



Greater Hume Council



Volunteer Guidelines

These guidelines have been prepared by Greater Hume Council to assist
Volunteers in their role.

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1.0 Introduction

Greater Hume Council is fortunate to have a large number of community members who have chosen to volunteer their time to assist in the provision and enhancement of some of Council's services, for the benefit of the community at large.

Greater Hume Council acknowledges that volunteers play a vital role in our social, environment and cultural well-being which is integral in establishing our vibrant community atmosphere.

Volunteers currently work in areas such as:

- Recreation
- Tourism
- Community
- Children Services
- Special Events, such as Australia Day, Clean Up Australia etc.
- Environment
- State Emergency Services.

In moving forward, Greater Hume Council wishes to ensure that the community's sense of inclusiveness is encouraged, particularly for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, different disabilities (cognitive, intellectual & other developmental disabilities, mobility, visual, hearing and mental health disabilities) and their caregivers. Policies have been developed to encourage diversity of social, cultural and community activities that promote inclusiveness and connectedness.

Consideration of disability and inclusion is now managed by new legislation, the Disability Inclusion Act 2014. The Act requires all government departments and certain public authorities, including councils in NSW, to have a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Council's Disability Inclusion Plan focuses on four key areas:

- Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- Creating liveable communities
- Supporting access to meaningful employment
- Improving access to services through better systems and processes

Greater Hume Council has adopted a Disability Inclusion Action Plan which can be found on Council's website.

Greater Hume Council recognises that people with a special need or disability share the same motivations for volunteering as anyone else. They volunteer to learn new skills, to meet new people and to contribute to their community.

There are many benefits to organisations which involve people with a disability in their volunteering programs.

These include:

- the new perspectives that people with a disability can offer;
- the creation of an accessible and inclusive volunteer program that reflects the diversity of the community;
- increased awareness of disability and its implications, leading to improvements in communication and project and program design.

Council welcomes people with a range of different disabilities (cognitive, intellectual & other developmental disabilities, mobility, visual, hearing and mental health disabilities) and their caregivers to be involved in our community and volunteering opportunities.

It is anticipated that the use of volunteers will continue to be expanded into other areas of Council as we continue to grow.

These guidelines outline both volunteers' and Greater Hume Council's rights and responsibilities. It also ensures that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate in a variety of volunteering activities.

2.0 Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is considered to be a person who undertakes an activity on behalf of Council either directly or indirectly, and where the intent is to provide a tangible benefit to the community without any expectation or entitlement to personal remuneration. As such, a volunteer is not party to an employment contract with council in regard to that activity.

The volunteer may be invited to participate directly by council, one of Council's auspice programmes or through another third party group which is involved with council in undertaking the activity. Although there is no direct personal remuneration which could be considered as income for the volunteer undertaking the activity, there may be arrangements made for the payment of out of pocket expenses associated with the activity.

3.0 Roles for Volunteers

Council and the individual volunteers each have an obligation to ensure that volunteer participation is safe, effective and, most of all, enjoyable. Volunteers contribute to a range of activities and through their commitment and energy volunteers enrich the fabric of the local community. Volunteers will be recruited in line with the information outlined in these guidelines.

3.1 Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by industrial awards or work-place agreements. Volunteers however do have rights and responsibilities, some of which are enshrined in legislation.

As a Council Volunteer you have the right to:

- Work in a safe and healthy environment in accordance with the WH&S Act
- Be treated fairly and shown respect
- Be appointed within the Equal Employment Opportunity & Anti-Discrimination Legislation
- Be provided with safe systems of work
- Be provided with adequate supervision and support
- Be provided with volunteer induction and orientation
- Have your information stored and confidentially maintained in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

In conjunction with your rights you have a responsibility to:

- Follow instructions of your supervisor
- Agree to work in a safe and healthy manner – not to jeopardise the health and safety of others – both fellow volunteers, paid staff and the public
- To be reliable and commit, where possible, to the agreed position and working arrangements

- Notify Council at registration and when necessary of any pre-existing medical conditions that could be aggravated or any special needs that need accommodating
- Report injuries and complete an incident report for any injuries, incidents or near misses, always inform your supervisor or the volunteer coordinator
- Work as part of the team
- Be willing to learn and continue learning
- Follow any guidelines, policies and procedures relevant to the volunteering position
- Act in a manner that does not undermine Council in the community
- Ask for help when needed, ask questions when more information is required
- Accept supervision in the spirit in which it is meant
- Respect the confidentiality of other volunteers, Council employees, Council and any information to which you may be exposed
- Record details where requested in an attendance register or log book on each volunteering occasion (for insurance purposes)
- Undertake where required a Police Check and/or Working with Children Declaration (at your own expense) and as required under the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998. All Police Checks will remain the property of Greater Hume Council
- Work within your own physical limits and area of skill
- Notify volunteer supervisor/co-ordinator of any issue relating to work task allocation which may impact on your participation, for example prior or existing physical restrictions.

4.0 Recruitment

4.1 How Volunteers can be Engaged

Volunteers will be engaged by advertising or word of mouth. The relevant volunteer co-ordinator or representative of a programme or committee is to make contact with each person to disseminate all relevant information.

4.2 Working with Vulnerable People

All persons looking after vulnerable people, such as the aged, children and young people have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for them. Legislation was introduced that affects all people working with the aged, young people and children.

- Commission for Children & Young People Act, 1998
- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000
- Aged Care Act, 1997.

These laws make up the Working with Children Check, the goal being to create workplaces where children are safe and protected.

The Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 defines child-related employment as: “any employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised”.

It is the responsibility of those seeking volunteer work that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised to:

- Complete a declaration saying whether or not they are a prohibited person when applying for child-related employment
- Agree to allow the employer to undertake all aspects of the employment screening process.

It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for volunteer roles that primarily involve direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised. It is therefore the responsibility of a prohibited person to NOT apply for any such position. The Council may, at its discretion, require a Police check on any volunteers where deemed appropriate.

4.3 Termination of a Volunteer

In instances of misconduct or breaches to the volunteer responsibilities, the Volunteer Supervisor/Coordinator has the right to dismiss the Volunteer, and depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, dismissal may be without prior warning and be immediate. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Theft of property or funds
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances whilst or during volunteering
- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, community members, clients or staff
- Disclosure of confidential information regarding the Council and/or clients
- Breaching any other volunteer responsibilities
- Malicious damage to Council or community property
- Not working in a safe manner
- Council no longer requires the services of the volunteer.

4.4 Application Form

A volunteer application form is required to be completed by all volunteers and as such, all volunteers should complete the form prior to the commencement of their volunteer activities.

The details on these forms will be entered into the Greater Hume Council volunteer database.

4.5 Volunteer Database

A centralised volunteer database will be developed to ensure that all appropriate information required for WH&S and Insurance purposes relating to the use of volunteers is maintained.

The database will be maintained by the HR department. Volunteer Coordinators will have access to the database to update information regarding volunteers.

Information contained in the database is held in accordance with Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA).

5.0 Work Health and Safety

Volunteers, whilst not considered to be employees of Council, are still owed a statutory duty of care while undertaking activities on behalf of Council. Before volunteers are permitted to undertake an activity on behalf of Council a risk assessment of the activity will be undertaken to ensure the following:

- The activity is suitable for volunteers
- The activity does not place volunteers at risk to their health and safety
- The volunteer has the physical capacity to undertake the activity
- The volunteer has the knowledge and skills required to undertake the activity in a safe manner
- If required, the volunteer holds appropriate licenses to undertake the activity.

It is expected that volunteers are aware of the risk assessment relevant to their role, and if appropriate contribute to the development of the risk assessment with any changes.

While undertaking activities on behalf of Council, volunteers have responsibilities for health and safety. In particular volunteers, through their actions or omissions, are not to place themselves or other persons at risk while undertaking Council related activities. Depending upon the nature of the activity the responsibilities for volunteers may include the following:

- Be aware of and follow the approved risk management procedures for the activity
- Follow the directions of the person in charge of the activity
- Use plant or equipment in accordance with the correct procedures
- Bring to the attention of the appropriate person any matter which could affect the safe undertaking of the activity
- Report to the appropriate person as soon as practical any incidents or near misses which relate to health and safety of the voluntary activity
- Attend a medical if requested, in order to confirm you are physically capable of undertaking the tasks.
- May be subject to random testing for alcohol or other drugs under Council's Alcohol & Other Drugs Policy.

5.1 Induction

It is important to ensure that all Volunteers participate in an Induction process to ensure they are all prepared to undertake their role and to help them to quickly become effective members of the team. The Induction may be a one-on-one or in a group and shall be conducted by the activity Supervisor or Coordinator.

The formal Induction includes an Induction checklist and Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) checklist as well as an overview of the Handbook, application form and relevant Council policies and requirements, including components of the Code of Conduct. Volunteers will be required to comply with this information and any other relevant policies and procedures to assist them in meeting their responsibilities for legal, ethical and appropriate conduct.

Select committee members will be provided with training and resources from Council that will enable them to induct other committee members or volunteers and record that training on behalf of Council as required.

This is required to ensure the Health Safety and wellbeing of all Council workers and meet Council's legislative obligations

5.2 Supervision

Each Council project/activity that utilises volunteers will appoint a volunteer supervisor/coordinator with the responsibility of supporting and overseeing the volunteers, and the associated processes and procedures. That person will have the appropriate skills and training to undertake the role.

The supervisor/coordinator will monitor their volunteers and have regular discussions with them to identify any issues or training and support needs that would assist them to fulfil the role. This also provides opportunity for a volunteer to provide feedback and to raise issues.

Volunteers who have a complaint or grievance should first refer the matter to their supervisor/coordinator and both will work to resolve the issue. If this is not possible the matter can then be taken to the Manager responsible for the program area and action may be taken in accordance with Council's Grievance Policy.

5.3 Training

All volunteers are to undergo relevant training for their volunteer role. This will include training pertinent to their role and can be delivered on the job. Part of this training is understanding the work health and safety issues relevant to the voluntary role.

5.4 Incident Reporting

All accidents, incidents, injuries and near misses must be reported to your supervisor instantly. If you were to sustain an injury or near miss you will be required to complete an incident report which your supervisor will assist you with. It is important to report everything no matter how small so we can make improvements to minimise the risk of something similar reoccurring.

6.0 Volunteering Code of Conduct

As a volunteer for Greater Hume Council certain behaviours and rules are expected to be adhered to whilst undertaking volunteer duties.

6.1 Confidentiality

Volunteers shall not use confidential information gained through their activities as a volunteer for the purpose of securing a private benefit for themselves or for any other person.

Volunteers shall not disclose any confidential information for any reason without the authority to do so.

Volunteers shall not disclose private or personal information as defined in the Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998.

6.2 Acceptance of Gifts/Benefits

Individuals and groups you deal with through volunteer work may want to express their appreciation for services or assistance by the giving of some form of gift, benefit or hospitality.

Greater Hume Council's Bribes, Gifts and Benefits Policy sets out the requirements for acceptance of bribes, gifts and benefits.

Bribes should never be accepted. A person offered a bribe should refuse it and report the incident as soon as possible to their supervisor. Council will take steps to report the matter to ICAC and the police immediately.

Any offer of a gift, whether it is a gift of value or a token gift, must be disclosed to your volunteer supervisor. Your supervisor will arrange for the completion of a Gifts, Bribes and Benefits Register form which is then required to be authorised by the General Manager. If a gift of nominal value (token) is received, the General Manager may approve the acceptance of such gift.

Gifts of cash or where there is implication that the person may receive favour in return must not be accepted.

6.3 Conflict of Interest

Volunteers must not use their position to gain profit or advantage. Volunteers must be aware of circumstances where a possible conflict of interest may arise and declare it if necessary.

6.4 Use of Resources

Volunteers may be provided with equipment to assist in performing various activities. If a licence or qualification is required to operate equipment, the volunteer is required to provide evidence of a current qualification or licence prior to operating the equipment. It is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure that equipment is used correctly and within the guidelines or instructions provided by the Supervisor.

If equipment is damaged, the Volunteer Coordinator should be notified immediately so appropriate repairs can be made.

Volunteers must not use Greater Hume Council property for their own private purposes.

Any court imposed fine or infringements received as a result of the actions or omissions of a volunteer will be the responsibility of the volunteer. They include, but are not limited to, fines related to parking, speeding, littering, and red light cameras.

6.5 Out of Pocket Expenses

From time to time, volunteers may need to use their own money to purchase materials or pay fees. Volunteers must have prior approval from their supervisor before they use their own money.

Out of pocket expenses will only be reimbursed if a claim is submitted with proof of payment attached i.e. a tax invoice, unless previously agreed/approved. The supervisor must sign the claim form and supply a general ledger number for allocation of the expense.

6.6 Policy and Procedures

Volunteers agree to be bound by relevant policies and procedures of Greater Hume Council applicable to their volunteering position.

6.7 Equitable Treatment of People and Situations

Volunteers shall treat members of the public, Council Staff and Councillors fairly and equitably and with respect, courtesy, compassion and sensitivity.

Volunteers shall not act contrary to any law in their voluntary capacity.

Volunteers shall not act unreasonably, unjustly, oppressively or in a discriminatory manner.

Volunteers shall refrain from any form of conduct, in the performance of their duties, which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment or give rise to the reasonable suspicion or appearance of improper conduct.

6.8 Duty of Care

Council has a legal responsibility to provide a duty of care to all volunteers to ensure that they are not exposed to any risk of injury or illness from either the tasks they are undertaking, the equipment they are using or the environment they are working in.

6.9 Dress and Sun Protection

To protect persons from UV exposure, volunteers working outdoors will be required to wear long sleeve or three quarter length sleeve shirts with collar, loose fitting long trousers, enclosed footwear, hat with a broad brim and sunglasses. It is also recommended that volunteers be “sun-smart”, using appropriate sun-protective lotion/cream. Volunteers working indoors will wear appropriate and sensible clothing and footwear for the activities they may be undertaking.

6.10 Alcohol and Drugs

All Volunteers must present for duties in a condition that renders you fit to perform your duties in a safe manner, without risk to your health and safety, or that of others.

This means you must always be in a 'fit for duty' state, where you are unaffected by drugs (including medication), alcohol or fatigue while performing duties for Council, undertaking activities, operating vehicles or equipment and travelling to and from Council.

All Volunteers must comply with Council's Drug and Alcohol Policy.

6.11 Reporting of Corrupt Conduct

Council is committed to an ethical workplace and requires volunteers to report corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious and substantial waste of public money. If you suspect any corrupt conduct please refer to Council's Internal Reporting Public Interest Disclosure Policy.

6.12 Media Protocol

Volunteers are not permitted to make any comments to the Media on behalf of Council, except where approval has been provided. Any queries for a statement to the media must be referred to the General Manager or the Director of Corporate & Community Services.

6.13 Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act

Council will obtain personal information from volunteers including name, address, telephone numbers, police check, child protection screening (where applicable) and other contact details. Personal information obtained by Council is governed by the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA). This legislation provides direction for the collection, protection, storage, disposal, access and use of personal information by Council.

Council will take all reasonable care to protect personal information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. To ensure that personal information held by Council is current, please notify Council if any of your details change.

For further information, please contact your Council or committee supervisor.

7.0 Insurance

7.1 Personal Accident Insurance

Council's personal accident insurance policy covers registered volunteers whilst performing activities authorised by Council. The insurance also covers volunteers on direct route to and from the authorised event or activity (does not include motor vehicle damage).

It should be noted that the policy only covers volunteers aged between 18 and 90 years. As a result persons outside of this age bracket are not able to be engaged in any voluntary activities.

Council will take all reasonable care to ensure that volunteers operate in a safe working environment. Volunteers are required to act in a responsible manner and in accordance with standard operating procedures. Wilfully or deliberately causing injury is not covered by Council's insurance.

Any accident that occurs whilst under the care and control of Council should be reported to the immediate supervisor as soon as possible. A report must be completed by the supervisor and returned to Council's Risk & Safety Coordinator within 24 hours.

7.2 Public Liability Insurance

Whilst working under the care and control of Council, volunteers are protected against Public Liability claims under Council's Public Liability insurance cover. Council's insurance does not cover incidences where damage has been caused through wilful or deliberate acts.

If damage is caused or an incident arises, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to Council's Risk & Safety Coordinator.

7.3 Volunteers' Personal Property

Volunteers' personal items are not covered by Council's insurance whilst undertaking volunteer activities. Volunteers are encouraged not to bring or wear items of any significant value (including jewellery). All attempts should be taken to secure personal items against theft or damage. It is also recommended that only small cash amounts be carried, sufficient for the needs of the day.

7.4 Use of Council Equipment

Volunteers may be provided with Council equipment to assist in performing various activities. If a licence or qualification is required to operate plant or equipment, a volunteer must provide evidence of such qualification or licence. All care should be taken to ensure that equipment is used correctly and within the guidelines or instructions provided by supervisors.

Damage to Council equipment by volunteers whilst working under the care and control of Council is covered by Council's Property Mutual Insurance. Council's policy does not cover any wilful or deliberate damage to Council property.

If equipment is damaged, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to Council's Risk & Safety Coordinator.

7.5 Use of Motor Vehicles

Volunteers may be required to use a motor vehicle during the course of performing their volunteer activities. If the volunteer is required to use a car they must submit a copy of their licence to their volunteer supervisor/coordinator. If using their own vehicle they must submit a copy of their personal car insurance.

Greater Hume Council does not cover or compensate any damage incurred to a volunteers' own vehicle (you are required to have your own car insurance policy). It is a mandatory requirement to have a current drivers licence and third party car insurance when using your own vehicle while you are volunteering for Greater Hume Council. If these requirements cannot be adhered to, the individual will not be able to participate in volunteer activities that require a vehicle.

Damage to a Council vehicle by a volunteer whilst working under the care and control of Council is covered by Council's Motor Vehicle Insurance policy. Council's policy does not cover any wilful or deliberate damage to Council property.

If a motor vehicle is damaged, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to Council's Risk & Safety Coordinator immediately.

The vehicle log book must be completed correctly each time a Council vehicle is used.

This document and relevant forms can be downloaded from Greater Hume Council's website www.greaterhume.nsw.gov.au.