



SENIORS SOCIAL ISOLATION PEAK SERVICES PROGRAM


Seniors Social Isolation Provider Community of Practice (SSIP-CoP)

Minutes from Training Workshop – Sept 2025

Date/Time	Monday 29 September 2025 (10.00am – 1.00pm)
Topic	Volunteering Involving Organisation Training Workshop
Location	Hervey Bay Community Centre (Hall A & B) (In Person)
Facilitator	Kristie McLean, Community Project Officer, Volunteering Queensland
Supported by	Karen Wilson, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland
Apologies	<p>SSI Provider (n = 4)</p> <p>Diana Bernard, Seniors Social Connections Program Practitioner, Relationships Australia Queensland David Hoodless, Older Men Unlimited Hervey Bay Kylie Nitz, Maryborough and District COTA Well Aged Services Jules de Waard, Seniors in Focus (Pialba) Fraser Coast Regional Council</p>
Attendees	<p>SSI Providers (n = 2)</p> <p>Sherie Riley, Coordinator, Hervey Bay Sixty & Better Healthy Ageing Program Inc. Kenzo Sugawara, Community Liaison Officer, Community Connection Branch, Noosa Council</p> <p>Other Providers (n = 3)</p> <p>Roslyn Pritchard, GRoW Cooroy (Green Referrals for Wellbeing) / USC Jenny Blagdon, GroW Cooroy (Green Referrals for Wellbeing) Fiona Wallis – SANDBAG Community Centre, North Brisbane</p>

Discussion, Key Points and Actions

	Topic and Key Discussions Points	Actions
1	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Kristie welcomed everyone to the workshop and provided an overview of today's session.	

	Topic and Key Discussions Points	Actions
2	INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY	
2.1	<p>Kristie invited participants to write down 4 questions they'd like answering today.</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we ensure the sustainability of volunteers? • What long term support can we offer volunteers? • What is the line between volunteering and being a paid employee? • Some people may volunteer for Centrelink reasons (i.e., need to volunteer so many hours per fortnight), whilst others may genuinely want to be there. <p>Questions were grouped under the following categories</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program Development 2. Recruitment 3. Onboarding 4. Compliance 5. Retention 6. Tools 7. Other 	
3	DISCUSSION	
3.1	<p>Volunteer Framework</p> <p>Volunteer Role Considerations: Duties and Responsibilities What tasks will the volunteer perform? What type of volunteer are we seeking? (e.g., skilled, trainable) What training will be provided?</p>	

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	<p>Access and Privacy What will volunteers have access to? Consider privacy and data security requirements.</p> <p>Information Management Where will all information be stored? Secure program, locked Excel spreadsheet, other secure system.</p> <p>Role Purpose Why was this role created? How does it meet organisational needs?</p> <p>Recruitment and Onboarding Where will the role be advertised? Is there an onboarding process in place?</p> <p>Framework Development Tools like CANVA AI can be used to develop a basic Volunteering Framework. Ensure a solid foundation is in place before recruiting or assigning volunteers.</p>	
3.2	<p>4 Key Considerations</p> <p>Clarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well defined roles and expectations (what is expected of the volunteer, the tasks involved, and the time commitment required) • Clear communication channels • Volunteers understand responsibilities • Contributions aligned with organisations mission • Prevents misunderstandings and ensures everyone is aligned – knows their role requirements and avoid confusion. <p>Simplicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Process Considerations: • Simplicity • Keep all processes and instructions straightforward and easy to follow. • Digital Barriers • The biggest challenges are often online processes. • Seniors may face difficulties due to the digital divide. • Solutions • Despite digital challenges, practical workarounds exist to enable participation. Offer the opportunity to support them through the processes or consider peer-to-peer support (i.e., is there a tech-savvy volunteer who can support them through the processes). 	

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	<p>Purpose and Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers with Lived Experience • Encourage participation from volunteers who bring personal insights or lived experience relevant to the community or service. • Their experience can enhance empathy, understanding, and connection with the people they support. <p>Practical Support Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider type of assistance volunteers may provide, such as: • Transport support for seniors or clients • Accompanying those who may require carers or additional support • Offering mental health or wellbeing support as appropriate • Identify what resources or support volunteers might need to perform these tasks safely and effectively. <p>Training and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide targeted training to prepare volunteers for their roles. Examples include: • Mental Health First Aid • Disability awareness and inclusion training • Communication and boundary-setting workshops • Well-trained volunteers can maximise their positive impact while maintaining safety and confidence in their role. <p>Overall Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the volunteer role aligns with organisational goals and creates a tangible positive impact for participants, communities, and the volunteers themselves. <p>The Queensland Lived Experience Workforce Network (QLEWN). A statewide peak body led by, with, and for the Lived Experience workforce within the mental health, alcohol and other drugs, and suicide prevention sectors. https://www.qlewn.com/</p> <p>See also QLD Funded Landing Page - Lived Experience Training</p>	<p>Send QMHC Lived and Living Experience Network details to Ros and Jenny</p>
3.3	<p>Recruitment</p> <p>Question: What are the different ways volunteer roles are advertised?</p> <p>Member Communication</p> <p>Include information about volunteering opportunities in newsletters sent to members.</p> <p>Membership Forms</p> <p>Add a tick-box question: “Would you be interested in volunteering?”</p> <p>Include a prompt for members to list the skills they can contribute.</p> <p>Collect information in a central database for follow-up and matching to roles.</p> <p>Identifying Volunteer Roles</p> <p>Clarify the types of volunteer roles you are recruiting for:</p>	

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	<p>Skilled roles: Advertise via platforms like Ethical Jobs</p> <p>General volunteering</p> <p>Use platforms like Seek Volunteering (free for NFP organisations) Consider opportunities to recruit volunteers with lived experience through: Volunteering expos and targeted outreach in relevant community networks</p> <p>Useful Technology for recruiting volunteers</p> <p>Go to the FREE version of CANVA AI and enter "<i>create a Facebook tile for recruiting volunteer champion for mental health</i>". Create a position description on CANVA AI Create a volunteer impact story (30 second video)</p> <p>Intergenerational experiences</p> <p>VQ is creating intergenerational community partnerships resources See also Social Isolation Best Practice Guide</p>	<p>Research Intergenerational programs in Queensland / Australia and add the list to the COTA Queensland SSIP Hub</p>
3.4	<p>Q&A re Onboarding</p> <p>Question: Is there a realistic start and finish time for volunteers? Answer: Yes/No. It depends on what they signed up for. If there's support there, that's okay. Consider flexibility in how the role can be done (e.g., home, creative)</p> <p>Question: How long can a shift be? Answer: Volunteer shifts must align with labour laws and be appropriate to the role's demands, including any stress-related factors such as mental health support.</p> <p>Question: How much responsibility is a volunteer allowed? Answer: Volunteers can contribute as much as they are willing, provided that the organisation is not reliant on them to operate and they are not performing tasks reserved for paid staff. When volunteers are working alone, there should always be either a staff member or a second volunteer ('buddy') present for support and safety.</p> <p>Question: How can we overcome the problem of technology when onboarding volunteers? Answer: Provide multiple onboarding pathways, including digital options and in-person support. Engage tech-savvy volunteers to assist with databases, ensuring they understand privacy and data security requirements. Require a police check if volunteers handle personal data. Volunteers with specialist skills can contribute to one-off projects under staff supervision. Any photography requires consent via a Media Release Form, and images must not be stored on personal devices. Volunteers may also help coordinate other volunteers when directed and supported by paid staff.</p>	<p>Discuss Privacy and Data Security Training for SSI-funded orgs with the Department and consider timeframe.</p>

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3.5	<p>Compliance</p> <p>Volunteer compliance, resources and guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VQ Website: Access resources and checklists to support compliance. • VIO Module Training: Free training available for the next 8 months, covering the entire volunteer process. • Includes governance, recruitment, and onboarding (Module 1) • PPT presentation with information-gathering exercises • Volunteer Handbook: Framework available on the VQ website or can be drafted using CANVA AI. • Use of Personal Vehicles: Follow relevant policies and requirements. • Best Practices: Guidance for effectively supporting volunteers. <p>Organisational Compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer-led/run organisations without paid staff must ensure volunteers manage compliance. • Organisations with paid staff should assign compliance responsibilities to staff. <p>Question: How do we manage volunteers with their own agenda Answer: Revamp the training and redo it, particularly for volunteers who have been there forever and have always done things a certain way. They may not necessarily be following procedures. Redo training so everyone is on the same page, same policies and procedures.</p>	
3.6	<p>Volunteer Recognition and Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge Contributions: Volunteers give their time to make a difference—recognition is essential. • Share Success Stories: Highlight achievements using platforms like Vistabook or Snapfish. • Celebrate Milestones: Maintain a Hall of Fame document to track and celebrate volunteer accomplishments. • Creative Recognition: Find innovative ways to show appreciation for volunteers’ efforts. • Foster Connection: Encourage volunteers to stay in touch via WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram. • Events and Learning: Organise mini conferences with guest speakers, including those with lived experience. • Digital Communication: Keep volunteers informed and engaged through EDMs, newsletters, Mailchimp, or Campaign Monitor, including videos where possible. 	<p>A note about CANVA AI: CoPilot can be used in same way as CANVA AI and ChatGPT</p>

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	<p>Maintaining Volunteer Records and Systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freddie Match Recruitment Website: Supports initial volunteer onboarding and tracking, offering enhanced functionality. • E-Tapestry (Cloud-Based): A secure online platform for managing volunteer information. • Locked Excel Spreadsheet: A simple, affordable, and accessible option for storing volunteer records securely. 	
3.7	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Resource and Information Guide - Seniors Volunteering Volunteering Queensland • Governance Journeys – Volunteering Queensland • National Standards for Volunteer Involvement – Volunteering Queensland • Seniors Volunteering Volunteering Queensland • State of Volunteering in Queensland – Volunteering Queensland • Support : National Knowledge Base 	

Minutes drafted by Karen Wilson. Please email any revisions or comments to: Karen Wilson, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing Queensland at: karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au

Revised 6/5/26