



Pictured above: Graeme at the Hospital Kitchen ready to collect Meals for his Wheels.

MEALS ON WHEELS - IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE FOOD

Graeme Watts, like most volunteers, generously donates his time to a number of community activities. He is an active member of the Benalla Lions Club and has almost reached 120 donations with the Red Cross blood bank.

Graeme is a long term volunteer with Meals on Wheels, a service delivered daily to assist clients live independently in their own homes. He is quick to point out that it's "not just about the food". The key benefit lies in the regular interaction between

volunteers and clients who can be socially isolated.

Members of the community can also volunteer with Aged and Disability services as Volunteer drivers to help transport clients to medical appointments or with the weekly Planned Activities groups that encourage older people to increase their social interaction and remain active within the community.

To find out more about volunteering with Community Services, contact the Food and Volunteer Services Team Leader on 5761 2250.

A PATHWAY TO STUDY AND EMPLOYMENT

Renee Scott has just completed Community Services studies with GOTAFE with a strong passion for advocacy, programs and activities for young people. Renee chose to volunteer to complement her studies and gain workplace experience. Over the past 18 months, Renee has been a valued member of the Community Planning Steering Committee, bringing a younger person's perspective to the development of the Benalla Rural City Community Plan 2016-2036. She has found the experience very

worthwhile, learning a range of new skills culminating in the confidence to present at the public launch of the Community Plan.

Renee's advice to young people thinking of volunteering is that "it might seem daunting but I encourage young people to give it a go. The variety of volunteering options is so broad there is bound to be something you are interested in and there is lots of flexibility around how often you volunteer".



Renee Scott has valued the opportunity for personal growth as a member of the Community Planning Steering Committee.

Volunteering: The heart of our Community

The *Volunteer Connection* newsletter is distributed three times a year to volunteers and partner organisations. We invite community groups with volunteer programs to share their news, events and stories.

For further information about *Volunteer Connection*, contact:
Jane Taylor, Volunteer Development Coordinator on **5760 2600** or jane.taylor@benalla.vic.gov.au.

Want to know more about volunteering opportunities?

Visit our website: www.benalla.vic.gov.au
Email: council@benalla.vic.gov.au
Contact the Customer Service Centre on **(03) 5760 2600**



VOLUNTEERING DECEMBER 2016
NEWSLETTER



Volunteering: The heart of our Community

ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTION



Tony McIlroy, Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the first issue of Volunteer Connection – a newsletter dedicated to our wonderful volunteers. Each year on 5 December, the contribution of volunteers is acknowledged across the world on International Volunteer Day. This newsletter is for you, the volunteers who make a difference to the social, environmental and cultural fabric of our community.

Benalla Rural City is fortunate to have more than 450 committed volunteers

participating in varied roles across a broad range of programs and services and it is true to say that without this volunteer contribution, many of these programs could not effectively operate. Our volunteers come from a wide range of age groups, backgrounds and life experiences, each with a story to tell – yet they all have one thing in common – a willingness to give time to help others. I hope you enjoy the individual stories highlighted in this newsletter.

Benalla's key community facilities continue to be the toast of the region and are widely recognised. The hardworking volunteer members led by dedicated committees for groups such as the Friends of the Benalla Art Gallery, Friends of the Benalla Botanical Gardens, Friends of the Benalla Library and Friends of BPACC, make a contribution to the ongoing development of community facilities through advocacy, support and fundraising.

On behalf of the Mayor, Councillors and Staff, I would like to thank you for continuing to make a difference to the social connectedness and wellbeing of our community. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Council staff Coordinators who lead and support the organisation's volunteer program and activities.

On behalf of the Council, I wish you all a happy and restful Christmas and best wishes for 2017.

Tony McIlroy
Chief Executive Officer



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- CEO Welcome
- Volunteer Profiles
- Program Profiles
- Volunteer Vacancies



Volunteer support from our community groups is crucial to the success of the Benalla Festival. Thank you to the SES who assisted with crowd fencing, marshalling for the street parade and the supply of ever popular glowsticks.



VOLUNTEERING AT THE BENALLA ART GALLERY

The Benalla Art Gallery presents a diverse, high quality exhibition program to inspire and engage audiences. Our exhibitions are supported by a dynamic range of public programs of workshops, talks and events designed to provide

a direct experience and deeper understanding of making and thinking about art. With thousands of visitors per year, volunteers are valued members of the Gallery team and play an important role assisting staff with public programs,

special events, research, administration and social functions. If you are interested in supporting the Gallery in any of these ways, please contact the Gallery Administration and Customer Relations Officer on 5760 2619 or via email: gallery@benalla.vic.gov.au

2016 TALLY
...and still counting

| Activity | Volunteers |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Aged and Disability | 90 |
| Arts and Tourism | 152 |
| Events and Festivals | 35 |
| Youth Programs | 44 |
| Gardens and Parks | 32 |
| Facilities | 80 |
| Specialist Committees | 40 |

Did you know? On a weekly basis Community Services volunteers collectively donate over 90 hours of their time to deliver Meals on Wheels, provide Volunteer Transport and assist with Planned Activities Groups – that equates to nearly 5000 hours per year!

GEOFF WALLIS - VOLUNTEERING ALL ROUNDER



Geoff Wallis, volunteering all-rounder, with the L2P vehicle.

Geoff has been an active volunteer in the Benalla community since moving here a decade ago. When asked what volunteering means to him, Geoff is keen to help and support others – “I have had a good life and definitely wanted to give back to the community”. A valued member of the BPACC team since 2006, Geoff is an enthusiastic usher and assists with setup and catering for events and live shows. He has had the opportunity to meet a wide range of people, discovered unexpected talents and learnt from others. Geoff’s role of L2P mentor involves coaching young drivers to achieve their required 120 hours of supervised driving. For one hour or so per week

over a six month period, mentors and young drivers utilise the L2P program vehicle to build confidence and experience. Geoff has enjoyed the supportive and ongoing relationships with the young people he has been matched with. Geoff has supported four young people who have successfully gone on to gain their drivers’ licence. “I really enjoy the contact and connection with younger people. It is an opportunity to share life experience and learn from them”. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, or would like more information about the program, please contact the Benalla Rural City Council L2P Coordinator on 5760 2600.



Above: Long term volunteer Bev Bresanello (pictured with Tourism Coordinator Alison Angus) enjoys helping visitors to our town.

Below: Usher Dale Jackman (pictured right) “likes the variety of contact with patrons and being part of the BPACC team”.



VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

TOURISM IS TAKING OFF IN OUR REGION - BE PART OF THE EXCITEMENT!

Benalla Visitor Information Centre volunteers play an important role as ambassadors for the Benalla area. Tourism is going through an exciting growth period in the region and volunteering presents an excellent opportunity to contribute to the local community and help visitors to make the most of their stay. You do not need to have lived in Benalla for a long time to volunteer. If you enjoy meeting and speaking with people, learning about the region and have time to give then join our enthusiastic, fun and friendly team. Please contact the Tourism Coordinator Alison Angus on 5762 1749 or stop by the Visitor Information Centre in Mair Street

and have a chat about volunteering (open 9am – 5pm). **BPACC - STEP THIS WAY!** Volunteer ushers play a vital front-of-house role for the Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre. As a member of our friendly, fun-filled team of ushers, you will perform integral jobs at BPACC on a show-by-show basis. The show cannot go on without you! Volunteering at BPACC is a great way to stay connected with the performing arts while also meeting people who have an interest in film, drama, comedy, music or dance. For more information about volunteering with BPACC please contact BPACC Coordinator, Ashley Merbach on 5762 5515 or visit at 57 Samaria Road, Benalla (10am-4pm Monday to Friday).

FRIENDS OF THE BENALLA GARDENS: ‘DEAD HEADS’

Established in 1959 with renovations undertaken in 2004, the stunning collection of roses at the Benalla Botanical Gardens continues to be a major drawcard for rose fanciers and tourists. Throughout the flowering season, a dedicated groups of Friends members meet twice a week to lovingly prune (dead head) the spent blooms from the estimated 1000 rose specimens planted in the Gardens. So with tongue firmly in cheek, these hard-working members have given themselves the not-so-subtle title of the “Dead Heads”. The key skills required to be a Dead Head include patience, practice with

secateurs and a good sense of humour. What keeps them coming back year after year? Barbara is motivated by a “love of roses”; Tricia sees it as a great way to “give back to community” and Betty appreciates “a sense of achievement and how beautiful it is to work amongst the roses”. This dedicated group help keep the garden blooming and weed free. If you have what it takes to join the Dead Heads or want to know more about the activities of the Friends of the Benalla Botanical Gardens contact: friendsofbenallagardens@gmail.com or tel: 5762 3210.



Pictured above: Barbara Tatterson, Tricia Potter and Betty Lindsay – coming up roses.



Volunteer Bev Thornell says working in the shop has led to stimulating conversations with customers.

REDB4 BOOKSHOP - WORTH A LOOK

Redb4 Bookshop, a fundraising initiative of The Friends of the Benalla Library, was established in 2013. All profits made are used to enhance Benalla’s beautiful new Learning Centre. The bookshop is operated by a team of 52 volunteers.

Why not drop in to 111 Bridge Street and check out the interesting range of quality second hand books on offer and pick up a bargain. Redb4 Bookshop is open Monday to Friday 10am-4pm and Saturday 9:30am-12:30pm.

Want to know more about volunteering opportunities?

Visit our website: www.benalla.vic.gov.au

Email: council@benalla.vic.gov.au

Contact the Customer Service Centre on (03) 5760 2600

