



## SENIORS SOCIAL ISOLATION PEAK SERVICES PROGRAM

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

#### Minutes of Meeting – Volunteer Workshop – March 2026

<b>Date/Time</b>	Thursday 26 March 2026 (10.00 – 1.00pm)
<b>Theme</b>	Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO) Training Workshop
<b>Location</b>	Hybrid Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-Person:</b> COTA Queensland Boardroom, Level 6, 10 Market St, Brisbane 4000</li> <li>• <b>Zoom Meeting</b>   Meeting ID: 873 0738 6125   Passcode: 311241</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>Kristie McKean</b> , Community Project Officer, Volunteering Queensland
<b>Supported by</b>	<b>Karen Wilson</b> , Executive Officer, Seniors Social Isolation Peak Services Program, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Queensland
<b>Recording</b>	Due to technical issues the session was not recorded. Summary notes have been provided from the transcript.
<b>Attendees (N = 11)</b>	<p><b>Guests (n = 3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Brisbane City Council:</b> Isabel Stankiewicz</li> <li>• <b>Volunteering Queensland:</b> Rhee Duthrie and Susie Musgrove</li> </ul> <p><b>SSI Providers (n = 8)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cooktown District Community Centre:</b> Susan Williams</li> <li>• <b>Inala Community House:</b> Haley Kiata</li> <li>• <b>Noosa Council, Community Development:</b> Monique Johnson</li> <li>• <b>Pets for Life - Caloundra Community Centre:</b> Shirley Hammill</li> <li>• <b>Redcliffe Older Peoples Action Program:</b> Jenny Reid</li> <li>• Sally (Guest) tbc</li> <li>• Seniors (tbc)</li> <li>• <b>World Wellness Group:</b> Danne Bathan and Ketaki Alate (In-Person)</li> <li>• <b>Y-Care South East Queensland Inc:</b> Debbie Gliddon</li> </ul>

## Discussion, Key Points and Actions

	Discussion and Key Points	Actions
<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<p><b>Acknowledgement of Country</b>            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>	
<b>1.2</b>	<p><b>Meeting Overview</b></p> <p>The meeting <b>reviewed practical approaches to volunteer management</b>, including recruitment, screening, onboarding, retention, training, technology and supports for ageing volunteers, framed around four core principles: clarity, simplicity, purpose, and impact.</p> <p>The <b>session began with technical setup to enable hybrid participation</b>, then Kristie McKean introduced a discussion-driven format and a collaborative board for participants to add questions and experiences; the group used the board to collect issues across recruitment, governance, policies, performance management and change management.</p> <p><b>Discussion then moved through concrete practices:</b> short screening calls and staged onboarding with follow-up reviews; flexible, chunked role design and shared shifts to improve retention; digital and buddy supports to reduce technical barriers; <b>use of platforms such as Better Impact, HubSpot and Volunteer Gateway;</b> and <b>design tools like Canva</b> for handbooks, templates and recognition assets.</p> <p>The group addressed <b>Centrelink-referred placements</b> and contract distinctions, insurance and licensing checks, school and community partnerships for younger volunteers, and specific supports for older volunteers including partial role sharing, mentoring and links to wellbeing services.</p> <p><b>Participants identified training and survey tools</b> and noted that meeting resources and a consolidated link set would be circulated after the session.</p>	
<b>1.3</b>	<p><b>Discussion Summary</b></p> <p><b>1. Opening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Session delayed briefly due to technical issues.</li> <li>• Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country.</li> <li>• Facilitated by Kristie McKean (Volunteering Qld).</li> <li>• Workshop designed as an interactive, discussion-based session using Miro board.</li> </ul>	

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<p><b>2. Key Principles of Volunteer Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clarity:</b> Clear roles, expectations, and communication pathways.</li> <li>• <b>Simplicity:</b> Streamlined, efficient processes (reduce manual/clunky systems).</li> <li>• <b>Purpose:</b> Connect volunteers to the “why” to support retention and engagement.</li> <li>• <b>Impact:</b> Measure and communicate outcomes to support funding, motivation, and recognition.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Key Discussion Themes &amp; Insights</b></p> <p>Volunteer Management Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing change with long-term volunteers requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Clear communication of the “why”</li> <li>◦ Inclusion in the change process</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Not all volunteers are the right fit → importance of screening and honest conversations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recruitment &amp; Retention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life commitments impact availability → need for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Flexible roles (shared, remote, episodic)</li> <li>◦ Creative recruitment (schools, community groups, partnerships)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Volunteer burnout common in small communities → broaden recruitment pools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Innovative Volunteer Models</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move beyond traditional roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Task-based / remote volunteering</li> <li>◦ “Spontaneous” or episodic volunteering</li> <li>◦ Flexible engagement without committee commitments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Onboarding &amp; Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured onboarding is critical: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Screening → induction → check-ins (1 week, 1 month, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use systems (e.g. Better Impact, HubSpot) where possible.</li> <li>• Address tech barriers with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Buddy systems</li> <li>◦ In-person support options</li> <li>◦ Alternative application methods</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Volunteer Support &amp; Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegate via volunteer leaders/coordinators.</li> <li>• Use structured supervision templates and clear boundaries.</li> <li>• Maintain regular communication and feedback loops.</li> </ul>	

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	<p><b>Recognition &amp; Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful recognition preferred over generic rewards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feeling valued, heard, and included</li> <li>○ Storytelling, impact sharing</li> <li>○ Personalised or purpose-driven recognition</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Training &amp; Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer relevant, flexible training (e.g. first aid, inclusion, leadership).</li> <li>• Co-design learning with volunteers (ask what they need).</li> <li>• Use short, practical sessions rather than long training blocks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ageing Volunteer Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges around health, capacity, and dignity.</li> <li>• Approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transition to lighter/mentoring roles</li> <li>○ Connect to external supports or social programs</li> <li>○ Handle conversations with sensitivity and respect</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>4. Tools &amp; Resources Highlighted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteering Qld resource hub and training</li> <li>• Miro (collaboration)</li> <li>• Canva (promotion, resources)</li> <li>• Volunteer management platforms (e.g. Better Impact)</li> <li>• “Voice of the Volunteer” survey tool</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Key Takeaways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and adaptability are essential in modern volunteering.</li> <li>• Strong frameworks + clear communication = better outcomes.</li> <li>• Community partnerships and creative thinking improve recruitment.</li> <li>• Volunteer experience (purpose, inclusion, recognition) drives retention.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up support available (1:1 sessions).</li> <li>• Evaluation survey to be circulated.</li> <li>• Resources and links to be shared post-session.</li> </ul> <p><b>Contact</b>  Kristie McKean  Community Project Officer Volunteering Queensland  T. 07 2145 8545  E. <a href="mailto:Kristie.McKean@volunteeringqld.org.au">Kristie.McKean@volunteeringqld.org.au</a></p>	<p>Providers to contact  Kristie directly for  follow-up 1:1 sessions</p>

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1.4	<p><b>Exported Miro Board Sticky Notes</b> Write on the sticky notes, any Questions or Challenges you would like to discuss today</p> <p><b>Volunteer Management Retrospective Summary</b> This retrospective focused on the <b>challenges and opportunities</b> in volunteer management across the organisation. The team identified <b>critical issues</b> around volunteer recruitment, retention, engagement, and the practical aspects of managing diverse volunteer populations. The discussion highlighted the <b>need for better systems, clearer policies, and innovative approaches</b> to address volunteer burnout and organizational capacity constraints.</p> <p><b>Discussion Summary</b> The session centered on <b>three main themes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. volunteer recruitment and retention challenges</li> <li>2. policy and procedural requirements</li> <li>3. practical management of volunteers.</li> </ol> <p>Participants raised <b>concerns about volunteer burnout</b> due to individuals serving multiple organizations, difficulties in attracting people to executive positions, and managing change with long-term volunteers. The team also explored <b>opportunities for innovation</b> in volunteer models and the need for better resources and technology to support volunteer coordination.</p> <p><b>What Needs Improvement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Volunteer retention and burnout prevention:</b> 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.</li> <li>2. <b>Policy and procedural clarity:</b> Gaps exist in volunteer management policies, screening requirements, and onboarding processes, particularly for Centrelink volunteers who require host organization contracts.</li> <li>3. <b>Time and resource constraints:</b> Staff members have limited time to effectively manage volunteers, and organizations lack adequate promotional resources that clearly showcase roles and organizational impact.</li> </ol>	<p>Miro (Electronic Whiteboard Notes)</p>

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	<p><b>Ideas for Improvement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Innovative volunteer models:</b> Explore alternatives to traditional volunteering structures, including intergenerational volunteering, shared community portals for small towns, and volunteer coordination by other volunteers.</li> <li><b>Enhanced recognition programs:</b> Develop milestone recognition initiatives and National Volunteer Week celebrations to improve volunteer satisfaction and engagement.</li> <li><b>Improved onboarding and training:</b> Create upskilling opportunities for volunteers (e.g., first aid courses, safe talk training) and establish clearer pathways for volunteer development and role transitions.</li> </ol> <p><b>Open Questions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What volunteer management policies should be prioritized, and where can teams access the national standards (1-pager)?</li> <li>How should organizations handle volunteer applicants who may not be well-suited for roles, and is it acceptable to decline volunteers?</li> <li>What are the best practices for managing challenging situations, including volunteers who don't follow directions, miss shifts, or have personality clashes?</li> <li>How can organizations navigate change management with long-term volunteers who resist new requirements like police checks or WWC screening?</li> <li>What templates and tools are available for volunteer surveys, impact data collection, and volunteer portals with communication capabilities?</li> <li>How to support organisations to stay motivated when they feel so overwhelmed by not being able to attract volunteers?</li> <li>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</li> <li>What volunteer management policies should we be making sure we have in place</li> <li>Navigating and supporting diverse personalities within the volunteer team</li> </ol>	

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	<p>10. What do I need to consider when recruiting volunteers for office-based roles</p> <p>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</p> <p>12. Where can I get a 1 pager of the national Standards?</p> <p>13. Life commitments are making it hard to hold onto volunteers for long</p> <p>14. How can we rethink Board/Management Committee roles to attract more people to take on the responsibility of Executive Positions?</p> <p>15. Navigating change in organisation procedures/requirements with existing long-term volunteers (e.g. introduction of new screening or training requirements)</p> <p>16. Do we have to say yes to every volunteer applicant- volunteer applicants who may not be well-suited to the role.</p> <p>17. Ideas for innovative volunteer models - versus traditional and how to overcome barriers</p> <p>18. Ideas for promotional resources that clearly showcase roles and organisational impact to attract volunteers</p> <p>19. How do we overcome technological barriers when recruiting volunteers</p> <p>20. Identifying and connecting with potential volunteers.</p> <p>21. Challenges with onboarding Centrelink volunteers due to host organisation contracts being required</p> <p>22. What is the easiest way to onboard volunteers and what insurance do they need?</p> <p>23. Best ways of engaging with communities that "over volunteer" to attract them</p> <p>24. Development of existing volunteers for a bigger collective - like the Olympic Games</p> <p>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</p>	

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	<p>26. How can I effectively manage volunteers when I have limited time?</p> <p>27. How do we manage volunteers who won't listen to directions or who don't turn up to shifts-</p> <p>28. What are some recognition ideas for volunteers- miles stones/National volunteer week</p> <p>29. Ideas for an effective volunteer portal with communication capabilities</p> <p>30. What kind of upskilling opportunities should we provide for volunteers</p> <p>31. How to find/offer the right opportunities for volunteers to develop their skills in their position e.g. first aid courses/ safe talk</p> <p>32. Best way to have conversations with aging volunteers who are struggling but see this as a very important part of their lives</p> <p>33. Is there a template for a Volunteer survey?</p> <p>34. What are some ways we can share the data</p> <p>35. What are some ways to gather impact Data</p> <p>36. Are there tips for working with Senior Volunteers or Older people in general?</p> <p>37. Intergenerational volunteering - is this a thing (yet)?</p> <p>38. Are there other communities that use a shared portal for whole community access (small towns)</p> <p>39. Is it acceptable for volunteers to coordinate other volunteers and activities?</p> <p>40. Dealing with volunteers who have personality clashes!</p>	
0	<p><b>Online Chat Summary</b></p> <p><b>Rhee:</b> Its quite complex between Centrelink and the host provider. Council would have its own onboarding arrangement</p> <p><b>Carole Labram:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Susie:</b> Public liability and volunteer personal accident insurance is what we recommend. Useful information and resources available here:</p>	

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	<p><b>Rhee:</b> if you do create a story - it can be used for grant applications and impact reporting - super powerful, with consent from the volunteer.</p> <p><b>Monique J:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/share/r/18Rh6jLyhi/">https://www.facebook.com/share/r/18Rh6jLyhi/</a> One we did for one of our community groups.</p> <p><b>Susie:</b> 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 "<i>your year to volunteer</i>"</p> <p><b>Rhee:</b> 2026 is also International Year of the Volunteer</p> <p><b>Susie:</b> 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: <a href="#">Technology   Volunteering Gateway</a></p> <p><b>Susie:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Susie:</b> new Voice of the Volunteer survey tool that is free for all organisations: <a href="#">Voice of the Volunteer Survey – Volunteering Queensland</a></p> <p><b>Rhee:</b> Another program helpful for older people is: <a href="#">LiveUp   Free and reliable healthy ageing information   iLA</a> they help a lot with online supports and tech support Jenny Hazelwood is the State contact <a href="mailto:jenny.hazlewood@ilaustralia.org.au">jenny.hazlewood@ilaustralia.org.au</a></p> <p>See also: <a href="#">Volunteer Involvement Lifecycle Resources – Volunteering Queensland</a></p>	
1.6	<p><b>Additional Resources</b></p> <p>The following resources were shared in the chat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Standards for Volunteer Involvement – Volunteering Queensland</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Standards Wheel (1 page)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Verification of voluntary work form (SU462) - Services Australia</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Volunteering and Centrelink 2025 update</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Volunteer Week Resources - Volunteering Australia</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026).</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Insurance - Volunteering Australia</a></li> </ul>	

**Meeting Notes 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](mailto:karen.wilson@cotaqld.org.au)