

Volunteer Handbook

Ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

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MTHCS
Mallee Track Health
and Community Service



Foreword

Everyday across the Mallee Track catchment, a small army of important people do seemingly ordinary things that make an extraordinary difference in the lives of others. This small army goes about its work with little fuss – but they are not unseen or unnoticed. They go about their work with a feeling of satisfaction that can only be felt by service to others – this service is known as volunteering.

Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS) knows that volunteers make a significant contribution to the organisation and broader community. Our clients tell us so. The volunteer workforce at MTHCS is almost half the size of our paid workforce. Without volunteers our health service would not be able to provide such a comprehensive range of services to all corners of the catchment.

People who volunteer bring a diversity of skills and talents, which enhances the quality of services we can deliver. Volunteers provide a caring and personal response to significant human needs. The act of volunteering offers many benefits and personal rewards for those volunteers involved.

MTHCS is committed to providing high quality volunteer management and support as this is integral to encouraging and involving volunteers in our work. This booklet outlines your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer with MTHCS and other important information for your volunteer role.

I hope your volunteering experience at Mallee Track Health and Community Service is a rewarding one.

We thank you for your contribution to Mallee Track Health and Community Service and the clients that we serve.

Booklet provided to you by: _____

Date: _____

Volunteer Name: _____

Your Volunteer Coordinator is: _____

Their Contact Number is: _____

The Program Leader where you volunteer is: _____

Their Contact Number is: _____

Your Volunteer Role (s): _____

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Visit our website at www.mthcs.com.au or find us on Facebook.

Service Overview

Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS) is a Multi-Purpose Service that provides a flexible range of Aged Care Services including residential and community services, Home and Community Care Program for Young People, Neighbourhood house programs, and Early Years services that are appropriate to the needs of the community. We respect and abide by MTHCS Values and the Public Sector Values and Principles.

Our vision

Leading our communities to excellence in integrated health and community services.

Our mission

To provide people of all ages with access to quality, person-centred care in the Mallee.

Our philosophy

Equitable and timely access to innovative models of care, supported by a local workforce that is engaged with the community.

Our Organisational Values

- **Accountability** - We define our expectations and are accountable for our actions;
- **Excellence** - We set high standards and continually strive to improve on them;
- **Compassion** - We treat everyone with care, respect and dignity;
- **Teamwork** - We work collaboratively and in the spirit of partnership;
- **Integrity** - We endeavour to do the right thing in all circumstances, even if no-one is watching;
- **Transparency** - We are open and honest and embrace positive change.

Volunteer Roles

Volunteers work in a wide range of roles within MTHCS and within numerous community and residential based programs. Volunteers are an important part of program delivery and enable the effective delivery of a wide range of programs that otherwise may not be possible.

The Volunteer Coordinator will assist the volunteer to identify their role of choice and suitability. MTHCS believes it is important for the right person to be chosen for the right volunteer role and as such volunteers will be interviewed to ascertain the most suitable role(s).



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Volunteer roles include:

Delivered Meals Volunteer: To deliver midday meal using own transport to designated clients in their home.

Planned Activity Group Volunteer: Volunteers assist program coordinators with transport, meal preparation, activities and outings. Volunteers are required at a range of community locations across the Mallee Track.

Escort: Provide support to someone whilst on an outing or attending appointments to ensure they remain as independent as possible.

Volunteer Drivers: Provide support to get people to appointments, social gatherings, shopping using MTHCS vehicles.

Friendly Visiting: Visit people in their own home or residential areas to support them to feel connected to their community.

Meet & Eat: Support people to come out for a shared meal within their community to stay as active, connected and independent as possible.

Computer & Internet Programs: To teach people in various areas of computer literacy at the Ouyen Neighbourhood House.

OP Shop: Support the running of the Sea Lake Op Shop.

Men's & Ladies' Auxiliaries: Work within a supportive community group to raise funds for purchase of vital equipment for the health service.

If you have an area you would like to volunteer in or you have specific skills that could assist to develop a program, please come and speak with your MTHCS volunteer coordinator to discuss your options.

Recruitment & Selection

All persons interested in Volunteering must first complete a volunteer application form and undergo an interview. This is to ensure any specific needs of the volunteer are known and understood and that a person's skills and interests are best matched to a volunteer role and to the needs of the organisation. The Volunteer Coordinator reserves the right to deem an application as not suitable if it does not meet the requirements and values of the organisation. All volunteers must provide two referees for the Volunteer Coordinator to contact prior to commencement.

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Position Descriptions

MTHCS has a wide and varied role within the community; this enables us to provide a variety of volunteering opportunities. All volunteers will be provided with information on their volunteering role and guideline support them whilst volunteering. Each volunteer will be asked to sign an agreement form upon joining MTHCS. Support will be provided to volunteers to encourage regular feedback and ensure supervision and education needs are being met.

Recognition & Support

In recognition and thanks for the valuable contribution volunteers make to the organisation MTHCS holds a Volunteer Appreciation function each year. All volunteers are invited to attend. This event occurs annually in May in line with National Volunteer Week.

Volunteers are highly valued members of the service, and as such will be provided with support and training relevant to the role they are doing along with opportunities for skill sharing and networking. Each service area that has volunteers will:

- ☐ Maintain contact with volunteers and encourage them to report back if they have any concerns or issues either about the role or issues of health safety and wellbeing for self or person/s they are working with.
- ☐ Maintain regular contact with the volunteer to ensure they are well supported and any issues that may arise are addressed promptly.
- ☐ The Volunteer Coordinator will obtain feedback from volunteers to ensure the consumer is matched to the correct role/consumer, if there are issues then alternative roles/consumer may be found for the volunteer



Police Checks

In line with the Department of Health and Human Services standards procedures for employing paid and volunteer workers, police checks are a requirement for any agency providing services to vulnerable clients. Volunteers are required to undergo a police check prior to commencing as a volunteer with MTHCS. Volunteer checks are completed by MTHCS staff who have had training around conducting the check and privacy relating to collection of personal information. Volunteers are required to bring in specified points of Identification for staff to process the police check. The Volunteer Coordinator will support you to have your check completed.

No contact from the Police is made directly to the volunteer. Any cost of the police check will be met by MTHCS and information from the check will remain confidential.

Confidentiality

All staff and volunteers are bound to maintain the confidentiality of information they may have access to. *Some of our happy band of volunteers enjoy a garden party hosted by the health services with staff service during Volunteers Week.*

A breach of confidentiality can result in a volunteer being dismissed from their role.

Should a volunteer want to talk to someone about their volunteering role or be concerned about someone they are volunteering with, please discuss your concerns with the Volunteer Coordinator or Service Area Coordinator.

MTHCS recognises the need to, at times, talk about things that you may have come across as part of your volunteering role.

We welcome this as it will ensure you feel supported and have someone to talk to should something challenge your thoughts.



Education and Training

All volunteers will be given an orientation to the organisation before commencing as a volunteer. Regular updates/ongoing training sessions are also held for most programs.

Training will be provided free of charge to volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to attend these training sessions. The majority of MTHCS volunteers work within the aged or community services area the following information is provided to explain how health and community services work with people.

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Rights & Responsibilities

As a MTHCS Volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- ☒ Follow Occupational Health & Safety Guidelines and report incidents or near misses as soon as is practicable.
- ☒ Be dependable/reliable and to notify the Volunteer Coordinator or Staff in your volunteer service area if you are unable to report for service.
- ☒ Present to your volunteer role in suitable attire that is neat and clean.
- ☒ To wear footwear appropriate to the volunteer role, it is essential to consider the safety and protection of your feet.
- ☒ Be fit to complete duties - not be under the influence of any illicit drugs, alcohol, medication, or have a medical condition that may affect your ability to perform your volunteer role.
- ☒ Be willing to undertake training to perform assigned tasks more effectively.
- ☒ Uphold the vision, mission, philosophy and policies of MTHCS.
- ☒ Use reasonable judgment in making decisions.
- ☒ Remember that all personal information learnt whilst on or off the job is strictly confidential.
- ☒ Respect the privacy of all customers.
- ☒ Carry out the specified volunteer responsibilities and tasks allocated.
- ☒ Be accountable.
- ☒ Be committed to the Organisation.
- ☒ Ask for support when you need it.
- ☒ Make others aware of your limits.
- ☒ Provide feedback, suggestions and recommendations to the Service Area Coordinator.
- ☒ Treat people with whom you are working with respect.
- ☒ Value and support other team members.
- ☒ Carry out the service you have agreed to do responsibly and ethically.
- ☒ Give notice before you leave the organisation.
- ☒ Report any gifts, or kind, from a customer to the Volunteer Coordinator. Under no circumstances is a volunteer to accept money. Any enquiries regarding this matter refer to your Volunteer Coordinator.

As a MTHCS Volunteer you have the right to:

- ☒ Be treated with respect and without bias or prejudice:
- ☒ Service satisfaction, to be assigned a service area which is worthwhile and challenging.
- ☒ Work in a healthy and safe environment; Mallee Track Health and Community Service is a "Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol Free" Environment.
- ☒ Be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.
- ☒ Be recognised as a team member.
- ☒ Be adequately covered by insurance.
- ☒ Be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are volunteering.
- ☒ Be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses, if appropriate and approved.
- ☒ Have the support and respect from staff and co-workers.
- ☒ Be given a copy of the organisation's volunteer policy and any other policies that affect your work.

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- ☑ Have a task description and agreed flexible working hours.
- ☑ Be involved in decision making.
- ☑ Be provided with sufficient training to do your job.
- ☑ Be trusted with information that will help you carry out your work more effectively.
- ☑ Be well briefed on the organisation and informed on new developments; via a volunteer newsletter.
- ☑ Know who you are accountable to and have clearly defined channels of communication.
- ☑ Be informed and consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect you and your work.
- ☑ Know the reasons why, if you are deemed to be unsuitable for a task.
- ☑ Be made aware of the grievance policy and procedure.
- ☑ Have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988.
- ☑ Confidentiality by the Volunteer Coordinator about the volunteer's personal details.
- ☑ Know what tasks you will be expected to perform and to say "No" to unacceptable tasks.
- ☑ If a volunteer is using a private vehicle they are covered for insurance excess by MTHCS. The vehicle must have private comprehensive insurance cover to be used.



Occupational Health & Safety

Mallee Track Health and Community Service is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for staff, contractors, volunteers and suppliers, in accord with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. This commitment extends to ensuring a safe and healthy living environment for residents and visitors, and meeting moral and legal responsibilities toward the local community.

Service Area Coordinators in each service area are accountable for the implementation of this policy in their service area to ensure a safe work place is provided and maintained. They evaluate volunteers' safe work performance and education requirements on a day to day basis and during performance appraisal. They also ensure the provision of resources to meet the organisation's commitment to health and safety.

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Volunteers shall follow all health and safety policies and procedures when working on and offsite. Volunteers shall report all observed potential or actual hazards to the Volunteer Coordinator.

The development and evaluation of the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Program, including hazard identification and risk management occurs through a commitment to consultation and team work between managers, volunteers and staff. Consultation by management occurs with elected staff, volunteers and health and safety representatives when a workplace change has the potential to effect health and safety. The Occupational Health and Safety Program includes but is not limited to the provision of a smoke free environment, Sun Smart work practices, No Lift work practices and an infection control program to reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Reimbursement Procedure

Volunteers are not expected to be out of pocket for expenses as part of their volunteering role. Vouchers to the value of \$15.00 may be authorised by the SAC and used to reimburse Volunteers own spending toward fuel and food while engaged in their volunteer role, e.g. remote volunteer may be entitled to be reimbursed for the fuel they use getting to a community fleet, to conduct a volunteer transport.

Volunteer Don'ts

As part of your volunteer role there are a few tasks that fall outside the scope of your role. These tasks should not be undertaken by volunteers:

- Personal care
- Administering of medication
- Changing dressings
- Request or accept money or gifts
- Become involved or responsible for a person's property, assets or financial affairs
- Give legal, financial, medical, professional, cultural or religious advice.

Should someone ask you to support them with any of the above tasks volunteers are to advise the client that they are unable to support them with this need and refer them on to the Service Area Coordinator or Volunteer Coordinator for referral to suitable agency to support the person with these needs.

Compliments and Complaints

Your feedback regarding services is always welcome and seen as an opportunity to improve. Your feedback helps us to improve our service. Please do not hesitate to provide feedback on any aspect of the service you receive or would like to receive.

Please head to www.careopinion.org.au and share your experiences of Mallee Track Health and Community Service, care and support, GOOD or BAD. Your stories are passed on to the right people to make a difference.

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Volunteer/Client Matching Procedure

Every effort is made by the staff at MTHCS to ensure volunteers are matched to suitable tasks and people to support. During volunteer orientation and client assessments people are asked about their like and dislikes. This information is used to support matching of volunteers to clients.

From time to time a poor match occurs due to limited volunteer resources. When a known poor match occurs both the volunteer and person receiving the service will be advised and have the right to cancel the service. Volunteers are asked to advise their Volunteer Co-ordinator instances of poor matching that they are not aware of to ensure everyone's volunteering experience is a pleasurable one.

Smoke Free Environment

All buildings and surrounds and vehicles are non-smoking. All persons are asked to refrain from smoking whilst in these areas.

Exiting the Program

Volunteering is always a matter of choice and a volunteer may choose to leave a program at any time. Prior notice is appreciated where possible to ensure that the quality of service is maintained. Written resignation is preferred.

Supporting People to Stay as Active, Connected and Independent as Possible

Across the globe, keeping people well as they age is becoming more of a priority.

Partly this is to do with our growing ageing population and partly it is to do with individual choice - people want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible as they age.

One of the best ways to look after the wishes of individuals and meet the needs of the community is for older people to maintain good health. Increasingly, research tells us that good health comes from keeping active, maintaining good nutrition and keeping up good lifestyle habits - like being sun smart.

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Nowadays, we also think about being active in a broader sense – being active in your local community, actively making decisions about your own life and keeping active mentally.

What does active ageing mean for the people we work with?

This focus on active ageing means that we want to support older people to continue to live an independent and active life in their own home for as long as possible. Not so long ago, we thought doing things ‘for’ people was best. The thinking nowadays is not to rush in to do everything for our clients. For example, when cleaning people’s homes, sometimes staff will just be beside the person as they do their own dusting. Simple as it sounds, this means the client is taking an active role in looking after their own home, doing some of their own housework. They feel better and they are keeping active. Not all of our clients can do as much as they would like, but it is still important that they are making their own choices as far as possible.



But I volunteered so I can help people...isn't this needed anymore?

Yes - volunteers play a vital role in providing Home and Community Care services across Victoria. The key message for volunteers is to support older people to be as active as they possibly can.

Volunteers play a fantastic role by ‘being beside’ clients - taking them out in the community, chatting with them, driving them to places they would not otherwise get to, making sure they have a meal delivered to them after a stay in hospital. Without this volunteer support, many people would not be able to stay in their own homes. So, volunteers are very much needed, but sometimes the best thing a volunteer can do is nothing! Staying near the person and supporting them to look after themselves is great for everybody.

But everyone is so busy...Isn't it easier for me to just do it?

We are all busy and under time pressures, which is exactly why volunteers can make such an important difference to the quality of people’s lives. Of course, it is often easier for someone else to do the task - but that’s not the point, is it? Our services are about doing what’s best for the client, no matter how much longer that may take.

I don't want to do something that's dangerous for the client

No - and MTHCS strongly agrees with you! It’s important that you are aware that the staff have assessed the client to see what they are capable of doing and what they want to do. The things we ask you to do are part of the client’s care plan and reflect the goals that the client would like to achieve. We also make sure that we monitor clients, to check whether their goals have changed for any reason. We keep this information in the client’s care plan. As a volunteer, you are not expected to do anything that you feel is risky for the client or for you.

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We also require that you tell us what you observe about the client. If you think someone is struggling with a task, make sure you let your supervisor know. It may be that the person needs to be assessed again and a new care plan developed.

Our clients like to be looked after, what's wrong with that?

Essentially there is nothing wrong with being looked after; we can all relate to that feeling!

However, it is really important to encourage people to be as active in managing their own lives as possible – and to keep this up on a daily basis. One way to think about this is to recall a time when you were out of action – maybe just with a bad flu, or after surgery or having children. Can you remember what it felt like, trying to get back on your feet?

You can literally feel dizzy and need to take time to get back to feeling strong and healthy if you've stopped doing things for a week or so. Older people are often less able to stretch or to lift heavy things. This can lead to people doing less and less. Gradually these restrictions can start to affect basic day-to-day activities. Rather than thinking of 'looking after' people as waiting on them, think of looking after people as encouraging them to keep as active as possible. Volunteers can make people feel special. In fact, you can play a great role in encouraging and motivating people, and giving them confidence.

Does being active always mean doing something physical?

No, not at all. It can be something mentally active - like playing a game of chess or backgammon or reading a book or discussing a newspaper article. It can be talking about a piece of music or reminiscing. We think about being active on physical, social and emotional levels. Maybe another way to think about it is that it is the opposite of inactive.



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