



VOLUNTEER POLICY

<i>Responsible Officer/s</i>	Community Development Officer Commercial and Community Services
<i>Relevant Legislation / Documents</i>	Volunteer Protection Act 2001 Volunteer Protection Regulations 2004 Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 Children's Protection Regulations 2010 Local Government Act 1999 Equal Opportunity Act 1992 Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Disability Discrimination Act 1986 Covering All Bases – An information guide for managing volunteers in Local Government – Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme Other Policy/Procedure Child Safe Environments Code of Conduct Code of Conduct for Volunteers Staff Grievance Resolution Policy Social Media Policy Staff and Volunteers Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy Electronic Communication Facilities Policy Volunteer Information Handbook Volunteer Management Procedure
<i>Adopted</i>	16 October 2009
<i>Reviewed</i>	16 July 2021
<i>Next Review</i>	July 2025

A. Purpose

The District Council of Loxton Waikerie (Council) recognises the importance of volunteers within its community. Volunteering has mutual benefits for volunteers and the Council. Volunteers are an important resource for our community as they support a range of services and programs. Without volunteers, many of the services and programs provided by Council would either not be possible or the cost of providing these programs and services would be significantly more.

Volunteers forge a strong bond between Council and its community by encouraging:

- encouraging community engagement, participation and independence
- providing additional access to resources and information
- value adding to services responsive to community needs, and
- increasing opportunities for social interaction, support and satisfaction
- extending the reach or impact of council services and events.

B. Objective

The objective of this policy is to articulate Council's commitment to volunteerism for the benefit of Council, the community and those individuals participating in the program, to clearly define the role of volunteers within Council, and to set out best practice principles to guide the management of volunteers. In doing so, we will ensure the sustainability of Council's volunteer program, enhancing Council's existing services and programs.

The development of this Policy has taken into consideration the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, developed by Volunteering Australia and Covering All Bases, An Information Guide for Managing Volunteers in Local Government, developed by the Local Government Association of South Australia Mutual Liability Scheme.

C. Policy

Council recognises its role as a community leader with a responsibility to support and encourage volunteering. Council will demonstrate best practice for community engagement and in this case, the recruitment, support, management, recognition, retention and celebration of volunteers.

Where practicable Council will implement the Principles and Practices set out in the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, developed by Volunteering Australia. These standards include:

1. *Policies and procedures*

Council will define and document its policies and procedures for volunteer involvement and ensure that these are conveyed to all volunteers implemented and maintained at all levels of the organisation.

2. *Management responsibility*

Council will ensure that volunteers are managed within a defined system by capable personnel with the authority and resources to achieve organisational goals.

3. *Recruitment*

Council will clearly document volunteer recruitment, selection and orientation induction policies and procedures that are consistent with non-discriminatory practices and guidelines.

4. *Work and the workplace*

Council will clearly define the roles of volunteers and ensure that their work environment is safe from potential and actual hazards and potential hazards whilst ensuring that the activities they've undertaken are not detrimental to their health and/or wellbeing.

5. *Training and development*

Council will ensure that volunteers receive appropriate induction and training, given feedback on their work, provided with opportunities to improve their skills and knowledge and are given recognition.

6. Service delivery

Council will ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are developed and followed to monitor and review volunteer services, support their work and to assess related customer satisfaction.

7. Documentation and records

Council will establish and maintain a system with defined procedures to manage all documentation and personnel records associated with the management of volunteers.

8. Continuous improvement

Council will plan and regularly review its Volunteer Management System to ensure that opportunities to improve the quality of the system are identified and actively pursued.

9. Access, equity and participation

Council will provide an equitable opportunity for residents to participate in volunteering and will encourage the inclusion of all citizens. Council will endeavour not to place a volunteer in a role that has been previously undertaken by a paid employee during industrial disputes or staff shortages.

10. Building community capacity

Council's volunteer program seeks to build capacity, knowledge, awareness and skills within the community.

11. Safe environment

Council is committed to ensuring the safety of vulnerable people who are accepting the services offered through the Council's volunteer programs and the volunteers providing these services.

Definition of Volunteers

Volunteering is defined as time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain. (*Volunteering Australia, 2015*)

- to benefit the community and the Council by contributing to the services and programs which are provided by Council
- are registered volunteers of Council and who undertake activities in designated volunteer positions only
- provide their time and skill of their own free will and without intimidation
- do not receive monetary reward from Council but may receive reimbursement for pre-approved out of pocket expenses
- undertake activities that complement and enhance—but do not replace—the services provided by the Council's paid staff.

The following persons for the purpose of the policy are not considered volunteers:

- people on work placement and work experience programs
- students undertaking volunteering as a part of the education curriculum

- volunteers involved in 'Work for the Dole' initiatives
- elected members unless formally inducted through the volunteer program
- staff unless formally inducted through the volunteer program

Recognition of Volunteers

Whilst we recognise that volunteers enjoy their commitment to volunteering, Council enjoys recognising the valuable contributions made by volunteers. Council will organise, as appropriate, the awarding of recognition and the celebration of volunteers through annual functions and events.

The volunteer management system comprises the range of policies, procedures, resources and databases that facilitate the recruitment, support, management, retention and recognition of volunteers and volunteer programs.

Councils Responsibilities to Volunteers

Council and volunteers have rights and responsibilities owed to each other and the wider community.

Council will:

- provide community leadership that supports, encourages and values volunteering
- develop and maintain strong communications with volunteers and relevant bodies including state government departments and parliament
- interview and engage volunteers in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- provide adequate insurance coverage for volunteers through the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme and Local Government Risk Services whilst they are undertaking clearly defined Council volunteer duties
- provide clear expectations, written role statements, policies and procedures
- provide volunteers with a formal induction program, orientation and training (including WHS and an appropriate Volunteer Management System)
- ensure there is a supervisor within each volunteer program that has skills and knowledge to develop and supervise an effective volunteer program
- aim to provide opportunities for professional development
- ensure volunteers enhance the work of paid staff
- follow WHS policy, providing volunteers with a healthy and safe work environment and refusing their services where there is a risk to the health, welfare and safety of themselves or others.
- provide volunteers with access to a grievance and unsatisfactory performance procedure
- refuse the service of volunteers where the volunteer is not suited to the program
- celebrate, recognise and acknowledge the contribution of its volunteers.

Volunteer have the following Rights and Responsibilities to Council

Volunteers will:

- be treated with respect and dignity and be valued as an important member of the team
- be reimbursed for pre-approved out-of-pocket expenses
- have personal and confidential information treated accordingly
- undertake activity at their own free will and without coercion
- respect and maintain confidential information and perform their role to the expected standards defined within their role descriptions
- provide a satisfactory Criminal History Record Check or relevant Human Services (DHS) screening prior to the commencement of their voluntary role in prescribed positions.
- a DHS screening is required for all volunteers working:
 - with persons who are frail aged, vulnerable or have a disability
 - with persons under the age of 18 years of age

- on private property or in resident's homes
- where it is a requirement of the funding agreement or legislation
- all other roles that don't fall in the above categories will require a Criminal History Record Check
- advise their coordinator or appropriate staff if there are any changes to their criminal history after they have been screened and prior to the due date of their next screening.
- abide by the Council's Volunteer Code of Conduct, policies and procedures and understand that unsatisfactory volunteer work and/or inappropriate behaviour may result in cessation of the volunteer registration
- participate in appropriate induction, orientation and training which is provided and undertake further training if required
- operate under the direction and supervision of Council personnel to achieve the objectives required
- work within a team structure and accept support, supervision and constructive feedback on their performance
- provide truthful and accurate information to the Council employees, other volunteers and community members
- work according to WHS policy in a safe, healthy and professional manner that does not endanger their own safety and/or health including others
- report to Council if any injury or accident occurs to themselves, others or property whilst performing volunteer duties
- report any hazards or potential hazards to Council
- notify appropriate staff of any personal changes which may affect their volunteer role (e.g. changes in health status, personal details, availability, loss of license)
- promote a positive image of the Council whilst performing volunteer duties
- decline or withdraw from volunteer work if it is unsuitable or if it is placing excessive demands on them.

Work Health and Safety Laws Responsibilities to Council

Volunteers have rights and obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 and volunteers must therefore adhere to the WHS requirements of the Council. Volunteers will be instructed on these requirements as part of their induction and training.

Eligibility for Volunteering

Council has an application process and welcomes all expressions of interest from the community including elected members and staff with respect to volunteering within a Council program.

Individuals

Residents interested in volunteering will be assessed through the application and training process for suitability against the following criteria:

- the individual's suitability for volunteering taking into consideration their skills, interests, requirements of the role, competency, Criminal History Record Check or relevant Department of Human Services (DHS) screening and reference check
- the organisational needs: i.e. vacancy in the program area where the individual wishes to volunteer
- the individual's willingness to be flexible to the requirements of the organisation.

Elected members

Elected members who wish to register as volunteers will be required to follow the application process to ensure they are provided with the same rights and responsibilities which apply to all volunteers engaged by Council. If an elected member wishes to volunteer, they are doing so in the capacity of a volunteer and must not exercise their authority as an elected member over staff, volunteers or members of the public.

Staff

Staff who wish to register as a volunteer will be required to follow the application process to ensure that staff are provided with the same rights and responsibilities as all Council volunteers. If a staff member wishes to volunteer, they are doing so in the capacity of a volunteer and must not exercise their authority as a staff member over staff, volunteers or members of the public.

Volunteer engagement

Volunteers will be officially registered with Council following the successful completion of the 'Volunteer Engagement Process', which includes:

- application and interview
- provision of a Criminal History Record Check or relevant Department of Human Services (DHS) screening is required every three or five years where appropriate and/or a reference and medical assessment, where require
- orientation, induction, WHS and on-the-job training
- competency and Safe Work Procedures assessment
- formal agreement.

Insurance

Council provides personal accident insurance for all register volunteers.

Under the Work Health and, Safety legislation volunteers are deemed to be employees. As such, they have the same rights and responsibilities in relation to safe practices but are not entitled to the conditions applied by WorkCover.

Council volunteers are only covered by the personal accident policy when they are carrying out Council tasks that are specific to their volunteer role. Records of volunteer activity must be recorded in a Volunteer Activity Time Sheet to comply with Council's Records Management Policy.

Dress standards

Volunteers are required to dress in a neat and presentable fashion in accordance with the activities in which they are authorised to perform. Where relevant, volunteers must wear identification and personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed.

Volunteer age limits

Council will accept volunteers 14 years and over this–fall in line with the age of employment. However all volunteers aged between 14 and over to 18 years will be required to be personally supervised by a designated experienced staff/volunteer member in attendance who has completed Child Safe Environment training and a Criminal History Record Check or relevant Department of Human Services (DHS) screening every three or five years where appropriate.

There is no maximum age limit for volunteers, although for personal accident insurance, full cover only extends to people up to 90 years of age. For people 90 years of age and over, cover is limited while undertaking approved work for Council. The volunteer will be able to continue to volunteer provided their activities are re-assessed on a regular basis as being appropriate to their skills and abilities. This may be undertaken in consultation with a medical professional.

D. Availability

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Loxton or Waikerie during ordinary business hours at no charge.

Copies of this Policy will also be available from Councils website: www.lwdc.sa.gov.au or postal copies may be obtained from the Council Office free of charge.

E. Document history and version control

Date	Version	Authorisation	Amendment details
16/10/2009	1.0	Council meeting of 16 October 2009	First version
20/01/2012	1.0	Council meeting of 20 January 2012	No change noted
18/12/2015	2.0	Council meeting of 18 December 2015	Developed with reference to the national standards for involving volunteers in not for profit organisations by Volunteering Australia. Policy articulates council's commitment to a volunteer management system – including formal induction. Notes eligibility for volunteering and volunteering and notes the insurance cover that is in place for those volunteers over the age of 90.
20/04/2018	2.1	Council meeting of 20 April 2018	Minor changes only noted: Addition of document history and version control protocols, council values and notes that hard copies of council policies are provided free of charge.
16/07/2021	3.0	Council meeting of 16 July 2021	Updated references, legislation, related policy and procedures Volunteer and Council's relationship to its community Definition of volunteers Volunteers have the following Rights and Responsibilities to Council and Criminal History Record Check and Department of Human Services (DHS) screening information and changed the policy to council's new template format