

Aged care celebrates its volunteers

By Sandy Cheu on [May 25, 2018](#) in [Industry](#)



Volunteer Daphne Hazell in the library she set up at ACH VITA

From librarians to disc jockeys and corporate workers, aged care providers are highlighting the people who volunteer their time, expertise and friendship to support residents as part of National Volunteer Week celebrations.

For every paid worker in the not-for-profit aged care sector, there are five volunteers, according to the 2017 Senate inquiry report into the future of Australia's aged care workforce.

In 2016, 23,537 volunteers provided 114,987 hours of care in residential facilities, 80 per cent of which nationally have volunteer staff, the report found.

One of those is ACH Group volunteer Daphne Hazell, 91, who started volunteering at the age of 16 as a Sunday school kindergarten teacher and has recently set up her ninth library at ACH's residential facility VITA, in Daw Park.

Ms Hazell has spent most of her life surrounded by books working and volunteering as a librarian including 27 years at Sacred Heart College and 15 years at the Repatriation General Hospital library.

She and her team of volunteers have catalogued hundreds of donated books from residents, staff and family members in VITA's new library.

Three days a week volunteers go around the facility to visit residents in their rooms with a variety of magazines, books and DVDs.

"You're never too old to get enjoyment from volunteering," said Ms Hazell, who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2012 for her community service.

"It means you have companionship and it makes you feel better in yourself, too. Volunteering has helped me to live, not just exist."



A Villa Maria Catholic Home resident (left) with volunteer Mary and fellow volunteer Dominic (right)

At Villa Maria Catholic Homes, a team of volunteers spend time with aged care residents at the St Bernadette's Residential Aged Care including Mary who visits Maltese residents and speaks to them in their shared language.