

Newsletter | February 2026

Seniors HQ



Health & Wellbeing

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5338 4500 | bchc.org.au

Seniors HQ



Welcome to our new Ballarat Community Health Seniors HQ Newsletter

Our aim is to provide you with information to help you stay connected to our services and maintain a healthy lifestyle with positive well-being and independence.

What to expect

In each edition we will bring you:

- 'BCH in Focus' for the latest news on BCH services, sites and people.
- Events happening soon that you may wish to attend.
- Articles on health and wellbeing topics.

Feedback

Your feedback matters. It helps us shape the way we support the community.

We welcome feedback at any time. Speak to our team or visit our website (bchc.org.au) for more information.

We encourage you to participate in our client surveys and we may invite you to join.

Feel free to tell us what you think about this newsletter at any time. We are looking at other ways we can seek your feedback on this newsletter. Please look out for further information in future editions.

Thank you

For sharing your experiences in our 2025 Annual Client Feedback Survey.

Learn more bchc.org.au/news/client_feedback_2025/

We're proud to support you, and grateful you've trusted BCH with your care. Your feedback tells us you feel more heard, more involved, and more confident managing your health and wellbeing with BCH by your side.

Our goal at BCH is to provide you with trusted, unbiased, clear and evidence-based information. When presenting externally sourced information we will always identify this. BCH has not been paid, given gifts, or offered any other incentives to promote this content. We have not verified the content and make no representations as to its accuracy or completeness. We encourage you to do your own research before acting on any of the information provided.

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BCH in Focus

Seniors Lifestyle Program

Seniors Lifestyle Victoria (SLV) is a program coming soon to Ballarat Community Health

The program is designed to help older Victorians like you stay active, healthy and connected to your community.

When you join the program, a dedicated coordinator will work with you personally — helping you identify your health and lifestyle goals, connecting you with the right services, and checking in with you regularly to make sure everything is going well. We will help guide you through the healthcare system and link you with services and activities that support your wellbeing and independence.

An early support program

Seniors Lifestyle Program is best suited to people who are generally in good health but could use a little extra help to stay active and independent. It works particularly well if you are already receiving — or thinking about accessing — aged care services such as the Commonwealth Home Support Program or Support at Home, and would like some additional help with goal setting, health advice, or finding local activities.

The program is also well suited to those managing a chronic health condition and looking for community-based support to complement the care you already receive from your doctor or specialist.

Through the program, you may be connected with a range of supports, including gentle exercise programs, falls prevention and strength-building activities, nutrition and healthy eating guidance, medication reviews and management advice, and social groups, community activities and peer support programs.

You may be eligible for Seniors Lifestyle Victoria if you are:

- aged 65 or older (or 50 or older and identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander)
- live in your own home or community (not in residential aged care) and
- show changes in health that can affect your daily life, such as: reduced mobility, strength, balance or endurance, losing weight without trying, a fall or an accident-related visit to hospital in the last 12 months.

The great news is, no referral will be required from your doctor. Once we start you can simply contact us to learn more or make an enquiry to join the program. Further information about the program and how to access it will be coming soon to our website and at our sites.



Are you eligible for a Companion Card?

If you have a significant and permanent disability and need a carer to help you attend events, you may be eligible for the Companion Card.

The Companion Card program is designed to support social inclusion for people with disabilities (including older people living with disability) and their carers. It allows you to attend a venue or event with a companion, who then receives a complimentary ticket. Just like a 2-for-1 deal!

Venues and events can include things like:

Tours, arts centres, parks, sporting venues, swimming pools, cinemas, museums, public transport, theatres and cultural events. Think of all the health, social and wellbeing benefits of getting out and about and enjoying activities in your local community!

To be eligible for a companion card, you'll need to demonstrate you have a significant and permanent disability, and a lifelong need for high-level attendant care support to participate in community activities.

Examples of eligibility requirements (these may vary from state to state):

- Significant and severe conditions that cannot be controlled by medication or other treatment/intervention
- Cognitive issues where impairment is significant e.g. advanced dementia
- Progressive neurological disorders e.g. Parkinson's disease, Motor neurone disease
- Complex and permanent conditions affecting mobility, communication, decision-making

For more information on applying for your companion card, please visit the link below or ask your care partner for assistance:

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/companion-card>

Source: Get Smart Aged Care Consultancy



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Helping family and friends with young children support loved ones with dementia

Dementia Australia exists to support people living with dementia and anyone involved in their care. When it comes to families, most of the resources and information is aimed at adult family members. But what about young children? How do we help them to make sense of what is often an invisible and confusing disease?

Thankfully, there are now some lovely, heartfelt and helpful ways to show young children that they are not alone in their feelings relating to an older family member who is living with dementia.

'My Grandmum, My Papu, My Grandpa and Me' is a new animated series produced by Dementia Australia NSW which features three children, Ezekiel, aged six, Bibi, aged nine, and Julia, aged 11, talking about their experiences of their grandparent with dementia, in their own words.

Each of these delightful videos is under 2 minutes in length and is narrated by the children. They use their own words to tell of their experiences of being the grandchild of a very important person in their lives, and talk of both the joy and challenge of their dementia journey.

Is there someone in your life that might benefit from watching these videos? Adults can also learn from hearing the honesty and candour with which young children talk about their observations and feelings.

There is something in these videos for anyone who is supporting a loved one living with dementia.

You can watch and share the video playlist here :

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAwh-BH-4GO5hZ5OrPZY0DMGzztya0s_Eg

Source: Get Smart Aged Care Consultancy



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Planning ahead for an emergency

It's not uncommon these days to hear about an extreme weather event or other emergency unfolding, with people having to quickly respond to protect themselves and/or their property.

Planning what you would do in an emergency can help you stay calm, have a clear plan, and keep yourself, family, animals and property safe.

It's important to think things through and have a plan in place so that when emergencies happen, you are well-prepared and can continue to receive your care and services during a stressful time.

Ballarat Community Health have plans in place so we can continue to offer services and support you as best as we can during an emergency.

Our team may talk to you and your carers/supporters about emergency planning, look at risks you may face and help you find the best supports and resources for you to plan for an emergency.

BCH is here to support you, starting with our Emergency Planning Client information Sheet.

What you'll find:

- What to think about when planning
- Being Prepared
- Coping in an Emergency
- Where can you get help in planning for an emergency?

You can access the information sheet online on our website or at our sites.

bchc.org.au/client-information/emergency-planning



Spotlight on health: Incontinence

Did you know that 1 in 4 Australians experience incontinence? It can vary in severity, ranging from a small leak to a complete loss of bladder or bowel control. It is very common among older adults and can affect both women and men.

Incontinence describes any accidental or involuntary loss of:

- Urine from the bladder – known as urinary incontinence
- Faeces from the bowel – known as faecal incontinence

Once you notice any symptoms, the first step is to seek advice from your GP or a continence health professional. It may help to prepare for your appointment by writing down as much information as possible to describe the problem.

For example:

- how often you (or the person you are caring for) go to the toilet;
- how much urine is passed;
- how often and how much leakage is occurring;
- how regularly bowel motions are passed;
- fluid and diet intake;
- current medications;
- other health problems; and
- ability to perform self-care tasks such as toileting, dressing and getting to and from the toilet.

The Australian Federal and State Governments offer a range of subsidy schemes to help offset the cost of continence products.

You can call the National Continence Helpline for information and advice on 1800 33 00 66 from 8am–8pm (AEST) Monday to Friday. Or you can visit their website <https://www.continence.org.au>

If you have a Support at Home package you may be able to help cover the costs of assessments and aids with the appropriate clinical approvals. Please speak to your BCH Support at Home Care Partner if you wish to explore this further.



Local Events

Below are a few events happening soon that we wanted to share with you.

For further information about events that may be of interest visit

ballarat.vic.gov.au/community/ageing-well-ballarat
seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/

February 21st 10am-1pm

Discover your brand-new Vickers Street Community Hub

Dive into fun activities with your family, meet your neighbours and share your thoughts on what you'd like to see in your Community Hub in the future.

Activities on offer include

- 11am Come and try Tai Chi
- 12.15pm Strength for Seniors

Can't make it on the day, or looking for something closer to where you live?

The City of Ballarat Service Directory is a great source of information about events and activities for Seniors across our city. The Directory can be accessed online at

https://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/Victoria/Ballarat/Ageing_Services?PageNo=1

March 1st

Evening Guided Meditation for Busy Carers

Throughout this gentle series, carers will be guided through a nurturing meditation designed to quieten the mind and create peace, presence and deep stillness.

<https://carergateway.benevolent.org.au/event/basking-in-the-light---meditation-series---online/>

March 11th

#TheBiscuitTin Photo Exhibition & Morning Tea

To celebrate International Womens Day and acknowledge the important contribution older women make in our community, Ballarat Community Health will be holding a morning tea and photography exhibition of #TheBiscuitTin Project at 12 Lilburne Street Lucas. This is a free event, book tickets online.

<https://events.humanitix.com/thebiscuittin-project-photo-exhibition-and-morning-tea>

March 12th

How to care for someone living with dementia

This 4 week program provides a comprehensive overview of how to care for someone living with dementia. Strategies include: communicating effectively, understanding changes in behaviour, creating meaningful activities, and making your home dementia-friendly.

<https://www.dementia.org.au/events/dementia-and-your-caring-role-24>

March 25th

What's available through Carer Gateway?

An overview of the tailored supports and services available to carers, including counselling, planned and emergency respite, access to carer directed packages and in person peer support.

<https://www.carersnsw.org.au/events/carergateway-services-and-support250326>

Need help getting online?

The Good Things Foundation

Can help. Learn more <https://goodthingsaustralia.org/learn/>

#TheBiscuitTin

Photo Exhibition & Morning Tea

Celebrating Older Women



International
Women's Day



Wednesday March 11, 2026



Get Tickets

This is a Free Event

Commencing at 10.15 am
At Ballarat Community Health
12 Lilburne Street Lucas, Vic 3350
bchc.org.au

We're celebrating International Women's Day with an event to acknowledge the important contribution older women make in our community. Join us to hear more about #TheBiscuitTin Project, explore the photo exhibition and the Older Women's Recipes for Respect Ballarat book, and enjoy morning tea with us.

