

## Social Prescribing Initiatives: Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance Ballarat

**Service:** Green Scripts - Health benefits of being in nature

**Main Component:** The “Green Scripts” dementia-friendly community project is a social prescribing project aiming to link people impacted by dementia with the established and emerging dementia-inclusive community activities in Ballarat. Social prescribing has been shown to reduce health inequities associated with isolation, self-esteem and social connectedness, and to improve personal well-being. The centrepiece for the practical application of “Green Scripts” is the Dementia Sensory and Forest Trail located in the Woookarung Regional Park in Ballarat, a project which was a recipient of an earlier Dementia Friendly Community grant. Recent studies have shown the efficacy of being in nature in slowing down cognitive and mental decline, providing opportunities for social interaction and reducing the risk of falls by improving strength and balance with physical activity. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) recommends that social prescribing be incorporated into routine healthcare in Australia. It is reported by the RACGP that 70% of GPs believe referring patients to community activities, groups or services helps to improve health outcomes, but most do not have links with such services. “Green Scripts” is a freely available online resource illustrating opportunities to utilise the Trail for different health benefits. It will be promoted to primary care practitioners as an opportunity to address physical, mental health and social care needs of people living with dementia and their support person(s). “Green Scripts” is a practical and healthy demonstration of a dementia friendly community in action.

**Who is this for?** People living with dementia, all community members

**Organisations-involved:** Bigger Hearts Dementia Alliance Ballarat

**Link:** <https://greenscripts.cerdi.edu.au>

**Keywords:** nature, health, dementia, inclusive communities, social prescribing, primary care

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