Stories of giving across Ballarat and the Western Region
On average graduates of the Leaders Forum Community Leadership Program give back more than 15 hours of support a month to community organisations locally.
“Hello my name is Deb Milera, I am proud Narungga Woman and my people come from the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia. Leaders come from all walks of life. As the leader you need to be able to empower people to stand up and advocate for what they believe in. The most important thing that I have learnt is that it is ok to be me. No matter where I am, I will continue to empower my people to stand up for their basic human rights. My hope for the future is that my children will live in a world free of racism and hatred and with equality to live happy, healthy, safe and successful lifestyles.”

Rokewood/Corindhap Football - Netball Club Coach
“Hello my name is Janelle Ryan, I am the owner of The Little PR Company. Volunteering is important to me as we need to take responsibility for bettering the place in which you live and work, by being an active part of positive change and helping to build community spirit. It’s important to show my son Lewis the importance of this through my voluntary actions and to help instil a strong community minded spirit in him, for the benefit of his future. I want Lewis to know that volunteering can give you something money just can’t buy, real and honest goodwill and happiness.”

LBWR Learning Partner
“Hello my name is Peter Rutley, volunteering gives a sense of accomplishment and a rewarding feeling that you are giving back to the community, a community that we all benefit from. In any given week, I think we would all utilise the resources or assistance, either directly or indirectly, through an organisation that has people who volunteer to provide that service. I think people should be aware of and that if they can offer even just a few hours per month volunteering that the feeling of giving back to your community is certainly worth it. I have been happily volunteering for the past 8 years. I can look back over the years and I know I have benefited from what others have given to my local clubs. I encourage you to put up your hand up and ask… can I help?”

Buninyong Football - Netball Club Treasurer
“Hello my name is Jennifer Ganske, as an immigrant it is essential that my community fill the void of an extended family and heritage for me. Living regionally outside of Ballarat it is imperative to be a volunteer. Community defines my sense of place. It gives me a strong feeling of belonging and allows me to create an extended family in the geographic area which I choose to live, create and raise my children in. My local community is fuelled by the volunteer work force. Volunteers help keep our community vibrant healthy and strong.”

Pyrenees Music Festival Committee
“Hello my name is Kate Burrows, I love giving to my community through volunteering because I LOVE Ballarat and I LOVE the people who live here. I believe volunteering brings people together, our local strengths work together to support the assets within and help to build a happy, strong, inclusive, resilient community through innovation and understanding to respond accordingly. Volunteering at Ballarat Regional Tourism is something close to my heart and allows me to contribute my skills and knowledge from managing a retail gift store for 8 years along with an extensive list of events that I have been involved in. If you can then find something that you are passionate about then go for it, there is nothing more rewarding than the feeling of giving.”

Ballarat Regional Tourism Board Director
“Hello my name is Mark Bruty, community to me is the “sum of all parts” that makes up the fabric of my city and my relationships. It is a collection of people, groups and businesses that work together and interact with each other to make something great. To me it provides a sense of belonging, respect and desire to be inclusive. Volunteers are important pillars of the community. Many outcomes cannot be achieved without the assistance of volunteers and it is they important that they are celebrated. Volunteers assist the community, but the relationship is reciprocal. Engaging people to meet and work with other like-minded people builds relationships and has a positive effect on the individual and their community, and I see this every-day at my club the North Ballarat Roosters”

North Ballarat Football Club Community
“Hello my name is Michelle Emma James, living in many places around the world, I developed a strong appreciation for the different ways that people live and experienced being a part of a diverse range of cultures and communities. To me, the notion of community has always been strong but also fleeting and plural. Moving to Ballarat over the past year has made my community feel more grounded, it gives me a sense of belonging where I can share values, skills and interests and embrace diversity. The community is strengthened through the resources and support that people bring to one another, individuals gain new skills and experiences, meet new people and learn from diverse perspectives. Volunteering makes you healthier and helps to reduce stress, which in my book is a win for everyone!”

Pecha Kucha Melbourne Co - Convener
“Hello my name is Beth Lamont. Volunteering has been of such great benefit to me, while my kids were little, I spent 3 years on the committee (and was president for a time) of the Ballarat Toy Library. Whilst working collaboratively towards growing the organisation, I gained much experience and developed essential skills that were instrumental and gave me a head start when it came to running my own business. I got to spend time with other parents and my children with other children within my community. My advice is get out there and volunteer, do something that sparks your interest and passion. You’ll be making a difference, and you never know what good things will come out of it.”

Live Music Advisory Group
“Hello my name is Morgan Williams, for me community is always made up of supportive groups that come together out of a shared vision, goal, interest or simply for social stimulus. So much of our Western society is based on monetary values. Removing some of this from our daily lives paves the way for an exchange-based system of mutual learning, growth, understanding and expansion. We all benefit from helping each other. The value of volunteering is really beyond measure; it’s a feeling of giving and receiving without expectations, encouraging the world and people around us to learn, grow and evolve. This has also expanded in our digital world where I can meet, interact and chat with online communities or my family, all over the world.”

Daylesford Dharma School Committee
“Hello my name is Talei Deacon and I believe that volunteering is good for everyone, so why wouldn’t you do it? Volunteering unites people, creates networks, exposes you to a diverse range of people and experiences, and strengthens the community. It’s incredible the joy that volunteering brings, that you can make a positive impact in someone else’s life, whether it’s sitting on a board, or raising money for a breakfast program that provides children with a meal. Volunteering contributions can be small, they aren’t always time consuming and the end result can be enormous. I would encourage everyone to look around their community and see how and where they can volunteer and make their community a stronger, kinder, more accepting place.”

Women’s Health Grampians Board Member
“Hello my name is Carmel Flynn, give happy – live happy is a great expression of generously giving. Being involved just because you want too is happily giving. Often there is no measurable impact of volunteering and you don’t always know what impact you are making. Talking to someone, helping someone with their groceries, delegating tasks from someone else who is overdoing it, assisting with a one off cause are just as important as feeding the homeless or getting a building built. It’s basic, if you have something to offer and time to spare, share. Volunteering is just part of who I am. It’s is in my blood, my mum was a great example for me and my six siblings, mum was always there to help. It’s not until you volunteer that you understand what others, who have gone before you have given. Life’s short, get in and give it a go!”

BLOC Committee - Loreto College Committee Member
“Hello my name is Justin O’Gorman, volunteering is an essential component of what makes community. Many of our local clubs and organisations simply would not exist without their volunteers and the skills and experience they offer. I have been given the opportunity to coach junior basketball which allows me to share my skills and experience gained over many years. It has re-engaged me in a sport I love, re-enforced the critical role volunteers have to play and allowed me to teach and support a group of young and enthusiastic athletes. Watching them learn and grow gives me the greatest sense of accomplishment. I encourage everyone to find their place in the community and volunteer. We all have skills and experience to make a difference.”

Ballarat Wildcats Coach
“Hello my name is Pauline O’Shannessy-Dowling, to me community means being part of something that is bigger than me; bigger than the individual. Volunteering provides the opportunity to contribute to that bigger entity in a positive, constructive and meaningful way. I really want to be a positive force and role model within the community. I hope that my desire to follow my dreams as a practicing artist will inspire others to dream big and never give up. Volunteering is invaluable. I have been volunteering in various roles for the past 20 years in both the arts and community sector. Volunteering provides such positive benefits to the individual who volunteers, the recipient institution and the wider community. Volunteering is self-affirming and life affirming.”

Art Gallery of Ballarat
“Give what you can, time, money or care”
Father Bob Maguire

What can you give to your community?

leadership
ballarat + western region