

Social Activity Volunteers

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we establishing Social Activity Volunteers?

The City of Ballarat has invested in community infrastructure with Seniors Exercise Parks located at Mt Pleasant Reserve, MR Power Park Sebastopol, and soon to be installed at Lucas Central Park. Seniors Exercise Parks promote opportunities for older people to engage in physical and social activities.

Social Activity Volunteers were established to activate the seniors exercise parks by supporting and promoting physical activity to the community, building confidence to use equipment and creating a 'community' of users.

Seniors exercise equipment inspires active ageing and physical independence by improving strength, mobility, motor skills, balance and contributes to falls prevention of older community members. Encouraging older adults to remain physically active is vital for their ongoing physical, mental and social health.

What support is provided to be a Social Activity Volunteer?

City of Ballarat Ageing Well Services will provide volunteers with support to:

- Complete any documentation required to be a Volunteer
- Connect with other Social Activity Volunteers
- Connect with the local community and the Ageing Well Services team
- Promote and encourage participation of older adults in further programs, events, activities, and services within Council and the broader community
- Participate in education and training opportunities relevant to volunteer role
 - Be more confident in the role of Social Activity Volunteer
 - Professional boundaries and managing risk as a volunteer
 - Increase awareness, understanding and skills in challenging ageism

How long can I be a Social Activity volunteer?

There is no limitation to the length of time you can be a Social Activity Volunteer.

Who will pay for Police check and Working with Children Check (WWCC)

Applications for Police check and WWCC are not required until a formal offer to the role is provided to you by the City of Ballarat following interview and referee checks.

There will be no cost to the volunteer applicant for the costs of a Police check. The costs of a Police check are covered by City of Ballarat.

The Volunteer WWCC required is free to apply for and obtain online.

Applicants can be supported through this process.

What is meant by suitable level of fitness and physical ability for Social Activity Volunteers?

Social Activity Volunteers play an active role both physically and cognitively at seniors exercise parks. This will involve physically navigating the seniors exercise park potentially intermittently over a duration of between 20 minutes to an hour, including providing support and navigation of equipment and resources to attendees at these activations.

The role also involves working outside with exposure to varying weather elements but not extreme conditions.

Health and mobility conditions may not exclude you from being a Social Activity Volunteer. We ask that you take into consideration the physical and cognitive demands of this volunteer role before you submit an application.

Is training provided?

Yes, an induction and training program has been developed to support community members meet the volunteer role functions. Examples of training include National Ageing Research Institute seniors exercise park equipment familiarisation, First Aid, and Dementia awareness. Further training opportunities may be identified in consultation with volunteers as individual and group needs become apparent.

What does the time commitment of Seniors Exercise Park activations look like?

It is anticipated that a volunteer's time commitment will vary based on individual circumstances and preferences. 1 hour weekly (for attendance at 1 session) up to 4 hours weekly (for attendance at multiple sessions) could be accommodated.

Additional one-off opportunities for community engagement and co-design workshops will also be offered across the year.

City of Ballarat will provide support in management of the volunteer roster so changes due to appointments, illness, holidays etc can be covered by other volunteers or staff as required.

Social Activity Volunteers work outdoors, what happens on days of extreme heat, cold, or wet weather?

City of Ballarat staff and volunteers are guided by a thermal comfort policy to support program delivery which identifies triggers for the cancellation of programs and activities due to weather conditions.

Ageing Well Services staff and volunteers will monitor weather forecasts proactively in consideration to senior exercise park activation being outdoors and exposed to the weather elements.

Additionally Ageing Well Services will engage in regular conversations with Social Activity Volunteers to capture the anecdotes and experiences of program participation in consideration to suitability of seasonal weather conditions. The needs and experiences of volunteer and program attendees will be considered for any changes, suspensions or cancellations due to weather conditions and communicated to the community.

How do I register my interest in being a Social Activity Volunteer?

There are several ways to register your interest:

- Using this online form: forms.office.com/r/QCPkJSGqDB
- Completing a printed form
 - collect the expression of interest form and reply-paid envelope from the Phoenix Building (25 Armstrong Street South) or one of the Ballarat Libraries locations.
 - make a request to Lee Bennett on 5320 5500 or via email ageingwell@ballarat.vic.gov.au for a printed form to be posted to you with a reply-paid envelope.
 - collect the form at an information opportunity and return via reply paid envelope or to the Phoenix Building.
- Call Lee Bennett on 5320 5500, or email ageingwell@ballarat.vic.gov.au to request documents in an accessible format or for support.

What are the key dates I should know about for this process?

Expressions of Interest open: 20 March 2025

- Online: forms.office.com/r/QCPkJSGqDB
- Hard copy: collect from the Phoenix Building (25 Armstrong Street South, Ballarat), any Ballarat Library or request a copy from Ageing Well Services by phone 5320 5500 or via email ageingwell@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Information opportunities:

- Informal information opportunity at the Ageing Well Service Provider Expo: 26 March 2025 between 10am and 2pm at the Mercure Convention Centre, Main Road, Golden Point (Ballarat)
- Drop-in information sessions (no bookings required):
 - Wednesday 2 April 2025 at the Ballarat Town Hall in Committee Room 2 between 10am and 11am
 - Thursday 3 April 2025 at the Ballarat Library (178 Doveton Street North, Ballarat) in Meeting Room 2 between 4pm and 5:30pm.

Expressions of Interest close: 30 April 2025 at 5pm

Applicant notification for further conversations: mid-May 2025

Who do I contact if I still have questions?

Phone 5320 5500 and ask to speak with Lee Bennett, Ageing Well Services. Alternatively, you can email ageingwell@ballarat.vic.gov.au.