Volunteer Information
Handbook

Nov 2022

Flowchart associated with Volunteer process at the Port Augusta City Council:
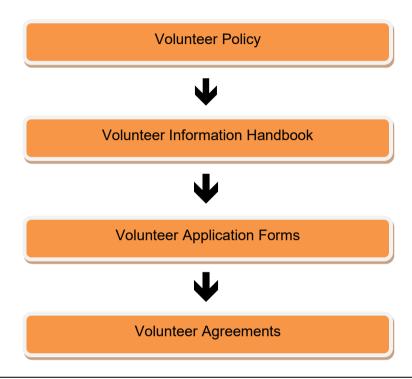
Volunteer Policy

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Volunteer Information Handbook

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Volunteer Application Forms

⬇

Volunteer Agreements

Organisational Chart as it applies to the Volunteer Management process:

Management Group

⬇

Manager Strategy, People and Culture

⬇

WHS Team

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Departmental Manager

⬇

Volunteer Supervisor

⬇

Volunteer

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Volunteer Handbook. It provides guidance to clear up any queries in relation to council's Volunteer policies and procedures.

To be used by Volunteers, supervisors and coordinators.

A guide that can be used by and applied to all Volunteer programs within the community.

2. DEFINITIONS

Application Form means the form a Volunteer (as an individual or a Volunteer Organisation) must complete and submit to the Council in order for the Council's assessment of the Volunteer's eligibility for inclusion on the Volunteer Program.

Council means Port Augusta City Council.

MG means the Management Group which is comprised of the Council's Chief Executive Officer and Directors.

Organisation means a not-for-profit organisation undertaking a project on the Council's behalf.

Human Resource Department means the Port Augusta City Council's Human Resource area located at the Civic Centre, 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta.

Volunteer means a person undertaking or performing a service for Council as part of a volunteering program and has the same meaning given to it under the *Volunteer Protection Act 2001* (SA).

Community Development Officer means the Council employee who is responsible for overseeing that Volunteer Programs are following correct procedures.

Volunteer Program refers to the Council's then current Volunteer activities by reference to specific projects that align with the Council's strategic management plans for the community.

Volunteer Register means a database which contains information about Volunteers providing service to the Council.

Volunteer Attendance Register means a daily sign in sheet which will then be collected and added to the Council's Volunteer Register.

Volunteer Role Statement means the description of duties and/or responsibilities that the Volunteer will undertake when assisting with the delivery of a particular Volunteer Program.

Volunteer Supervisor means the person who is directly responsible for daily management of a Volunteer in their role for whichever specified Volunteer Program.

3. COUNCIL VOLUNTEERS & CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY 3.1.07

Council recognises that Volunteers contribute to and support the fundamental values of a healthy community. Volunteering encourages individuals of diverse backgrounds and cultures to serve the community in a variety of ways. This involvement is a practical expression of the willingness of the community to be responsible for itself.

Volunteerism is an important element to the fabric of the Council's Community Social program and the Volunteer Program is continually monitored by the Community Development Officer and the Management Group (MG) to identify new opportunities to collaborate with Volunteers to deliver the Council's Strategic Directions 2019-2029. From time to time, some Volunteer Programs will be cut and new Volunteer Programs introduced.

Council strongly supports the volunteering program and encourages individuals across the region to consider "giving a little back" to the community.

The Council will endeavour to match the skills of its eligible Volunteers to the relevant Volunteer Program. Not every Volunteer will have the experience or skills needed to assist in the delivery of the Council's current Volunteer Program. There may be times when the Council will need to write to some of its existing Volunteers to explain that there is currently no demand for their particular skill set and pending the introduction of a new Volunteer Program, the Council will keep the Volunteer's details on its system in the instance that a Volunteer Program is developed that calls for the skills that have been identified in that particular Volunteer.

The Council through the MG acknowledges volunteering and aims to promote and facilitate its continuation in the community of Port Augusta.

The Council aims for 'a culture of trust and open communication between Council Staff and Volunteers will be valued and always fostered. It is imperative that a good relationship exists as between the Council staff and its Volunteers.

With respect to local organisations who offer to commit to Council's Volunteer Programs, Council aims to maintain partnerships with Volunteering Organisations by:

- o publicly recognising the efforts and successes of Volunteers in their particular volunteer Program.

- o encouraging Volunteer participation across age-groups and cultures to promote unity amongst community.

- o promoting partnerships between government, community groups, and businesses to support Volunteers.

- o sustaining a volunteer community by providing access to resources, facilities, support, advice, information, and training.

- o There is of course a process that the Volunteer Organisation must embark upon in order to register its interest in assisting Council with delivery of the Volunteer Program.

Volunteers have the same level of responsibility as Council staff in relation to their behaviour and activities while carrying out their roles for Council. The three broad principles that underpin the ethics and standards of conduct of volunteers are 'integrity', 'respect' and 'accountability'. The guidelines within Council's Volunteer Code of Conduct must be adhered to by Volunteers at all times and a breach of the Code will result in an investigation in accordance with the Council's Complaint Handling process.

4. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITES – COUNCIL AND VOLUNTEERS**

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

Council recognises its role as a community leader with a responsibility to support and encourage volunteering in the context of the existing legal framework. This is demonstrated by the establishment of the MG who take responsibility for the overall management of Volunteers and the Council's Community Development Officer which will monitor Volunteering activity and the delivery of the Volunteer Program generally.

4.1   Management Group will:

- provide community leadership that supports, encourages and values volunteering.

- continue to build and maintain its own Volunteer Program for the benefit of the community.

- promote the success and positive influence of volunteering within the community.

- provide for the management of the Human Resource Department.

- provide resources for the implementation of Volunteer strategies/projects.

- develop and maintain strong communication with Volunteers and relevant bodies including State Government Departments and Parliament.

- identify needs and trends within the Volunteer sector.

- develop partnerships that support volunteering.

- introduce a Volunteer Management Program to ensure suited persons are selected for a particular Volunteer Role through a structured application process.

- provide clear expectations, written role statements and procedures will be provided to the individual Volunteer about their roles (**Volunteer Role Statement**).

- provide to larger groups (Volunteer Organisations) a general role statement for certain Volunteer Programs to ensure that the purpose and the role of Volunteers is clearly understood and facilitated and that an accurate level of reporting and awareness is communicated to the Council to satisfy its legislative and reporting obligations.

- ensure all Volunteers are provided with a formal induction program that will facilitate the education of Volunteers about the Council and the relevant Volunteer Programs, on-site training that may be required, practices, policies, and procedures.

- ensure that discussions take place on any major decisions or changes that will affect a volunteer's role and/or performance.

- provide support to Volunteers if they require any assistance to perform their role, this includes feedback on performance, and any further training, which assumes that the Volunteer has open communication with the Volunteer Supervisor and sets out any queries that the Volunteer might have with respect to their Volunteer Role Statement.

- ensure there is a Volunteer Supervisor within each program that has skills and knowledge to develop and supervise an effective Volunteer Program. The role of coordinating and supervising Volunteers will be recognised in the Volunteer Role Statement document.

- allocate specific roles to Volunteers that will best fit in with any talents, skills or limitations of the Volunteer in the context of the existing Volunteer Program.

- aim to provide opportunities for a range of experiences and to learn new skills where possible.

- allocate work to Volunteers that would be enriching to Council, program participants and Volunteers.

- effectively manage, support and resource the Volunteer program.

- ensure that Volunteers enhance the work of paid staff, never replace or surpass it.

- provide a supportive and safe environment.

- celebrate, recognise and acknowledge the contribution of its Volunteers.

4.2 Volunteers will:

- commit to a project to benefit the community and the individual.

- undertake activity at their own free will and without coercion.

- receive no financial payment.

- be active in designated Volunteer positions only as set out in the Volunteer Role Statement. Any proposed departure from the Volunteer Role Statement must be discussed in advance with the Volunteer Supervisor and the Volunteer Supervisor must confirm the adjustment to the Volunteer Role Statement in writing.

- aim to enhance a Volunteer Program, project or service under the direction (and with the consent of) the Volunteer Supervisor.

- be sure their motives and objectives match the Volunteer Role Statement and the Council's expectations before accepting a Volunteer Role.

- follow the relevant policies, procedures and guidelines of Council and the Volunteer Program they are committed to.

- be a positive contributor to their particular Volunteer Program.

- accept and perform their responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

- be willing to undergo induction and undertake further training if required as discussed with the Volunteer Supervisor.

- accept support and supervision and constructive feedback on their performance over the term of their volunteering activity.

- be open and honest in all communications.

- not represent themselves as a paid staff member or obligate Council in any way.

- work as a team member.

- respect confidentiality; and

- carry out tasks in a way which corresponds with the aims and values of Council and/or their Volunteer Organisation and/or the Volunteer Program; and

- agree to wear an identification badge while participating within the Volunteer Program which clearly identifies the person as a Volunteer.

- agree to a Department of Human Services screening check where appropriate.

- Advise the Community Development Officer immediately if their circumstances change that could impact on their Criminal History record.

5. **VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR**

As noted above, each Volunteer Program will have a Volunteer Supervisor. The Volunteer Supervisor's responsibility is to support and oversee the Volunteers. The Volunteer Supervisor should also assist with any processes associated with any of the Volunteer Programs.

The Volunteer Supervisor should have the required skills and training to undertake the role. This is a matter that is determined by the MG.

The Volunteer Supervisor should identify any issues and seek to resolve them in a positive manner.

A Volunteer Supervisor should deal with any issues, concerns or grievances that a Volunteer may have from time to time. A Volunteer Supervisor should be the Volunteer's first point of contact. If discussion of the issue, concern or grievance with the Volunteer Supervisor is not possible, then the Volunteer should alternatively seek assistance from the Community Development Officer or the Manager Strategy, People and Culture in writing. The Manager Strategy, People and Culture or other member of the MG will review the correspondence and consider the necessary next steps, if any, to be taken.

The Volunteer Supervisor of each program should be clearly identified to the participating Volunteers. If the Volunteer is in doubt as to who the Volunteer Supervisor is, then the Volunteer should raise that concern as soon as practicable and certainly before undertaking any task associated with the Volunteer Program in question to avoid issues arising.

The Volunteer Supervisor will be responsible for undertaking the Volunteer induction, review of performance following 30 day trial period, and consulting with the Community Development Officer in relation to the issue of the letter of acceptance, refusal or disengagement to the Volunteer.

The Community Development Officer will ensure that a Department of Human Services screening check is undertaken for all volunteers who will undertake activities within an area where clients are considered vulnerable (e.g. Childcare, Special Needs, Aged Care etc).

6. **VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

6.1 **Application, Interview, Selection & Management**

6.1.1 Volunteering opportunities need to be promoted to the community in an accessible manner to all community members.

6.1.2 Volunteer applications:

6.1.2.1 Can be made via the website:

(a) The Council website will have information providing a list of Volunteer Programs. Information will include necessary skills (where appropriate) and time commitment (in terms of hours) required to the volunteer program.

(b) the webpage will also have links to the Volunteer Information Handbook, Volunteer Policy, Code of Conduct and Volunteer Application Forms; any other relevant information or conditions will be provided on the webpage.

6.1.2.2 may advertise in the Council's Community Newsletter from time to time:

(a) a description of various volunteering positions, eligibility criteria, how a person can apply to become a volunteer, and any other relevant information.

6.1.2.3 An authorised agent executing a Volunteer Agreement on behalf of all its Volunteer members with Council, must note and adhere to the following in order for the Volunteer application process to progress:

(a) where a Volunteer Organisation is making the Volunteer application to apply to commit resources to the delivery of some or all of Council's Volunteer Programs, then the Volunteer Organisation will ensure that all its Volunteers have completed the application forms that will then be presented to the Council as a **joint application** by the Volunteer Organisation for assessment against the volunteer program criteria.

(b) in the event that the Volunteer Organisation recruits new Volunteers following its registration with the

Council's Volunteer Program, then any new members to the Volunteer Organisation will need to complete the Volunteer Application process as set out in 6.1.2.3 (a);

6.1.2.4. Changes in circumstance:

(a) Volunteers who leave, take a sabbatical, or become ill, or cannot fulfil the Volunteer Role Statement with the Volunteer Organisation for whatever reason, should notify the Volunteer Supervisor or the Community Development Officer. In the case of Volunteers which were introduced by the Volunteer Organisation, the Volunteer Organisation should advise the Council's Volunteer Supervisor in writing with the update to ensure that Council maintains an accurate record of who may be partaking on its Volunteer Programs.

6.1.3 Additional information that a Volunteer applicant (Volunteer Organisation or individual Volunteers) may need to provide might include the Volunteer Organisation's applicants, medical certificates, driver's licence, health condition etc to allow the Council to review the Volunteer Application Form.

6.1.4 The enrolment of Volunteers will be coordinated by the Community Development Officer.

6.1.5 It is important to note that Volunteers will be selected in a non-discriminatory manner and matched to the most appropriate Volunteer Program. Ideally, the skills of the Volunteer should correspond with the Volunteer Role Statement. The Council's Community Development Officer will make the final determination which Volunteer applicants will be successful, when the Volunteer will be included on the Council's Volunteer register and which Volunteer Program(s) the successful Volunteer cam commit to. The decision is final and binding. There is no appeal process.

6.1.6 An interview process may be used for certain Volunteer Programs given the nature of some of the Volunteer Programs.

6.1.7 An informal interview with the Volunteer Supervisor or Community Development Officer prior to commencement of the Volunteer Program may be conducted to ensure the Volunteer is aware of their Volunteer Role Statement.

6.1.8 Unsuccessful Volunteer applicants will be notified by mail.

6.2 **Screening and other clearances**

6.2.1 All Volunteer applicants will be required to provide a screening check with their Application Form, irrespective of whether the Application Form is being completed as an individual or part of a Volunteer Organisation Volunteer Application Form process.

6.2.2 Any information regarding convictions on the Department of Human Services screening check will be considered by the Manager Strategy, People and Culture in consultation with the Community Development

Officer or MG in determining whether to offer the applicant a Volunteer Role.

6.2.3 In the event that other clearances are necessary, these will be discussed with the Volunteer Applicant by the Community Development Officer and/or Volunteer Supervisor at the earliest convenience.

6.3 **Acceptance and Registration**

6.3.1 The Volunteer will be <u>considered</u> for the relevant Volunteer Program when the following has been completed to the satisfaction of the Community Development Officer:

- o completed and lodged the Volunteer Application Form.

- o provided Council with an up-to-date screening check and/or references.

- o where appropriate, provided evidence of current Drivers Licence.

- o where appropriate, provided evidence of First Aid Training.

6.3.2 The Volunteer will be advised in writing whether they are considered ready for <u>participation</u> on the relevant Volunteer Program and the Community Development Officer shall ensure the following actions have been completed:

- o The Council has received a properly executed Volunteer Deed Form (individual or organisation);

- o signed the Volunteer Role Statement applicable to the relevant volunteer program that the volunteer is seeking to contribute to.

- o The Volunteer has completed orientation and induction.

- o Details of Volunteer has been registered on Council's Volunteer Register.

6.3.3 The successful Volunteer Applicant will be provided with the following to support them in their new role as a Council Volunteer:

- o Name and contact details of their Volunteer Supervisor and the Community Development Officer.

- o Copy of the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

- o Copy of the Volunteer Policy

- o Relevant Council Work Health and Safety policies.

- o Volunteer Role Statement description.

- o Volunteer ID badge.

6.4 **Placement**

As noted above, the Community Development Officer has the responsibility of placing all Volunteers into a Volunteer Program that is best suited to the Volunteer based on the information provided on the Volunteer's Application Form.

A suitable placement will be determined on the skills, experience and interests of the Volunteer in conjunction with the requirements of the Volunteer Program, Volunteer Role Statement description and current Volunteer vacancies.

6.5 **Induction/Orientation**

6.5.1 The purpose is to prepare Volunteers for the volunteering role.

6.5.2 The Council will ensure that all Volunteers are given an induction orientation in accordance with Council's Human Resources guidelines.

6.5.3 The induction checklist includes the Volunteer gaining an appreciation and insight into the Council's work health and safety measures, and relevant Council policies.

6.5.4 An orientation of the Volunteer Program site will also be undertaken by the Volunteer Supervisor. During this orientation, the Volunteer will achieve awareness of the layout of the site, dress code and any other 'outstanding' issues or queries can be addressed with the Volunteer Supervisor.

6.5.5 The Volunteer **cannot** commit to activity on the relevant Volunteer Program without completing the induction process.

6.6 **Training and Development**

6.6.1 It is essential that Volunteers have been trained for their specific Volunteer Role Statement. This will be determined by the Volunteer Supervisor and the Community Development Officer.

6.6.2 The Community Development Officer following consultation with the Work, Health and Safety department and MG will determine, if there is a need to provide specific Volunteers with access to training to undertake the Volunteer Role Statement.

6.6.3 The Community Development Officer is responsible for identifying any additional training or development needs that may be required to be addressed in the Volunteer Program from time to time when Volunteer Programs are being reviewed.

6.7 **Identification**

6.7.1 Volunteers will be issued with a badge by the Council that states 'Volunteer'. This badge is to be to be worn at all times when volunteering.

6.8 **Intellectual Property**

Intellectual Property (**IP**) is a broad term encompassing written, graphic and audio visual material. Ownership of IP can be complex and especially so in volunteering relationships.

Under Australian law, IP belongs to the creator of the work in the first instance; but the IP of work created by paid employees is generally held by their employer. However, the same does not apply to Volunteers.

Where a Volunteer creates material for the Council, the Council has taken the precaution to deal with this issue in a written agreement with the Volunteer.

6.9 **Trial Period**

All Volunteers will be on a trial period for 30 days when they first become registered on the Volunteer Program.

At the end of the trial period the Volunteer Supervisor will review the Volunteer's performance and forward findings to Community Development Officer.

The review as between the Volunteer Supervisor and the Community Development Officer will consider the Volunteer's performance to date and whether it is suitable for the Volunteer to continue in that Volunteer Role or with any Volunteer Program at all.

6.10 **Intention to Cease a Volunteer Role Statement**

6.10.1 A Volunteer's service can be discontinued if:

6.10.1.1 the Community Development Officer receives notice from the Volunteer of their decision to cease their Volunteer Role.

6.10.1.2 the Community Development Officer has come to the decision that the Volunteer Role is no longer required following a review of the Volunteers activity.

6.10.1.3 the Community Development Officer is directed by the Council to discontinue a particular Volunteer Program and the Volunteer cannot be committed to another Volunteer Program.

6.10.1.4 the Community Development Officer has come to the decision that the Volunteer does not have the capacity to undertake the Volunteer Role.

6.10.1.5 the Community Development Officer in consultation with the Manager Strategy, People and Culture or MG have come to the decision that the Volunteer has acted in a manner contrary to either the Volunteer Agreement, the Volunteering Handbook, and/or Council policy.

6.10.1.6 the Volunteer has breached the provisions of the Volunteer Code of Conduct and a decision is made by MG following an

investigation under Council's Complaints Handling Process to disengage the volunteer.

6.10.2 The Council will offer all Volunteers disengaging the Volunteer Program the opportunity to participate in an on-line feedback forum. The Volunteer will be emailed a link to complete the task. Feedback will be reviewed and will be used to improve and enhance the Volunteer Programs generally.

6.11 **Attendance at & Absence from the Volunteer Program**

6.11.1 Every Volunteer will need to record their daily commitment on a Volunteer Attendance Register, which should be provided and managed by Volunteer Supervisor.

6.11.2 Volunteers are expected to perform their roles on a timely basis. Your fellow Volunteers will rely on you and your efforts to deliver the relevant Volunteer Programs.

6.11.3 If a Volunteer expects that they will be absent on a given day or for a given period of time, the Volunteer should give adequate notice to their Volunteer Supervisor.

6.12 **Work, Health and Safety requirements**

6.12.1 All Volunteers have a right to expect a safe and healthy environment when committing to delivery of the Volunteer Program. The Council will monitor the work health and safety requirements as necessary.

6.12.2 Volunteers shall not undertake, or be expected to undertake, an activity which they believe may be of a hazardous nature or they consider outside their individual 'comfort zone'.

6.12.3 If a Volunteer has any concern about work, health and safety issues it should be reported to their Volunteer Supervisor or Community Development Officer as soon as possible.

6.12.4 All Volunteers have a responsibility to take reasonable measures to look after their own health and safety, to use prescribed safety equipment, not put others at risk, and obey all safety rules in place. If that means dropping 'tools', then so be it. The Volunteer's safety is Council's paramount interest.

6.13 **Reimbursement of Expenses**

6.13.1 Any out of pocket expenses incurred by the Volunteer as part of their duties must be first approved by their Volunteer Supervisor or the Community Development Officer in writing, before the sum can be reimbursed to the Volunteer by the Council.

6.13.2 Travel costs will not be reimbursed unless the Volunteer has to travel significant distances to undertake their Volunteer Role and this is provided as part of the Council's approved Volunteer Program budget. The same rationale in 6.13.1 applies.

6.13.3 In any event, the cost of travelling between a Volunteer's home and the Volunteer Program site will not be reimbursable.

6.14 **Future Involvement in Volunteer Programs**

6.14.1 For the avoidance of doubt, voluntary service does not entitle a promotion to a paid position.

6.14.2 The Volunteer Supervisor or Community Development Officer may provide a statement of service about the Volunteer's role and length of service when a request has been received in writing.

6.15 **Concerns, Grievances and Misconduct**

6.15.1 All Volunteers are included within Council policies on Fair Treatment, Sexual Harassment, Victimisation, Workplace Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

6.15.2 Any complaints from a Volunteer should be dealt with by their Volunteer Supervisor or the Community Development Officer of the Council.

6.15.3 Any form of serious misconduct or misbehaviour will not be tolerated. This includes:

- assault;
- bullying;
- fraud;
- physical, verbal or sexual harassment;
- theft

6.15.4 Any decision of the Council involving the disengagement of a Volunteer for a form of serious misconduct is final and binding.

6.15.5 Any decision involving disciplinary action shall be made known to the affected Volunteer in writing.

6.16 **Insurance**

The Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme (LGAMLS) provides a level of indemnity to Council in respect of the acts and actions of its Volunteers. There are strict guidelines which must be followed at all times.

The LGAMLS will provide details from time to time that require the Council to demonstrate its level of commitment to the protection of Council's Volunteers.

This means that accurate time commitment by each Volunteer is recorded on the Council's 'Volunteer Attendance Register' and saved into Council's Records Management System for evidence purposes.

Both the Volunteer Supervisor and the Volunteer need to be clear on the volunteering parameters which will involve correctly and accurately recorded at all material times.

The Volunteer acknowledges that there is an expectation on the Council to keep the LGAMLS updated, as agreed, with Council's Volunteer Program.

To this end, if the Volunteer Register is not maintained then neither the Volunteer nor the Council may not be protected to the maximum extent provided for in law and in practice.

It is the responsibility of the Volunteer to ensure that the Volunteer Attendance Register correctly and accurately records volunteering activity at all material times. If in doubt, the Volunteer should raise the issue with the Volunteer Supervisor.

Volunteers use of own vehicle

Council's insurance does not cover volunteer's personal vehicles and therefore if a volunteer uses their own vehicle while volunteering for Council the volunteer is responsible to ensure that their insurance company is advised that the vehicle is being used for voluntary work. Evidence should also be provided to Council of the Volunteers Comprehensive Insurance Coverage.

6.17 Workers Compensation

Volunteers are not covered under Workers Compensation provisions.