



# ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

*Before setting up a volunteer program...*

## Engaging volunteers:

### Before you start the journey think about:

- Why do you want to involve volunteers;
- How to involve volunteers;
- Who will supervise, support and manage the volunteer program;
- Policies on the involvement of volunteers in the organisation; and
- Can you afford to use volunteers?

### When involving volunteers ask yourself:

- Are your reasons for employing volunteers valid, consistent and relevant to your organisation;
- Do proposed volunteer roles have intrinsic value and are a meaningful role for the volunteer;
- Does it look too much like a paid position;
- What are the health and safety implications?

### Can you:

- Appoint a manager or coordinator to manage volunteers;
- Monitor the volunteer program and make adjustments as necessary;
- Have organisational policy and procedures containing information on the management of volunteers; and
- Formalise ways in which volunteers are involved in decisions, consulted and recognised.

## Recruiting volunteers:

You can use a range of options from personal contacts to using a volunteer referral service such as ours, however, some principles should remain constant:

- Simple messaging;
- Use your personal networks;
- Work out where people you want to reach are, what they read and how they do it e.g., social media, internet; and
- Recruit for specific roles.

Are you ready to commit to volunteers then you need to find the right people for your volunteer positions.

Start by:

- Having job descriptions for each volunteer role; and
- Planning for the interview.

## Interviewing new volunteers:

Consider the following:

- Plan the interview, where it will be conducted and who will be the interviewer/s;
- Decide on key questions and identify the answers you want; and
- Keep notes on each interview and get back to applicants when promised.

If you employ paid staff you may have many policies documented and employment forms. You can use the same for paid and volunteer staff wherever possible.



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## Criminal History Checks:

It should be made clear to potential volunteers from the outset that they will be required to undergo a criminal history screening process as part of your risk assessment policy. Therefore, any volunteer working in Commonwealth and/or State funded aged care and disability programs or facilities in **QLD** will need to be screened.

Depending on the volunteer's role, who they will be working with and where they will be working they may require more than one screening check.

Currently there are three checks available to organisations for criminal history screening:

- **National Police Certificate** - to work in aged care. As there is a fee, first check if you have an *Organisation Reference Number* and a *Charity Fee Number* for the cost of processing each check.
- **Working with Children Positive Notice** - Blue Card to work with young people and is free for volunteers.
- **Disability Positive Notice Card** - Yellow Card for working with people with a disability and is free for volunteers.



## Induction:

Inductions are important to new volunteers. The procedure for inducting a new volunteer should be similar to what is given to paid staff on commencement of employment. Listed below are areas that volunteers need to be familiar with:

- Organisational policies and procedures;
- Quality Frameworks and Standards;
- Work health and safety policies;
- Volunteer rights and responsibilities;
- Work related information e.g., hours;
- The induction process; and
- A volunteer evaluation process.

## Orientation:

Orientations are also important to new volunteers and should also be similar to what is given to paid staff on commencement of employment. Listed below are some of the areas that volunteers need to know:

- Where the sign in/out book is;
- Locations of coordinator's office;
- Tea/lunch room facilities;
- Staff/volunteer toilets;
- Fire extinguishers/hose reels and fire exits;
- Fire evacuation plan; and
- Work health and safety officers.