

2026 **POSITIVE AGEING & WELLBEING** AWARDS

AWARDS BOOKLET

AWARDS SPONSOR

McArthur
Best people fit. Making a difference.

2026 POSITIVE AGEING & WELLBEING AWARDS

ABOUT THE AWARDS

Formerly known as the Active Ageing & Wellbeing Awards, LGPro's Positive Ageing & Wellbeing Awards have been rebadged to reflect Local Government's refocus from service delivery to capacity building in promoting health and wellbeing as they strive for an age-friendly society.

These awards recognise the individuals and teams working in Victorian Local Government that have made significant contributions to positive ageing and wellbeing, with councils nominating in the following two categories:

- **Outstanding Program or Project: Grant-Based (Externally Funded)**
- **Outstanding Program or Project: Non-Grant (Council Funded)**

Proudly supported by McArthur

McArthur

Best people fit. Making a difference.

WINNER & HIGH COMMENDATION

**Outstanding Program or Project:
Grant-Based (Externally Funded)**

WINNER

Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Aged Care Volunteer Visiting Scheme

HIGH COMMENDATION

Warrnambool City Council
*The Warrnambool Seniors Festival – Events inclusive
of residents from priority groups*

WINNER



Macedon Ranges Shire Council *Aged Care Volunteer Visiting Scheme*

Funded primarily by the Federal Government and delivered by Macedon Ranges, the Aged Care Volunteer Visiting Scheme connects trained volunteers with older people living in aged care or at home who may be experiencing loneliness or social isolation. To support the emotional wellbeing, cultural connection, and community engagement of older people, particularly those more vulnerable from a diversity of backgrounds, volunteers visit them regularly, offering companionship and conversation.

The program aims to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing, so far having supported more than 120 older residents since 2022. The program contributes to the council's goal of improving physical and mental wellbeing across the community, with many participants so far reporting feeling happier, more confident, and less isolated. Some who previously remained in their rooms have begun going outdoors and taking part in activities again. Through regular visits, participants have formed meaningful friendships with volunteers, strengthening their sense of connection and belonging within the community.

While leveraging meaningful partnerships, the council oversees all aspects of delivery, including volunteer recruitment and training, participant matching, and collaboration with aged care services. Partnerships include Bupa, Respect R.M. Begg, ARCARE, Romsey Community Aged Care, and Nexia Aged Care, along with providers supporting people in their homes. Given the region's dispersed geography, the council has played a key role in coordinating access and ensuring the program reaches communities across multiple towns.

The program initially faced challenges, including building trust with aged care providers and recruiting volunteers through online channels. In response though, the team shifted to local engagement, sharing stories through newspapers, social media, and community events. Funded at approximately \$177,300 annually and with additional council support, the program is delivered nimbly by part-time staff and continues to achieve strong outcomes, with participants and volunteers alike reporting improvements to their mental health and overall wellbeing through these regular, meaningful social connections.

HIGH COMMENDATION



Warrnambool City Council

The Warrnambool Seniors Festival – Events inclusive of residents from priority groups

The Warrnambool Seniors Festival is an annual celebration delivered each October to promote positive ageing and social connection. It is run in partnership with local clubs, community groups, not-for-profit organisations and a range of Warrnambool's services. An injection of Victorian Government funding in 2024 and 2025 facilitated an expansion that brought with it greater inclusion of priority groups including First Nations Elders, LGBTI+ seniors, people living with disability, vulnerable men, and multicultural communities through a diverse range of free or low-cost activities.

The festival focuses on helping older people feel connected, included, and welcomed. Across the last two years, 59 events with this goal in mind attracted more than 2,400 participants. Attendance from priority groups has increased significantly since the new funding and expansion, with many of these participants engaging with the festival for the first time thanks to these new inclusions. Participants commonly reported feeling happier, more confident, and more socially connected after attending, reflecting the festival's strong impact on wellbeing and its role in reducing social isolation.

Partnerships were central to the festival's success. The council worked closely with organisations as diverse as the Gunditjmarra Aboriginal Co-operative, Switchboard Pride in Ageing, the Warrnambool Historic Vehicle Club, and the Warrnambool Multicultural Association among many more. These collaborations helped ensure activities were safe, welcoming, and culturally appropriate, enabling people from diverse backgrounds and abilities to participate meaningfully and feel represented within the program.

Early challenges included reaching priority groups who had not previously engaged and building trust with community organisations – work that demanded time and a conscious effort to carve out capacity. Through co-design and sustained relationship-building though, the festival became more inclusive and accessible. Funded by \$10,000 grants in both 2024 and 2025 alongside the council's own funding, as well as in kind support from various partnerships, the program has continued to sustainably grow. With strong community demand, participants have expressed a clear intention to return, reinforcing the festival's lasting value.

WINNER, HIGH COMMENDATION & FINALIST

Outstanding Program or Project: Non-Grant (Council Funded)

WINNER

Nillumbik Shire Council
Together Through Loss

HIGH COMMENDATION

Whitehorse City Council
Whitehorse One Voice – Choir Project

FINALIST

Monash City Council
Poetic Portraits

WINNER



Nillumbik Shire Council *Together Through Loss*

Together Through Loss has a simple but powerful premise: supporting older community members experiencing grief after losing a loved one.

The six-week mental health support program for people over 65 runs in small groups of six to eight participants who meet weekly for one-hour sessions led by a psychologist. Each session explores topics related to grief, while providing space for participants to share experiences, ask questions, and support one another. The program offers a safe, supportive environment that helps older people feel less alone.

The program aims to reduce loneliness and improve mental wellbeing by fostering connection during a difficult time. Outcomes over the past two years have been unanimously positive. In 2024, all participants reported that they had learnt strategies to manage grief and said they felt understood and supported. Many found it particularly helpful to connect with others experiencing similar loss, and all participants indicated they would recommend the program to others.

Developed by Nillumbik's Ageing Well team in response to increasing isolation among older people following bereavement, the program is delivered in partnership with United Minds, a local not-for-profit psychology organisation. A psychologist co-facilitates each session, providing professional guidance on grief, emotions, and coping strategies. This partnership helps ensure participants feel safe, comfortable, and well-supported throughout the program.

Early challenges the teams overcame included session time constraints and ensuring the right group size, leading to pragmatic adjustments in participant numbers. Screening processes were also strengthened to ensure suitability. When participants expressed a need for continued connection, the team introduced ongoing monthly catchups. The program has since been delivering strong community outcomes, with participants reporting reduced loneliness, lasting friendships, and improved wellbeing, demonstrating its value as an effective and sustainable support initiative.

HIGH COMMENDATION



Whitehorse City Council *Whitehorse One Voice – Choir Project*

Whitehorse One Voice was an intergenerational choir project with one iconic soundtrack, delivered as part of the Whitehorse Seniors Festival. Developed in partnership with Creativity Australia, brought together older community members, schools, community choirs, and residents to perform John Farnham's "You're the Voice." More than 35 groups and 600 individuals registered, culminating in 300 voices performing live together at Box Hill Town Hall, strengthening connection, reducing isolation, and improving wellbeing through a shared love of music.

The project aimed to improve mental health in older residents, increase social connection for culturally and linguistically diverse community members, and engage students to foster intergenerational connection. Flexible participation options – from online and in-person to participating from school – made this innovative festival of music accessible to a wide range of people. The community was involved in choosing the song and project name, encouraging a strong sense of ownership. Over seven months, participants took part in rehearsals, digital activities, and performances, with many reporting increased confidence, happiness, and connection.

The program was delivered by Whitehorse's Positive Ageing Team in partnership with Creativity Australia and a range of community groups, schools, and volunteers. Weekly video tutorials supported participants to learn the song, regardless of musical experience or language ability. A combination of in-person and online engagement enabled diverse participation, including older residents, multicultural communities, students, and families, creating a broad and inclusive community experience that stretched well beyond the main performance.

Challenges included coordinating large and diverse groups, accommodating different skill levels, and ensuring accessibility. Some multicultural participants found English lyrics difficult, for example, so alternative approaches such as focusing on melody or incorporating movement were used. While the hybrid format presented technical challenges, strong planning and collaboration ensured its success. The project delivered positive outcomes, with participants forming friendships, gaining confidence, and reporting a strong sense of belonging.

FINALIST



Monash City Council *Poetic Portraits*

Poetic Portraits was a creative, intergenerational storytelling project that brought younger and older people together through poetry and photography. Delivered in partnership with RMIT University, participants created poems and portraits exploring identity, ageing, culture, and community. The multiplatform project saw their work shared through libraries, exhibitions, outdoor displays, an anthology, and audio recordings, helping older people tell their stories, reduce social isolation, and strengthen connection across the community.

The project aimed to celebrate positive ageing, build intergenerational relationships, and support inclusion across diverse communities. It involved a rich cross-section of the community, with 20 participants aged 25 to 94 from varied cultural and language backgrounds. Many participants reported increased confidence, pride, and connection after sharing their work publicly. With a lasting legacy, some have continued to meet beyond the project, forming their own writers' group and strengthening ongoing social ties and creative engagement.

A joint effort, Poetic Portraits was delivered by the Monash Age Well team alongside RMIT University, supported by local writers, libraries, arts teams, and community partners. Workshops were designed to be simple, inclusive, and welcoming, supporting those with limited experience or English language skills. Redefining traditional arts participation, the project integrated poetry, portraiture, audio storytelling, and multi-site exhibitions. To increase accessibility, exhibitions extended beyond galleries into libraries, cafes, and outdoor spaces, while audio recordings ensured participation for people with low vision or literacy barriers.

The project delivered strong outcomes for participants and the wider community. Older adults reported feeling less lonely and more included, while younger and older people alike developed greater mutual understanding through shared storytelling. Outdoor exhibitions reached more than 150,000 people, with further engagement online and in libraries. The project demonstrated an innovative approach to creative ageing, showcasing older people as active, valued contributors, and offering a model that can be adapted to other communities.

