

## Building Community: Gifting Time Volunteer Resource

### Topic 4 - Overcoming the barriers

The barriers to volunteering have long been understood to include lack of interest, transportation, financial considerations, health issues and other commitments (*Volunteering in Australia 2022 – The Volunteer Perspective, Volunteering Australia*). Respondents to the Building Community : Gifting Time Community Survey (the survey) confirmed these barriers still exist for both volunteers and non-volunteers living on the Sunshine Coast. Time constraints was the highest response at 45% followed by bureaucracy, family commitments, travel and personal conflict. Respondents were divided on the benefits of the digital age for volunteering. Some seeing this as negative and removing the face-to-face interaction while others saw greater opportunities to volunteer remotely. Participants at the Community Forum were asked to share creative ideas to help overcome the key barriers that exist for non-volunteers.

#### What strategies can be used to overcome barriers faced by volunteers or people interested in volunteering on the Sunshine Coast?

##### Flexibility

Flexibility and variety in volunteer tasks are important factors in maintaining the interest of volunteers. Consider creating smaller or shorter tasks to accommodate volunteers who are time poor or may have physical or health limitations. Also be flexible with rostering volunteers to shifts, being mindful they're giving up their time. Providing volunteers with opportunities to gain experience and learning new skills is also important. Consider posting volunteer opportunities on your website and allowing volunteers to self-select the jobs and times they wish to work. Make allowances for volunteers to take time out from their commitments. Look into virtual volunteering and if this will work for some of your volunteer tasks.

##### Time and Transport

Transport and the cost of travel are key barriers for volunteers. Public transport on the Sunshine Coast has long been an issue due to the long distances and the time taken up with travel will exacerbate barriers to volunteering. Volunteers having to use their own transport can place financial pressures on people and in turn influence their decisions to volunteer. Bring staff and volunteers together and talk about transport and travel issues to seek solutions such as car-pooling. If it is feasible for the organisation, investigate a minibus to transport people, particularly if they are engaged in the same activity or at the same location.

##### Volunteer Support, Training, and Incentives

Reward and recognition go a long way to retaining volunteers and can take many forms. Create a sense of belonging by providing branded work wear. Build the capacity of volunteers through training and personal development. Offer service period incentives for specific milestones reached (e.g. gift cards for 12 months service). Have regular opportunities where staff and volunteers can get together for work and social activities.

Support volunteers where possible with mentors or buddies to assist them in learning about the role and your organisation. Investigate other ways to support volunteers such as day care facilities, financial compensation for transport or out of pockets expenses, discounts and give aways.

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## Topic 4 - Overcoming the barriers

Focus on the volunteer. Provide opportunities to get to know the people who volunteer or wish to volunteer. What are their skills, motivations, expectations, ambitions, challenges, and requirements? Find out what it is they have to offer your organisation and what you have to offer them to overcome barriers and provide support.

### Resources

#### Training

[Volunteering Queensland](#)

[TAFE Qld](#)

[Volunteering Australia](#)

[Volunteering Sunshine Coast](#)

#### First Aid

[Allen's Training Sunshine Coast](#)

[Sunshine Coast First Aid](#)

[National First Aid](#)

#### Volunteer Incentives and Support

[Volunteer Incentives and Engagement Ideas](#)

[Salvation Army](#)

[Volunteering Australia](#) – National Strategy

#### Volunteer Registers/Databases

[GoVolunteer](#)

[FreddyMatch](#)

[EV CREW](#)