

Volunteer Management Program



A government funded information and support service for volunteer involving organisations across Central Western NSW. We can provide assistance to any not-for-profit, community-based organisations in areas such as:

Volunteer Management—
Promotion—Networking—Volunteer Training

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Volunteer Management Program

The Neighbourhood Centre Bathurst

**Interested in volunteering?
Here's what you need to know.**

A guide to...

Volunteering

**for anyone becoming
(or interested in becoming)
a volunteer**

Questions to ask

Before joining an organisation as a volunteer, there are some important things you should consider. Check that:

- the purpose of the organisation matches your own values and beliefs
- the organisation's insurance cover is satisfactory. Types of insurance could include Public Liability and Volunteer Personal Accident. Ask what you are covered for if you happen to get injured while volunteering
- your volunteer job description is clear and specific so that you know the scope of your duties
- you will be provided with sufficient training to perform your duties
- you are satisfied with the level of training you receive in relation to work health and safety
- the organisation can provide you with written information about its purpose and activities, and
- you are satisfied that the funds of the organisation are expended in accordance with its purpose.

You might also like to ask:

- If the organisation is signed up the NSW Government's ***Statement of Principles for the Recognition of Volunteers***.

If they are, this will tell you that the organisation upholds principles of care, respect and dignity for both their paid and un-paid workers.

View the principles in full at
www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au.



What to expect when you start

• Orientation and Induction

Your orientation and induction to any organisation should cover:

- Introductions to staff, in particular your direct supervisor
- Orientation to the workplace and organisation
- Work health and safety training and requirements including, but not limited to, emergency exits and alarms, fire extinguishers, first aid, first aid supplies and accident reporting
- Access to all policies relating to volunteers and volunteer roles.
- Reading and signing of volunteer documentation that could include:
 - a **volunteer agreement** that outlines the standards and expectations relating to you as a volunteer
 - a **job description** that outlines your specific duties and where you fit into the bigger picture of the organisation
 - a **code of conduct** that details the ethical and responsible behaviours expected of you
 - A **confidentiality agreement** that outlines how to protect private information held by the organisation
- Sufficient training for a volunteer to be able to carry out their role competently and safely
- Opportunities for questions and planning for role reviews
- **Ongoing Support**

While performing your volunteer duties you should feel adequately supported and supervised so that you have the opportunity to debrief or discuss any issues.

Thank you for your interest in contributing to the community through volunteering.

Volunteers are vital to the provision of many important services which contribute to improving the overall wellbeing of the community for its members.

The following guide has been prepared by the Volunteer Management Program and provides general information to introduce you to the experience of volunteering, we hope you find it helpful.

To request further copies please contact the Volunteer Management Program at The Neighbourhood Centre Bathurst: phone 02 6332 4866

Email: vmv@binc.org.au for Central West

Acknowledgements

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What to expect before you start

As a matter of course when becoming a volunteer you may go through some or all of the following processes, depending on the particular organisation and the role you are undertaking:

- **One or more interviews** to discuss your interests and abilities and match you to suitable volunteer roles.
- **Volunteer Screening** In some cases organisations will screen staff and volunteers in order to:

Protect Service Users: Laws and ethics require organisations to ensure that the individuals who utilise their services are protected from abuse or harm.

Support Volunteers: In the case of a complaint or questionable incident that calls a volunteer's behaviour in to question, recorded screening clearance can vouch on their behalf.

Protect Organisations: The organisation can be subject to mandatory obligations to screen staff and volunteers due to the nature of the services they provide.

Types of Screening The level of risk and responsibility attached to a position will determine the forms of screening undertaken and can include:

- Driving record check
- Reference check
- Working with children check
- Criminal record check
- Medical history check

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How to find Volunteer opportunities

When you decide that you would like to become a volunteer, there are a number of ways in which to do so. You can:

Check out the Community Guide for your area. These guides are usually put together by either the local council, local paper or a local community organisation.

Check out the Go Volunteer website for volunteer opportunities in your area (www.govolunteer.com.au). Please don't be deterred if you can't find suitable opportunities. When you apply for any position you will be contacted about your interests—there may be other interesting positions that are not advertised on the website.

Contact organisations you are interested in volunteering with.

What you'll find in this booklet...

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What is volunteering?

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

Ultimately, volunteering is a form of civic participation; contributing and being a part of community.

Volunteering can include activities undertaken in both formal organisations and informal community groups.

Volunteering should not exploit a person or replace paid employment.

And while volunteering provides important benefits to society, it also provides significant benefits to the volunteers themselves, and this should be recognised and fostered.

(Volunteering Australia, 2015)



Volunteer Responsibilities

As a volunteer you have a general responsibility to:

- support the organisation's aims and objectives
- only perform duties you are authorised to perform and always operate under the direction and supervision of your Co-ordinator and ask for support if needed
- notify your Co-ordinator or another member of staff of any health or safety issues or potential hazards and report any incidents
- behave appropriately and courteously to staff, clients and the public in the course of your role
- let the organisation know if you wish to change the nature of your contribution (for example, hours, role) or if you wish to stop volunteering
- let the organisation know immediately if there is anything that makes you unsuitable or unable to legally carry out your volunteer role
- comply with the law at all times
- be open and honest in your dealings with the organisation and let them know if they can improve the volunteer program and the support that you receive.
- respect the confidentiality of clients, staff and other volunteers
- undertake training when it is offered

Volunteer Rights

To help protect these rights, Volunteering Australia developed the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement*. These Standards provide organisations with a general guide to good practice when involving volunteers.

You can view these Standards at volunteeringaustralia.org

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- information about the organisation
- a clearly written role description and work procedures
- a supervisor, so you have an opportunity to ask questions and get feedback
- be recognised as a valued team member and not be exploited
- a healthy, safe working environment and insurance cover
- reimbursement for your reasonable expenses so that you are not out of pocket as a result of volunteering
- respect for your privacy, including private information being kept confidential
- be informed and consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect your role
- be made aware of the grievance procedure within the organisation
- orientation and training

The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering has a meaningful, positive impact on your community but the benefits to you as the volunteer can be just as valuable.

- Learn new skills
- Share your current skills
- Meet people
- Achieve personal satisfaction
- Increase self confidence and personal skills
- Become actively involved in and contribute to our community
- Improve your career prospects or resume
- Have fun
- Choose how much or little time you want to commit

The Principles of Volunteering

Volunteering Australia's Principles of Volunteering

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- Volunteer work is unpaid and is not a substitute for paid work
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice
- The volunteering relationship can be ended at any time by either party
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community and respects the rights, dignity and culture of others and promotes human rights and equality
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers

Summarised From www.volunteeringaustralia.org/

Volunteer Roles in the Community

The types of volunteering opportunities available in your community may surprise you as they can be many and varied.

Opportunities available could include...

Community and Support

Aged care visitor, driver, driving supervisor, kitchen hand, canteen, social support, administration, telephone caller, board members, helping those with a disability.

Administration and Retail

Reception, publicity, data entry, websites, administration, customer service.

Environment and Safety

Gardener, conservation volunteer, wildlife.

Culture, Art and History

Tour guides, ushers, publicity, events.

Sport and Recreation

Riding support, guides, scouts, sporting clubs, special events, activity programs, arts and crafts.

Education

Play group support, technology tutoring, research assistant, form help volunteer.

One off volunteer roles—special events

The Principles in action

The following example illustrates the principles of volunteering at work, and shows how they can help differentiate volunteering from other activities.

Washing the dishes - volunteering, or something else?

At home: when I wash the dishes after dinner I am doing the housework (I am keeping my dishes clean so I can use them at my next meal).

Informal volunteering: when I wash the dishes for my neighbour because he has a broken wrist I am being a good neighbour (this man is my friend and I am helping out because I want to express my friendship in the knowledge that he would help me if the situation arose).

Formal volunteering: when I go to a not-for-profit organisation and apply to help out in their soup kitchen, and one of my duties is to wash dishes, then I am a volunteer. I have chosen freely to volunteer. I am not being paid for my work. I am motivated to perform the duties of this volunteer role because I believe that my unpaid labour benefits the community.

Community work experience: when my university/TAFE/school/job network provider requires that I perform work as a volunteer as part of their requirements, and my task is to wash dishes at a local hostel for homeless people, this is work experience (my main motivation is to meet their requirements).

Community service: when I commit an act of vandalism and a magistrate orders me to make reparation by washing dishes at a local community centre then I am on a community service order (I don't want to wash dishes even though I think the community centre does good work).

Work and development order (WDO): when I have unpaid fines with the SDRO and I am eligible to undertake unpaid work in the form of washing dishes at a soup kitchen in order to pay the fines off then I am on a work and development order.