Dr Lynne Reeder, FedUni - Emotional Intelligence in Early Childhood.



5.6.1 LET'S TALK PEACE - BALLARAT FORUM

On 22 January 2021, ICAN Ballarat, WILPF Ballarat and Compassionate Ballarat organised an online forum to mark the day that the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force. Ballarat joined cities across Australia to celebrate this important UN Treaty and to highlight the importance of addressing conflict through peaceful negotiation. Indigenous Elder, Al Harris gave a personal reflection on his past family members who were impacted by the Maralinga nuclear tests, and the guest speaker was Prof Tilman Ruff AO, co-president of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and a recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. The forum finished with the reading of a poem specifically created for this forum by local performance poet Megan J Riedl.

5.6.2 PEACE POEM

Let's Talk Peace Ballarat commissioned and released a video of Megan J Riedl's three-part poem, 'Fallout', on the International Day of Peace, 21 September 2021. The video was funded by a City of Ballarat grant and supported by Compassionate Ballarat and Ballarat Arts Alive. Watch the Poem recording here: vimeo.com/609395954

Megan worked with Ballarat production company Green Eggs and Ham to create the video and commented that poetry is an interesting and special way for people to interact with topics that can be confronting. Ms Riedl said she had a moment in the weeks before she was due to complete the poem when she dropped a full glass jar of mayonnaise on her kitchen floor. It became a metaphor that is used throughout the poem.



5.6.3 PEACE POLE - ROTARY

Compassionate Ballarat and Let's Talk Peace Ballarat worked with the national Rotary Group to plant Ballarat's first Peace Pole. The Peace Pole has been made for Sebastopol Primary School and will be planted early next year. Peace Poles carry the Universal Peace Message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" and symbolise our common wish for a World at Peace. The Principal of Sebastopol Primary School, Michelle Wilson, is very pleased to have this pole as a resource for the inclusive peace education the school wants to provide its students. Peace Poles can become part of reflective spaces/gardens where children especially may find solace and 'time out' in a positive sense, and they can support the introduction or strengthening of peace education within the school and community. 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' is inscribed in English, Maori, Russian and Wadawurrung.

5.6.4 PEACE EDUCATION

At the 2021 'Future of Peace Leadership' Rotary Peace Symposium, Ballarat PhD Researcher, Rotary Peace Fellow Alumnus and Let's Talk Peace Ballarat Associate Jess Trijsburg, organised the 'What you can do for peace' workshop <https://youtu.be/itshZKVbpuw>".



5.6.5 LIBRARY DONATIONS

Developing inner peace is fundamental to creating Positive Peace. Now at Ballarat libraries you can read stories about Ballarat's own 'Compassion Heroes' - local school children who have initiated projects of extraordinary kindness and compassion - as well as 'Untangling you – How can I be grateful when I feel so resentful?', Dr Kerry Howells' book that helps us reduce resentment and grow gratitude to create a more harmonious and peaceful world. Compassionate Ballarat partnered with Let's talk peace-Ballararat to enable wider access to this inspiring material. Let's talk peace – Ballarat plans to gift more books to support peace education in Ballarat in 2022.



5.7 SOCIAL JUSTICE

5.7.1 REFUGEE SCHOLARSHIP

Compassionate Ballarat and Rural Australians for Refugees are working with Federation University Australia to create a new refugee scholarship. While FedUni has several similar scholarships, including for international students – this scholarship was proposed at the time of the fall of Afghanistan. Ballarat has several students from Afghanistan and this scholarship would assist in their education, as it would others on temporary protection visas. There are currently many scholarships available for international and refugee students. All Foundation scholarships are listed on this website - www.federation.edu.au/foundation



5.7.2 SAFE SHELTER

During 2020 Compassionate Ballarat's' Dr Mary Hollick, led a combined community project, based on the ACT model of Safe Shelter ACT. The aim of the project was to utilize existing safe spaces in Ballarat so homeless men can have a safe, dry place to sleep during the winter months. Two spaces were being assessed at Cathedral Parish and through Uniting Care to address this growing problem. All work to develop this project is completed through volunteers, grants and donations.



5.7.3 HOMELESSNESS FORUM

More than 1000 people in Ballarat did not have a safe and secure place to live or sleep in the last financial year. To address and learn more about the extent of the issue, the Committee for Ballarat Leadership project, Compassionate Ballarat, and The Ballarat Foundation hosted a forum, on the 9th of November, attended by over 100 people from a range of homelessness support agencies and organizations in Ballarat. Compassionate Ballarat was invited to participate in the planning of this forum. On the day, Dr Mary Hollick represented Compassionate Ballarat by giving a presentation and hosting one of the workshops.



6. CONCLUSION

Despite the many COVID-related challenges everyone has experience and endured during 2021, the compassion of the Ballarat community has continued to shine through. In partnership with organisations large and small, Ballarat City Council, Federation University Australia, primary and secondary schools, and other community minded organisations and individuals, Compassionate Ballarat has continued to encourage, support, and celebrate the many compassionate actions that occur within our community every day.

To provide some additional information on the ways in which our aims were achieved in 2021 - this table provides some additional information:

1. See and Enable

The Science of Compassion defines compassion as a capacity to see suffering and to take resourced action to alleviate that suffering. This year one of our major projects was to work with primary and secondary school students who had both seen and taken action to ease the suffering of others. These school students are wonderful exemplars of the courage it takes to make a difference. Each story in the Compassion Heroes book addressed five questions:

- 1) What suffering did you see?
- 2) What prompted you to take this action?
- 3) What action did you take?
- 4) What difference did that make to you?
- 5) What difference did that make to those who received it?

The students' ability and willingness to see suffering should not be underestimated - much of the trauma in our communities goes unnoticed, unseen, and untreated. These children not only saw the suffering in the homeless, in the aged and frail, in the stress amongst their peers, and in abandoned animals, but in seeing this suffering they were better placed to take informed action to alleviate it. These stories are truly inspiring and call on us all to move within our community with our eyes and hearts open.

2. Facilitate and Integrate

An example of how our supportive alliances and partnerships grew in 2021 - was the Compassionate Ballarat invitation to speak at the Intercultural Cities summit. Ballarat was the first city in Australia to join the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Network - which recognises Ballarat's history of the many different nationalities that were here at the time of the 1850's Gold Rush. This year's Summit was lived-streamed to the 124 other intercultural cities across the world, and the storytelling session was underpinned by the elements of being both a compassionate and intercultural city. Following the stories from five of Ballarat's intercultural residents, Dr Lynne Reeder stated that '...imagination is central to storytelling and is also a core ingredient of compassion - because our ability to 'wonder about' is the conduit to access the world of someone other than ourselves'.

3. Resource and Empower

While compassion has been with us a value for centuries, it is only in recent times that science has studied compassion as a motivation. Prof Paul Gilbert states that the research base of compassion is vital because, '...the motivation of compassion pushes us to understand how we have structured the world, and to ask how we can structure it better, not because we may suffer, but because others are suffering'. Again, this year Compassionate Ballarat has run a number of forums to inspire and resource those wanting to learn more about the application of the science of compassion. In one of these forums Hugh MacKay spoke about his new book *The Kindness Revolution* - in which he writes that *Revolutions never start at the top*.

If we dare to dream of a more loving country - kinder, more compassionate, more cooperative, more respectful, more inclusive, more egalitarian, more harmonious, less cynical - there's only one way to start turning that dream into a reality: each of us must live as if this is already that country. This forum was run in collaboration with the Committee for Ballarat. In closing remarks its Chief Executive Michael Poulton promoted the 'Buy Local' Campaign to support local businesses who had been very badly hit by COVID lockdowns. Assoc Prof Rick Chew, Director of the Ballarat Arts Academy co-convened the conversation with Hugh and introduced the forum by playing the video of 'What A Wonderful World' created by The Ballarat Arts Academy and The BallaRat Pack Orchestra. It was a very moving interpretation that set the scene for the inspiring conversation that followed. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FkwaMGpnrg>

4. Grow and Embed the virtuous cycle of compassion

Being a part of the global Charter for Compassion provides access to a network of charter cities and connections across the world. In 2021 Compassionate Ballarat brought together senior representatives from Compassionate Belfast, the European Forum for Restorative Justice, and the US Human Values Centre in a forum on collective trauma. This forum was held in conjunction with the Art Gallery of Ballarat's, Out of Darkness exhibition. This exhibition was a survivor's journey of institutional child sexual abuse and the discussions in the forum focused on the role that the 'creative eye' plays in seeing the suffering of collective trauma. This forum shared examples of what Charter cities around the world are doing to support a range of community traumas – for example in Belfast, Compassionate Belfast has created a Zen garden where schoolchildren can come and rake the sand, with the idea of raking up the past to explore the present with new eyes; and another project in France is focusing on the polarization between young immigrant children and the police and how to connect them. Sharing and applying the knowledge from Charter cities across the world, ensures that Compassionate Ballarat can become a significant contributor to this global compassion movement.

2022 promises much for our local community – one like so many others around the world in need of healing - and whilst there will inevitably be more unanticipated challenges to come - by adopting a lens of compassion, we can all be better placed to make a real difference to our community – by shining a light on what makes our community great and critically identifying opportunities to make things better by taking compassionate action.

THANK YOU

As a fully volunteer group Compassionate Ballarat is very grateful for the support it receives from many business and community groups including:

- Federation University Australia - who provided technical support for webinars.
- Ballarat Health Services – who have offered secretarial support
- Committee for Ballarat - who have provided rooms for forums
- The Courier – who have covered many Compassionate Ballarat events

MORE INFORMATION

www.charterforcompassion.org
www.compassionateballarat.com.au
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www.charterforcompassion.com.au
<https://www.facebook.com/LetsTalkPeaceBallarat/>