

Over 55s Connect Facebook



Project overview

Over 55s Connect Facebook page is a project of the Macedon Ranges Shire Council to engage and connect with older residents via social media.

Project description

Over 55s Connect Facebook page provides a forum for community groups to promote their activities, and reach an audience who might not otherwise find out about them.

The project aimed to improve the way older people in the Macedon Ranges Shire access information about services, support, programs, activities and events.

It also sought to create a sense of community for and among older people in the region.

Project model

- Lack of knowledge of what is available was identified as a barrier to older residents participating in activities.
- Community consultation findings identified the need for an online centralised information system for community members to access to find out about services, support, programs, activities and events for older people locally to be developed.
- A project implementation and evaluation plan was developed.
- An executive briefing was delivered to ensure the Over 55s Connect Facebook page was endorsed by the council, and so that a part-time staff member could be employed for 12 months.
- A communications plan for the Facebook page launch was developed.
- The Over 55s Connect Project Officer position was advertised, and the new appointee commenced in June 2017.
- A business case was developed for the executive, demonstrating the need for the Facebook page project.
- A content plan for the first four months of the Facebook page was developed to support the business case and has been used as a tool to plan content for the page.
- Guidelines were developed for the Facebook page to ensure awareness of page rules, monitoring and responses.
- Three staff members participated in communications training on how to manage and administer a council-coordinated Facebook page, ensuring the team were skilled and able to develop content and post on the page.
- The Facebook page launched on Friday 4 August 2017.
- The page is administered by the Healthy Ageing Engagement Team at Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

Budget

Total project cost	\$20,000
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Project challenges

Getting the project started took longer than anticipated, and local government organisations need to factor in the time it takes to plan and adhere to organisational processes and procedures when it comes to social media.

A social media presence requires a lot of time and resources, including the development of community guidelines and ongoing moderation and publishing of content for the Facebook page.

Project outcomes

- The Over 55s Connect Facebook page was established. The page is administered by the Healthy Ageing Engagement Team at Macedon Ranges Shire Council.
- The page has seen strong levels of engagement from the target audience.
- The Facebook page acts as a centralised information system for community members to access to find out about services, support, programs, activities and events for older people locally.
- The page allows for online live chats with experts to start conversations about support, services and health information or topics of interest to older people. For example, users can chat with a local fitness instructor, nurse or assessment officer to offer advice, information and direction on where to go for further support.
- The page also allows for event coordination and promotion.
- The Facebook page was supported by information and training sessions that were delivered throughout the shire to support older people to access social media.

Project sustainability

The council's Healthy Ageing Engagement team (HAET) will continue to manage the page, with input from age-friendly ambassadors who continue as part of the ongoing volunteer program.

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