



**Dhelkaya  
Health**

# The Volunteer

July 2025



## Dhelkaya Health Volunteer Newsletter

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## UPDATE FROM THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

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Dear Dhelkaya Health Volunteers

Welcome to the July edition of the volunteer newsletter.

### Volunteer Engagement Survey

In the next few weeks, we will send you an email asking you to complete our annual Volunteer Engagement Survey. The purpose of this survey is to gain an understanding about your experiences as a volunteer. Your comments will be kept confidential and will be used to improve the Volunteer Program. Please let me know if you would prefer a paper-based copy and I will put one in the post to you.

### National Volunteer Week

Volunteering Australia, during National Volunteer Week shared Victoria's State of Volunteering Report 2025, providing the latest insights into volunteering across the state.

The report is a testament to the enduring spirit and contribution of Victoria's volunteers. In every suburb, town and region, volunteers give their time, skills and care to build stronger communities and advance causes that matter deeply to all of us.

**Volunteering is transforming.** The report offers a clearer picture of how, where, and why Victorians volunteer – and what must change to support them into the future.

#### KEY FINDINGS:

- **3.3 million Victorians volunteer in their community.**
- This represents **58.9% of the Victorian population** aged 15+ years.

- Collectively, Victorian volunteers contribute over 732 million hours.
- **69.4% of young Victorians** (15-24 years old) volunteer; the highest rate of any age group.

### Top 5 volunteering motivations

62.0% – To help others.

48.7% – Because I can.

37.7% – To use my skills and expertise.

33.0% – To give back to those who have helped me.

23.9% – To support or learn more about a cause.

[CLICK Here TO DOWNLOAD REPORT](#)

All the best,

Edwina



## WHAT'S COMING UP – EVENTS

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### **Volunteer Meet and Greet – Afternoon Tea**

– Visit to Safe Space, then onto Saffs Café for coffee/tea

Thursday 3 July at 1.30pm – 3.00pm.

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### **Gardening working bee at Ellery House**

Saturday 19th July at 9.30am – 12.00noon. The focus will be pruning and general weeding.

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### **L2P Information Session – Find out more about this volunteering role.**

#### **Afternoon Tea provided**

Tuesday 26th August at 2.00pm – Dhelkaya Health Function Room.

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### **Volunteer LearnLab – Topic: Find out more about Dementia.**

See below for more information.

Thursday 11th September at 10.30am – 11.30am – Dhelkaya Health Auditorium.

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### **Volunteer Meet and Greet – Morning Tea**

Tuesday 21 October at 10.30am – 12.00noon.

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### **International Volunteers Day Celebrations**

Friday 5th December at 10.30am – 12.00noon

Please RSVP to let us know you are coming along by emailing [VService@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:VService@castlemainehealth.org.au)



## Current Volunteer Positions Available

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Dhelkaya Health offers many different volunteering programs, we really do have something for everyone. Tell your friends about the variety of roles we have on offer.

Position descriptions are available for the following roles, and we're happy to share them with whoever expresses an interest.

- Patient Transport Drivers
- L2P Driver Mentors
- Companion Walker Volunteers
- Maldon Hospital Trishaw Pilots
- Patient Experience Survey

## Available Volunteer Roles

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### Patient Transport Drivers

Utilising Dhelkaya Health Patient Transport vehicles, provide eligible Mt Alexander Shire community members and residents of Dhelkaya Health Aged Care Facilities with a safe, reliable transport service to health appointments. Currently operating Tuesday – Thursday.

- Completion of Dhelkaya Health vehicle orientation training.
- Collect patients from designated locations.
- Ensure the safety and security of the vehicle at all times whilst in charge of the vehicle.
- Abide by all traffic laws and maintain safe driving practices

### L2P Driver Mentors

The TAC L2P program assists learner drivers under 21 years of age who don't have access to a supervising driver or vehicle to gain the 120 hours of driving experience required to apply for a probationary licence.

Dhelkaya Health runs this program locally, and is hosting an L2P information session for those who are thinking about volunteering. 26 August at 2.00pm in the Function Room.

Enjoy a complimentary afternoon tea while you learn more about this valuable volunteering role. To register please call Lisa on 0429 798 707 or [Edwina.ecoller@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:Edwina.ecoller@castlemainehealth.org.au).

### Patient Experience Survey

Support the hospital in obtaining feedback from patients and their families regarding the experience that they have whilst attending Dhelkaya Health.

Volunteers will be required to collect feedback from patients using an ipad visiting wards and departments across the hospital.



## Available Volunteer Roles

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### Companion Walking Volunteer

Companion Walking Volunteers provide one to one gentle walking with individuals residing in Mount Alexander Shire who request companion walking.

Volunteers are required to meet the individual requesting companion walking at a pre-determined location. Have the ability to relate to people from diverse backgrounds. Attend first Aid training.



### Maldon Trishaw Pilot

Join the trishaw program and take aged care residents living at Maldon Hospital for bike excursions along the rail trail.

The trishaw program at Dhelkaya Health is run in conjunction with Cycling without Age (Castlemaine) and training will be provided.

The trishaw program is scheduled to take residents out every Thursday afternoon.



For further information about any of these volunteer roles contact:  
[ecoller@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:ecoller@castlemainehealth.org.au)





## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

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### Rebecca Buchanan – Residential Aged Care Wellbeing Coordinator

The footy banter, cuppas, small chats, smiles, and knowing nods are all deeply appreciated. We're incredibly grateful for the patience and dedication of our Trishaw pilots, and for the hard work that's gone into getting the Trishaw back up and running.



Trishaw Pilot Volunteer – Michael



Residential Aged Care Volunteer – Gail

There's nothing quite like the crisp air in our lungs and watching the gardens change with the season – a joy and a gift we don't take for granted.

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### Step into connection: Become a companion walking volunteer

30 June 2025

Dhelkaya Health's **Companion Walking program** is helping people across Mount Alexander Shire improve their mental health and wellbeing through gentle, one-on-one walks with a supportive volunteer.

Wahibe, a participant since the program began during the COVID-19 lockdowns, shared how Companion Walking has made a lasting impact on her life.

"I knew I needed exercise but kept putting it off. Since then, I was diagnosed with ADHD, and have

found out that people with this diagnosis need someone to keep us on track," Wahibe said.

"It helps me to get out of the house and exercise for at least that hour each week. I know it is not enough, but it's better than nothing. It's also provided companionship – my volunteer and I have become friends and we see each other outside of companion walking. When I moved to this area, I wanted to get to know people, and this program has given me valuable connections in the community."



## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

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A recent evaluation of the program conducted by Dhelkaya Health revealed its powerful impact: 100% of participants strongly agree that Companion Walking supports or improves their mental health and wellbeing.

Now, Dhelkaya Health is seeking new Companion Walking Volunteers.

Volunteers walk one-on-one with a participant at a pre-arranged time and location and provide companionship and conversation. The walks are gentle and paced to suit both people. This role is

ideal for people who are friendly, empathetic, and able to relate to others from diverse backgrounds.

First Aid training is provided, and ongoing support is available from Dhelkaya Health.

Whether you're passionate about health, helping others, or simply enjoy walking and connecting with people, this is a meaningful way to give back to your community.

Interested in volunteering? Call Dhelkaya Health's Volunteer Office on 5471 3566



Companion Volunteer Liz with participant Wahibe





# VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

## Walking Groups



The Monthly Walking Tours has recently been evaluated, as part of a state-wide Social Inclusion Measurement Project.

Standardised questions were given out to regular participants at a walking tour and we found that increasing exercise is not the only benefit of this program!

- 100% of respondents said that it increased their mental health and wellbeing
- 100% of respondents said it increased their sense of belonging
- 60% said that it increased their social connections
- 58% felt more involved in social activities as a result of this program.

We will be evaluating a lot of our other volunteer led programs soon.



### Nordic Walking

**Term 3 2025 21 July — 19 September**  
COME AND JOIN THIS FUN AND SOCIAL GROUP

**CASTLEMAINE - NEW PARTICIPANTS**  
Botanical Gardens  
(picnic shelter / playground car park)  
Mondays 2pm

**HARCOURT - NEW PARTICIPANTS**  
Meet opposite Harcourt CFA  
Tuesdays 4pm

**CASTLEMAINE - CONTINUING WALKERS**  
Botanical Gardens  
(picnic shelter / playground car park)  
Fridays 9.30am

Weekly groups during the Victorian school term. Nordic Poles are available for participants to use during sessions. No cost but bookings essential as spaces are limited. For more information or to book call 5479 1000  
Groups will not happen if the temperature is 30 degrees or above



### Walking Tour: Nuggetty

**THURSDAY, 31 JULY 2025**

Enjoy magnificent views to Bradford Hills, pass dramatic granite boulders and the spring that 'back in the day' sustained family life against the odds. Significant bush reserves hide a mining heritage that includes the richest gold mine in the district.

To get to the meeting location, approach via Nuggetty Road then turn up Browns Road. We will assemble approximately 100m up where the road turns right to follow the range.

Time: 10.30am - 11.30am  
Guide: Ray Stevenson  
More information: Call 5479 1000





## Program Lead Profile

Sherene Clow

LGBTIQA+ Wellbeing Officer



Here is Sherene with her work that she entered into the Bent Brushes Exhibition 2025

*Hello, my name is Sherene Clow and I am the LGBTIQA+ Wellbeing Officer at Dhelkaya Health. I lead several programs that utilise volunteers and I am grateful to each of those who donate their time to make these programs work so seamlessly. Since 2020, when I first stepped into my role, creating meaningful, safe, and welcoming spaces for our LGBTIQA+ community has been at the heart of what we do. Our volunteer-led social groups are small but mighty—and we're ready to grow!*

### Rainbow Steps Walking Group

*Every Tuesday at 9:30am, you'll find us (and a few furry companions) taking a gentle stroll through the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens. The pace is slow, the conversation easy, and the company heartening. Long-time volunteer Cathy greets walkers with a warm smile, rain or shine, and helps set the tone for a restorative midweek moment. Everyone's welcome to join—dogs included!*

### Bent Brushes Art Collective

*Founded in 2021, Bent Brushes offers a creative sanctuary each Saturday at Castlemaine Community House. Whether you're a practiced artist or just want a safe, inclusive space to try something new, Bent Brushes is the place to be. Volunteer Stephen holds the space each week, and each year, the group proudly hosts an exhibition at the Castlemaine Market Building—welcoming works from artists across our LGBTIQA+ community.*

### Silver Rainbow Social Club

*Twice a month, our over-50s group gathers for connection, laughter, and a good cuppa. With support from Mount Alexander Shire Council, we alternate between the Ray Bradfield Room and Aitken's Corner Café. It's relaxed, welcoming, and full of rich conversation. As a facilitator, it's a personal highlight of my role—and we're always happy to see new faces. Meets 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at 10.30am*

### Volunteer With Us—Help Make These Spaces Possible

*These groups thrive because of the care and time offered by our volunteers. If you're someone who values connection and wants to help create inclusive community spaces, we'd love to hear from you. Whether you're keen to support an existing group or start something new—like gardening, photography, birdwatching or bushwalking—we're excited by your ideas and your energy.*

*Let's grow this network together—step by step, brushstroke by brushstroke, and cuppa by cuppa.*

*For more information or to express interest in volunteering, please get in touch—we'd love to welcome you aboard. [SCLow@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:SCLow@castlemainehealth.org.au)*





### Welcome to our new volunteers

Pam Oakley – Biography Program

Les Baxter – Trishaw Program

Fairlie McNaughton – Residential Age Care Activities

### One of our own – Volunteer Ray Pattle

MIDLAND EXPRESS

News

Tuesday, June 10, 2025-5

# OAM honour for Ray

Lisa Dennis

Guildford Grumpies 'legend' Ray Pattle has been recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to the community of Guildford.

The 82-year-old said he was humbled to receive the award and thanked the Grumpies and fellow community members who had put his name forward for the honour.

"I was in two minds whether to accept it at first. I feel like there are lots of incredible volunteers working behind the scenes to make things happen in our little community. But then I thought about how proud my late wife Lynne Elaine would be and our children and I chose to accept it," he said.

Ray and Lynne purchased their block in the tiny hamlet 30 years ago and settled there 25 years ago after building their dream home.

"I recall the real estate agent at the time didn't exactly sell us on Guildford stating 'all drains lead to Guildford and that's where the rubbish ends up' but we weren't deterred. They couldn't have been more wrong. Our experience here has been nothing but sheer joy," Ray said.

"As a former accountant at an aircraft factory, of course I was soon approached to take on a treasurer's role at one of the local organisations and it just rolled on from there. Being a small village, I soon found myself on a raft of committees."

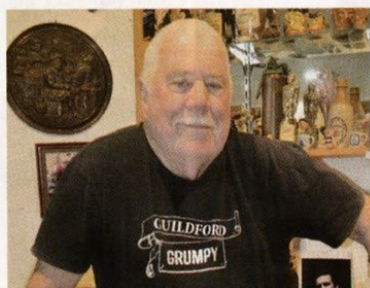
In fact, the *Express* noted Ray's pile of laptops during our visit!

The long list of groups he has supported over the years include: Guildford Fire Brigade, Guildford Hall Committee, Guildford History Group, John Powell Reserve Committee, Guildford Banjo Jamboree, Save Our Store' campaign

– Guildford Co-op, Guildford Primary School re-opening support group, and the Guildford Anzac Day Dawn Commemoration Service organising group just to name a few.

Ray was a founding member of the Guildford Grumpies Social Club, which later evolved into a car club and became an official branch of the Men's Shed movement.

"We started out as 10 members enjoying a beer at the Guildford Hotel and have expanded to have our own club-



Guildford's newest OAM Ray Pattle was humbled to receive the honour.

house and 150 plus members today," Ray said.

"We are proud supporters of the former Apex Club of Castlemaine's annual Santa Run helping fund them to reach all the outlying villages, and more recently we have assisted with uniforms and fees for the newly reopened Guildford Primary School campus."

Ray is also passionate about history and is a member of the Guildford Cemetery Trust and has co-authored three books on local histories with noted historian Ken James including: *Guildford Cemetery: Commemorating 150 Years Since the First Burial 1871- 2021*, *A History of Guildford*, and *A History of Tarlita*.

"A lot of people wouldn't even know where the cemetery is and ask me why would you want to volunteer for that! But it's a beautiful cemetery that holds so much history and it's fascinating," he said.

He was also awarded a 'National Emergency Medal' for the role he played with the Guildford CFA when they offered ground support the day after the tragic 2009 Black Saturday fires in which 173 people lost their lives.

In addition to his contribution to the Guildford community Ray has also volunteered with the Castlemaine Historical Society Inc and is currently a volunteer patient transport driver at Dhelkaya Health.

Ray has also had a long-time involvement with the CFA, and he and late wife Lynne were also foster carers in late 70s and early 80s taking in babies and children who needed a loving home.

"We mostly cared for babies whose mum had made the difficult decision to give them up for adoption. They had a month in which they could change their minds and we cared for the babies in the interim so prospective foster parents wouldn't get attached if the birth mother had a change of heart. We cared for about 25 babies and children. Fortunately, these days there are a lot more supports available for young women in that position," he said.

Ray is known as 'The Legend' among the Grumpies as he has faced just about every test and trial one can face.

"In 2010 we nearly lost our son Darrus to pneumococcal disease but fortunately he pulled through. He lost a leg and had to learn to walk again. However, that wasn't good enough so he has since learnt to run with the assistance of a former Olympian.

"I lost my beautiful wife Lynne Elaine after a three-year battle with pancreatic cancer in 2020 during the height of the covid pandemic. We lost three Guildford residents within a fortnight. It was a terrible period but I am so grateful for the support I have received from my community.

"And just last year my daughter Sloane had to be medevaced home to Australia from Cambodia after an accident that saw her seriously injured. But fortunately she made a full recovery.

"People ask me why I volunteer as a patient transport driver? This is my way of giving back to the Australian medical system that has given my family so much," he said.

"I'd really encourage anyone who has thought about volunteering to give it a go. Most of these little groups only meet for an hour four times a year. They are all lovely people and it makes it so easy to volunteer. It is incredibly rewarding and not only enriches the community but your own life. It has been nothing but a joy," he said.





## VOLUNTEER NEWS

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### Ellery House Working Bee

Many thanks to the wonderful volunteers who assisted with the gardening at Ellery House.

In preparation for the new plants donated by the Castlemaine Roses and Gardening Club for Ellery House, two gardening working bees were held in April and May.

We were very grateful to our volunteers who participated in these events. Weeds were removed, bushes cut back, Gazania's pulled out and a general clean-up was achieved. Amazing how many hands make light work!

If you are interested in joining us as we will be holding regular working bees, please contact [ecoller@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:ecoller@castlemainehealth.org.au)





## NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK CELEBRATIONS – THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

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Dhelkaya Health hosted a special Volunteer Week High Tea on 20 May to celebrate the incredible work of our volunteers.

Transforming the Auditorium with paper lanterns, decorations, flowers, candles together with delicious sandwiches and petit fours finished off with cups of tea and coffee and a goodie bag.











- “ Congratulations to you Edwina & all the wonderful helpers, who made our special High Tea a memorable event!! Everyone went that extra mile and our gift was lovely, thoughtful and very much appreciated. Thank you all once again”.
- “ I would also like to thank you and all involved in putting on the high tea. It was really lovely. (The gift bag was greatly appreciated too!)”
- “ Ever so much thanks for my goodie bag!! Love everything in it. Great mug also. Very thoughtful and extremely well planned out!”





## Volunteers in our Social Support Group assisting with Mindful flower arranging

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## Volunteer LearnLab: Feeding your curiosity

### More information about Dementia

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In conjunction with Dementia Action Week – This year's theme is: 'Nobody can do it alone.'

On the **11th September at 10.30am at Dhelkaya Health**, Brenda Shingles, a volunteer, will be sharing her experience as a Dementia friend with Dementia Australia.

The session will be 40minutes, and will include a video from Dementia Australia with people living

with Dementia talking about what they feel when in the community and a discussion afterwards.

*"Together, we can all work to create a dementia-friendly community so that everyone feels valued and remains connected".*

– John Living with Dementia.



# Dementia Action Week

15-21 SEPTEMBER 2025

## Nobody can do it alone

An initiative of

 **Dementia Australia®**



## KEEP IN TOUCH

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This is your newsletter, we would love your input with feedback, experiences and stories you might like included.

Email us at [VService@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:VService@castlemainehealth.org.au)

Phone: Volunteer Office: 03 5471 3566 | Pastoral Care: 03 5471 3542



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