

## REPORT TO THE BALLARAT COUNCIL – COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT



### COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT

*creating a nurturing city*

Compassionate Ballarat (CB) is both part of the Australian Charter for Compassion, and the Global Charter for Compassion movements. One of the Charters foremost programs is its compassionate cities program. Compassionate cities support the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of residents – and they do so on the basis that there now is considerable evidence that when people are caring towards others, and feel cared for by others, their physical and mental health improves. [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org)

#### SIGNING THE CHARTER

To date over 430 cities around the world have signed the Charter, and by joining them in an official signing, 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 the City's key 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 and of other Charter cities** – e.g. recent presentation by Kevin Teurff, 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 his experience of being stranded at the time of 9/11. This allowed Compassionate Ballarat to reach a wider audience, and for a discussion on compassionate responses in times of societal distress;
- **Be afforded best practice support and guidance** – e.g. a number of the leading cities such as Louisville 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 during that one week. CB is running a similar program in October and we were able to recently organise a Zoom call to Louisville on this programs details;
- **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](http://www.compassionateballarat.com.au)

### **COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT STEERING GROUP**

The work of Compassionate Ballarat is overseen by a Steering Group, and in 2018-19 that group comprised:

- Ben Kelly (BHS) Chair; Superintendent Jenny Wilson (VicPol); Dr Lynne Reeder (FedUni); Dr Mary Hollick (FedUni); Sam Luxemberg (retired psychologist); and Denise White (marketing). Secretarial support - Sam Holmes (BHS).

### **AIMS OF COMPASSIONATE BALLARAT:**

To raise awareness of the science of compassion for application across Ballarat by:

- Enabling and resourcing people in Ballarat to see, notice and take compassionate action;
- Engaging the city's leaders in applying and evaluating the application of compassion science 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;
- Distributing and giving prominence to that participation to inspire others to be involved;
- Creating a virtuous cycle for the City Council to participate and make a significant contribution to the global work of the Charter for Compassion.

### **OVER THE PAST 15 MONTHS THIS STEERING GROUP HAS WORKED ON A NUMBER OF PROJECTS INCLUDING:**

#### **LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- CB organised and delivered four community forums in the areas of 1) Compassionate Leadership, 2) Education, 3) Health, and 4) Compassionate Ballarat;
- Forums attended by over 400 residents to develop a shared understanding of the evidence base of compassion and its application across these sectors;
- Based on outcomes of 4) Compassionate Ballarat forum – relevant issues of concern to the community were identified (see Appendix 1);
- Supported the organisation of the inaugural Compassionate Walk, held at Lake Wendouree, September 2018 - successful in engaging over 200 participants registered or participated in the walk and activities around the lake. Included partnerships with Sunshine Letters, Dementia Australia, Shannon's Bridge and Life's Little Treasures Foundation. Other points of interest around the lake included the Ballarat Society of Artists Inc, EGF Disability Employment, Ballarat Libraries; and the Ballarat East Men's Shed;
- CB was awarded a Council community grant for the 2019 Neighbour day – which involved a letterbox drop to over 200 houses in Ballarat's three newest suburbs – the

drop included a gift of tea bags and biscuits and a card which asked recipients on this Neighbourhood Day to have 'a cuppa' with someone they felt was in need of their most precious commodity - their time.

### COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

- One of the strategic roles of Compassionate Ballarat is to resource senior Ballarat CEOs in the evidence base for compassionate leadership.
- To date CB has organised three compassionate leadership forums in conjunction with FedUni's Business School on the science of human motivations and how they drive behaviours, and on future graduate skills;
- CB distributes relevant research articles and book references to the City's CEOs, e.g. *The Language of Compassion in Acute Mental Health Care*, and *Awakening Compassion at Work, The Design of Compassionate Care*, etc;
- City leaders have participated in CB activities, including statements of support e.g Dale Fraser, CEO, Ballarat Health Services - Compassion is one of the four key values of BHS:
  - *BHS is in the business of healing and care. Individually we provide almost 6 million hours of care each year to our community – but the needs of the community are beyond our capabilities. If, as a compassionate city, we could collectively work with others to have common goals of easing the suffering of those less fortunate in our community, the opportunities afforded would be far greater. Our community is judged by the standards achieved by all those who live in our community, not solely by those more fortunate, healthier, more educated or more powerful. Lifting our collective capacity to support those who are suffering, must be the mark of a community that we would all aspire to contribute to.*

### CITY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

- Meetings with Mayor Macintosh, Cr Coates, Cr Des Hudson, Justine Linley, Pete Appleton, Caroline Amirtharajah, Breanna Doody, Amanda Collins, Craig Donaldson, Nick Locandro;
- Invited to have policy and research input to Heritage and Cultural Landscapes, Gambling Taskforce, Place based Suicide taskforce, City's Community Safety Committee;
- CB also had an input to the city's Social Policy Framework, which recommended that compassion be incorporated as a guiding principle – and as a result the City Council has now formally endorsed compassion as a principle to be embedded within, and reported on in the development of any social justice policy.

### DEVELOP COMPASSION RESOURCES

- With Prof Britt Klein, created a free six week on-line learning program – *CompassionateUs* program within the existing My Digital Health, developed in the School of Health and Life Sciences, FedUni – this on-line program will be offered free to all Ballarat organisations and business wanting to implement compassion training for their staff;
- CB has been invited to run training sessions for senior staff at BHS, St John's, PHN medical practice managers, FedUni staff (compassionate leadership), and FedUni teaching graduates (compassionate education).

## **COMPASSION IMPACT MEASURES**

- Commenced formal engagement with the city's leaders on the application of compassion science across sectors;
- Invited to present on compassion science and international compassion practices to senior staff at St John's hospital and to the Medical practice managers. As a result St John's hospital staff have now established and are using the Compassion Pause in their end of life procedures;
- Compassionate Ballarat is networked and connected to other Australian Charter cities - and a report from Compassionate Gold Coast is as attached. The GC signed the Charter in the lead up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games. (Appendix2)
- Invited to present at community events, including Free food lane way, the National Police Remembrance Day, End of Life forum at Ballarat Cemeteries;
- Following the National Police Remembrance Day presentation – connected with one of the police widows and planned a social infrastructure forum to coincide with her 3000km walk across Victoria to raise awareness of the impact of suicide;
- Following that March 2019 forum, a report was written to both capture the presentations and outcomes. That report has now been shared through the global Charter network;
- Compassion and empathy were noted as important contributors during the launch of the creative cities initiative;
- In Nov 2018, Dr Lynne Reeder (CB/FedUni) presented at a global Charter event in Toronto, presenting on the work of CB, with supporting quotes from Ballarat CEOs.

## **COMPASSIONATE CITIES SUPPORT THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING OF RESIDENTS. IN PARTICULAR, THEY:**

- Offer opportunities to form bonds across their diversity;
- Facilitate formal and informal networks for residents to forge connections with each other and with their environment;
- Create safe spaces for fun-filled and nurturing social activities and experiences;
- Enable residents to see the suffering occurring in their communities, and inspire them to take action to alleviate it;
- Celebrate the individuals and groups who take action at their own risk to heroically respond to the discomfort they see; and
- Resource and provide the compassion skills needed to support their residents in being able to connect with others without feeling overwhelmed themselves

## APPENDIX 1 - COMPASSION BALLARAT FORUM OUTCOMES 27/4/2018

### What are the Issues for Ballarat?

- Institutionalised abuse over generations - impacts
- Need for police and emergency services mental health training
- People with mental health issues feeling genuinely heard
- Improve streetscapes
- Food security
- Poverty pockets
- Soup bus
- Shower bus
- Refugees – acceptance and integration
- Mentoring
- Education of children on being compassionate

### What is your vision for a compassionate Ballarat?

- Safety
- Inclusive community
- More welcoming of migrants & English as a Second Language
- More green space, bike lanes and walking trails = Active living
- A community that is inspiring community members to contribute (e.g. White Night, Spring Fest, Begonia, - free and accessible to all)
- Better transport – bus routes/times
- Food Relief – food bank initiative vvv; local food
- Workplace health and wellbeing
- Engaging youth
- Involves schools, sporting clubs and community organisations, Ballarat Community Health
- Biophillic design of buildings or health centres (i.e. Ballarat Community Health Lucas site
- Compassion pilot sites??
- Building resilience in all parts of the community, particularly younger people
- Access to support systems e.g. transportation to medical assistance
- Greater access to understanding of mental health support
- Integrated approach by vital and other organisations in Ballarat and surrounding regions to create stronger and more accessible networks to build compassion and seek where it needs to be built
- The needs of vulnerable people are met in our city:
  - i. Integrated, coordinated efforts of multiple organisations & communities
  - ii. Collaborative, holistic - with a sense of common humanity

### What would a Compassionate Ballarat look like?

- Compassionate media (look at the way news is portrayed) – focus on positive
- Polyvalent spaces – those that are sensitive to their connect and surroundings
- Open neighbourhoods – knowing neighbours
- Groups that invite people to come out of their homes
- Allowing children to be freer
- Compassionate workplaces/employers – work life balance; psychological safety
- Teaching in schools – from younger age groups
- All are responsible

- Develop 'human' skills
- Encourage working together
- Spaces that encourage well being

#### **How can we capture and share Compassionate Ballarat activities?**

- Online technologies
- Through community organisations such as senior citz, Probus, volunteer groups etc.
- Through schools, capturing whole families; use young people to spread the message
- Through interfaith networks and multicultural society
- Persona stories in the media – start by using CEO statements from today
- Public spaces and noticeboards where people walking are engaged
- Art – use of public spaces, Evolve network
- Neighbourhood houses, medical centres etc.,
- Through our workplaces/networks – a commitment to take the message back
- Spread message that compassion is good for business
- Artistic sculptures with multiple purposes
- Be aware of what they are first – more conversation, engaging younger community, social media advertising (health care organisations)

## APPENDIX 2 - COMPASSIONATE GOLD COAST

Whilst the 2018 Commonwealth Games, held on the Gold Coast in April 2018, were the initial focus for interfaith initiatives towards the City of Gold Coast signing the Charter for Compassion and being designated as a Compassionate City, the specific catalyst was an invitation by the Mayor Tom Tate, following his involvement in an Appreciative Inquiry initiative that engaged students from 12 local high schools and focused on the theme of a 'Compassionate City'.

Compassionate Gold Coast had been established to serve the City of Gold Coast and to facilitate the implementation of compassion initiatives, across the 13 Sectors of the Charter for Compassion's work and, following presentation to the City, which included a recognition of the 'compassionate work' the City was already involved with, and a Report by the Community Services team, the City of Gold Coast signed the Charter for Compassion and were designated as a Compassionate City on 21 September 2017.

As part of that commitment, the City appointed Councilor Glen Tozer, as the 'Compassion Ambassador', and link between the City's Community Services team and Compassionate Gold Coast. This appointment has been invaluable in the partnership between the City and Compassionate Gold Coast, both in terms of facilitation, resourcing and communication.

Following the signing of the Charter, the 2018 Commonwealth Games and with Cr Tozer's support and Compassionate Gold Coast's resourcing solid progress has been made in the following ways:

- 'Compassion Innovation Challenge', with student teams from Bond University, Griffith University & Southern Cross University, and partners, peak body Study Gold Coast and Gold Coast Innovation Hub;
- 'Compassion in Health Care', 'Compassion at the End of Life' and 'Compassion in Mental Health' Symposiums
- Negotiations towards securing Key Sector Partners in the Education, Health and Interfaith Sectors;
- Compassionate Gold Coast's Networking/Facilitation/Presentations across the City, including at Community Events;
- Links with Community Services staff, including Junior Council, and Libraries (Compassionate Listeners pilot);
- Annual Compassion Awards Events & Media
- Development of a city-wide 'Compassionate Listeners' pilot.