

Role Scaffold — Volunteer (Uey Kai Garden, DCCG)

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Status: Draft — to be confirmed with the working group.

Template: DCCG Role Scaffold Template.

Purpose of the Scaffold

A Volunteer is anyone from DCCG or the wider Donnellys Crossing community who shows up to garden — planting, weeding, harvesting, building, or otherwise being alongside the work — without holding one of the named coordination roles (the five Head Gardeners, Kids' Plot Lead, Marae Liaison, Food Stand Caretaker, Fuel/Spend Tracker). The scaffold sets out what Volunteers are stepping into, what's welcomed from them, and what isn't theirs to decide.

Why This Matters

A garden run by a small group at the centre and "everyone else" on the edges produces two failure modes: people on the edges either withdraw (they don't feel welcome to contribute) or push (they feel justified in overriding decisions because they showed up). The scaffold names a third option — the Volunteer has voice but not decision-rights, and the rules around that are clear from day one.

This addresses a real concern: someone with strong opinions shows up and disagrees with the Head Gardeners. Their opinions are welcome to be voiced, but the working group as a body, or the Lead Gardener vote, decides — not the loudest voice.

Outcomes of the Scaffold

Poor Outcome. Either the Volunteer holds back ("I'm not a Lead Gardener, I don't get a say") and the working group misses their input, or the Volunteer pushes through ("I came here to help, you should listen") and the working group loses coherence.

Expected Outcome. Volunteers turn up, do the work, voice opinions when they have them, and accept that the working group as a body makes most decisions, and the Head Gardeners vote on cross-cutting horticultural ones (see decision making scaffold).

Excellent Outcome. The line between Head Gardeners and Volunteers softens because the work is shared. Volunteers with experience teach. Volunteers new to

gardening learn. Opinions are voiced, considered, sometimes adopted, sometimes not. "Not adopted" isn't experienced as rejection.

Planks of the Scaffold

1. Show up when you can, leave when you need to

Purpose of the Plank. Any amount of participation is real participation. partial contribution norm applies.

Why This Matters. Volunteer turnout is fragile if it depends on people staying all day. Most volunteers can give an hour or two. Some can give a morning. A few can give a day. All of those count.

Poor Outcome. Volunteers feel they can only come if they can stay the whole time. Few come.

Expected Outcome. Forty minutes is welcomed as a full contribution. Leaving early doesn't need an apology.

Excellent Outcome. Anyone who wants to be alongside the work, for any amount of time, feels invited.

2. Voice is welcome; decisions belong to the working group or the Head Gardener vote

Purpose of the Plank. A Volunteer's opinions, suggestions, and disagreements are welcomed into the conversation. Decisions about what gets planted, when, where, and how are made by:

- The working group as a body, for most things.
- The Head Gardener vote, for cross-cutting horticultural decisions (see decision making scaffold).

Why This Matters. Strong opinions are real. Sometimes they're right. Sometimes they're not. Sometimes they're a matter of preference. The Plank ensures opinions get heard and considered, and then the working group or the five Head Gardeners decide. The decision is honoured even by those whose opinion didn't carry.

The relevant Head Gardener role's final Plank (Hold the role as a tender, not an operator) is the other side: Head Gardeners hold horticultural depth but don't decide individually either. The Volunteer voices in; the working group or the vote decides.

Poor Outcome. A Volunteer suppresses their opinion ("I'm just a volunteer") or pushes it through ("I'm right; do it my way"). Either silence or override.

Expected Outcome. Voice is named clearly when there's something to say. "Have we thought about companion planting here?" or "I'd do it differently, here's why." The working group or the Head Gardener vote decides. The Volunteer accepts the result.

Excellent Outcome. Decisions are better for having heard the Volunteers' voices.

3. Three options when the decision goes the other way

Purpose of the Plank. Make explicit what's available to a Volunteer whose persistent strong opinion isn't adopted.

Why This Matters. Without this Plank, the Volunteer has only "stay silent" or "keep pushing" — both bad. Three options, all acceptable:

- *Voice it again, but only if conditions have changed.* The Rule 3 throttle applies — re-raising the same concern in the same conditions isn't voice, it's wear.
- *Leave the working bee, the garden, or the project.* Walking away is acceptable. promise sentence covers all DCCG households whether they garden or not; leaving the project doesn't leave the community.
- *Grow your own.* Your own garden, your own beds, your own preferences. Surplus from a home garden can still flow to the food stand (emergency stocking norm applies).

A Volunteer who chooses any of the three isn't letting anyone down.

Poor Outcome. The Volunteer feels their only options are "keep pushing until I win" or "leave bitter."

Expected Outcome. The Volunteer chooses one of the three.

Excellent Outcome. Walking away or growing your own is treated as equal to staying.

4. Care for the place

Purpose of the Plank. The Uey is a public reserve. The garden is on shared ground. Volunteers leave the site at least as tidy as they found it — tools put away, gates closed, the BBQ shelter respected.

Poor Outcome. Volunteers treat the site like a project they're visiting. Tools wander. The site looks unkempt. Neighbours notice.

Expected Outcome. The site is left tidy. Tools return to where they came from.

Excellent Outcome. The site is held by everyone who uses it. Nobody has to tidy up after anyone else.

Values

Three values: **voice without overriding** (your opinion matters; it doesn't decide); **partial is full** (forty minutes is a real contribution); and **clean options when you disagree** (voice again only if something changed, leave, or grow your own).

A note on Head Gardener authority

The five specialised Head Gardeners (Head Gardener - Seeds, Planting Convenor, Head Gardener - Soil, Head Gardener - Pests, Head Gardener - Orchard) each hold horticultural knowledge in their specialisation. The five vote on cross-cutting horticultural decisions through the Decision-Making Scaffold. Five voters, no ties, close votes (3-2) trigger a one-week pause.

For a Volunteer:

- On decisions that go to the Head Gardener vote, your voice goes into the discussion before the vote. The five Head Gardeners decide. You don't vote, but you are heard.
- On everything else — working bees, food stand, picnic, kids' plot, anything that isn't specialist horticultural — the working group decides as a body. Your voice goes in the same as anyone's.

A Volunteer's strong opinion isn't vetoed by a Head Gardener's expertise. It's considered alongside the expertise, either by the Head Gardener vote or by the working group, depending on what's being decided.

This is what non operator norm and the final Plank of each Head Gardener role were designed to protect. The Volunteer scaffold shows the same point from the Volunteer's side.

See also: decision making scaffold, head gardener seeds, head gardener planting, head gardener soil, head gardener pests, head gardener orchard, rhythm, non operator norm, system ask norm, partial contribution norm, rule 3 voice exit, promise sentence, emergency stocking norm.