

AGEING WELL IN BALLARAT STRATEGY 2027–2030

Proudly working
with and for
our community





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The City of Ballarat acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.





“One of the biggest opportunities for Ballarat is to focus less on creating new infrastructure and more on linking and activating what already exists.”

Community member

A Message from the Mayor and CEO

The Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2027-2030 is our roadmap to ensuring Ballarat remains a place where older people feel included, connected and empowered to live life as they choose.

With almost one-third of Ballarat's population aged 55 and over, planning for an age-friendly city is more important than ever. This strategy recognises the significant contributions of older residents and reinforces our commitment to creating a community where people can age well, remain active and continue to participate in community life.

As a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, we are committed to removing barriers to participation and creating environments that support wellbeing, independence and connection.

Importantly, this strategy has been informed by the voices of community members and guided by the WHO Age-friendly Cities Framework. Residents told us what matters most to them as they age, including accessible communication, transport, opportunities for social connection and participation, and welcoming public spaces and facilities.

This strategy provides a clear direction for how the City of Ballarat will work alongside residents, local organisations and service providers to create a more age-friendly city. Together, we can continue building a Ballarat where older people are valued and supported to thrive.



Cr Tracey Hargreaves
Mayor, City of Ballarat



Evan King
CEO, City of Ballarat



Purpose and Scope of this Plan

The Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2027-2030 provides a framework for supporting current and future generations of older people to live healthy, connected, safe and fulfilling lives. It recognises the important contributions older people make to Ballarat's social, cultural, civic and economic life and guides Council's role in ensuring Ballarat is an inclusive and age-friendly community.

Ballarat's population is ageing, reflecting broader demographic trends across Australia and internationally. As the number and diversity of older residents continues to grow, there are increasing opportunities to ensure people can remain active, engaged and connected throughout later life. Older people bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, experience and leadership that enriches our community and strengthens Ballarat as a place to live and age well.

Ageing is a lifelong journey shaped by our opportunities, relationships, environment, health and sense of belonging, and our experiences of ageing are diverse. Supporting people to age well requires planning for communities that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to changing needs, while recognising the diversity of experiences, aspirations and circumstances among older people. This includes people from 55 years of age and First Nations people aged 50 and over, to encourage and support them to plan and prepare for the years ahead and adapt their lives to changing needs and opportunities.

Our Vision for an Age-friendly Ballarat

**Ballarat: the place to live, work, play,
learn and age well.**

**We want to ensure Ballarat is an
Age-friendly community where people
feel safe, valued, connected, included,
and respected and able to participate
fully in life however they choose.**



What is an Age-friendly community?

An age-friendly community is a place that supports people to age well by:

- Helping people stay healthy, active, and independent
- Reducing loneliness and increasing social connection
- Improving safety, accessibility, and liveability for everyone; and
- Strengthening community engagement and local leadership

Age-friendly communities don't just support older people, they benefit everyone. By creating environments where people can live well at every age and stage of life, we build stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient communities.



Principles

Our commitment aligns with the [City of Ballarat Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031](#), which seeks to optimise health and wellbeing at every stage of life and foster a connected, engaged and inclusive community, living safely and sustainably, with residents who are active, healthy and resilient.

Guided by the Plan's principles, we take a whole-of-organisation approach to planning, delivering and evaluating services, programs and initiatives.

These principles inform our decisions, partnerships and actions to improve outcomes for older people in Ballarat.

Equity

We will work to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equitably. This includes equitable access to resources, services and opportunities to assist and support our community to age well in Ballarat.

Inclusion

We recognise that older people in our community are diverse and dynamic individuals with many and varied capabilities, resources, experiences, lifestyles and preferences.

We will work to build a community in which all residents throughout their life feel valued, respected, supported, safe, and can participate in all aspects of community, social and economic life as they choose.

Accessibility

We will work to ensure that our city and its places, spaces and buildings are accessible for all, regardless of ability, means, lived experience, gender, language, religion or culture.

Community Participation

We appreciate and will draw on the life experience, knowledge and insight of our residents. We are committed to including all our residents in our planning and decision making and ensuring their voices are heard as we continue to build an age-friendly community in Ballarat.

We value the participation and contribution of older people in our community. We will work to reduce formal and informal barriers that affect access to resources, services, opportunities and participation in social, community and economic life.



Principles

Collaboration

We acknowledge that creating an age-friendly community requires a commitment from all in our municipal community, and the commitment, leadership and action by many, including government, service providers, organisations, business, our community and all people living, working and visiting our city.

We will develop relationships and strengthen partnerships with our community, local business, government, services and support agencies to strengthen our shared commitment to build our combined capabilities and encourage greater co-operation and integration across our community and local service system.

Evidence-based decision making

We will use community feedback, lived experience, best practice, data and evidence to understand community needs, guide decision-making and measure progress, ensuring our actions deliver meaningful and lasting outcomes for our community.

Intersectionality and inclusion

The City of Ballarat recognises that older people may experience ageing differently based on their life experiences, identities and circumstances. Some older people face intersecting forms of disadvantage or exclusion related to gender, First Nations identity, disability, socioeconomic circumstances, cultural, religious or linguistic diversity, sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy is committed to fostering an inclusive community where all older people feel valued, respected and able to participate fully in community life. We recognise that achieving equitable outcomes requires responsive and tailored approaches that address barriers to participation and support the diverse needs, strengths and aspirations of older people.

A Gender Impact Assessment has informed the development of this Strategy, with recommendations embedded throughout the plan to support equitable and inclusive outcomes for older people across Ballarat and to guide our approach.



The Role of Age-friendly Ambassadors

The Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy is underpinned by a participatory approach that recognises older people as experts in their own lives and essential partners in creating an age-friendly community. Meaningful engagement with older residents ensures that policies, services, programs and public spaces are informed by lived experience and responsive to the diverse needs, aspirations and contributions of people as they age.

A key mechanism for this participation is the City of Ballarat’s Age-friendly Ambassador Program, established in 2025. The program brings together a diverse group of older residents who act as community representatives, advocates and advisors, providing valuable insights into the experiences of ageing in Ballarat.

Through ongoing engagement, consultation and co-design opportunities, Age-friendly Ambassadors help identify emerging issues, champion age-friendly principles, strengthen connections between City of Ballarat and the community, and support the development and implementation of initiatives that enable people to age well.

By embedding the voices of older people through the Ambassador Program and other engagement activities, we are committed to ensuring that age-friendly actions are shaped by those with lived experience, resulting in more inclusive, relevant and sustainable outcomes for the Ballarat community.





“Ballarat has all the ingredients to be a leading age-friendly city. The next step is making participation easier, more visible, and more connected.”

Community member

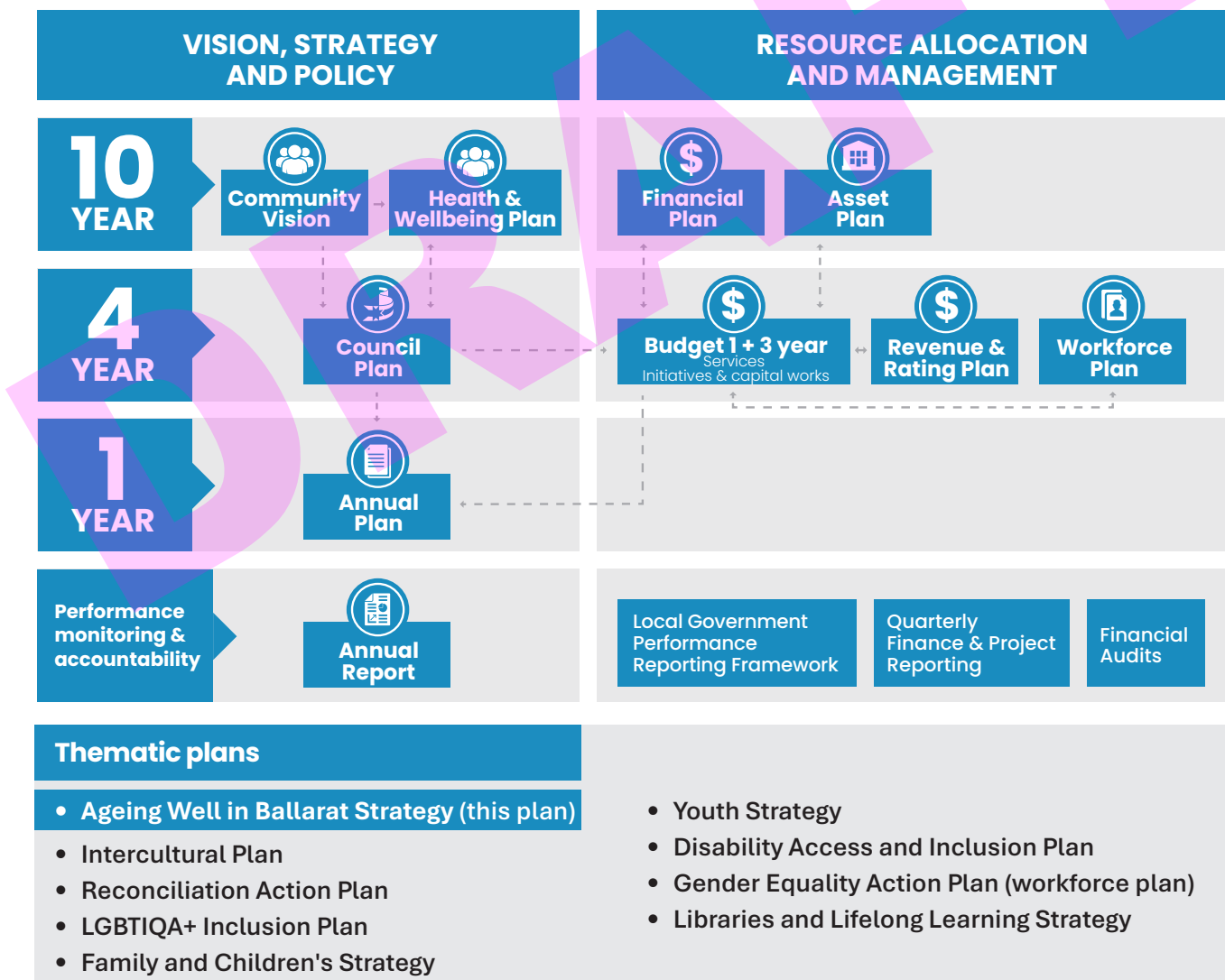
Strategic Context

The City of Ballarat recognises that access and inclusion for everyone is most effective when it is embedded across all areas of City of Ballarat's planning, policy, service delivery and reporting. This requires a coordinated and connected approach.

Older adults interact with a wide range of services, programs, facilities and community spaces throughout their lives, and their wellbeing is influenced by decisions made across many areas of Council.

The Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy sits within the City of Ballarat's integrated planning framework, ensuring a coordinated and sustainable approach to supporting older people and advancing an age-friendly Ballarat.

City of Ballarat integrated strategic planning framework



Our Community Profile

Here is a current snapshot of our community:



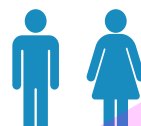
34,863

Ballarat residents are aged 55 years and over (or 31% of Ballarat residents)



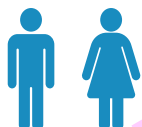
47,000+

people in Ballarat aged 55 years and over by 2033



55%

of the population aged 55 years and older are female.



64%

of the population aged 85 years and older are female.



323

First Nations people aged 50 or older in Ballarat.*



1,410

people aged 55 and over may identify as LGBTI+ in Ballarat.



14%

of people aged 55 and over in Ballarat were born overseas.



14%

of people in Ballarat aged 55 and over need assistance in their day-to-day lives.



45%

of carers of people with disability, long term illness, or old age, are 55 years and over.

Source: Data is from ABS Population and Housing 2021, unless otherwise indicated. * Victorian Population Health Survey 2023

Our Community Profile



18%

of ALL people providing unpaid childcare in Ballarat were aged 55 and over.



18%

of people in Ballarat aged 65 to 74 are in the labour force.



48%

of Ballarat residents in low-income households are aged 55 and over.



24%

of older people in Ballarat live alone (8435 household) and 66% of these people are women.



2,123

people living with dementia in Ballarat.^



Almost 50%

of Australians aged 65 to 74 felt digitally excluded.**



1 in 6 people aged 65 and over

in the community experienced abuse in a 12-month period, but this is often underreported. Older women were more likely overall than older men to experience abuse (15.9% compared with 13.6%).~



Top 5 chronic health diseases

for people aged 55 and over in Ballarat: arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, mental health and asthma.

Source: Data is from ABS Population and Housing 2021, unless otherwise indicated. ^ Dementia Australia 2024, **Digital Inclusion Index 2022, ~ National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study 2021

Our Approach

The City of Ballarat’s age-friendly approach is guided by World Health Organization’s (WHO) Age-friendly Cities and Communities Framework, which supports communities to create inclusive, accessible and supportive environments where people can age well.

As a member of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities since 2024, the City of Ballarat is committed to fostering an inclusive, accessible and connected community where older people are valued and supported to participate fully in community life.

Aligning with the WHO age-friendly domains provides an opportunity to engage, plan and measure progress alongside local, national, and international partners and will support City of Ballarat’s commitment to be a recognised and celebrated age-friendly city.

The 8 WHO Age-friendly Domains



The framework is based around eight interconnected domains:



Places, Spaces and Buildings

Age-friendly environments support mobility, safety, comfort, and social participation. They include well designed public spaces, safe walking environments, accessible facilities, and features that promote confidence and independence for people of all ages and abilities.



Transport

The ability for people to move around their communities using different modes of transport is fundamental to their quality of life and wellbeing, including accessing services, shopping, connecting with family and friends, and participating in community activities and events.



Housing

Access to housing that meets the needs of older people is important. Housing options need to be affordable, safe, and designed to support people as their needs change, enabling older people to remain connected to their communities.

Our Approach



Social Participation

Age-friendly communities provide older people with opportunities to participate in social, cultural, educational and recreational activities that are accessible, affordable, inclusive, and varied to reduce isolation and support wellbeing.



Respect and Social Inclusion

An age-friendly community actively values, respects, and includes older people. This domain focuses on ensuring that older adults feel recognised, represented, and able to participate fully in community life by promoting attitudes, policies, and community practices that value older people, challenge ageism, and encourage intergenerational connection.



Civic Participation and Employment

Age-friendly communities ensure that older people can contribute, lead, work, and volunteer in ways that match their interests, abilities, and life circumstances.



Communication and Information

Age-friendly communication ensures that older people can easily access, understand, and use information, including from digital and nondigital channels. It supports social participation, independence, and access to services.



Community Support and Health Services

An age-friendly community ensures that older people have reliable access to community support and health services that help them maintain health, independence, and overall wellbeing.

While Council plays an important leadership role, creating an age-friendly Ballarat requires a collective effort. Achieving meaningful outcomes for older people also depends on the commitment and collaboration of residents, community organisations, businesses, service providers and all levels of government working together to remove barriers, support healthy ageing, promote inclusion and create environments that support people to age well.



“As you get older it’s harder to meet people and make new friends and form connections.”

Community member

How This Strategy Was Developed

This strategy builds on the foundations of the first Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy (2022–2026), drawing on the achievements, learnings and insights gained through its implementation.

Informed by state, national and international policy directions and age-friendly best practice, it has been shaped by the voices of our community through extensive engagement undertaken over the past four years. Insights gathered through a range of projects, reviews, surveys, workshops and community conversations have informed our understanding of local priorities, emerging issues and opportunities to support older people to age well in Ballarat.

This ongoing engagement has helped guide the delivery of the current strategy and has directly informed the development of this new strategy.

Key engagement activities undertaken during 2024–2026 included:

- **November 2024** Ageing Well Services Communications Review – Community survey
- **April 2025** Ballarat Ageing Well Expo – Pop-up engagement on lifelong learning
- **June 2025** Ageing Well in Ballarat Transport Study – Community survey/ workshops
- **September 2025** Ageing Well Services Social Activities Review
- **October 2025** Age-friendly Ballarat Survey – Informing age-friendly indicators

These conversations have enabled us to monitor changing community needs, evaluate existing initiatives and identify priorities for the future, ensuring that the Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2027–2030 is evidence-informed and community-led.

Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy Engagement – 2026

Between March and June 2026, the City of Ballarat undertook tailored community engagement to inform the development of the next Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy, including exploring further some topics of interest from previous community engagement.

The purpose of this engagement was to hear directly from the Ballarat community, particularly people aged 50 years and over, carers for older people, and local organisations, about their experiences, preferences and priorities for an age-friendly Ballarat over the next four years.

“Being heard and respected as part of the community. You seem to become invisible as you age.”

Community member

A range of engagement methods were used to provide accessible and meaningful opportunities for participation, including printed and online surveys, in-person conversations, small group discussions with Age-friendly Ambassadors, community workshops and other feedback opportunities.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our community members who took the time to share their views and experiences to help shape this strategy. Thanks also to our 2026 Age-friendly Ambassador group for their active participation throughout the development of the strategy and action plan.

How This Strategy Was Developed

Engagement Snapshot:

We received over 650 responses:



146

people completed
the online
community survey



62

people completed
the printed
community survey



368

people responded
to the single question
feedback



11

people completed
the stakeholder
survey



8

age-friendly
Ambassador meeting
participants



19

community workshop
participants



8

people completed the
Ageing Well Services
staff survey



36

City of Ballarat
Staff Workshop
participants

The findings provide valuable insight into the experiences, needs and aspirations of older people in Ballarat. They highlight community strengths, identify priorities for improvement, and reinforce the need to address barriers such as transport, social isolation, digital exclusion and access to health, wellbeing and support services.

The findings also reflect the diversity of experiences across the community and highlight opportunities to better recognise, support and build on the strengths, capacities and contributions of older people as active and valued members of the community.

What We Heard

Older residents value Ballarat’s community connections, local services, libraries, parks, activities, volunteering opportunities and existing ageing well initiatives. They also identified ongoing barriers to independence, wellbeing and participation, including transport gaps, cost of living pressures, service access, housing insecurity, social isolation, digital exclusion, safety concerns and access to relevant and timely information.

Feedback gathered through community engagement identified consistent themes about what matters most to older people in Ballarat. These themes provide a clear evidence base for the Strategy and have informed the strategic actions that follow.

Emerging themes:

Independence and ageing in place:

People want to live safely, independently and confidently in their homes and communities, with access to affordable practical support when needed.

“Ballarat is a beautiful town and I would like to feel safe and secure.”

Community member

Connection and belonging:

Social participation, volunteering, lifelong learning, intergenerational connections and welcoming community spaces are central to wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

Accessible movement:

Reliable transport, safe and well-maintained footpaths, crossings, parking, lighting and seating are important for independence, mobility and participation in community life.

Clear, accessible and timely information:

People access information in different ways and want it to be easy to find, relevant, trustworthy and available through both digital and non-digital channels.

Digital inclusion:

Confidence, skills and access to digital technology vary widely. While many people value online information and services, others face barriers to access or prefer non-digital options.

Respect, safety and inclusion:

Older people want to be recognised, respected and included as valued contributors, decision-makers, workers, volunteers, carers and community leaders.

Local decision-making and engagement:

People are more likely to engage with Council when they feel heard, respected and able to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Face-to-face connection:

People value opportunities for in-person learning, engagement and social interaction that foster meaningful relationships and strengthen community connections.

This strategy builds on the priorities, actions and relationships developed through the 2022–2026 Strategy and engagement undertaken since its inception. The next four years provide an opportunity to strengthen what the community values, address persistent barriers, and embed age-friendly thinking across planning, partnerships, advocacy and service delivery.

Strategic Actions

The strategic actions have been developed from the key themes and priorities identified through community engagement and aligned to the age-friendly domains that guide Ballarat's approach. This creates a clear line of sight between what the community told us, the priorities adopted in the Strategy, and the actions that will guide implementation.

The actions and initiatives identified in this Strategy will be delivered through existing Council services, approved operational budgets and existing staff resources. No additional funding allocations are required at the time of adoption. Any future initiatives requiring additional resources will be considered through Council's annual planning and budget processes.

Age-friendly domain	Strategic Actions
 Places, Spaces and Buildings	- Plan, design, maintain and improve places, spaces and buildings to be accessible, inclusive, easy to use and support healthy ageing. - Enhance the safety, accessibility and inclusiveness of public spaces and community settings to support participation, independence and belonging. - Encourage community connection and promote health and wellbeing in our places, spaces and buildings.
 Transport	- Advocate for improved, accessible and reliable transport services that respond to community needs. - Promote awareness and use of a range of transport options that support independence and community participation. - Create a more connected and accessible city by encouraging transport solutions that respond to local needs.
 Housing	- Advocate for and support housing policies, planning, investment and partnerships that increase the diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing options, enabling older people and vulnerable residents to age well in their homes and communities. - Promote access to information, resources and supports that enable residents to make informed housing decisions.
 Social Participation	- Provide, and promote inclusive, accessible and affordable opportunities for people to participate in social, recreational, cultural and lifelong learning activities that foster social connection. - Promote, support and/or facilitate inclusive opportunities that reflect and celebrate the diversity of older people in Ballarat. - Support seniors' clubs and community groups to remain active and inclusive.

Strategic Actions

Age-friendly domain	Strategic Actions
 Respect and Social Inclusion	• Recognise and celebrate the contributions of older people to Ballarat's social, cultural and civic life. • Build community awareness, capability and shared responsibility to recognise, challenge and respond to ageism. • Collaborate with government and community organisations to prevent, identify and respond to elder abuse. • Create, support, partner and/ or promote opportunities that encourage intergenerational connection and/ or sharing of knowledge and skills.
 Civic Participation and Employment	• Provide meaningful opportunities for older people to participate in civic and community life and contribute to decisions that affect them and their communities. • Encourage and promote lifelong learning, employment and volunteering opportunities that enable older people to contribute their skills, knowledge and experience. • Promote the value of older workers and foster age-inclusive, multigenerational workplaces.
 Communication and Information	• Provide accessible, timely, trusted and relevant information through a range of communication channels and formats that meet the diverse needs of older people. • Strengthen digital inclusion through access to technology and opportunities to develop digital skills and confidence. • Support older people to remain informed, connected and engaged in their community through information sharing, education and capacity-building initiatives.
 Community Support and Health Services	• Provide accessible information, navigation support and community connection opportunities that help older people and carers understand, access and engage with services and support. • Support people to maintain their health, wellbeing, independence and quality of life as they age. • Strengthen evidence-informed planning and advocacy to support an age-friendly Ballarat.

Implementing Our Approach

The Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy and Action Plan will be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated as required to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of older people and changes in the local community.

A four-year Action Plan accompanies this strategy and outlines the key initiatives that will support delivery of the strategy's objectives. While the Action Plan provides a long-term roadmap, progress will be reviewed annually to assess achievements, identify emerging priorities and align implementation with City of Ballarat planning and budgeting processes.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring and reviewing activities will include:

- Annual reporting on progress to Council and the community.
- Annual review of actions and measures within the Action Plan.
- Feedback from older residents, community stakeholders and through the Age-friendly Ambassador Program.
- Consideration of emerging trends and changes affecting older people, including demographic shifts, policy reform, service changes, and technological developments.

Many actions will be delivered through existing Council programs and resources, while others may be supported through partnerships, advocacy and external funding opportunities.

Measuring Age-Friendliness

A key component of this strategy is the use of Age-friendly Indicators to measure Ballarat's progress as an age-friendly community.

In 2023, the City of Ballarat developed an Age-friendly Indicator Framework and in 2025 collected baseline data through community surveys and existing data sources, establishing Ballarat's first comprehensive measure of age-friendliness. This baseline provides a benchmark against which future progress can be assessed.

The Age-friendly Ballarat Survey and associated indicator measures will be repeated in 2029 to evaluate changes over time, assess the impact of the strategy and inform future planning. This approach aligns with best-practice principles of the World Health Organization's Age-friendly Cities Framework and supports evidence-based decision-making.

By combining ongoing reporting, community feedback and measurable indicators, we will be able to track progress, celebrate achievements and continually improve outcomes for older people in Ballarat.



“Social media is isolating and those of us who don't use this sort of technology (by choice) still need to socialise.”
Community member



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NRS-Friendly Hearing or Speech Impaired?

Call via the National Relay Service
on 133 677

Translating and Interpreting Services

Call 131 450 for immediate phone interpreting
(available 24 hours)
Visit tisonational.gov.au for online service

For a hard copy of this strategy please email

ageingwell@ballarat.vic.gov.au



@BallaratCityCouncil



cityofballarat



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All information correct at time of publication.
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