

Shopping, fun and friendship:

Census helps connect older people in Bass Valley

Beautiful beaches, a relaxed lifestyle and a strong sense of community are just some of the many reasons the residents of Bass Valley in rural Victoria choose to call it home.

More than a quarter of people who live in Bass Valley are aged over 65, compared to 15% for the rest of Victoria.

Bass Valley Community Group Manager, Roderick McIvor, said Census data helps to inform services for the local community.

“We look at Census data all the time because it helps us stay on course,” Mr McIvor said.

“Occasionally people might ask if we should be doing something else, like focusing on youth. From the Census, we know that older people form our largest demographic and really need our help.

“We can clearly see we have a large ageing population scattered across the Valley, including in some quite isolated locations. This isolation can put older people at risk of being lonely, and it can be hard to do simple things like shopping, social activities and meeting friends.

“We run a community bus to take passengers into town, out for lunch or to social activities like fishing and karaoke. The Community Group also runs events and clubs that give older people the chance to get together.”

By using Census data such as the socio-economic status, age and health profile of his community, Mr McIvor has been able to obtain grants to support his clients. Some of the grants have funded upgrading the op shop and starting a computer club.

“Census data allows us to understand what our community looks like, and working together we can determine where our volunteer services are needed most,” Mr McIvor said.

“The data gives us an insightful base to start our thinking. That’s why it’s so important for people to fill out the Census. It’s essential to keep community services like ours running.”