

BATHURST seniors have been urged to take advantage of new low-cost courses to help them become more “tech savvy”.

NSW Ageing Minister Andrew Constance last week launched the \$500,000 NSW Ageing Strategy, which aims to respond to the challenges posed by an ageing population.

Mr Constance said providing affordable training on how to use computers, smartphones or tablets would give senior citizens the ability to find information and connect with people.

The move has been welcomed by the Bathurst University of the Third Age (U3A), which organises courses for people over 50 in phone, camera and computer skills.

Tutor Bernard Connell said the funding boost would be beneficial for seniors.

“Everything seems to be online these days, so if they don’t have those skills they miss out,” Mr Connell said.

“They’re being told about these programs like Skype and need to know how to use them as a way to keep in contact with family and friends.”

In launching the strategy, Mr Constance said the government wanted to see the state’s seniors able to better understand and utilise technology.

“By up-skilling seniors on the latest technology, we can help them to become more connected with their families and friends and their local communities,” he said.

The funds will be used over two years to fund technology training programs across the state. A new grants program will also be established as part of the strategy to help local councils build age-friendly communities.

The Local Government Shires Association will administer a funding pool of \$550,000 to assist councils with infrastructure, focusing on accessibility.

Both announcements are the key to the NSW Ageing Strategy, which is designed to help cope with the state’s rapidly expanding older population.