

# Bigger Hearts - Building a Dementia Friendly Ballarat

## Bigger Hearts Exchange

Thank you for your interest in *Bigger Hearts* – a project building a Dementia Friendly Ballarat. The project is a partnership between The Tea Cosy Project (see: [celebrateageing.com/bigger-hearts](http://celebrateageing.com/bigger-hearts)), Alzheimer's Australia Vic, the City of Ballarat and Australian Unity. This Tool Kit information about participating in the *Bigger Hearts Exchange* that will take place in Ballarat on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

### The importance of Dementia Friendly Communities

A recent report by Alzheimer's Australia identified that with community support people living with dementia can continue doing many of the things they did before they were diagnosed with dementia. However, people with dementia often feel socially isolated and wish they had more opportunities to interact with the community and more opportunities to participate in social activities. To address this need, Alzheimer's Australia has called for the development of dementia friendly communities. The characteristics of dementia friendly communities include promoting:

1. Community awareness and understanding about dementia
2. Access to social activities for people living with dementia
3. Employment opportunities for people living with dementia
4. Support for people with dementia to live at home for as long as possible
5. Affordable and accessible transport for people living with dementia
6. Improved physical environments for people living with dementia.

To achieve these community characteristics, a Local Dementia Alliance is generally established. The Alliance is a group of people who help to coordinate the necessary changes. The *Bigger Hearts Project* aims to build awareness and understanding of dementia in Ballarat – in order to help generate support for a Ballarat Dementia Alliance. The *Bigger Hearts Project* includes a *Bigger Hearts Exchange* as well as activities with local schools and businesses.

### Bigger Hearts Exchange

The *Bigger Hearts Exchange* is calling for people living with dementia to share their experiences and community members to become 'Story Catchers' – or have a one-one-one conversation with a person living with dementia about their experiences of dementia and their experience of a dementia friendly Ballarat.

If you give your permission this exchange will be recorded on film and an audio recording will also be made. The film and a short narrative written up from the audio recording will be used to educate the community about listening to and connecting with people living with dementia. The film has been sponsored by Australian Unity. Story catchers will also be invited to work with the person living with dementia to record their experiences on a blank postcard.

The Exchange aims to capture the essence of the *Bigger Hearts* project. It values the expertise of people living with dementia as well as the importance of listening and human connection. A more detailed outline of the *Exchange* is provided over the page and date.

### Event Details

- Date: Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September
- Time: 10 -11.30
- Location: to be confirmed

### RSVP

If you are interested in participating in this event, please contact the project coordinator:

Catherine Barrett

Phone: 0429 582 237

Email: [catherinebarrett13@gmail.com](mailto:catherinebarrett13@gmail.com)

### What you are being invited to do

If you decide to participate in the *Bigger Hearts Exchange* you will be invited to work in pairs to hear from a person with dementia about their experience of living with dementia and what dementia

friendly means to them. Story Catchers will be invited to summarise the experiences of people living with dementia on a blank postcard provided. The postcard that you make together will then be shared on a project website to help others understand the experiences of people living with dementia and the importance of talking to people with dementia.

The Exchange will take about an hour and a half. There will be project staff present to introduce you to the person you will be working with and to answer any questions or concerns. We will also provide morning tea. Story Catchers are invited to bring a home made or purchased heart to attach to the postcard you make together. This exchange of hearts is a symbol that the Story Catcher has opened their heart to understanding the experiences of people living with dementia.

#### **Summary of key steps to participate**

1. Ring Catherine to check whether all places have been filled
2. Story catchers: make a heart to attach to the postcard (draw, paint, collage, knit, sew, applique – anything)
3. Come to the Exchange at 10am - join us for a cuppa to meet the other participants
4. Listen to Anne and Edie talk about the Bigger Hearts approach
5. Listen to a summary of the keys steps and ask any questions
6. Met the person you will be working with
7. Story catcher works with the person living with dementia:
  - a. Asks the person with dementia what it is like for them to live with dementia
  - b. Asks them what a dementia friendly world feels like for them – what makes their heart bigger
  - c. Checks what you have heard (in a few sentences) and check that the person with dementia is happy with your summary
  - d. Takes the blank postcard and attach the heart
  - e. Writes the summary on the blank postcard
  - f. Decorates the card
8. If you have both agreed to participate in the film – you will then be invited to:
  - a. Have your interaction filmed (and audio recorded)
  - b. Reflect on the content of your conversation
  - c. Story Catchers will also be invited to reflect on the process of listening to a person living with dementia
9. The person with dementia is then invited to give the Story Catcher a heart - symbolizing this human connection that makes hearts bigger
10. Please give your postcard to Catherine Barrett to be uploaded to the project website
11. Please fill out the evaluation to tell us what you thought about the Exchange
12. The project coordinator would also like to contact story catchers shortly after the exchange to record any further reflections. This is an option.

#### **Writing about the Bigger Hearts Exchange**

We think this exchange will capture the essence of the Bigger Hearts project: listen to and connecting with people living with dementia. We want to document this exchange to help other people learn from it. If you agree to participate you will be invited to have your conversation audio recorded. The project coordinator will also follow up story catchers after the event to record reflections on the exchange. The audio recording will be sent to a professional transcribing service and a story from the exchange sent to you for checking. We would like to include this story in a publication that helps others learn more about listening to and connecting with people living with dementia

#### **Filming the Bigger Hearts Exchange**

Andrew Ferguson from [Ferguson Films](#) will be producing a film from the *Exchange*. If you participate you will be asked whether you consent to your Exchange being filmed. Participation in the film is an option – if you do not want to be filmed please let Catherine know. We are producing this film to help educate other community members.

#### **Project patrons**

Project Directors Anne Tudor and Edie Mayhew are Ballarat residents – and the inspiration for the project. Edie lives with younger onset dementia and says that she and her partner Anne have chosen to respond to dementia with bigger hearts. Edie invites us to open our hearts to people with dementia – so we can create dementia friendly communities.

**More information:** please go to our webpage for more information about the project and to join our mailing list for project updates: [celebrateageing.com/bigger-hearts](http://celebrateageing.com/bigger-hearts)