



Volunteer Policy

Reference Number:	4.12
Type:	Council
Category:	Safety and Community
Relevant Community Plan Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible social infrastructure and services that engage our diverse community. • Capitalise on partnerships, build community resilience and sense of belonging.
Responsible Officer(s):	Manager Community Connections
First Issued/Approved:	July 1996
Minutes Reference:	CoS 5/03/2018, Item 3.12
Last Reviewed:	March 2018
Next Review Due:	March 2020
Applicable Legislation:	Volunteer Protection Act 2001 Volunteer Protection Regulations 2004 Child Protection Act 1993 Work Health Safety Act 2012 Equal Opportunity Act 1992 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1986 Local Government Act 1999
Related Policies:	Work Health, Safety/Injury Management Policy Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy Staff and Volunteers Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy Child and Vulnerable Persons Policy Electronic Communications Policy Corporate Volunteer Policy Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy – Council Staff
Related Procedures:	Volunteer Induction Volunteer Information Handbook Volunteer Service Development Officer's Standard Work Procedures

1. Purpose

City of Charles Sturt manages a large group of volunteers across a diverse range of community programs. The purpose of the Volunteer Policy is to provide a best practice framework for the management of volunteers by:

- Articulating the underlying philosophy of involving and providing direction and structure to the way volunteers are managed;
- Defining the responsibilities and the relationship between Council's paid staff and volunteers;

- Providing an understanding of Council's expectation and standards for volunteers in accordance with the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in not-for-profit organisations;
- Defining the rights and responsibilities of volunteers;
- Providing guidance on the resolution of any disputes which arise in connection with any of the volunteer programs; and
- Insuring vulnerable people are not placed at risk as a result of being a volunteer or accepting the service of a volunteer program

2. **Scope**

This policy is intended as a guide for all Council business units that deliver services and programs that utilise volunteers registered with the City of Charles Sturt. It will also guide Council's vision for the ongoing recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers that encourages community participation and social interaction through volunteering opportunities.

The policy applies to all volunteers and to those employees who work in activities, programs and services where volunteers are involved.

3. **Policy Statement**

The City of Charles Sturt recognises the importance of volunteers and the valuable contribution they make to the City by providing customer focused services and enhancing established council programs. Council is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders are supported by optimising the management of volunteer programs. Council recognises volunteering as a pathway to employment and a pathway to retirement with multiple outcomes for individual well-being and connections to community.

3.1 **Council's Responsibilities to Volunteers**

Council is committed to best practice in volunteer management based on the National Standards.

Volunteers will be:

- recruited in a fair, equitable and formal manner, provided with training to undertake their tasks, inducted to Council and orientated to their workplace.
- provided with a role description that outlines their roles, responsibilities and expected performance standards of service delivery.
- given a Volunteer Information Handbook that acts as a guide and to instruct them in quality service and professional standards pertaining to volunteering.
- provided with safe workplaces as per legislative requirements of Work Health Safety Act 2012.
- provided with insurance cover when they are registered and have the approval of Council whilst undertaking their designated volunteer roles.
- provided with support and direction from the nominated supervisor.
- notified that an updated Criminal History Record Check or relevant Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) screening is required every three years.
- have complaints and grievances addressed in accordance with Council's policy and procedure.

3.2 Volunteers have the following Rights and Responsibilities to Council

Volunteers:

- are treated fairly and respectfully and be valued as an important member of the team.
- provide a satisfactory Criminal History Record Check or relevant Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) screening prior to the commencement of their voluntary role in Prescribed Positions.
- a DCSI check is required for all volunteers working:
 - with persons who are frail aged or have a disability
 - with persons under the age of 18 years
 - in a role where money is handled
 - on private property or in residents' homes
 - where it is required by the funding agreement or legislation
- all other roles that don't fall in the above categories will require a Criminal History Record Check.
- should advise their coordinator or the Volunteer Service Development Officer if there are any changes to their criminal history after they have been screened and prior to the due date of their next screening.
- are responsible for familiarising themselves with Council's policies and procedures.
- respect and maintain confidential information and perform their role to the expected standards defined within their role descriptions.
- participate in training when it is defined as mandatory and are encouraged to participate in training that is offered to assist in skill development.
- inform the Volunteer Service Development Officer or their program Coordinator of any health issues that will prevent them from safely undertaking their role.
- work within a team structure and accept any direction and supervision from staff and are expected to be effective members of the organisation.
- inform their Program Coordinator if they are unable to attend their volunteer task at any time.
- abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct and understand that unsatisfactory volunteer work and/or inappropriate behaviour may result in cessation of the volunteer registration.
- decline or withdraw from work if it is unsuitable or if it is placing excessive demands on them.

3.3 Continuous improvement to ensure best practice

In order for volunteers to conduct their activities the Council acknowledges that volunteer programs require a commitment of adequate financial, human, physical and time resources. These resources will be allocated in line with Council requirements and the National Standards for Volunteers.

Council's volunteer programs are regularly appraised by compiling feedback from volunteers and volunteer coordinators through surveys and reviews.

A volunteer management system and its documented processes will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its sustainability, relevance and its alignment to Council requirements and the National Standards for Volunteers.

Budget provision will be made to cover reimbursement of pre-approved out of pocket expenses.

3.4 **Volunteer contribution to Council**

Volunteer programs provide a variety of services directly to the public to enhance the human, environmental and social wellbeing of the community and extend and enhance the work completed by paid staff. Volunteer roles support, maintain and add value but do not replace the roles of paid staff.

4. **Roles and their Designated Responsibilities**

4.1 **Manager and Team Leaders of the Business Unit Involving Volunteers must:**

- Be familiar with Councils' policies and procedures concerning volunteering.
- Allow staff the time to supervise and coordinate volunteers that are assigned to them.
- Ensure that staff coordinating volunteers have this role included in their job descriptions and Personal Development Agreements (PDA's).
- Ensure that staff coordinating volunteers are attending Volunteer Coordinators Meetings and appropriate training.
- Provide the Volunteer Service Development Officer with any information that might evaluate the effectiveness and impact of volunteers working in the area.

4.2 **Volunteer Service Development Officer (VSDO) must:**

- Have knowledge about the trends and issues in volunteering and volunteer management practices.
- Have knowledge and understanding of the work done in business units involving volunteers.
- Be accountable for recruiting suitable volunteers from staff requests, including recruiting and managing skilled volunteers on a case by case basis.
- Act as a consultant in crafting work for volunteers that is do-able, meaningful, manageable by staff, and attractive to volunteers, in accordance with definitions of volunteer, non-volunteer and skilled volunteer.
- Responsible for the ongoing recruitment, induction, generic training and corporate recognition of Council volunteers.
- Act as a third party support to both staff and volunteers in any disputes.
- Advocate for volunteers; represent their voice and potential when necessary, including negotiating adjustments in roles and tasks in response to changing physical and cognitive abilities.
- Manage the Volunteer database and train volunteer coordinators in its use.
- Manage on-line criminal history record checks or DCSI checks (where relevant) for Council volunteers.
- Develop and implement Council's Work Health Safety Volunteer Services Management System in accordance with current Work Health Safety legislation.
- Meet with Council staff who coordinate volunteers on a regular basis for training, information and support.

4.3 **Staff who coordinate volunteers must:**

- Ensure that any person wishing to volunteer contacts the VSDO to register officially with Council.
- Keep the VSDO informed of any changes in volunteer participation.
- Negotiate with the volunteer and the VSDO in making appropriate changes to volunteers' tasks and/or roles in keeping with changing physical/cognitive capacities.
- Keep records and submit end of quarter reports in a timely manner to the VSDO.
- Attend bi-monthly volunteer coordinators meetings to gain support, information and training.
- Be welcoming and appreciative of volunteers.

- Explain their role description and hold volunteers accountable to carry out their agreed role.
- Provide on-site Work Health Safety induction and ensure that volunteers comply with WHS standard operating procedures.
- Provide appropriate mandatory training.
- Provide ongoing support and resources to volunteers by having quarterly volunteer meetings.
- Organise program level volunteer recognition and years of service celebrations.
- Involve/inform the VSDO if there are significant problems or issues involving volunteers.

4.4 Volunteers must:

- Make a realistic commitment and fulfil it.
- Perform the duties as outlined in the Volunteer Role Description.
- Be customer service focused.
- Participate in appropriate induction, orientation and training.
- Comply with Council policies and procedures.
- Accept direction and supervision from their volunteer coordinator.
- Protect their own safety and the safety of others.
Notify their coordinator of any factors that may impede their ability to perform their duties in an appropriate or safe manner.

5. Definitions

Key Term – Acronym	Definition
Volunteers	<p>Undertake activities of their own free will.</p> <p>Receive no financial remuneration for tasks performed or services rendered except for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses in some programs.</p> <p>Are involved in or undertake activities of benefit to Council and the wider community through the use of their skills and abilities, knowledge, energy, efforts and time.</p> <p>Are registered with, and have the approval of Council, to undertake activities in a designated volunteer role.</p> <p>Do not replace paid staff.</p> <p>May be undertaking volunteering to meet Centrelink requirements</p>
Skilled Volunteers	<p>Are individuals with qualifications or professional experience, who are willing to give their expertise and time, free of charge, to assist others for a short term commitment with well-defined roles, benefits, skills, start and completion dates.</p> <p>Do not replace paid staff.</p>

Non Volunteers	<p>People on work placement and work experience programs</p> <p>Students undertaking volunteering as part of the educational curriculum</p> <p>Elected Members of Council</p> <p>Persons receiving payment outside of the volunteer reimbursement framework</p>
Volunteer Coordinator	Council staff member that coordinates supervises and manages volunteers on a day to day basis as part of their job.
Vulnerable People	People who may be at risk of abuse or exploitation due to their dependency on others. This may include children, people with a disability, the frail aged and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
Prescribed Position	A position that requires regular contact or that is working closely with Vulnerable People.