



Media release

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## **Community organisations vital role for older men**

Almost 90 per cent of older men involved in community organisations feel it improves their overall wellbeing, according to a survey funded by National Seniors.

The survey conducted by the University of Ballarat, found that 98 per cent of the men questioned reported that being involved in community organisations made them feel better about themselves. Eighty per cent said it made them feel happier at home, and 77 per cent said it had improved their social skills.

One 94-year-old man said that involvement in his community group had saved his life. "It has been a great benefit to me and if it hadn't been I would have died," the participant said.

The survey found that being part of an organisation helped older men learn and develop new skills. This is important as only six per cent of men aged over 50 are involved in formal learning compared with 15 per cent of older women.

The survey also found that older men help organisations and the wider community by passing on skills and knowledge, making products, and providing community services.

Commenting on the results of the survey, National Seniors chief executive Michael O'Neill, said survey shows that community organisations make a vital difference to older men.

"They make them feel better about themselves, allow them to learn new skills and give something back to the community.

"Government should recognise the important role of these organisations and work with them to support the participation of older men. While the organisations should look at how they can encourage more men to become involved. This will benefit the organisations and the wider community," said O'Neill.

The report of the survey titled *Making Good Connections: How community participation enriches learning, wellbeing, and a sense of identity*, will be launched on Friday 26 February at a Men's Learning and Wellbeing Forum hosted by the University of Ballarat.

**Michael O'Neill is available for comment on 0448 125 898.**

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or Casey-Ann Seaniger 0422 391 627.**

**Details of the Forum are available from Barry Golding on 03 5327 9733.**

*With around 280,000 members, National Seniors is Australia's largest consumer organisation for the over-50s and fourth largest group of its kind in the world.*