



SENIORS SOCIAL ISOLATION PEAK SERVICES PROGRAM

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

Minutes of Meeting – Volunteer Workshop – March 2026

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| Date/Time | Thursday 26 March 2026 (10.00 – 1.00pm) |
| Theme | Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO) Training Workshop |
| Location | <p>Hybrid Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-Person: COTA Queensland Boardroom, Level 6, 10 Market St, Brisbane 4000 Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 873 0738 6125 Passcode: 311241 |
| Facilitator | Kristie McKean , Community Project Officer, Volunteering Queensland |
| Supported by | Karen Wilson , Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland |
| Recording | Due to technical issues the session was not recorded. Minutes drafted from the AI transcript generated. |
| Attendees (N = 11) | <p>Guests (n = 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brisbane City Council: Isabel Stankiewicz Volunteering Queensland: Rhee Duthrie and Susie Musgrove <p>SSI Providers (n = 9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooktown District Community Centre: Susan Williams Inala Community House: Haley Kiata Noosa Council, Community Development: Monique Johnson Pets for Life - Caloundra Community Centre: Shirley Hammill Redcliffe Older Peoples Action Program: Jenny Reid East Creek Community Centre (Toowoomba) - Sally Fisher Unidentified Provider – Seniors World Wellness Group: Danne Bathan and Ketaki Alate (In-Person) Y-Care South East Queensland Inc: Debbie Gliddon |

Discussion, Key Points and Actions

| | Discussion and Key Points | Actions |
|------------|--|----------------|
| 1 | WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | |
| 1.1 | <p>Acknowledgement of Country</p> <p>Karen acknowledged the Turrbal people of Meanjin (Brisbane) as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we met in person, and paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Respect was also extended to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples joining the meeting.</p> | |

| | Discussion and Key Points | Actions |
|-----|---|--|
| 1.2 | <p>Session Overview</p> <p>Hybrid meeting set-up and Miro board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The session opened with technical setup, followed by a discussion-driven format introduced by Kristie McKean • Miro Board e-tool was introduced for participants to collaborate on discussions about recruitment, governance, policy, performance management, and change management. <p>Volunteer Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical approaches to volunteer management, including recruitment, screening, onboarding, retention, training, technology, and supports for ageing volunteers. • Discussions framed around four core principles (clarity, simplicity, purpose and impact). <p>Practical approaches to recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential recruitment tools: Better Impact, HubSpot, Volunteer Gateway, and Canva. • Short screening calls and staged onboarding with follow-up reviews to improve volunteer fit and retention. • Flexible, task-based role design and shared shifts to support engagement, alongside digital and buddy systems to reduce barriers for less tech-confident volunteers. • Centrelink-referred placements and related contractual considerations, insurance and licensing requirements • Opportunities for school and community partnerships to engage younger volunteers. • Supports for older volunteers, including role sharing, mentoring arrangements, and links to wellbeing services | Session resources and a consolidated set of links to be shared with providers. |
| 1.3 | <p>Discussion Summary</p> <p>See Appendix A for summary of the discussions.</p> <p><i>Next Steps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up support available (1:1 sessions). • Evaluation survey to be circulated. • Resources and links to be shared post-session. <p>For further information contact: Kristie McKean Community Project Officer Volunteering Queensland T. 07 2145 8545. E. Kristie.McKean@volunteeringqld.org.au</p> | SSI Providers to contact Kristie directly for follow-up 1:1 sessions |
| 1.4 | <p>Miro Board (Electronic Whiteboard) Conversations</p> <p>An Electronic Whiteboard (Miro) was used during the session for providers to ask questions and share their thoughts.</p> <p>See Appendix B for summary.</p> | Open Miro e-conversation |

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|-----|---|---|
| 1.5 | <p>Online Chat Summary</p> <p>The online discussion highlighted the complex arrangements between Centrelink and host organisations, with different onboarding processes depending on the provider context.</p> <p>Insurance is an important consideration, with variations in volunteer personal accident and public liability cover. Need to be mindful that some policies have age limitations for volunteers. Useful guidance and recommended insurance types are available through sector resources.</p> <p>Discussed the value of storytelling in volunteer programs, particularly for grant applications and impact reporting, with emphasis on obtaining consent from volunteers. Upcoming opportunities such as National Volunteer Week in May were identified as key moments to promote volunteer impact, supported by campaign resources including Canva templates for social media, certificates, and promotional materials, aligned with the theme “<i>Your year to volunteer</i>” It was also noted that 2026 is the International Year of the Volunteer.</p> <p>Technology and tools were discussed, including the Volunteering Gateway as a central resource for comparing volunteer management platforms, and Better Impact as a commonly used system with scalable pricing. Additional tools included a free Voice of the Volunteer survey tool to support feedback collection, and broader lifecycle resources to support volunteer management.</p> <p>Finally, supports for older volunteers were highlighted, including access to online and digital assistance programs such as LiveUp, along with relevant contacts and resources to support healthy ageing and participation.</p> <p>See Appendix C for online chat verbatim.</p> | <p>Follow-up: Karen to explore Centrelink arrangements further and develop guide.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for NVW and International Year of the Volunteer</p> <p>Add resources to SSIP Hub</p> <p>Discover LiveUp</p> |
| 1.6 | <p>Additional Resources</p> <p>The following resources were shared in the chat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance - Volunteering Australia • International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026). • National Standards for Volunteer Involvement • National Standards Wheel (1 page) • National Volunteer Week Resources - Volunteering Australia • Verification of voluntary work form (SU462) - Services Australia • Volunteering and Centrelink 2025 update | <p>Add resources to the SSIP Hub</p> |

Minutes prepared by Karen Wilson, Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing Queensland at: karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au



Appendix A – Summary of Discussion

Key Principles of Volunteer Programs

- **Clarity:** Clear roles, expectations, and communication pathways.
- **Simplicity:** Streamlined, efficient processes (reduce manual/clunky systems).
- **Purpose:** Connect volunteers to the “why” to support retention and engagement.
- **Impact:** Measure and communicate outcomes to support funding, motivation, and recognition.

Key Discussion Themes & Insights

Volunteer Management Challenges

- Managing change with long-term volunteers requires:
 - Clear communication of the “why”
 - Inclusion in the change process
- Not all volunteers are the right fit → importance of screening and honest conversations.

Recruitment & Retention

- Life commitments impact availability → need for:
 - Flexible roles (shared, remote, episodic)
 - Creative recruitment (schools, community groups, partnerships)
- Volunteer burnout common in small communities → broaden recruitment pools.

Innovative Volunteer Models

- Move beyond traditional roles:
 - Task-based / remote volunteering
 - “Spontaneous” or episodic volunteering
 - Flexible engagement without committee commitments

Onboarding & Systems

- Structured onboarding is critical:
 - Screening → induction → check-ins (1 week, 1 month, etc.)
- Use systems (e.g. Better Impact, HubSpot) where possible.
- Address tech barriers with:
 - Buddy systems
 - In-person support options
 - Alternative application methods

Volunteer Support & Management

- Delegate via volunteer leaders/coordinators.
- Use structured supervision templates and clear boundaries.
- Maintain regular communication and feedback loops.

Recognition & Engagement

- Meaningful recognition preferred over generic rewards:
 - Feeling valued, heard, and included
 - Storytelling, impact sharing
 - Personalised or purpose-driven recognition

Training & Development

- Offer relevant, flexible training (e.g. first aid, inclusion, leadership).
- Co-design learning with volunteers (ask what they need).
- Use short, practical sessions rather than long training blocks.

Ageing Volunteer Workforce

- Challenges around health, capacity, and dignity.
- Approaches:
 - Transition to lighter/mentoring roles
 - Connect to external supports or social programs
 - Handle conversations with sensitivity and respect

Tools & Resources Highlighted

- Volunteering Qld resource hub and training
- Miro (collaboration)
- Canva (promotion, resources)
- Volunteer management platforms (e.g. Better Impact)
- “Voice of the Volunteer” survey tool

Key Takeaways

- Flexibility and adaptability are essential in modern volunteering.
- Strong frameworks + clear communication = better outcomes.
- Community partnerships and creative thinking improve recruitment.
- Volunteer experience (purpose, inclusion, recognition) drives retention.

Appendix B – Miro Board Discussions

Instructions: Write on the sticky notes any questions or challenges you would like to discuss today

Volunteer Management Retrospective Summary

This retrospective focused on the **challenges and opportunities** in volunteer management across the organisation. The team identified **critical issues** around volunteer recruitment, retention, engagement, and the practical aspects of managing diverse volunteer populations. The discussion highlighted the **need for better systems, clearer policies, and innovative approaches** to address volunteer burnout and organizational capacity constraints.

Discussion Summary

The session centered on **three main themes**:

1. volunteer recruitment and retention challenges
2. policy and procedural requirements
3. practical management of volunteers.

Participants raised **concerns about volunteer burnout** due to individuals serving multiple organizations, difficulties in attracting people to executive positions, and managing change with long-term volunteers. The team also explored **opportunities for innovation** in volunteer models and the need for better resources and technology to support volunteer coordination.

What Needs Improvement

1. **Volunteer retention and burnout prevention:** The same pool of volunteers is stretched across multiple organizations, leading to engagement challenges and burnout. Life commitments make it difficult to retain volunteers long-term.
2. **Policy and procedural clarity:** Gaps exist in volunteer management policies, screening requirements, and onboarding processes, particularly for Centrelink volunteers who require host organization contracts.
3. **Time and resource constraints:** Staff members have limited time to effectively manage volunteers, and organizations lack adequate promotional resources that clearly showcase roles and organizational impact.

Ideas for Improvement

1. **Innovative volunteer models:** Explore alternatives to traditional volunteering structures, including intergenerational volunteering, shared community portals for small towns, and volunteer coordination by other volunteers.
2. **Enhanced recognition programs:** Develop milestone recognition initiatives and National Volunteer Week celebrations to improve volunteer satisfaction and engagement.
3. **Improved onboarding and training:** Create upskilling opportunities for volunteers (e.g., first aid courses, safe talk training) and establish clearer pathways for volunteer development and role transitions.

Open Questions

1. What volunteer management policies should be prioritized, and where can teams access the national standards (1-pager)?
2. How should organizations handle volunteer applicants who may not be well-suited for roles, and is it acceptable to decline volunteers?
3. What are the best practices for managing challenging situations, including volunteers who don't follow directions, miss shifts, or have personality clashes?
4. How can organizations navigate change management with long-term volunteers who resist new requirements like police checks or WWC screening?
5. What templates and tools are available for volunteer surveys, impact data collection, and volunteer portals with communication capabilities?
6. How to support organisations to stay motivated when they feel so overwhelmed by not being able to attract volunteers?
7. How do you manage current volunteers who don't like changes occurring in a program- change in governance or having to fill in a police check
8. What volunteer management policies should we be making sure we have in place
9. Navigating and supporting diverse personalities within the volunteer team
10. What do I need to consider when recruiting volunteers for office-based roles
11. Our Volunteers are stretched between so many organisations; we are struggling to keep them engaged or lose them to burn out. The same pool of volunteers are giving their time to multiple committees and organisations
12. Where can I get a 1 pager of the national Standards?
13. Life commitments are making it hard to hold onto volunteers for long
14. How can we rethink Board/Management Committee roles to attract more people to take on the responsibility of Executive Positions?
15. Navigating change in organisation procedures/requirements with existing long-term volunteers (e.g. introduction of new screening or training requirements)
16. Do we have to say yes to every volunteer applicant-volunteer applicants who may not be well-suited to the role.
17. Ideas for innovative volunteer models - versus traditional and how to overcome barriers

18. Ideas for promotional resources that clearly showcase roles and organisational impact to attract volunteers
19. How do we overcome technological barriers when recruiting volunteers
20. Identifying and connecting with potential volunteers.
21. Challenges with onboarding Centrelink volunteers due to host organisation contracts being required
22. What is the easiest way to onboard volunteers and what insurance do they need?
23. Best ways of engaging with communities that "over volunteer" to attract them
24. Development of existing volunteers for a bigger collective - like the Olympic Games
25. How do we transition volunteers from roles they may no longer have the capacity to do into other roles or exiting from the program
26. How can I effectively manage volunteers when I have limited time?
27. How do we manage volunteers who won't listen to directions or who don't turn up to shifts-
28. What are some recognition ideas for volunteers- miles stones/National volunteer week
29. Ideas for an effective volunteer portal with communication capabilities
30. What kind of upskilling opportunities should we provide for volunteers
31. How to find/offer the right opportunities for volunteers to develop their skills in their position e.g. first aid courses/ safe talk
32. Best way to have conversations with aging volunteers who are struggling but see this as a very important part of their lives
33. Is there a template for a Volunteer survey?
34. What are some ways we can share the data
35. What are some ways to gather impact Data
36. Are there tips for working with Senior Volunteers or Older people in general?
37. Intergenerational volunteering - is this a thing (yet)?
38. Are there other communities that use a shared portal for whole community access (small towns)
39. Is it acceptable for volunteers to coordinate other volunteers and activities?
40. Dealing with volunteers who have personality clashes!

Appendix C – Online Chat

Rhee: Its quite complex between Centrelink and the host provider. Council would have its own onboarding arrangement

Carole Labram: We have a separate volunteer insurance policy, and the cover decreases with the age of the volunteer but I'm aware that some policies will not insure after a certain age.

Susie: Public liability and volunteer personal accident insurance is what we recommend. Useful information and resources available here:

Rhee: if you do create a story - it can be used for grant applications and impact reporting - super powerful, with consent from the volunteer.

Monique J: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/18Rh6jLyhi/> One we did for one of our community groups.

Susie: With National Volunteer Week coming up in May it's a good opportunity to promote your volunteers and their impact. There's a whole campaign library which includes branded Canva templates for social media tiles, certificates etc. The theme this year is "*your year to volunteer*"

Rhee: 2026 is also International Year of the Volunteer

Susie: The Volunteering Gateway website has a useful index of all the main technology platforms relating to volunteer management, which you can filter by the features you need, and by the cost: [Technology | Volunteering Gateway](#)

Susie: Better Impact seems to be the most popular system utilised by our members, and it has an easy cost calculator – with pricing based on the number of volunteers you have.

Susie: new Voice of the Volunteer survey tool that is free for all organisations: [Voice of the Volunteer Survey – Volunteering Queensland](#)

Rhee: Another program helpful for older people is: [LiveUp | Free and reliable healthy ageing information | iLA](#) they help a lot with online supports and tech support Jenny Hazelwood is the State contact jenny.hazlewood@ilaustralia.org.au

See also: [Volunteer Involvement Lifecycle Resources – Volunteering Queensland](#)