# Volunteers

Handbook



# **Contents**

Welcome		Work, Health and Safety	
About Whiddon		Infection Control and Best Practice	14
	_	Wearing a Mask/PPE	14
Our History	2	Hygiene Practices	15
Our Strategy and			
Pathway to Purpose		Day to day Operations	
		What to wear	16
The Whiddon Way		Name Badge	16
About the program		How to Sign in/Out	16
Your role as a Volunteer	6	Who to contact	16
Compliance Requirements	7	Insights and Feedback	
Volunteer Training		Sharing Insights	17
Volunteer Training Opportunities	8	Sharing Feedback	17
Policies and Procedures		Frequently Asked Questions	
Aged Care Code of Conduct	9	Our Services	19
Serious Incident Response Scheme	10		
Grievance and Complaints	11		
Privacy and Confidentiality	12		
Boundaries	12		
Use of Whiddon Resources	13		



# Welcome

### Welcome to Whiddon!

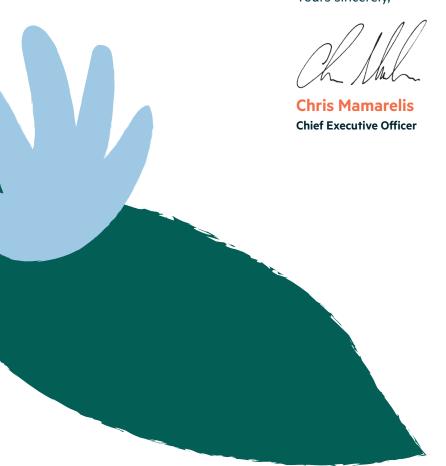
We're absolutely thrilled to have you as part of our team. Volunteers like you are at the heart of what we do, bringing energy, compassion, and kindness that make a genuine difference in the lives of our residents and clients every day.

At Whiddon, our purpose is clear: to enrich people's lives and make a real difference, and now you are part of that Journey. Whether you're assisting with activities, providing companionship, or supporting our dedicated team, each gesture, every conversation, and every meaningful moment that you share with our elders has a lasting impact.

This handbook is here to support you, providing guidance on everything you need to know as a valued member of our community and the Whiddon family.

Thank you for your commitment to making a real difference, we're so glad you're here.

Yours sincerely,





# **About Whiddon**

# **Our History**

For over 75 Years, Whiddon has been a dedicated provider of exceptional care for Australians throughout the regional, rural, and remote regions of New South Wales and Southeast Queensland.

Our journey began as a philanthropic initiative, and today we stand as a prominent notfor-profit organisation, serving more than 2,700 residents and clients and employing over 3,000 compassionate individuals. As an award-winning care provider, we extend our services through residential care homes, home care, retirement villages and support for participants with NDIS plans.

At Whiddon, our passion is centred on enriching lives and ensuring that our clients, residents and participants remain deeply connected to what truly matters to them. This is an important part of our model of care.

We channel our efforts back into our people, our communities, and the services we provide. We nurture partnerships with leading academics and universities to embrace the latest in innovative thinking, programs, and training focused on enhancing quality of life and wellbeing.

We wholeheartedly endorse and sustain a proud sense of community, where everyone, without exception, holds a significant place in our hearts.



# Our Strategy and Pathway to Purpose

## **Strategic Directions**

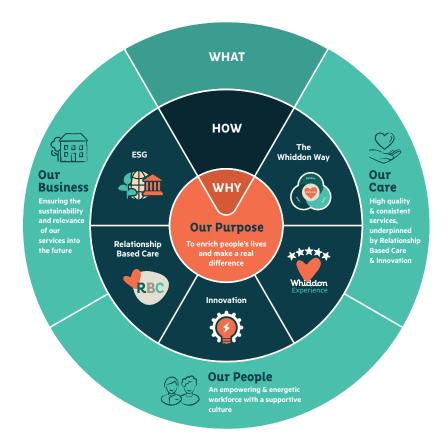
Our Strategic Plan is our blueprint for the next 3 years with a renewed focus on our Purpose, and the voice of those that matter: our residents, clients and our people.

It has our Purpose at its core and focuses on three clear Strategic Directions:

Our Care: High quality & consistent services, underpinned by Relationship Based Care & Innovation

**Our People:** An empowering & energetic workforce with a supportive culture

**Our Business:** Ensuring the sustainability and relevance of our services into the future



Our renewed purpose and direction will not only allow us to navigate through the next 3 years, it will mean we can thrive as an organisation and positively impact the lives of even more people in the communities of which we are a part.

# **Pathway to Purpose**

Our purpose at Whiddon is "To enrich people's lives and make a real difference"

We achieve our purpose through these five key pathways:





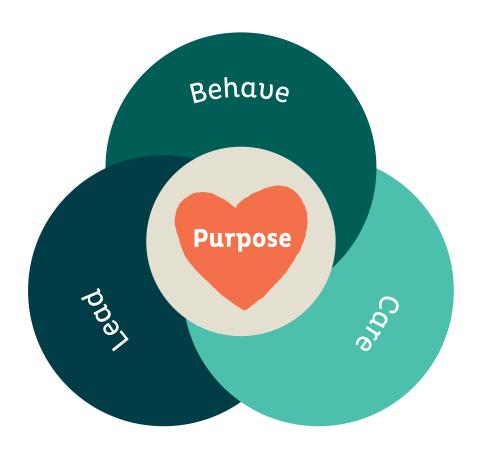






# The Whiddon Way

The Whiddon Way connects us to our purpose and creates a unique Whiddon Experience. It has three core elements: how we behave, how we care, and how we lead.



### The way we BEHAVE

Is about how we act every day. Our interactions with residents, clients, each other, and partners. It's about being welcoming, smiling, communicating kindly, being reliable, and open to change.

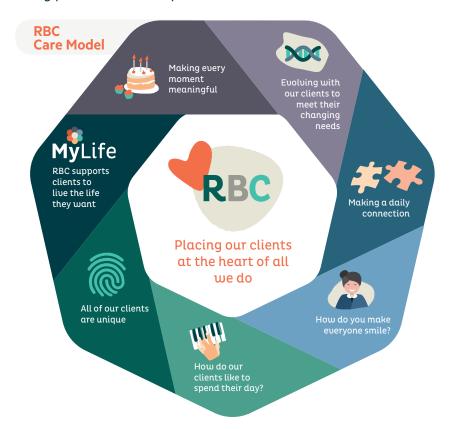
### The way we **LEAD**

Involves all of us. It's about creating a supportive and trusting environment, taking responsibility, helping each other grow, and working together to succeed.

### The way we CARE

Caring is a huge part of what we do and why we are all here. For residents and clients, we use the RBC (Relationship-Based Care) approach. RBC is the way that all team members deliver care across all of Whiddon's services, ensuring that the clinical, emotional, social and wellbeing needs of our residents and clients are being met. Working as a team, we provide individualised care to each person and help them maintain and build important social connections, as well as continuing to participate in interests and activities that are important to them.

The way we care is also about how we care for each other, by paying attention to how the team is going, supporting each other and looking after everyone's wellbeing and safety. It's about listening, being kind, open, and prioritising positive relationships.



### **Our VALUES**

Our personal values guide our actions, and the same goes for Whiddon. Whiddon's values - Relationships, Passion, and Growth - are the foundation of the Whiddon Way, shaping everything we do.



In summary, the Whiddon Way combines our behaviours, how we care, and our leadership principles. It is based on Whiddon's values and uses the RBC approach to ensure we provide the best care for residents and clients. This way, we create a positive and supportive environment for everyone.





# About the program

# Your role as a Volunteer

As a volunteer in aged care, you play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for residents and clients. Your contributions go beyond tasks; they foster community, emotional wellbeing, and lasting connections. Through your kindness and commitment, you help create an environment where residents feel valued, respected, and engaged.

Whiddon expects volunteers to engage respectfully, uphold values and policies, and maintain professional boundaries. They should communicate promptly if unavailable, follow health and safety practices, and report any concerns. Collaboration with staff and other volunteers is essential to creating a positive environment. In return, volunteers can expect a rewarding experience with appreciation, support, training, and a well-managed program. If any concerns arise, volunteers are encouraged to speak with their supervisor or the Volunteer Manager.

### What volunteers can do

Volunteers can participate in various activities, including companionship through faceto-face engagement, phone support, or pen pal programs. They can assist with lifestyle activities such as arts and crafts, games, and outings, as well as pet therapy, gardening, and reminiscence programs. Administrative and technical support roles are also available, including helping residents with technology. Volunteers can also get involved in the Men's Shed, a space where residents can engage in woodworking, repairs, and hands-on projects that promote camaraderie, purpose, and a sense of achievement.

The Volunteer Program is flexible, and we welcome new ideas and role suggestions from our Volunteers. Contact the Wellbeing and Lifestyle Team Leader or Volunteer Manager to explore further opportunities.

### What volunteers can't do

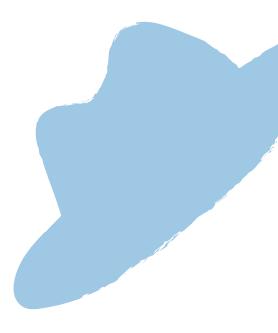
To safeguard the privacy, safety, and well-being of residents and clients, and to maintain professional boundaries, volunteers are restricted from performing certain tasks, including:

- Providing medical or personal care.
- Monitoring or assessing care standards.
- Engaging in or advising on financial matters of residents or clients.
- Accessing personal, medical, or care records of residents or clients.
- Interfering with or overstepping the personal relationships of residents or clients.
- Participating in the care homes or community care service operational decisions.
- Handling complaints or issues (these should be directed to the service manager or coordinator)
- Using or borrowing residents' or clients' belongings.
- Taking photographs or videos of residents or clients without prior written consent from both the individual and the service.
- Accepting gifts or monetary items from residents or clients (any offers of gifts should be respectfully declined and reported to the service manager).

# Compliance Requirements

All volunteers must have a Criminal Record Check (CRC), valid for three (3) years. However, if a volunteer's role involves unsupervised contact with an NDIS participant, they must obtain an NDIS Worker Screening Check (NDISWC) instead. This check is valid for five (5) years.

If a volunteer already holds a current NDISWC, this will be accepted in place of a CRC, and no additional check will be required.





# **Volunteer Training**

# Volunteer Training Opportunities

At Whiddon, we value the incredible contribution you make as a Volunteer. To support you in your role, we offer a range of training opportunities designed to help you feel prepared and confident in your volunteering journey with us. These training programs cover important compliance related topics such as the Aged Care Act, Privacy Act, and Quality Standards, along with other topics.

Additionally, we provide useful resources to expand your knowledge and keep you informed about the latest practices in Aged Care. While some of these training resources are required by law, we encourage you to take advantage of all available learning opportunities.

As part of our commitment to ongoing development, volunteers have access to our learning platform with over 95,000 modules on a wide variety of topics. Whether you want to deepen your understanding of aged care, develop new skills, or explore personal interests, you can learn anything you want, at your own pace. This is a fantastic opportunity to grow while making a meaningful impact in the lives of those we care for.

To obtain access to our Learning Platform, email Volunteers@Whiddon.com.au



# Policies and Procedures

This section outlines the key policies and procedures that guide your role as a volunteer with Whiddon. These policies are in place to ensure the safety, well-being, and satisfaction of everyone involved, including residents, clients, employees, and volunteers. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with these policies and procedures, as they are essential to performing your role effectively and safely.

# Aged Care Code of Conduct



**1.** Act with respect for people's rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.



2. Act with respect for the privacy of people.



**3.** Act in a way that treats people with dignity and respect and values their diversity.



**4.** Provide care, supports and services in a safe and competent manner, with care and skill.



**5.** Act with integrity, honesty and transparency.



**6.** Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of care, supports and services.



**7.** Provide care, supports and services free from all forms of violence, discrimination, exploitation, neglect and abuse and ii. sexual misconduct.



**8.** Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, discrimination, exploitation, neglect and abuse and sexual misconduct.

All volunteers in aged care should act in a way that is respectful, kind and consistent with the behaviours set out in the Code. There are a range of consequences for breaches of this code and they vary depending on the nature and seriousness of the matter. Volunteers should comply with the code at all times; however managers have an obligation to ensure volunteers understand their obligations under the Code and to address any alleged breaches promptly, fairly, and responsibly.

Possible outcomes that could be used in the case of a breach may be:

- Counselling
- Additional training or mentoring
- Redirection to a more suitable role
- Referral to authorities in case of serious breaches
- Termination of the Volunteer role

# What to do if you are concerned about a breach of the Code

Report any breach or concerns about a breach of the code to your local supervisor. If you are not comfortable in reporting to your supervisor, you may report to the Volunteer Manager. Whiddon is committed to protecting anyone who speaks up about their concerns and this is highly valued as it protects other volunteers, employees, residents and clients.

# Serious Incident Response Scheme

The Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) is a key framework in aged care aimed at identifying, managing, and reducing incidents that impact the safety, health, or well-being of residents and clients. As a Volunteer, you play a supportive role in aged care, hence you must understand your responsibilities under SIRS to ensure a safe environment for all residents and clients.

There are 8 types of reportable incidents involving older Australians that must be reported to the Commission.

	8 types of incidents that are reportable are:	Some examples
1	Unreasonable use of force	Hitting, pushing, shoving, or rough handling.
2	Sexual contact or inappropriate sexual touching	Sexual assault, stalking, making sexual advances or unwanted sexual touching.
3	Psychological or emotional abuse	Yelling, name calling, ignoring, threatening gestures, or refusing access to care or services as a means of punishment.
4	Unexpected death	Reasonable steps weren't taken by the provider to prevent a death, the death is the result of care or services provided by the provider or a failure by the provider to provide care and services.
5	Stealing or financial coercion by a staff member	Coercion of an older person to change their will to their advantage or steals valuables from an older person.
6	Neglect	Withholding personal care, untreated wounds, or insufficient assistance during meals.
7	Inappropriate use of restrictive practices	Restraining or using a sedative medication to control behaviour in a way that is not consistent with legislation.
8	Unexplained absence from care/missing person	When a resident in residential care goes missing without explanation and there are reasonable grounds to contact the police. Or an older Australian goes missing while care or services are being provided, and there are reasonable grounds to report that fact to the police.

If you become aware of an incident in aged care, you should:

- Make sure everyone is safe and call for help if needed
- Follow your services' policies and procedures for incident management
- Tell your supervisor as soon as you become aware
- Support the older person to understand who they can reach out to, such as:
  - » an employee at your service,
  - » the Commission, or
  - » an advocacy service such as the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN).

Everyone in aged care has the right to feel safe. Let's stay safe together.

For more information about how to raise a Grievance, please reach out to volunteers@whiddon.com.au.

# Grievance and Complaints

At Whiddon, we are committed to creating a positive and supportive environment for all volunteers. However, we understand that situations may arise where you feel dissatisfied or have concerns about your volunteering experience. Whether it's an issue related to your role, interactions with others, or the broader program, Whiddon provides a clear process for addressing grievances and complaints in a respectful and constructive manner.

You may wish to raise a grievance if:

- You feel you have been treated unfairly or disrespectfully.
- You have concerns about safety, workplace culture, or policies.
- You believe your role or responsibilities are not being managed appropriately.

### The Process

- Self-Resolution: If you feel comfortable, speak directly to the person involved to resolve the issue amicably. Often, open communication can resolve misunderstandings.
- 2 Speak to your supervisor or service manager: If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or if you do not feel comfortable addressing it directly, share your concerns with your local supervisor or service manager. They are there to support you and help find a solution.
- If your concern is about your direct supervisor: If the issue remains unresolved after discussing it with your supervisor, or your concern is about your direct supervisor, you may escalate your complaint to a higher level within the organization, such as the Volunteer Manager.





# Privacy and Confidentiality

As a volunteer with Whiddon, you have a responsibility to uphold the privacy and confidentiality of residents, clients, employees, and other volunteers. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality is essential for building trust, protecting personal information, and ensuring compliance with legal and organisational standards.

**Privacy** refers to an individual's right to control access to their personal information and space.

**Confidentiality** involves respecting and protecting the information shared with you in the course of your volunteering role.

As a volunteer, you are expected to:

- **Protect personal** information: Do not share or disclose any personal, medical, or financial information about residents. clients, employees, or other volunteers without explicit authorisation.
- Follow organisational policies: Adhere to Whiddon's privacy and confidentiality policies at all times.
- Be mindful of conversations: Avoid discussing sensitive information in public areas where it may be overheard.
- **Secure information:** Ensure that any documents, files, or digital information related to your role are kept secure and are accessed only by authorised personnel.

Breaches of confidentiality can include actions such as discussing a resident's or client's personal details with others, including family or friends, sharing photographs or videos of residents or clients on social media without explicit permission, or accessing records or information that fall outside the scope of your volunteering duties.

# **Boundaries**

Boundaries are essential in your role as a volunteer, ensuring respectful, safe, and professional relationships with everyone you interact with, including clients, fellow volunteers, and employees. Boundaries help protect privacy, maintain professionalism, and create a positive and supportive environment. They also align with Whiddon's policies, procedures, and legal obligations.

As a volunteer, you are expected to maintain clear boundaries by:

- Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of residents, clients, volunteers, and employees.
- · Focusing on tasks within your role, avoiding actions or decisions outside your scope of responsibilities.
- · Communicating politely and professionally while balancing empathy with respect for personal space and limits.
- Declining tasks or requests that exceed your role and seeking guidance from a supervisor or Volunteer Manager if needed.

In your interactions:

- With residents and clients: Be caring and empathetic but avoid sharing too much personal information or engaging in tasks outside your role, such as handling gifts.
- With other volunteers: Build friendly, professional connections while respecting each individual's preferences and privacy.
- With employees: Maintain a respectful and cooperative relationship, knowing employees are there to support and supervise you within appropriate boundaries.

The principle of being "friendly, not friends" is a helpful way to approach these relationships. This ensures everyone feels valued and supported while maintaining professionalism and respecting the vulnerability of the people we serve.

# Use of Whiddon Resources

Whiddon resources remain property of Whiddon at all times and it is essential that volunteers understand their requirements and obligations when using Whiddon resources for organisational and personal purposes.

As a volunteer you are expected to:

- Utilise resources in accordance with Whiddon's policies
- Use company technical and physical resources properly, responsibly and for legitimate purposes only

- Seek permission before using company property for personal purposes
- Use resources in a manner that causes no harm to the community or environment
- Secure all company property against theft or fraud
- Maintain the integrity and security of all company intellectual property
- Maintain the security, integrity and confidentiality of all relevant company commercial and other information

As a volunteer of Whiddon, you must not at any time, without Whiddon's prior written consent:

- divulge to any person, or entity, other than Whiddon, or use to your advantage or that of any other person or entity, any of the Confidential Information of Whiddon or any Whiddon Group Company; or
- use or attempt to use any information which you may acquire in the course of your volunteer role with Whiddon in any manner which may injure or cause loss or be calculated to injure or cause loss to Whiddon or any Whiddon Group Company or their respective clients, customers or employees; or
- use or attempt to use any information acquired during your volunteer role with Whiddon for any purpose unrelated to your volunteering responsibilities.

# Work, Health and Safety

Your safety and wellbeing are our priority, and we are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers, team members, clients and residents. To help maintain this, we ask that you follow all safety instructions and procedures, report any hazards, incidents, or injuries to your supervisor immediately, and use equipment responsibly and only as instructed (where applicable).

In challenging situations, your safety is the top priority. If necessary, remove yourself from the situation and seek help. Staff Assist buttons are located throughout the facility, including residents' rooms, corridors, main areas, dining rooms, and activity rooms, and can be used to call for immediate assistance.

If you have any concerns about safety or wellbeing, you can also raise them via our dedicated Wellbeing email address at Well@whiddon.com.au. Don't hesitate to speak with your supervisor or use this channel for additional support. Together, we can ensure a safe and supportive environment for everyone.

# Infection Control and Best Practice

Infection control practices are key to minimising the spread of infections in an aged care environment. As a Volunteer you must adhere to the following essential practices:

- Maintain Cleanliness: Follow your supervisor instructions regarding infection control practices, such as using wipes to clean tables, equipment, or any surfaces after use. Note that professional cleaners handle regular deep cleaning.
- **Isolation Precautions:** Follow any isolation or quarantine guidelines for residents who may have contagious conditions. Always check for updated instructions and follow them carefully.
- Follow Protocols: Familiarise yourself with and strictly follow all infection control protocols as outlined by the service. This includes using PPE properly, performing hand hygiene as required, and reporting any health concerns to your supervisor promptly.

By practicing proper hand hygiene, wearing the correct PPE, and adhering to infection control protocols, you help maintain a safe and healthy environment for our residents, clients, and everyone attending our Whiddon services.

# Wearing a Mask/ PPE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks, gloves, gowns, and eye protection, is essential in reducing the risk of infection in an aged care setting.

Masks and PPE: Volunteers must follow the current guidelines for wearing masks and other PPE. This may vary depending on the situation, including the type of task being completed, the level of exposure risk, and any relevant health guidelines in place at the time. Always wear the appropriate PPE as directed, ensuring masks cover both the nose and mouth completely, and dispose of disposable PPE appropriately after use.

# **Hygiene Practices**

Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infections in an aged care and home care settings. As a volunteer, it's essential to wash your hands regularly and thoroughly to protect both employees and yourself.

## Follow these simple steps:



### Wash Hands with Soap and Water

Wet your hands, apply soap, and scrub all surfaces for at least 20 seconds, including the front and back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.



### **Use Hand Sanitiser**

If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol. Apply enough to cover your hands completely and rub them together until dry



### When to Wash Your Hands

- Before and after interacting with residents/clients.
- After touching surfaces, equipment, or items that may be contaminated.
- After using the toilet, coughing, or sneezing.
- By practicing good hand hygiene, you help keep the environment safe and contribute to the health and well-being of our residents/clients.

# Day to day Operations

### What to wear

As a valued member of our team, we ask that you maintain a professional and respectful appearance. Please follow these guidelines for attire:

- Shirt\*: we will an provide an optional volunteer shirt. While wearing the shirt is not mandatory, we encourage volunteers to wear it while engaging in activities, as it helps residents and employees and clients easily identify you as a member of our support team.
- Bottoms: Skirts, dresses, and shorts should be at least knee-length.
- Shoes: For safety reasons, we ask that you wear closed-in shoes with rubber soles.

### \*Ordering Your Shirt:

- During the onboarding process, we collect your shirt size.
- If we have your size available on-site, it will be provided to you during Orientation.
- If your size is not currently in stock, we will place an order for it and ensure you receive your shirt as soon as it arrives.

# Name Badge

As part of our commitment to creating a welcoming and professional environment, the team will arrange for a name badge for you.

We ask that you wear your name badge whenever you are on-site to help residents, clients, staff, employees and visitors identify you easily. If you lose or damage your badge, please inform the team so a replacement can be arranged.

# Who to contact

For	anv	questions	or further	assistance.	please	reach out t	to vour	local S	Supervisor
	QII V	questions	OI IUIIICI	assistatice,	picasc	i cacii oai	io youi	iocui c	Jupei visoi.

Contact Person's Name	Mobile (if applicable)
Email address	Service Phone Number

If you wish to discuss any matters with our central team, contact our Volunteer Manager via Volunteers@whiddon.com.au

# Insights and Feedback

# **Sharing Insights**

Your interactions with residents and clients provide valuable insights that help us improve their care and overall experience. We encourage you to share relevant observations, such as changes in a resident's or client's mood, behaviour, or preferences, or anything that might enhance their day-to-day experience. For example, you might notice someone enjoying a particular activity, seeming unusually quiet, or mentioning a need or concern.

At the end of your time volunteering for the day, please check in with your supervisor to share feedback. Let them know who you visited, what activities you did, and any observations or insights you gathered. This helps us stay informed and ensures that we can respond promptly to any concerns or opportunities to improve care.

That said, there are some things that don't need to be escalated. Casual conversations or minor preferences (e.g., a resident or client mentioning they prefer tea over coffee during an activity) can usually be addressed in the moment. If you're unsure whether something should be shared, it's always best to check with your supervisor, who can guide you.

Finally, please remember that confidentiality is essential. Avoid sharing personal or sensitive information about residents or clients with anyone who does not need to know.

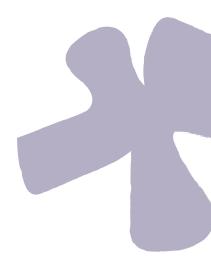
# Sharing Feedback

Your feedback is essential in helping us improve. We encourage you to share ideas, concerns, or suggestions. You can do this through both formal and informal channels, such as chatting with your local supervisor, or via the Volunteers inbox, which is monitored by the Volunteer Manager.

We also hold Quarterly
Volunteer Drop-in Sessions,
chaired by the Volunteer
Manager, where you can ask
questions and provide feedback.
Additionally, an annual survey
helps us gather valuable insights
to enhance the Volunteer
Program and improve Whiddon's
services.

Meeting details for the quarterly sessions will be shared with you in advance. If you have any questions, please contact Volunteers@Whiddon.com.au







# Frequently **Asked Questions**

# 1. What should I do if I can't attend my scheduled volunteer shift?

Please notify your supervisor as soon as possible so arrangements can be made. Providing early notice helps ensure continuity of support for residents and clients.

# 2. Who do I speak to if I have concerns or feel uncomfortable in my role?

You can approach your supervisor or reach out to the Volunteer Manager. We are here to support you and address any issues promptly and respectfully.

## 3. Are there breaks during my volunteer shift?

Yes, if you are volunteering for an extended period. Please check with your supervisor to arrange breaks.

# 4. Can I change roles or take on new responsibilities?

Absolutely! If you are interested in trying a different role or expanding your skills, speak with your supervisor. We value your contributions and want your volunteering experience to be fulfilling.

## 5. Is there an age limitation for **Volunteers?**

At Whiddon, we deeply value the contributions of all our volunteers at every stage of life. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers, our insurance policy provides coverage up to and including the age of 94.

For volunteers who reach 95 years of age, we warmly invite you to transition into an Honorary Visitor role. This role allows you to continue being an integral part of our community, enjoying meaningful interactions and continuing to support our purpose in a way that suits your preferences, without the formal responsibilities of volunteering.

This transition helps us prioritise safety and wellbeing while celebrating your ongoing connection to Whiddon.

# 6. What do I do if I want to stop volunteering?

If you're thinking about stopping your volunteering, we ask that you speak with your supervisor as soon as possible. They can guide you through the process and discuss any next steps to ensure a smooth transition. Your contribution is greatly valued. and we'd appreciate the chance to thank you personally!





# Award-winning care that connects, inspires and enriches lives every day.

Whiddon is passionate about enriching lives and keeping older people connected to what matters to them in life. We aim to really understand each person through building deep relationships with them, their family and their community.

This partnership enables us to care for all their needs – social, emotional and physical – so that they can continue to learn, live, love and enjoy every day.







# Contact us

- **\** 1300 738 388
- volunteers@whiddon.com.au
- www.whiddon.com.au/volunteers/
- 1 Connect with us on Facebook
- Find helpful resources

https://www.whiddon.com.au/careers/volunteer-at-whiddon/

