

Bigger Hearts, Anne Tudor OAM Fellow of the Elder Leadership Academy

Title: Bigger Hearts
Fellow: Anne Tudor OM
Date: 2017 – present

Context

Bigger Hearts was launched in 2016 to help to build a more dementia-friendly Ballarat. The inspiration for the project came from Anne and her wife, Edie Mayhew, who describe how their responses to living with Edie's younger onset dementia made their hearts bigger. Edie and Anne co-led the project initially, and then Anne continued the project when Edie was no longer able to actively contribute.

Bigger Hearts utilised creative arts and narrative based approaches to documenting the experiences of Ballarat people living with dementia. It built support for a Ballarat Dementia Alliance, which was established in 2017. The Alliance is a key step in the ongoing process of building a dementia friendly Ballarat.

A very special congratulations to Anne for being awarded a Queen's Birthday Honour (Order of Australia Medal)in 2017 ([click here](#)), the Victorian Senior of the Year in 2021 ([click here](#)) and the Ballarat Senior Citizen of the Year in 2017 ([click here](#)) and 2016 Minister for Health Volunteer Award ([click here](#)) and Honorary Membership of Dementia Australia for her work building more dementia friendly communities.

The project was a partnership between Celebrate Ageing, Alzheimer's Australia Vic, City of Ballarat, Australian Unity, The Ballarat North Community House and Carers Respite Service at Ballarat Health Service.

Aims and objectives

To build momentum for a more dementia friendly Ballarat and ensure its success by establishing a Ballarat Local Dementia Alliance.

Activities

1. Engaging community leaders, small and big business representatives, and existing dementia service providers in understanding the need for and supporting a more dementia friendly community
2. Co-delivering information sessions for local businesses and people with dementia
3. Co-hosting 10 meetings at a local café to connect with people with dementia and their families
4. Co-hosting a Bigger Hearts Exchange, where local people got to meet locals living with dementia, film produced to educate the community, [click here](#)
5. Assisting in the launch of the Bigger Hearts campaign, [click here](#)
6. Consulting Ballarat residents about their ideas for a dementia friendly city, through face to face meetings, phone calls and a postcard project – with feedback from over 300 locals
7. Assisting in coordination of a 100 Stories project – documenting stories of people living with dementia in Ballarat, see: [100 stories](#) project
8. Presenting at numerous local health and community services and National and International Conferences
9. Interview with the Royal Commission into Quality and Safety in Aged care: [click here](#)
10. Established a Ballarat Local Dementia Alliance – which led to a Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance, see <https://biggerhearts.com.au/>

Outputs

1. Postcards from 300 Ballarat residents documenting their suggestions for a more dementia friendly Ballarat and a report summarising key themes
2. A poster and postcard series for local Dementia Hubs - or organisations and businesses who want to raise awareness about dementia
3. A [film](#) showing seven local people with dementia in conversation with seven local identities - to raise awareness of the importance of connecting to people living with dementia. Film viewed 900+ times in 5 years
4. Multiple media articles (50+)
5. Multiple presentations (60+)
6. Facilitated 8 gatherings for 60 local residents living with dementia
7. Established a Ballarat Local Dementia Alliance
8. Supported [Small Acts of Love](#) - an international symposium on dementia and love, held in Ballarat

Outcomes

1. Established a Ballarat Local Dementia Alliance which still meets regularly 5 years on and has its own webpage: <https://biggerhearts.com.au/>
2. Powerful anecdotal feedback from that media: Ballarat now has many recognised dementia experts to respond to dementia stories in the news
3. Funding granted in 2018 through PITCH, Wendouree, provided by Ballarat City Council to cover costs of Dementia Friendly Training to members of the community, emergency services and customer service business employees
4. Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance making measurable change in business, hospitals and the community including: Woookarung Regional Park dementia friendly sensory trail. this 1.5km trail is partly funded through a \$15,000 grant from Dementia Australia. People with dementia are integral to the project and actively involved at all stages. Wathaurung advisors provide invaluable assistance. The lead partner is Parks Victoria; others include Friends of Canadian Corridor, DHHS, U3A, Federation University, four adjoining schools, two Primary & two Secondary Colleges.
5. An increase in the number of Ballarat people willing to openly share their dementia diagnosis.

Links:

- Bigger Hearts launch project:
<https://www.museumoflove.com.au/biggerhearts.html>
- Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance: <https://biggerhearts.com.au/>