

## Building Community: Gifting Time Volunteer Resource

### Topic 7 – Informal Volunteering

The definition of informal volunteering is "unpaid care or support provided to people outside your household and not within the context of a formal service organisation" (*Volunteering Australia*). Informal volunteering is not restricted to times of crisis. There are many opportunities to volunteer for and within groups with shared interests. Some of the areas of informal volunteering reported in the Building Community: Gifting Time Community Survey (the survey) survey included:

- Helping support friends or neighbours
- Providing emotional support
- Undertaking domestic work (for others)
- Assisting sports, recreation and art/performance group (e.g., clubs, choirs)
- Supporting online groups/forums
- Participating in environmental causes (e.g., looking after plant/wildlife)
- Participating in disaster prevention or recovery

Of respondents to the survey, 67% indicated that they had engaged in informal volunteering. This is a significant proportion and could suggest that these informal volunteers have strong social connections in their local communities where most informal volunteering takes place.

According to an article published by [The Conversation](#) in May 2023, informal volunteering is on the rise due to the flexibility of choice and time. Although there was a decline in formal volunteering during the COVID 19 pandemic, this crisis triggered a rise in people within communities helping those affected with shopping and other domestic tasks (within the restrictions imposed). Community Facebook pages were places where needs could be expressed and met.

Council's At Home in my Neighbourhood program, provides a number of resources that can assist in getting to know your neighbours and introducing yourself. Getting to know one another and engaging in street or neighbourhood activities can break down social barriers and make it easier for people to reach out to neighbours either offering or seeking help.

### Resources

[Volunteering Australia – The Story Project – Australian Multiculturalism Through The Prism of \(Informal\) Volunteering](#)

[Sunshine Coast Community Gardens](#)

[At Home in my Neighbourhood](#)

### Facebook

Facebook can be a great way to connect with your local communities and engage in informal volunteering. 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](#)