



# Annual Report 2025



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# Compassionate Ballarat

....is a fully volunteer group that seeks to inspire, encourage and champion the compassionate work occurring across our city by cultivating compassionate attitudes, awareness and actions within homes, workplaces and community.

[www.compassionateballarat.com.au](http://www.compassionateballarat.com.au)



## OUR WORK WITH COUNCIL

- 2025 Youth Awards - Compassion and Care Category
- Seeds of Compassion
  - Begonia Festival
    - Youth Fest
    - Think Equal
  - Harmony Week

# 2025 YOUTH AWARDS

This Youth Award recognises a young person who shows compassion and a deep commitment to creating a more inclusive and supportive community. They actively promote acceptance, respect, and equality, ensuring that everyone feels a sense of belonging and safety.

**The winner of this year's Compassion and Care Award was Paige Boss for her work in creating safe spaces for growth at school and beyond.**

This year Compassionate Ballarat Steering Group members Mary Darcy and Lynne Reeder were invited to be judges for the Youth Awards.



# SEEDS OF COMPASSION

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Compassionate Ballarat continued its work to plant seeds of compassion to promote Ballarat as a caring city underpinned by the compassionate wishes of its future leaders.

In 2024 nearly 100 wishes were received from Ballarat students in Year 6 and Year 10 classes, and the collected wishes were subject to a content analysis and were written up under five thematic headings which remain very relevant in 2025.



# Five themes that emerged from the wishes.....

**Inclusion - Acceptance – Belonging**

**Respect - Unity – Peace**

**Safe - Protected – Compassionate**

**Cohesion - Harmony – Equality**

**Thriving - Meaning – Potential**



## Seeds of Compassion at the Begonia Festival

During the Begonia Festival, the City Council gifted a tent so that members of Compassionate Ballarat could hand out the Seeds of Compassion book along with free seeds and conversations about planting compassionate wishes in our local gardens. Ben Kelly and Lynne Reeder, and other members of Compassionate Ballarat spent the day engaging people in compassionate conversations.





CB member Mary Darcy gave a presentation on the Seeds of Compassion project to young leaders of the Live4Life Ballarat Crew – a passionate group of Year 9 and 10 students from across Ballarat's secondary schools. During the session, the Crew were introduced to the Seeds of Compassion project and two powerful wishes emerged that deeply resonated with the group: *“Normal is a myth”* *“Everyone can be themselves without judgement”* After thoughtful discussion and a vote, the Crew chose to focus their Youth Fest event on the theme “Normal is a Myth” – a bold and compassionate message that challenges stigma and celebrates individuality.

Their creative vision was a 90-second video that showcases young people engaging in activities they love, using clever camera tricks and visual storytelling to highlight how everything is connected. The video will serve as a powerful reminder that there's no single definition of “normal” – and that embracing our differences is what makes our community stronger.

# THINK EQUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD



Think Equal is a global initiative which calls for a system change in education to end the discriminatory mindset and ensure positive life outcomes for children. Together with world experts, Think Equal designed a program to teach social and emotional learning to 3–6-year-olds.

Compassionate Ballarat members continued to support the introduction of this social and emotional learning program into Ballarat Kindergartens, by arranging for Early Childhood Coordinators from Merri-Bek Council to brief their peers in Ballarat Council on the positive outcomes of the program they ran in over 20 kindergartens during 2024.

# HARMONY WEEK 2025

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Madonna Quixley and Mary Darcy represented Compassionate Ballarat and Let's Talk Peace Ballarat at the Interfaith Harmony Week flag-raising in February.

Madonna offered the Prayer for Peace and worked on the Ballarat Interfaith Network organising committee for the event. Mary was in the Prayer Circle, and Annie De Jong also attended.

Mayor Tracy Hargreaves and a contingent of youth from five secondary schools spoke to the importance of Interfaith harmony.





During Harmony Week, Madonna Quixley also received an invitation to speak at Sebastopol Primary School on the third anniversary of the inauguration of their Peace Pole at a special assembly

Madonna applauded the activities the students are undertaking to make peace and harmony come alive in their lives.

# Lunchtime Prayers for Peace Vigil

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This event was held to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

A vigil was organised by Ballarat Interfaith Network, Let's Talk Peace Ballarat, and Compassionate Ballarat with the support of BGT Jobs & Training Ballarat and Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC).

People of all faiths gathered at Barkly Square to support the abolition of nuclear weapons on the worldwide 4th Annual Nuclear Prayer Day.

<https://timesnewsgroup.com.au/ballarat/news/prayers-for-peace/>





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# OUR WORK WITH BUSINESS

## Compassionate Leadership



# Realizing the Compassionate Wishes

*Wishing that we can all be safe in our homes – safe on the streets – safe on public transport – safe at work – safe in aged care – safe in schools - safe on the roads – that every one of us acts compassionately and feels connected - mostly the students just wished for Ballarat to be a safe city to live in.*

# PSYCHOLOGY SAFETY IN WORKPLACES

We asked members of the CEO group to share their examples of the psychological safety practices they employ in their organisations. We collected those and then shared them within the CEO group on the basis that if psychological safety can be better cultivated in the workplace, then it can be better modelled in the home.



## OUR WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Peace Poles at the Uniting Church - Snoooze Bus
- Need Help - Updated Brochure
- Links to Other Projects - Civility Project - Respect Ballarat



## Peace Pole at Uniting Church – Snooozebus

Compassionate Ballarat member Dr Mary Hollick has been working with the Uniting Church (of which she is an Elder) to have a Peace Pole planted in the front garden of its Lydiard St Church.

Mary has also been working with the Committee for Ballarat on finalising the fit out of Ballarat's Snooozebus (previously Sleep Bus), which was featured at Springfest.

Snooozebus Facebook link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086781712473>



## Residents in need of support

Compassionate Ballarat updated its booklet that brings together local food, shelter, support services, and learning services across Ballarat into one place. To make it easier in these cost-of-living times, this booklet provides direct contact details, so in most cases, residents don't need to go online. The 2025 version has been updated to provide many more services than our previous brochure.



# Civility Project: Reimagining a Civil Australia



Members of Compassionate Ballarat were invited to take part in the Kitchen Table discussions about co-designing a scalable, national approach with communities across Australia.

# COMPASSION RESEARCH

# APPLYING COMPASSION RESEARCH

This year a Special Issue of the Australian Journal of Management was launched. The authors spoke at an online seminar on compassion in organisations, organised by Dr Lynne Reeder and her colleagues at the University of Sydney.

The presentations underscored that compassion is a fundamental driver of psychological well-being and organisational health; and provided practical insights into how we can create more humane and high-functioning organisations. The two-hour seminar was edited into 15min recordings from each of the individual presentations, and can be accessed here:

<https://business.sydney.edu.au/events/research/2025/bhmb/ajm-special-issue-launch-compassion-at-work>





CHARTER FOR  
COMPASSION  
AUSTRALIA

OUR WORK WITH THE  
AUSTRALIAN COMPASSION  
COUNCIL

# 2025 National Day of Compassion

Compassionate Ballarat contributed to the 2025 National Day of Compassion with Compassionate Ballarat Chair, Ben Kelly, presenting the story of our work as an example of a compassionate city. Other speakers included Marilyn Turkovich, Executive Director of the global Charter for Compassion; Professor Hugh Mackay AO, ACC Compassion Ambassador – view here:

[Australia National Day of Compassion 2025: Compassion in Action\](#)



# OUR WORK AT A GLOBAL LEVEL

GLOBAL  
COMPASSION  
COALITION



CHARTER FOR  
COMPASSION

Compassionate Ballarat Featured in the first global Charter Conference.

Dr Lynne Reeder presented at this conference on the story of compassionate Ballarat - its origins, activities and successes to date.



# Global Compassion Coalition

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The Global Compassion Coalition was founded by Dr Rick Hanson – a New York Times best selling author and internationally well-known consultant on mindfulness and compassion.

Recently he asked the GCC Science Committee to organise global bi-monthly discussions based on the research questions outlined in the Future Directions report which Compassionate Ballarat launched last year.

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<https://www.compassionateballarat.com.au/a-new-report-on-the-science-of-compassion>



GLOBAL  
COMPASSION  
COALITION

# Compassionate Ballarat Steering Group 2025

Ben Kelly



Annie De Jong



Mary Hollick



Lynne Reeder



Mary Darcy



Madonna Quixley Gemma Kelly



David Deutscher

