

Media Release

Giving back makes a comeback: Aged Care volunteers heed the call

A campaign to address the critical shortage of volunteers in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) hopes to inspire more Australians to provide social support for some of the most vulnerable in the community.

The Re-engaging Volunteers into Residential Aged Care Facilities program is encouraging thousands of new and experienced volunteers an opportunity to experience the satisfaction of giving back to the community. Volunteers are needed for non-clinical social support to help in aged care facilities, providing companionship and assisting with leisure activities to combat social isolation and loneliness.

Volunteers in metropolitan and regional areas will be matched with one of the hundreds of facilities that have registered for the program, which will run until August. Volunteers will need to complete a short online training session and police checks and show proof of COVID-19 and flu vaccination as relevant.

Volunteer numbers fell dramatically during the height of COVID-19, with more than 70 per cent of volunteers unable to assist as a result of the pandemic. These Australians are now being asked to come back and experience the sense of community that volunteering provides, to help bring joy to residents of aged care facilities and make a real difference in their lives.

Volunteering Victoria CEO Scott Miller said: “The program is an important initiative to reinvigorate volunteering in aged care. Volunteering has always been a vital part of the non-clinical care in aged care facilities, with data clearly showing that a sense of social engagement and companionship has a meaningful impact on the quality of life and mental wellbeing of our most vulnerable citizens.

“Volunteer programs only ever seek to complement, not replicate or replace, the functions of a paid professional workforce. They provide assistance, companionship and support to residents, which is essential to their wellbeing. The volunteers we are calling for won’t replace paid workers in hands-on care roles, but will instead provide vital companionship and social connection through conversations, games and outings, in a time when connection has been hampered,” Mr Miller said.

“Volunteering has a vital role in aged care and we welcome this program as key part of the holistic care our most important citizens deserve.”

Australia’s volunteering peak bodies are committed to making the volunteering process as easy as possible, offering all the necessary training and paperwork and matching each volunteer with the most appropriate aged care facility.

Anyone interested in the program can register at <https://www.agedcarevolunteering.org.au/>

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