

Please note: The following is a fictional example designed to demonstrate the level of detail and evidence encouraged in nominations.



Nomination Questions:

- **Nominee Name:** Sarah Mitchell
- **Nominee Role:** Community Leader, Mentor and Founder of the Ballarat Women in Trades Network

About the Nominee:

- 1. Please describe how the nominee has demonstrated outstanding leadership within Ballarat or its communities through contributions that sit outside their paid employment, business-as-usual responsibilities, or formal role requirements.** (up to 500 words)

Provide specific examples of initiatives, projects or actions they have led or influenced as a voluntary, community-minded, advocacy-based, or above-and-beyond contribution, including their role, the actions they took, who benefited and any measurable outcomes or results.

Sarah Mitchell has demonstrated outstanding leadership in Ballarat through her voluntary work to increase opportunities for women and girls in traditionally male-dominated industries. While her professional background has given her insight into workforce barriers, the contribution described in this nomination sits outside her paid employment and reflects her personal commitment to building a more inclusive local community.

In 2021, Sarah observed that many young women in Ballarat were interested in trades and technical careers but lacked access to visible role models, practical information, employer connections and encouragement from people who understood the pathways available. Rather than simply raising the issue, Sarah took action in her own time and founded the **Ballarat Women in Trades Network**. The network brings together local employers, training providers, schools, parents and women working across construction, manufacturing, engineering, automotive and related industries.

Sarah personally led the development of the network, recruited an initial steering group of eight local women, created a simple governance structure, and secured practical support from five local businesses and two training providers. She coordinated meetings after hours, prepared information resources for students and families, and built relationships with schools so that young women could access accurate, locally relevant advice. Over four years, the network has delivered mentoring, career information sessions, workplace visits and employer introductions for more than 250 women and girls across Ballarat and surrounding communities.

One of Sarah's most significant achievements is the annual **Women in Trades Careers Day**, which she established and continues to coordinate as a voluntary community initiative. The event now attracts more than 100 secondary students each year and includes hands-on demonstrations, panel discussions, apprenticeship information and conversations with local women already working in trades. Following the first two events, participating schools reported increased interest from female students in vocational education, pre-apprenticeship programs and work experience placements in trade-related fields.

Sarah's leadership is practical, collaborative and sustained. She has moved beyond identifying a problem to creating a local solution that brings employers, educators, families and community members together. Her contribution is outstanding because it is self-initiated, delivered largely in her own time, and focused on long-term change for women and girls in Ballarat.

2. What tangible impact has the nominee had in advancing women's roles, opportunities, participation or representation in Ballarat through voluntary, community, committee, advocacy or other unpaid contributions, outside the normal expectations of their employment, profession, elected role or day-to-day responsibilities? (up to 500 words)

Please provide specific examples and, where possible, evidence of the scale or outcomes of their impact, such as the number of women supported, opportunities created, programs established, policies influenced or changes achieved. This nomination should focus on voluntary or community contributions, including committee roles, and not on work undertaken solely as part of the nominee's paid employment or usual paid professional duties.

Sarah has had a tangible and measurable impact on women's participation, confidence and access to opportunity in Ballarat. Her contribution has created practical pathways for women to explore training, apprenticeships and employment in industries where they have historically been underrepresented.

Through the Ballarat Women in Trades Network, Sarah has helped connect more than 80 women with local employers, apprenticeships, training providers or mentors. Of these women, 32 have gone on to commence apprenticeships, traineeships or employment in trade-related industries. These outcomes are significant because they represent real opportunities created through a community-led initiative, not simply awareness-raising.

Sarah has also influenced local employers to think differently about recruitment and workplace culture. Through informal advocacy, employer forums and one-on-one conversations, she encouraged three Ballarat businesses to review their recruitment practices, improve the language used in job advertisements, promote flexible entry pathways, and actively welcome female applicants. Those businesses

have since employed a combined total of 18 women in operational, apprenticeship and trade-based roles.

Beyond individual employment outcomes, Sarah has increased the visibility of women working in trades across Ballarat. She regularly invites women to share their career stories at schools, community events and network sessions so that students and families can see real examples of local women succeeding in non-traditional fields. This has helped challenge assumptions about the kinds of work women can do and has encouraged young women to consider pathways they may not previously have seen as possible.

Sarah's impact is both immediate and long-term. In the short term, she has helped women access information, confidence, networks and employment opportunities. In the longer term, she is contributing to cultural change by building stronger relationships between schools, industry and community organisations. Her work is helping Ballarat become a place where women and girls can imagine, pursue and sustain careers across a broader range of industries.

3. How has the nominee actively supported, mentored, advocated for or created opportunities for other women and/or underrepresented groups through voluntary, community, voluntarily appointed to a committee, advocacy or other unpaid efforts? (up to 500 words)

Please describe the specific voluntary actions they have taken, including through any usual voluntary committee roles or community organisations responsibilities, and the difference these actions have made to individuals, organisations or the broader community. Please do not focus on activities undertaken solely as part of the nominee's paid employment or usual paid professional duties.

Supporting, mentoring and advocating for others is central to Sarah's contribution. She has consistently used her own time, networks and experience to help women overcome barriers and access opportunities that may otherwise have been out of reach.

Since establishing the Ballarat Women in Trades Network, Sarah has personally mentored 15 young women. She meets with mentees outside work hours to discuss career goals, prepare for interviews, identify training options, build confidence and connect them with employers or other women in relevant industries. Several of these women have since commenced apprenticeships, moved into trade-related employment, or returned to the network to support others.

Sarah also established a structured mentoring program that has matched more than 40 women with experienced professionals across construction, engineering, manufacturing, automotive and allied sectors. Recognising that women can face

different and intersecting barriers, she has worked with local community organisations to make the program accessible to women from culturally diverse communities, women with disability, women returning to work, and women who may not have existing industry connections.

One example of Sarah's impact is a young woman who had completed a pre-apprenticeship but had been unable to secure an employer. Sarah introduced her to a local business willing to provide a trial placement, helped her prepare for the interview, and followed up with both the participant and employer during the early stages of the placement. The young woman successfully commenced a mechanical apprenticeship and has since returned to the network as a volunteer mentor for other young women considering similar pathways.

Sarah's approach is powerful because she does more than offer encouragement. She actively creates connections, opens doors, follows through and builds the confidence and capability of others. Her support has strengthened individuals, helped employers access new talent, and contributed to a broader sense of possibility for women and girls in Ballarat.

4. Why do you believe the nominee is a positive role model for current and future generations of women in Ballarat because of their voluntary service, committee involvement, community leadership, advocacy or other unpaid contribution? (up to 500 words)

Please provide specific examples of the values, behaviours or achievements they demonstrate, and explain how they have inspired others or created a lasting positive impact through, including any usual voluntary or community-based contribution. The focus should be on contributions beyond work undertaken solely as part of paid employment or usual paid professional duties.

Sarah is a positive role model for current and future generations of women in Ballarat because she demonstrates that leadership is not defined only by job title, seniority or formal authority. Her example shows that meaningful change can begin when one person sees a need, brings others together and stays committed to practical action over time.

She is known for persistence, generosity and collaboration. Rather than accepting women's underrepresentation in trades as inevitable, Sarah has worked with schools, families, employers and community organisations to create visible and achievable pathways. She is generous with her time, patient with people who are just beginning to explore their options, and willing to have constructive conversations with employers about how workplaces can become more inclusive.

Sarah's influence is particularly important because it is creating a lasting ripple effect. The women she has mentored are now becoming mentors themselves. The employer relationships she has built are continuing beyond single events. The annual Careers Day has become a recognisable community initiative that schools, businesses and families look forward to each year.

For young women in Ballarat, seeing women working successfully as electricians, builders, mechanics, engineers and manufacturing specialists can change what they believe is possible for themselves. Sarah has helped make those role models visible and accessible. She has also shown that women can support one another by sharing knowledge, advocating for fairer opportunities and building community networks.

Sarah's contribution extends well beyond her own achievements. She is helping to shift expectations, increase confidence and create pathways for women and girls who may otherwise have lacked access to encouragement and practical support. Her leadership is grounded in service, inclusion and a belief that Ballarat is stronger when all people can participate fully in community and economic life.

For these reasons, Sarah is an outstanding role model. Her voluntary leadership is already making Ballarat more inclusive, and the structures she has helped establish are likely to benefit future generations of women for many years to come.

5. What is the nominee's connection with Ballarat, and how has their usual voluntary service, committee involvement, community leadership, advocacy responsibilities or other unpaid contribution benefited Ballarat or its communities? (up to 500 words)

Please describe their connection to Ballarat, such as living, working, volunteering, studying, serving on committees, leading community initiatives or contributing to local organisations, and explain why their voluntary or community-based contribution is relevant to the Ballarat community. Please avoid focusing on achievements that were undertaken solely as part of the nominee's paid employment or usual paid professional duties.

Sarah's connection to Ballarat is both personal and community-based. She has lived in Ballarat for many years, raised her family locally, and has consistently contributed her time outside of work to help make the region more welcoming, inclusive and opportunity-rich for women and girls. Her commitment is not limited to one organisation or event; it is demonstrated through sustained voluntary leadership, mentoring and relationship-building across the local community.

Her contribution is relevant to Ballarat because it responds directly to local needs. Ballarat has a growing demand for skilled workers, and women remain underrepresented in many technical and trade-based pathways. By building connections between schools, training providers, employers, families and community organisations, Sarah has helped ensure that women and girls can see clear and practical pathways into industries that offer stable employment, skill development and leadership potential.

For example, Sarah's annual Women in Trades Careers Day is held in Ballarat and designed specifically for local secondary students, families and employers. The event gives young women direct access to role models, apprenticeship information and employers who are prepared to support female apprentices. It also helps families and teachers understand the opportunities available locally, which is important because encouragement from trusted adults can influence the choices young women feel confident making.

Sarah's work has benefited Ballarat by strengthening local networks, increasing visibility for women in non-traditional industries, and creating practical opportunities for women to participate more fully in the region's economic and community life. Her contribution is outstanding because it is sustained, locally focused and clearly above and beyond her daily job or formal responsibilities.

6. Is there anything else you would like to share about the nominee that supports their nomination? (up to 500 words)

What further distinguishes Sarah is the quiet, consistent and values-led way she carries out this work. She does not seek recognition, and much of her contribution happens behind the scenes: making follow-up phone calls, checking in with young women after events, encouraging employers to give someone a first opportunity, and connecting people who would not otherwise have met. These practical acts of follow-through are a significant part of why her contribution has been so effective.

Sarah is also trusted by a wide range of people across the Ballarat community. Students describe her as approachable and encouraging, employers value her practical and solutions-focused approach, and community partners recognise her ability to bring people together around a shared goal. She has built this trust over time by being reliable, respectful and genuinely committed to improving outcomes for women and girls.

This nomination is strongly supported because Sarah's work has created momentum that now extends beyond her own involvement. The network she founded has developed its own volunteers, mentors and employer champions, meaning the impact is becoming embedded in the community rather than

depending on one person alone. That legacy reflects the strength of Sarah's leadership: she has not only created opportunities for women, but has helped build a local culture where those opportunities can continue to grow.

7. **Provide one reference for the nominee** (must be different than nominator).