

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

TRIM 817#17

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1. INTRODUCTION

Wollondilly Shire Council is fortunate to have a large number of community members who choose to volunteer their time to assist in the provision and enhancement of some of Council's services around the shire including but not limited to;

- 1.1 355 Management Committees
- 1.2 Disability Access Advisory Committee
- 1.3 Community Bus Drivers
- 1.4 Wollondilly Community Nursery
- 1.5 Tahmoor BMX Park
- 1.6 Land Care groups
- 1.7 Library Services
- 1.8 Road Safety
- 1.9 Australia Day Committee and other Community Events

2. DEFINITION OF A VOLUNTEER

A volunteer is considered to be a person who undertakes an activity on behalf of Council either directly or indirectly and is not party to an employment contract with council. The volunteer may be recruited directly by council or through another third party group which is involved with council in undertaking the activity. Although there is no direct personal remuneration which could be considered as income for the volunteer undertaking the activity there may be arrangements made for the payment of out of pocket expenses associated with the activity.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Council

Volunteers contribute to a wide range of activities across the shire and without this important contribution; many of the activities would cease to operate. Council has a responsibility to ensure that volunteer participation is not only safe and effective but most of all enjoyable. Council has a responsibility to;

- 3.1.1 Provide adequate resources for volunteers to conduct activities, including tools, materials and personal protective equipment.
- 3.1.2 Maintain Personal Accident insurance cover for volunteers

3.2 Volunteer Coordinators

The Volunteer Coordinator will generally be the Council staff member who has organised and/or is directly responsible for the activity being undertaken. In some cases it will be a suitably qualified volunteer appointed by Council to supervise the activity for example a President or Chair of a committee. The co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that all of the activities undertaken are done in accordance with standard Council systems and procedures.

The Coordinator shall provide information, instruction and training to a level that will enable the volunteers to have a clear understanding of the task at hand and that the work is within the skill and competence level of the individual.

The volunteer coordinator shall ensure that;

- 3.2.1 An induction is provided prior to commencement of the activities to be carried out.
- 3.2.2 Information is provided on relevant Council protocols and procedures impacting on activities including but not limited to;
 - 3.2.2.1 Work Health & Safety
 - 3.2.2.2 Fitness for work (alcohol & other drugs)
 - 3.2.2.3 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination
 - 3.2.2.4 Reporting of Incidents
 - 3.2.2.5 General Housekeeping
 - 3.2.2.6 Financial procedures (if relevant)
- 3.2.3 If required a risk assessment of the activity has been completed and suitable control methods have been established
- 3.2.4 If items of plant or equipment are to be used by volunteers that they have been inspected by a competent person and declared to be safe for use.
- 3.2.5 If hazardous substances are to be used, that the safe handling, use, storage and transport requirements have been explained.
- 3.2.6 Arrangements are in place for the appropriate monitoring and supervision of the activity.
- 3.2.7 Records of attendance are kept.
- 3.2.8 Concerns or queries raised by volunteers are responded to.
- 3.2.9 The ongoing suitability of the volunteer and volunteer activities are regularly monitored and reviewed.
- 3.2.10 If disciplinary action is required, it is done in accordance with standard Council disciplinary procedures.

3.3 Volunteers

While undertaking activities on behalf of Council, volunteers also have responsibilities for health and safety. In particular volunteers, through their actions or omissions, are not to place themselves or other persons at risk while undertaking the activities they have been engaged to do.

Volunteers shall;

- 3.3.1 Report to the Volunteer Coordinator or the designated person in charge as soon as practical any incidents or near misses which occur during the activity.
- 3.3.2 Use Council resources effectively and economically.
- 3.3.3 Not use Council property for their own purposes.
- 3.3.4 Follow any guidelines, protocols and procedures relevant to the volunteering position.
- 3.3.5 Follow all reasonable directions of the person in charge of the activity and accept supervision in the spirit in which it is meant.
- 3.3.6 Use plant or equipment in accordance with correct operating procedures.

- 3.3.7 Not act in a manner that would undermine the activity or Council in the community.
- 3.3.8 Record attendance details in an attendance register, log book or minutes of a meeting where required.
- 3.3.9 Where required, undertake a Working with Children Check.
- 3.3.10 Bring to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator or the designated person in charge any matter which could affect the safe undertaking of the activity, such as a pre existing physical restriction, medical condition, injury or the taking of certain prescription medications that could affect the ability to drive or operate equipment.
- 3.3.11 Notify the volunteer co-ordinator of any incident, near miss, injury, or damage to property or equipment that occurs during the volunteer activity.
- 3.3.12 Notify the volunteer co-ordinator when electing to cease volunteering role permanently or for a period of time.

4. RECRUITMENT and TERMINATION

4.1 Eligibility

Volunteering is open to anyone between the ages of 10 – 90. However an application to volunteer does not guarantee that the person will be engaged. All applications are to be assessed equally and fairly. Council has a duty of care to ensure that volunteers are not exposed to risks to their health and safety and it is the responsibility of the Volunteer coordinator to determine that the Volunteer will be suitable for placement in the activity applied for.

Note: Parent/Guardian approval is required for volunteers under the age of 16

4.2 Application Form

A volunteer application form is available in Trim 817#4. Persons wishing to become a volunteer are to complete this form **prior** to the commencement of volunteer activities.

The detail provided is to be entered into the Wollondilly Shire Council volunteer database. Completed applications forms are to be scanned to **TRIM Container 2421**

4.3 Volunteer/Student Employment Declaration

The following legislation applies in New South Wales to all people working with children and young people under 18 years of age.

4.3.1 Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

4.3.2 Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulations 2013

It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for voluntary employment that involves direct contact with children, or for an employer to employ a prohibited person to work with children.

If a volunteer will or may be involved with the supervision of children or young persons under 18 years of age, then a Volunteer/Student Employment Declaration may need to be completed.

For further assistance on this subject contact the Children's Services Team Leader on ext 604.

4.4 Termination of a Volunteer or the Activity

Council reserves the right to suspend or terminate the services of a volunteer or, discontinue the running of an activity or, cancel the membership of a committee at any time without notice or, in instances of proven serious misconduct by a volunteer.

Suspension or discontinuance of an activity may result from but is not limited to;

- 4.4.1 The project finishing
- 4.4.2 The withdrawal of or exhaustion of funding for the activity
- 4.4.3 Insufficient numbers to run the activity or committee

Serious misconduct includes, but is not limited to;

- 4.4.4 Theft of Council or another Volunteers property or funds
- 4.4.5 Consuming alcohol or other drugs while performing work on behalf of Council
- 4.4.6 Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, clients, public or Council staff
- 4.4.7 Disclosure of confidential information regarding Council and/or its clients
- 4.4.8 Serious breach of any of the volunteer responsibilities outlined in this guideline
- 4.4.9 Malicious damage to Council or community property
- 4.4.10 Deliberately or negligently not working in a safe manner

5. DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Discrimination and/or harassment will not be tolerated. Volunteers must;

- 5.1 At all times treat members of the public, Council Staff and Councillors fairly and equitably and with respect, courtesy, compassion and sensitivity.
- 5.2 Not act contrary to any law in their voluntary capacity.
- 5.3 Not act unreasonably, unjustly, oppressively or in a discriminatory manner.
- 5.4 Refrain from any form of conduct, in the performance of their duties, which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment or give rise to the reasonable suspicion or appearance of improper conduct
- 5.5 Not make comments to other volunteers, Council employees or members of the public which are discriminatory or derogatory with regards to:
 - Sexuality or sex;
 - Health
 - Marital status;
 - Physical or intellectual ability; and
 - Race, ethnic or religious background.

Where claims of discrimination or harassment are reported, they are to be investigated in a confidential manner and if proven, the person deemed responsible is to be counselled and put on notice that their behaviour was unacceptable. If the situation is of a very serious nature and/or the volunteer does not agree to abide by the recommendations of the investigation, they are to be dismissed from their voluntary engagement.

6. WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Under the WHS Act 2011, Volunteers are deemed to be a worker of Council and as such are owed a statutory duty of care while undertaking activities on behalf of Council. Before volunteers are permitted to undertake any activity on behalf of Council a risk assessment of the activity will be undertaken to ensure the following:

- 6.1 The activity is suitable for volunteers;
- 6.2 The activity will not place volunteers at risk to their health and safety;
- 6.3 The volunteer has the physical capacity to undertake the activity;
- 6.4 The volunteer has the knowledge and skills required to undertake the activity in a safe manner.

7. TRAINING

Volunteers are to be provided with appropriate information, training, instruction and/or supervision which, depending on the activity, may include but is not limited to the following:

- 7.1 WHS induction training;
- 7.2 Use of communication equipment (where required);
- 7.3 On the job training specific to the activity;
- 7.4 Instruction in the use of tools, minor plant, equipment or personal protective equipment
- 7.5 The requirements of executive positions on committees.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 Volunteers shall not use confidential information gained through their activities as a volunteer for the purpose of securing a private benefit for themselves or for any other person.
- 8.2 Volunteers shall not disclose any confidential information to another person for any reason without the authority to do so.
- 8.3 Volunteers shall not disclose private or personal information of other volunteers, clients or Council staff as defined in the Privacy and personal Information Act 1998.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS/BENEFITS

Volunteers may accept small gifts from users of their service as appreciation of a job well done eg a box of chocolates. Gifts are not to be accepted when they are more substantial in nature and where there is the implication that the person may receive or seek a favour in return.

10. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Volunteers are not to use their position to gain profit or advantage. They should be aware of circumstances where a possible conflict of interest may arise and have a duty to declare it if necessary.

11. DRESS

Volunteers working outdoors will be required to wear long sleeve shirts with collar, loose fitting long trousers or knee length shorts, enclosed footwear, hat with a broad brim, sunglasses and sun screen. Volunteers working indoors should wear appropriate and sensible clothing and footwear for the activities they may be undertaking.

12. ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Volunteers are not permitted to consume alcohol or other drugs while they are performing work on behalf of Council.

If the Volunteer Coordinator makes a visual observation of impaired performance, demeanour or behaviour, which in their view could be considered to have the potential to compromise the safety of the individual or others, the volunteer is to be requested to leave the worksite immediately. If they have driven to the location, attempt to make alternative arrangements for them to be picked up or taken home by another person. Should the person become aggressive and refuse to leave call the Police.

Volunteers have a duty to notify their Volunteer Co-ordinator if they have been prescribed any prescription medication that has the potential to impair their ability to work in the capacity for which they have been engaged.

13. REPORTING OF CORRUPT CONDUCT

Council is committed to an ethical workplace and volunteers are to be encouraged to report any concerns involving alleged corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious and substantial waste of public money relating to the voluntary activity.

14. MEDIA PROTOCOL

Volunteers are not permitted to make any comments to the Media on behalf of Council. Any queries for a statement to the media must be referred to the General Manager or Assistant General Managers.

15. PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

Council obtains personal information from volunteers including names, address, telephone numbers, child protection screening (where applicable) and other contact details. Personal information obtained by Council is governed by the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA). This legislation provides direction for the collection, protection, storage, disposal, access and use of personal information by Council.

16. INSURANCE

16.1 Personal Accident Insurance

Council carries a Personal Accident insurance policy that covers volunteers for personal injury whilst performing activities authorised by or on behalf of Council.

It should be noted that the policy only covers volunteers aged between 10 and 90 years.

16.1.1 To be covered by insurance, Volunteers must have completed a formal application form and have been taken through a formal induction and must have been working under the supervision or knowledge of the Volunteer Coordinator for the work at the time of the incident.

16.1.2 All reasonable care is to be taken to ensure that volunteers operate in a safe working environment. Volunteers are required to act in a responsible manner and in accordance with standard operating procedures. Willfully or deliberate acts resulting in property damage or injury is not covered by Council's insurance.

16.2 Public Liability Insurance

Whilst working for or on behalf of Council, volunteers are protected against public liability claims under Council's public liability insurance cover. Cover does not extend to incidences where damage has been caused through willful or deliberate acts by the volunteer.

All incidents/accident are to be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. A report must be completed by the Volunteer Coordinator and handed to the Risk Management Officer within two working days from becoming aware of the incident. If an injury has occurred that required medical treatment the Risk Management Officer is to be notified as soon as possible.

16.3 Volunteer's Personal Property

Volunteer's personal items are not covered by Council's insurance whilst undertaking volunteer activities. Volunteers are to be encouraged to **not** bring or wear items of any significant value (including jewellery). All necessary equipment will be supplied by Council. All attempts should be taken to secure personal items against theft or damage.

17. USE OF COUNCIL EQUIPMENT

Volunteers may be provided with Council equipment to assist in performing various activities. If a license or qualification is required to operate plant or equipment, a volunteer must provide evidence of such qualification or license or they are not allowed to use or operate such equipment.

All care should be taken by the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that equipment is used correctly and within the manufacturer guidelines and/or instruction provided.

If equipment is damaged, an incident report must be completed and returned to the Risk Management Officer.

18. USE OF COUNCIL MOTOR VEHICLES

Volunteers may be requested to use a Council motor vehicle during the course of performing various activities. **The volunteer coordinator must site a person's driving license** before allowing them to drive the vehicle.

Damage to a Council vehicle by a volunteer whilst working for or on behalf of Council is covered by Council's Motor Vehicle Insurance policy. Cover is not extended where the damage results from willful or deliberate actions by the volunteer.

If a motor vehicle is damaged, the Volunteer coordinator must be notify the Plant Superintendent as soon as possible for further advice.

If required a claim will need to be completed by the volunteer and an internal incident form must also be completed.

The vehicle log book must be completed correctly each time the vehicle is used.

If a volunteer is a regular driver e.g. Community Bus Driver, they need to fill in the Volunteer Driver Update form – Trim 996#583.

18.1 Fines and Infringements

Any infringement received as a result of the illegal actions of a Volunteer will be the responsibility of the volunteer. They are wholly responsible for payment of such fines and infringements.

These include, but are not limited to:

18.1.1 Parking

18.1.2 Speeding

18.1.3 Littering

18.1.4 Red light camera

18.1.5 Use of a Mobile device

19. OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES

From time to time, volunteers may need to use their own money to purchase materials or pay fees. Where possible, volunteers should seek prior approval from the Volunteer coordinator or, person in charge before they use their own money.

Out of pocket expenses will only be reimbursed if a claim is submitted with proof of payment attached i.e. a tax invoice or receipt. The Volunteer coordinator must sign the claim form and supply a general ledger number for allocation of the expense.

20. RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

Council hosts an annual “Volunteers Morning Tea” function specifically held to thank volunteers for the contribution that they have made to the community throughout the year. Anyone who has worked in a voluntary capacity is to be invited to attend.

Council or the Volunteer Co-ordinator may also choose to recognise volunteers in other ways suitable for the level of work that has been undertaken at the completion of a particular project.

21. VOLUNTEER DATABASE

A centralised volunteer database has been developed to capture and maintain volunteer details and other relevant information required for WHS and Insurance purposes.

It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Co-ordinators in each department to update and maintain the database for the volunteers that they engage and oversee.

Information contained in the database is held in accordance with Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA).

22. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a volunteer has a grievance about any aspect of their tasks, other volunteers or Council staff, the following process should be followed:

- Step 1 Volunteers are to initially address any concerns with their Co-ordinator, Committee President or Chair of the area they are working. This discussion should be treated as strictly confidential.
- Step 2 The volunteer co-ordinator, President or Chair is to gather all of the facts and where possible seek a resolution to the issue at that level.
- Step 3 If Step 2 does not help resolve the problem, then the issue should be notified to the Department Manager.
- Step 4 If the matter remains unresolved, the matter is to be referred to the Director of the department or Employee Relations to attempt to resolve the issue.
- Step 5 If required the General Manager will make a final and binding decision on the matter and the volunteer(s) are to be provided with a written response.

23. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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| 1. Volunteer Application Form – General | TRIM 817#4 |
| 2. Volunteer Application Form – Sec 355 Management Committees | TRIM 5205#118 |
| 3. Volunteer Community Bus Driver Application Form | TRIM 996#1435 |
| 4. Volunteer Induction Record | TRIM 817#2 |