

Topic 1 – New Residents

Moving to a new location can be both exciting and daunting. There are so many things for new residents to consider from settling into a new home, work, school and finding their way around an unfamiliar location. It may take some time before people think about volunteering in their new community, despite volunteering being a great way to meet new people, form friendships and learn more skills (*Key Volunteering Statistics, February 2022, Volunteering Australia*). The findings in the Building Community: Gifting Time Survey (the survey) indicated this is the case in the Sunshine Coast Region.

Length of Residency and Volunteering

We know that with increasing residency, a greater proportion of people tend to offer their time in formal volunteering. For respondents to the survey, this ranged from 60% among those who have lived in the region for up to 2 years increasing to 84% for those with 10 or more years on the Coast. It takes time to settle into a new community, seek out places and activities of interest but it does appear from the survey data that a large proportion of relatively new residents are willing to engage in volunteering.

How can we encourage new residents to the Sunshine Coast to get involved in volunteering? This is the question that was posed for the Market Place activity at the Community Forum.

What strategies can be used to encourage new residents on the Sunshine Coast to engage earlier in volunteering opportunities?

Promotion, Awareness and Communication

Some of the suggestions from the community forum were around communication, promotion, and awareness. Letter box drops are one way to disseminate information locally but very labour intensive. Check what newsletters are being delivered already. Neighbourhood Watch might be an avenue to explore and incorporate any messages about volunteer opportunities and activities in their regular newsletter. Churches and spiritual centres, schools, pre-schools and kindies also have notice boards and notices to parents/members, and this might be another opportunity to spread the word to new residents. Everyone needs to buy groceries. Ask if notices about volunteering opportunities and local volunteer events can be left at local shops.

Events and Activities

Events and activities are a great way to attract people to your organisation and provide you with an opportunity to promote the benefits of volunteering for you. Open days, come and try days, trivia nights, bare foot bowls... the list goes on. Check out some of the ideas in the resources section.

Volunteer Stories

The power of stories cannot be underestimated. Take the time out while you have people at your event or activity to gather and listen to volunteer stories and how they have made a difference to your organisations and their local community. Use stories in your social media posts and other promotional material to attract new volunteers.

Flexible Approach

Be prepared to offer flexible volunteer arrangements and a variety of tasks to keep the volunteers interested and happy. Information and communication were key themes from the

community forum. Regular catch ups with volunteers and open communication are seen as essential.

Resources:

Facebook

Facebook can be a great way to promote volunteering opportunities. Here is a small selection of well supported Community Facebook pages.

[Sunshine Coast Hinterland Community Board](#)

[Sunshine Coast Community Board](#)

[Sunshine Coast Mums](#)

[Sunshine Coast Australia – Official Community Notice Board](#)

[Sunshine Coast Local Life Community](#)

[Neighbourhood Watch Queensland](#)

[Sunshine Coast Neighbourhood Watch](#)

Event Ideas

[Community Events Ideas](#)

[50 Ideas guaranteed to Inspire Your Next Social Event](#)

[Event Ideas and Formats to Inspire Your Next Great Event](#)

Event Websites

[Events Sunshine Coast](#)

New Resident Help pages

[New Residents](#)

Residents' Association

[OSCAR Inc](#) (peak body)