

POLICY

Policy Name	Volunteer Policy
Policy Category	Governance
Department / Officer	Corporate and Community Services/Manager Community Services
Date Adopted	4 July 1999
Date/s Reviewed	4 October 2006; 27 October 2014, 25 June 2018
Review Frequency	Every Three Years
Strategic Plan Reference	Objective 2 – Attractive and Inclusive Community Approach 2.4 – Encourage community participation and interaction Strategy 2.4.3 – Encourage volunteering as a way for people to get involved in community life and share their skills and experiences Objective 5 – An Innovative Council Empowering the Community Approach 5.2 – Encourage Active Citizenship and Community Pride Strategy 5.2.2 – Recognise the contributions of volunteers

Attachments

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Volunteer Policy is to provide a framework for the recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers involved in Council programs and services.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all volunteers in Council activities, programs and services and to those employees who work in Council activities, programs and services where volunteers are involved, or have management responsibility for those programs.

3. Policy Statement (Summary)

Council recognises the importance of volunteers and the valuable contribution they make to the community and to the delivery of a broad range of services and programs provided by Council. Council is committed to utilising the time, skills, talents and energy of volunteers because it:

- Provides direct links between Council and the community
- Encourages social interaction
- Enhances and extends services
- Encourages an exchange of skills

4. Legislation and Compliance

- Work Health and Safety Act 2012
- Volunteer Protection Act 2001
- Children's Protection Act 1993
- Volunteer Protection Regulations (SA) 2004
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

The Department for Child Protection has commenced a staged implementation of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*. The new Act replaces the Children's Protection Act 1993, however in the staged approach certain sections of the Children's Protection Act will still be law until October 2018.

There are some parts of the *Children's Protection Act 1993* that have not been carried over, but these are covered in stand-alone legislation including the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*.

The *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* creates a new working with children checks system for people working or volunteering with children in SA, including an ongoing monitoring system and moving from 3-yearly checks to 5-yearly checks. Checks will be transferable between different jobs and volunteer positions. Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 has not yet commenced.

5. Definitions

Volunteer – for the purposes of this policy a volunteer is an individual who is registered with and has approval by the Council to undertake activities that:

- Benefit the Council, community and the volunteer
- Complement but do not replace the activities of paid staff
- Are of the volunteer's own free will
- Are for no financial reward

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

- People on work placement and work experience programs
- Students undertaking volunteering as a part of the education curriculum
- Elected Members of Council (solely by virtue of their role as Elected Members)
- Persons working under the order of a court or as a condition of a bond

Child – means a person under the age of 18.

Criminal History Assessment – involves obtaining information about relevant potential employees, volunteers, contractors or consultants on the basis that the information is deemed relevant to assessing the suitability of a person to work in a particular area. The information gathered may include details concerning previous employment and relevant experience; verification of qualifications and professional registration; criminal history information; reference checks and work history reports.

Mandated Notifier - a mandated notifier is any person directly involved in the delivery of services wholly or partly for children or holds a management position, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services.

Prescribed Position – is a position undertaken by a person that involves or requires one or more prescribed functions as follows:

- Regular contact with vulnerable people or working in close proximity to vulnerable people on a regular basis where that contact or work is not directly supervised at all times.
- Supervision or management of above positions; and
- Access to records of a kind prescribed by regulation relating to children (including records relating to child protection services, health services, education services, disability services and court order and proceedings).

Vulnerable People – people who may be at risk of abuse or exploitation due to their dependency on others. This includes all children, people with a disability, the frail aged and people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

6. Policy Content

6.1 Principles of Volunteering

- Benefits the community and the volunteer.
- Is unpaid.
- Always a matter of choice and not compulsorily undertaken.
- A way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community.
- Promotes human rights and equality.
- Not a substitute, replacement or threat to paid work.
- Addresses cultural, environmental and social needs of the community.
- Respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.

6.2 Responsibilities of Council

- Provide a clearly written volunteer role description.
- Provide appropriate orientation and ongoing training.
- Give work that is matched with the volunteers skills, abilities and availability.
- Decline or withdraw the volunteer from work Council feels is not suitable for, or is placing excessive demands on the volunteer.
- Provide ongoing support and direction from appropriate staff.
- Provide appropriate resources to undertake volunteer duties as required
- Provide a safe work environment.
- Treat volunteers with respect and as valued members of a team.
- Consult with and welcome ideas and suggestions for improvements of the program with which the volunteers are involve.
- Have complaints and grievances heard by an appropriate supervisor.
- Ensure that volunteers are aware of grievance procedures.
- Recognise the contribution of volunteers.
- Provide reimbursement for approved out-of-pocket expenses where applicable.
- Have personal records relating to volunteers handled in a confidential manner.

6.3 Responsibilities of Volunteers

- Fulfil the duties as specified in their position description in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- Make a realistic commitment in terms of involvement and reliability.
- Understand and acknowledge the requirements of Council's Code of Conduct and relevant policies and guidelines.
- Participate in appropriate induction and ongoing training as provided.
- Follow all instructions, consistent with the volunteer's role description that may be given by the nominated supervisor.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding Council business, program information or any other sensitive, private information they come across during their volunteer duties.
- Report any unsafe conditions, potential hazards or accidents to their coordinator.
- Report any injury or damage to themselves or a third party.
- When a matter or situation arises that in the opinion of the volunteer is of serious concern, the matter can be disclosed in confidence under the Whistleblower Protection Policy to either the Responsible Officer in Council, or other party including the Ombudsman, the Minister, the Police or the Auditor-General.

7. Risk Management

Council will identify and assess potential sources of harm and take steps to reduce and manage the risk to Council, volunteers and the people who benefit from Council programs and services supported by volunteers.

- Council will ensure that appropriate insurance cover is provided to protect volunteers, paid staff, the community and organisations against damage, loss and injury.
- Council will undertake an induction process to provide volunteers with information relevant to performing their role. The induction process will include:
 - Corporate and Program Induction – giving an overview of Council and covering relevant policies such as Work Health and Safety, Code of Conduct, Complaints Handling, Grievance Procedure and Privacy Policy, Performance Management and Reimbursements
 - Volunteer Services Induction – outlining things such as volunteer rights and responsibilities, Council responsibilities, Work Health and Safety, insurances, confidentiality, principles of volunteering, training requirements and the Volunteer Protection Act.
 - Role/Site Specific Induction – including roles and tasks, worksite orientation, emergency procedures, site specific training and continuous improvement
- *Section 11(2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993* requires that *mandated notifiers* must report any suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. Volunteers who are *mandated notifiers* i.e. working directly with children, or who have direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of services to children will be required to undergo a *criminal history assessment* and obtain training in mandatory reporting to ensure that they are able to meet their mandatory reporting obligations.
- Volunteers who are in *prescribed positions* i.e. working with *vulnerable people* or have access to personal records relating to children, will be required to undergo a *criminal*

history assessment to determine their suitability for the role and to undertake mandatory training for the role.

The assessment of *criminal history assessments* will be based on principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, documented and consistently applied. .

8. Implementation/Delegations

The Chief Executive Officer has the authority to implement this policy.

9. Related Documents

- “Volunteer Management in Local Government”, Local Government Association of SA.
- “Volunteer Workforce Health and Safety Framework; A Guide for South Australian Local Government”, July 2014
- City of Victor Harbor Volunteer Induction Booklet
- City of Victor Harbor Volunteer Essential Induction Checklist
- Safe Environments Policy
- Code of Conduct for Council Employees
- Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure
- Privacy Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
- Emergency Management Policy
- Hazard Management Policy
- Work Health and Safety and Injury Management Policy
- Whistleblower Protection Policy

10. Availability of Policy

This policy is available on Council’s website at www.victor.sa.gov.au. It may also be inspected or purchased at the Principal Office of the Council at 1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor.