

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For Council to sign the Global Charter for Compassion, and in so doing to formally acknowledge and support the work of Compassionate Ballarat.

Similar to other global city movements, including Smart Cities, HUL, Creative Cities, and Restorative Justice Cities - Compassionate Cities support the work of Council by bringing global resources and a specific focus to the work of the City.

The specific focus of Compassionate Ballarat (CB) is the development and nurturing of the city's social infrastructure i.e. the shared social arrangements that bind communities together.

The new evidence base of compassion shows that as a motivation, it can harness and strengthen the positive qualities of mind. All human motivations organises our thoughts, feelings and actions in particular ways, and the prosocial motivation of compassion is a key ingredient for personal growth, and one that is at the very core of our humanity.

The global compassion movement is a cooperative effort to restore compassionate thinking and action with chapters at a local level (Compassionate Ballarat) and national (Australian Charter for Compassion) level. Internationally the Charter operates in over 53 countries and 430 compassionate cities. www.charterforcompassion.org

In Australia, the City of Gold Coast signed the Charter for Compassion in September 2017, and since then progress has been made by a number of initiatives including community events like the Compassion Innovation Challenge and Annual Compassion Awards, Events & Media. Currently there a number of other cities going through the process of Charter signing and these include in (Qld) Toowoomba and (NSW) Wollongong.

RATIONALE

Compassionate cities support the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of residents – and they do so on the basis that there is now considerable evidence that when people are caring towards others, and feel cared for by others, their physical and mental health improves. Building compassion within a community helps to create a sense of belonging and motivates people to take responsibility for and care for each other.

IN SIGNING CHARTER THE CITY WILL:

- **Position Ballarat as a global Charter city** – Ballarat will be seen as a demonstration city, whose activities can be highlighted and shared to other Charter cities – e.g. CB is currently working with the City's youth facilitators on a compassion music project – who's process and outcomes will be shared to other charter cities;
- **Be supported in addressing social indicators** – e.g. CB invited to share ideas with the CHCV Mayors and CEOs group on new developments in compassionate design and social infrastructure and how it differs from, and contributes to economic and physical infrastructure;
- **Gain access to the global resources of the Charter** – e.g. recent presentation by Kevin Tuerff, author of the book that was the basis of the Tony Award winning musical *Come From Away*. In his role as a global Compassion Ambassador, Kevin came to Ballarat to give a presentation at the Arts Academy on this musical and on the ripple effect of compassion.
- **Be afforded best practice support and guidance** – e.g. a number of the leading cities such as Louisville, Kentucky have been a Charter city for 10 years, and one

of its successful programs is its Mayor's week of service which has grown from 23,000 to 240,000 volunteer hours given during that one week. CB is running a similar program in October and we were able to recently organise a Zoom call to Louisville to better understand the details of this programs;

- **Be networked into world leading compassion studies** – the research underpinning compassion comes from psychology, neuroscience and emotional intelligence studies – e.g. through a direct link to the global Director of the Charter, FedUni researchers are now involved in a social and emotional capability study of 500 Australian children of a compassion framework for early childhood – as part of a global evaluation being conducted by Yale University;
- **Promote the City's community work through CB's social media networks** – e.g. CB has just launched its website which contains direct links to Ballarat's existing community food, shelter and learning networks.
www.compassionateballarat.com.au

WHAT DOES SIGNING THE CHARTER ENTAIL FOR COUNCIL?

In signing the Charter, the Council formally acknowledges and supports the intention of the global Charter for Compassion and to the work of Compassionate Ballarat. In particular that it will:

- Involve, and continue to involve Compassionate Ballarat in a range of existing city activities and policies – e.g. CB has provided input into the Community Gambling survey, Community safety committee, Social Justice Policy Framework, HUL workshop;
- Consider attending CB forums and events – for example, the Mayor attended a forum on compassionate cities, and as senior officers have attended the CEO forums;
- Council keep communication lines formally open between CB and councillors and officers.

COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT (CB)

Compassionate Ballarat aims to raise awareness and promote compassion across Ballarat by:

- Enabling and resourcing people in Ballarat to see, notice and take compassionate action;
- Engaging the cities leaders in applying and evaluating the application of compassion throughout their organisations;
- Contributing to the global charter outcomes by piloting and testing international compassionate city measures;
- Providing a framework and resources for residents wanting to participate in creating Compassionate Ballarat;
- Creating opportunity for City of Ballarat to participate and contribute to the global work of the Charter for Compassion.

Compassion Ballarat promotes and connects the compassionate work occurring across our city and provides educational resources, organizing tools, and avenues for communication. For the past 14 months - we have been working in areas of public policy, education, health, business, and the wider community.

The work of Compassionate Ballarat is overseen by a Steering Group, and in 2018-19 that group comprised: (Chair) Ben Kelly (BHS); (Members) Superintendent Jenny Wilson

(VicPol); Dr Lynne Reeder (FedUni); Dr Mary Hollick (FedUni); Sam Luxemburg (retired psychologist); and Denise White (marketing). (Secretarial support) Sam Holmes (BHS). To date the following organisations are supporting the work of compassion Ballarat

- Ballarat Health Services, Victorian Police, UFS, Federation University Australia
- Catholic Education Office, Ballarat Art Gallery, Sovereign Hill, Buninyong Community Bank, CFA, St John's Hospital, Ballarat Hospice, Regent Theatre, Loreto College, Big W.

COMPASSION IN ACTION:

Council has partnered with Compassionate Ballarat on a number of initiatives;

- **Placemaking for graffiti prevention – Little Bridge Street Bus Interchange**
In addition to creating social and physical infrastructure which supports a sense of safety and comfort, Council has partnered with Compassionate Ballarat to apply a compassionate lens to the project. This approach based on compassion moves away from traditional and sometimes reactive responses to anti-social and intimidating behaviors like homelessness, mental health, gendered violence and alcohol and drug misuse to one of public education, reflective and compassionate responses
- **Social Policy Framework**
Consultation with Compassion Ballarat resulted in compassion becoming a guiding principle of the Social Policy Framework. This means compassion is embed in, and reported on, in the development and consideration of social policy. The social policy framework will be used to guide policy development across many Council units.
- **Neighbour day**
In 2019 Compassion Ballarat received funding from Community Safety to deliver an activity designed to create social connections in newer suburbs.

Other examples of work Compassion Ballarat has undertaken includes:

- **Compassionate Design Forum (March 2019)**
This forum discussed the intentional creation of nurturing and connected spaces. Compassionate city incorporates design qualities that inspire and invite people to do things that support their well-being, because the quality of their surroundings provokes the desire to do so.
Full report at:
https://charterforcompassion.org/images/menus/communities/pdfs/Comp_Design_Forum_report_19_March.pdf
- **CEO forums (2018-2109)**
Training local CEO's in the application of compassion within their organisations. These forums have included presentations by noted authors and practitioners on compassionate leadership and emotional intelligence skills;
- **Compassion Walk (September 2018)**
Community event promoting and celebrating compassionate actions in Ballarat. Engaging over 200 participants.

Future opportunities

- **Celebrating Compassion –(20-27 October 2019)**
A range of professional development events and activities led by Compassion Ballarat to raise awareness and inspire how in applying the evidence base of compassion the key social issues in health, education, business and the community can be supported.