

Innovate Your Aged Care Volunteer Engagement

Using a Co-Production Approach





➤ **‘Innovate Your Aged Care Volunteer Engagement: Using a Co-Production Approach’** aims to inspire Volunteer Involving Organisations to break traditional moulds and collaboratively redesign volunteer involvement from strategic, operational, and service delivery perspectives.

This booklet is a result of a collaborative project between Macarthur Disability Services and Volunteering SA&NT - CHSP Sector Support and Development teams, funded by The Department of Health and Aged Care.

This booklet may be printed, photocopied, or shared digitally in its entirety to support the intended purpose of innovating volunteer involvement.

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Co-Production Approach



Volunteering and volunteers have long played a vital role in the aged care sector. With the introduction of a new Aged Care Act—including the Statements of Rights and Principles—now is the time to explore opportunities to rethink, reinvigorate, and redesign volunteer involvement across the sector.

Co-production is a collaborative process where people with bespoke experiences evaluate, plan, design, and deliver together (*Recovery and Wellbeing Academy, 2021*). This approach values the expertise and experience of all participants, ensuring that services are more effective and better aligned with the needs of those who use them. At its core, co-production is about partnership and shared decision-making (*Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2022*).

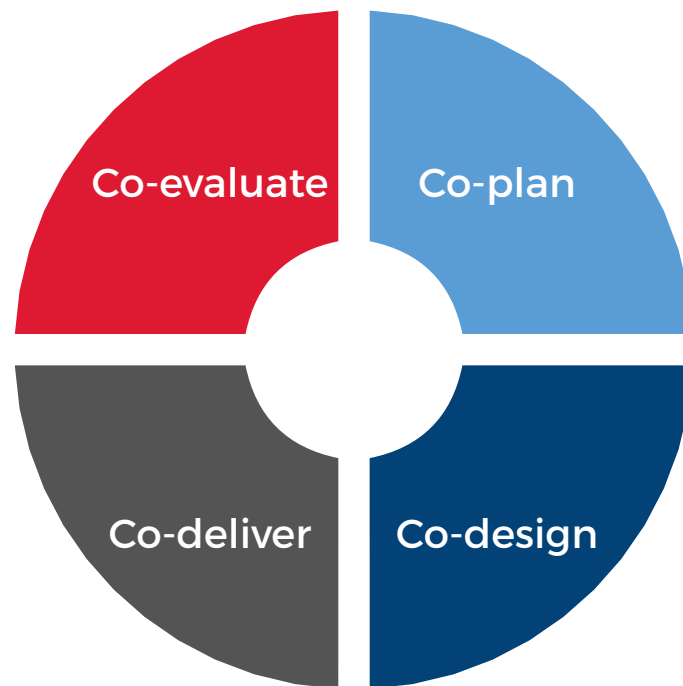
In the context of aged care volunteering, a co-production approach values the unique expertise of volunteers and the lived experiences of service users, recognising their contributions as essential to shaping meaningful and responsive volunteer involvement.

The co-production model used in this resource includes four key stages: Co-evaluate, Co-plan, Co-design, and Co-deliver. This framework is influenced by the Recovery College model (*Discovery College, 2017*), commonly used in the mental health sector (*MDS, 2025*).

Across each co-production stage, volunteer involvement is considered through three key volunteering categories: Strategic, Operational, and Service Delivery - ensuring that both volunteer and service user perspectives are integrated at all levels of the co-production process.

Graphic 1: Co-production

(influenced by Recovery College model in mental health sector (Discovery College, Alfred Health 2017))



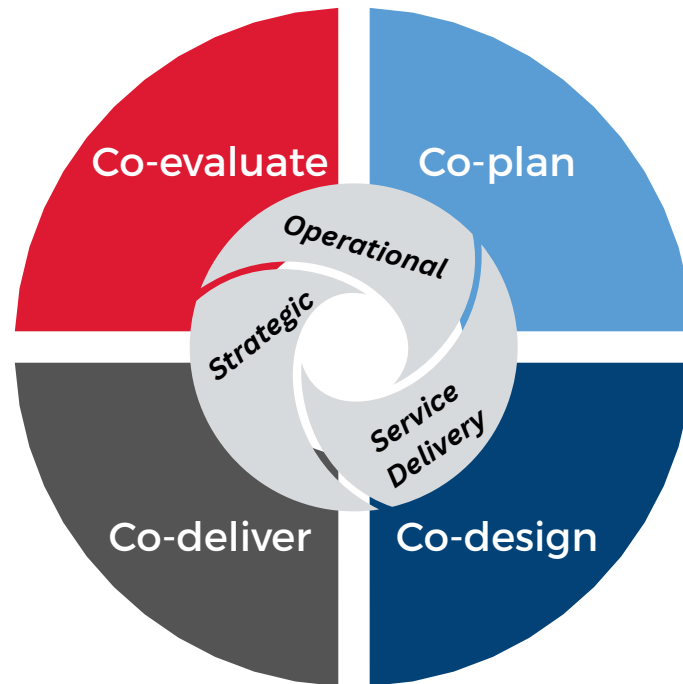
➤ **Co-evaluate** - All stakeholders are involved in providing feedback and insights into volunteering experiences and the services supported by volunteers. This includes identifying what is working well and exploring opportunities for innovation and improvement. Evaluation may include both quantitative and qualitative data—such as surveys, personal stories, complaint records, gap analyses, and audit findings.

Co-Plan - All stakeholders collaborate to plan the structure (or framework) of volunteer involvement, including setting goals, defining aims, and developing strategic actions and operational plans. This stage may also involve updating policies and procedures, assessing risk management, and making informed decisions about future service delivery.

Co-design - All stakeholders participate in designing the practical implementation of volunteer involvement. In simple terms, this stage focuses on how operations and service delivery will function at the grassroots level. It involves shaping the day-to-day realities of volunteer roles and responsibilities.

Co-deliver - All stakeholders collaborate to implement and deliver volunteer-involved programs, while monitoring progress and collecting impact statements and testimonials. This stage focuses on putting day-to-day tasks into action, with a continuous emphasis on observation, reflection, and ongoing improvement.

Graphic 2: Co-production and volunteer categories



Strategic

Strategic volunteering involves high-level planning, advising, and governance, contributing to the organisation's long-term direction and sustainability.

- Examples: Board service, professional advice (legal, financial, marketing), policy development
- Traits: Leadership-focused, strategic, decision-oriented
- Goal: Shape the organisation's long-term direction and sustainability

Operational

Operational volunteers work behind the scenes to support the infrastructure and day-to-day functioning of an organisation.

- Examples: Data entry, inventory, administration support, scheduling, volunteer onboarding, wellness ambassador
- Traits: Supportive, process-focused, internal-facing
- Goal: Maintain smooth operations and support effective service delivery.

Service Delivery

This category involves direct interaction with beneficiaries or communities, often focused on meeting immediate needs.

- Examples: Serving meals, driving older adults, visiting aged care residents, distributing goods
- Traits: Hands-on, front-line, people-focused, task-specific
- Goal: Provide direct support to improve others' well-being.

Innovation Project - Example

Project Purpose

Sample Home Care will conduct an Innovation Project to review volunteer involvement, assess its current effectiveness, and identify barriers and opportunities for innovation and improvement. The review will focus on the organisation's volunteering goals, as well as recruitment, retention, training, and support activities.

Outcomes/Impact:

- Increase volunteer inquiries by 25%
- Improve high-quality care for participants by 30%
- Enhance volunteering experiences by 25%
- Increase culturally safe, diverse, and inclusive service delivery and volunteer workforce by 50%





Co-evaluate

Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
Strategic	• <u>Volunteer Standards gap analysis</u> • Strengthened Aged Care Standards Self-Assessment • <u>Wellness and Reablement (CHSP)</u>.
Operational	• Review feedback and complaints records to identify patterns - could volunteers contribute to improvements? • Identify the programs currently supported by volunteers. • Review volunteer exit interviews and/or reasons for leaving to uncover insights. • Identify barriers and explore opportunities for modifying existing volunteer programs, or assess whether new programs could be introduced (e.g., conducting a SWOT analysis).
Service Delivery	• Volunteer feedback survey: Assess what is working well and identify opportunities for improvement, focusing on areas such as support, recognition, training, satisfaction, availability, barriers, and skills. • Participant (client) feedback survey: Gather insights on participants' interests, likes, and dislikes, what is working well, and where there are opportunities for improvement.



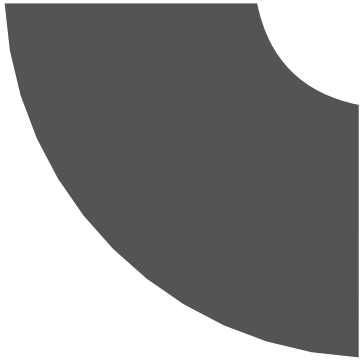
Co-plan

Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
Strategic	• Analyze opportunities identified in the Volunteer Standards gap analysis, Strengthened Aged Care self-assessment, and SWOT analysis. Select priority opportunities and develop specific strategic actions. • Define volunteer involvement rationale, goals, and objectives: Ensure alignment with the organization's values, mission, and vision. Clearly outline measurable outcomes to demonstrate the value and impact of volunteer involvement.
Operational	• Develop an operational plan outlining how volunteer involvement supports programs across the organization. • Update policies and procedures to reflect any changes. • Revise risk assessments to incorporate any updates or changes. • Review and update relevant insurance policies to ensure they are aligned with current volunteer involvement.
Service Delivery	• Make decisions on which programs/services will be supported by volunteers. • Allocate necessary resources and materials to support volunteer involvement and the identified programs/services.



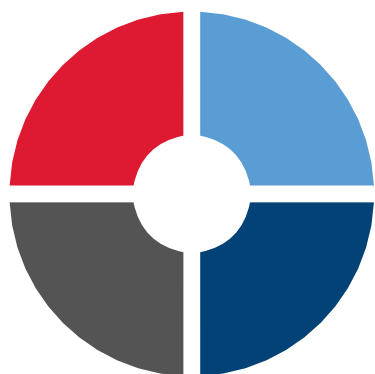
Co-design

Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
Strategic	• Integrate volunteer training and development plans into the program design, ensuring compliance with the Aged Care Act 2024 and Aged Care Code of Conduct. • Update Volunteer Agreements to align with the latest standards and regulations. • Embed cultural safety, diversity, and inclusion within all volunteer programs and practices. • Collaborate with stakeholders to design volunteer roles that are meaningful, engaging, and responsive to various formats (e.g., flexible, micro, event-based, corporate, skilled, short-term, intergenerational, virtual, in-person, ongoing).
Operational	• Utilise a range of promotional methods to attract and engage volunteers. • Develop and implement recognition strategies to ensure volunteers feel valued and appreciated. • Create a feedback mechanism for volunteers and stakeholders to continuously improve the volunteer experience and program delivery. • Establish clear communication channels to ensure volunteers are informed about their roles, expectations, and the broader goals of the programs they support.
Service Delivery	• Implement training and development plans to equip volunteers with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective and compliant service delivery.



Co-deliver

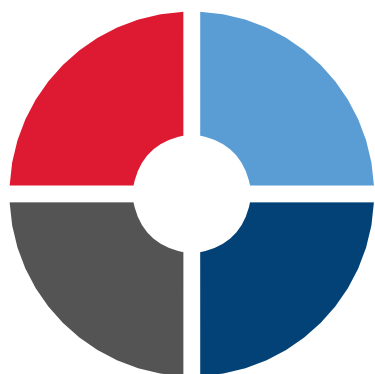
Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
Strategic	<i>(Focused on oversight, funding, and high-level monitoring)</i> • Track progress through monthly reports, including deliverables. • Submit mid-project funding reports, if applicable.
Operational	• Conduct debriefs or supervision sessions (1:1 or group) with volunteers. • Facilitate team meetings as needed. • Implement the training schedule for volunteers. • Adhere to risk mitigation strategies. • Follow established policies and procedures. • Onboard and induct new volunteers. • Communicate changes to staff, volunteers, and clients/consumers.
Service Delivery	• Deliver activities through service provision. • Collect client/consumer and volunteer feedback via impact statements and testimonials. • Apply culturally safe and inclusive practices in volunteer interactions.



Tracking progress

Timeline Start Date	01/07/2025	12/08/2025	01/10/2025	01/01/2026
Co-evaluate				
Co-plan				
Co-design				
Co-deliver				

Milestones When is each stage complete?	Status	Timeline
Co-evaluate e.g. Evaluation Report	In progress	04/08/2025
Co-plan e.g. Operational Plan		14/09/2025
Co-design e.g. Recruitment drive launched		01/12/2025
Co-deliver e.g. New volunteer involvement project implemented for 6 month period and outcomes/impacts measured		27/06/2026



Budget

Stage	Potential Items	Cost
Co-evaluate	- Engaging expert consultants to design and conduct a tailored evaluation - Supporting high-quality data analysis and clear, actionable reporting - Facilitating meaningful engagement through focus groups, interviews, or workshops - Offering appreciation incentives to participants (e.g., gift cards) - Providing comfortable, accessible spaces for in-person feedback sessions, including transport and catering where needed	\$
Co-plan	- Staff time allocated to support collaborative planning - Catering to create a welcoming and inclusive meeting environment - Insurance updates or adjustments to support planned activities - Facilitator support for structured and productive sessions - Venue hire for in-person planning workshops	\$
Co-design	- Legal or HR consultancy to review and update Volunteer Agreements in line with new regulations - Diversity and inclusion training and materials to support culturally safe practices - Marketing and branding updates to align with refreshed volunteer roles - Digital advertising and promotional materials to attract a diverse range of volunteers - Volunteer recognition initiatives, such as thank-you events, awards, or gifts	\$
Co-deliver	- Salaries/Wages (hour allocations). - Training e.g. online learning platform. - Resources for use in service delivery.	\$
	TOTAL	\$

Project Title here

Project Purpose

ADD PROJECT PURPOSE STATEMENT

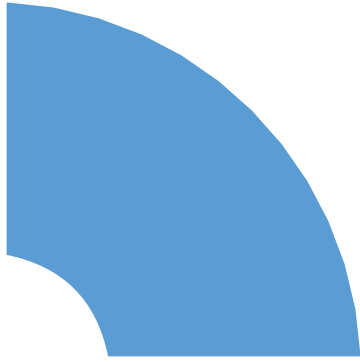
	Outcomes / Impact
1	
2	
3	
4	

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Co-evaluate

Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
Strategic	
Operational	
Service Delivery	



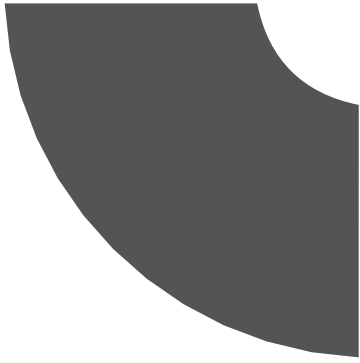
Co-plan

Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
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Operational	
Service Delivery	



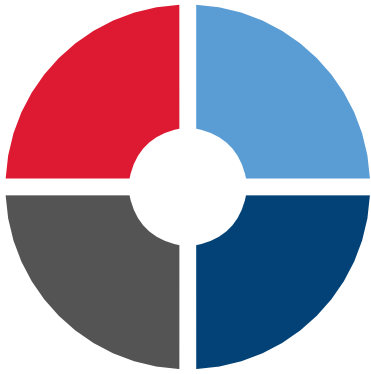
Co-design

Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
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Operational	
Service Delivery	



Co-deliver

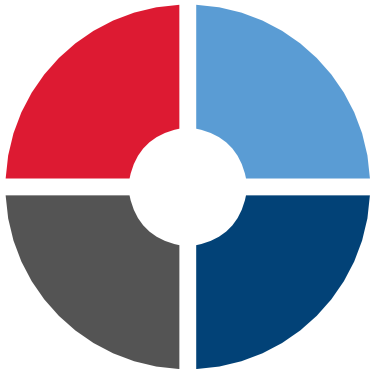
Categories of Volunteering	Potential Actions (examples including, but not limited to:)
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Operational	
Service Delivery	



Tracking progress

Timeline Start Date	/ /	/ /	/ /	/ /
Co-evaluate				
Co-plan				
Co-design				
Co-deliver				

	Milestones When is each stage complete?	Status	Timeline
Co-evaluate			/ /
Co-plan			/ /
Co-design			/ /
Co-deliver			/ /



Budget

Use the table below to breakdown your budget allocation for the Innovation Project.

Stage	Potential Items	Cost
Co-evaluate		\$
Co-plan		\$
Co-design		\$
Co-deliver		\$
	TOTAL	\$

Other Resources



'Free Training Opportunities for Aged Care Workers'

The Department of Health and Aged Care

www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/free-training-opportunities-for-aged-care-workers



'Corporate Volunteering'

Volunteering Australia (2025).

www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/corporate-volunteering/



'Designing Volunteer Roles: A Practical Guide'

Volunteering ACT (2014).

www.volunteeringact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/designing-volunteer-role-a-practical-guide.pdf



'GoVolunteer.com.au'

Promote volunteer roles including event and corporate.

www.govolunteer.com.au/



'PRObono Australia - Volunteer Roles'

www.probonoaustralia.com.au/volunteer/



'National Standards for Volunteer Involvement'

Volunteering Australia (2025)

www.volunteeringaustralia.org/nationalstandards/



'National Standards for Volunteer Involvement - Gap Analysis'

Volunteering Australia (2025)

www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wpcontent/uploads/NSVI_GapAnalysis.pdf

Other Resources



'Support and Training for Aged Care Volunteers'

The Department of Health and Aged Care

www.health.gov.au/topics/aged-care/volunteers/support-and-training



'Social Policy Compendium'

Volunteering Australia (2018)

www.volunteeringhub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Social%20Policy%20Compendium.pdf



'Student Volunteering in Aged Care Leads to New Skills and Plenty of Laughs'

Hammond Care (2023).

www.hammond.com.au/resource-hub/student-volunteer-alana



'Value of Volunteering Calculator'

Volunteering SA&NT (2024)

www.vsant.org.au/value-of-volunteering/



'Volunteer Rights and Volunteer Checklist'

Volunteering Australia (2009)

www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/files_mf/1376971192VAVolunteerRightsandchecklist.pdf



'Volunteers in Aged Care Survey 2023'

The Department of Health and Aged Care (2023)

www.agedcareengagement.health.gov.au/images/blog/Volunteer.png



'Volunteering and the Digital World: Extending the Power of Volunteering through New Technologies'

Perold, Helene, et al. (2020).

www.iave.org/iavewp/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Volunteering-and-the-Digital-World-Extending-the-Power-of-Volunteering-through-New-Technologies.pdf

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Social Care Institute for Excellence (2023)

www.scie.org.uk/co-production/

**How We Work.**

Discovery College (2017)

www.discovery.college/how-we-work-2/

**What is Co-production**

Recovery and Wellbeing Academy (2021)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxNSYDo7p6Y



Notes



