

**Ballarat Community Health's commitment to improving your health**

The mission of Ballarat Community Health is to work in partnership with the community to create opportunities and supportive environments which empower people to develop and maintain optimal health and wellbeing.

Ballarat Community Health provides a wide range of programs and services to the wider Ballarat population, including GPs, nursing, allied health, counselling, youth services, alcohol and other drug services and health promotion programs. Volunteers support many of the programs, both directly and indirectly.

The health sector sees a great deal of innovation in regard to volunteer roles. Volunteers bring talent, skills, time and energy to a sector that is constantly under-resourced and highly in demand. Volunteers help to alleviate pressure on resources, not only by completing particular tasks, but through their injection of positivity and enthusiasm into the workplace.

The research project, which has won the Research and Collaboration Award, aims to answer the question; Volunteering in a healthcare organisation: Does it increase health knowledge and promote health behaviours change? So far, the research has revealed interesting themes and is already offering insight as to what more can be done for volunteers. The goal of the project is to collect evidence that volunteering with health organisations helps people make positive lifestyle and health changes based on information they are exposed to, it could potentially encourage more people to volunteer with health organisations.

For Ballarat Community Health, applying to the State Award gave them the opportunity to share what they were doing with the sector, to create interest in the work and its potential. After four years of planning, literature reviews and interviewing, winning the Research & Collaboration meant recognition and support to further expand the research to include other organisation and their volunteers in the future.

**Congratulations to Ballarat Community Health on their well-deserved Research and Collaboration Award at the 2018 Volunteering Victoria State Awards.**

