

Volunteers handbook



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1. Welcome

The City of Wodonga would like to welcome and thank you for choosing to become a volunteer with the organisation. A priority for the City of Wodonga is to encourage our community members to become involved in a range of activities across the city with the aim of developing stronger relationships with the community. Volunteerism is a demonstration of a community's cohesiveness and an individual's commitment to contribute to the common good.

Through the development of the *Volunteer Induction Handbook*, City of Wodonga aims to provide standard volunteer guidelines that outline both your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer with the council.

2. Scope

This handbook is applicable to all City of Wodonga volunteers. Volunteers currently work in the areas of:

- Recreation and Wodonga Sports & Leisure Centre
- Early years
- Community centres
- Youth services
- Aged services
- Environmental services
- Arts and cultural services
- Events
- Bonegilla Migrant Centre
- Visitor Information Centre

It should be noted that as the city grows, so too will the variety of volunteering opportunities.



3. Definitions and principles of volunteering

Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through not-for-profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- To be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;
- Of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- For no financial payment; and
- In designated volunteer positions only.



Principles of volunteering

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer;
- Volunteer work is unpaid;
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice;
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances;
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community;
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs;
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only;
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work;
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers;
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others; and
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality

4. Occupational health and safety (OH&S)

Volunteers are not considered to be employees of City of Wodonga. However, under Section 23 of the Victorian Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004, Wodonga Council has an obligation to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons other than employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety from the conduct of the employer. Before volunteers undertake an activity on behalf of City of Wodonga, a risk assessment of the activity will be undertaken to ensure the following:

- the activity is suitable for volunteers;
- the activity does not place the health or safety of volunteers at risk;
- the volunteer has the physical capacity to undertake the activity; and
- the volunteer has the knowledge, training and skills required to undertake the activity in a safe manner.

5. Rights and responsibilities of City of Wodonga

- Provide adequate supervision for all volunteers.
- Acknowledge the extent and importance of volunteer contributions.
- Increase awareness both internally and externally of the contributions of volunteers.
- Conduct relevant induction for volunteers.
- Provide information on City of Wodonga's policies and procedures impacting on activities.

- Provide a written job description for the volunteer activities.
- Provide clear operational guidelines for each activity.
- Ensure staff provide open and honest information and respond to concerns and queries.
- Provide clear guidelines on the relationship between staff and volunteers and councillors.
- Consult on matters that will impact on volunteer participation.
- Regularly review the role of volunteers and volunteer activities.
- Maintain adequate volunteer recruitment processes.
- Maintain equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies in engaging volunteers.
- Provide a safe working environment.
- Provide relevant insurance coverage.
- Provide adequate resources for volunteers to conduct activities in accordance with City of Wodonga's policies and procedures.
- Where appropriate, acknowledge and identify the skill levels of individual volunteers.
- Where appropriate, identify and provide opportunities for skill development for individuals.
- Actively promote volunteer and group activities.
- Where appropriate, provide each volunteer with identification whilst undertaking volunteer work.

6. Rights of volunteers:

- To be treated as co-workers. This includes job descriptions, EEO, OH&S, anti-discrimination legislation and organisational grievance processes.
- To be asked for their permission before any job-related reference, police or other checks are conducted.
- To be given a job or task worthwhile to them.
- To know the purpose and ground rules of the organisation.
- To be given appropriate orientation and training for the job.
- To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred (as long as the council's volunteer co-ordinator agreed to the expenditure being necessary in the role)
- To be heard and to make suggestions.
- To have appropriate insurance cover.
- To be provided with a verbal reference or statement of service, if appropriate.

Responsibilities of volunteers:

- To complete the work that was volunteered for and be reliable.
- Be a team player.
- Be willing to learn and actively engage in personal development opportunities.
- Follow any guidelines, policies and procedures relevant to the volunteering position.
- To act in a manner that does not undermine City of Wodonga in the community.
- Ensure behaviour is aligned to City of Wodonga's values of trust, respect, integrity and learning.
- Ask for help when needed, ask questions when more information is required.
- Respect the confidentiality of other volunteers, City of Wodonga employees, City of Wodonga and others as appropriate.
- Record attendance details as determined by the area co-ordinator.
- Notify City of Wodonga's volunteer co-ordinator of any issue relating to work task allocation which may impact on your participation, for example prior or existing physical restrictions.
- Notify City of Wodonga's volunteer co-ordinator of any changes to availability, personal details or circumstances.
- Adhere to the Volunteers' Code of Conduct.
- Arrive at work, events and meetings on time and make sure mobile phones are switched off prior to the start.
- Keep all work areas clean and maintained



6.1 OH&S

While undertaking activities on behalf of City of Wodonga, volunteers have responsibilities for health and safety. In particular through their actions or omissions, volunteers are not to place themselves or other persons at risk while undertaking City of Wodonga 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 volunteer activity.

7. Police check

Information distributed to potential volunteers must include the requirement for individuals to undertake National Police Records Check before they commence volunteer work. An individual should not commence volunteer work without a National Police Records Check being received by City of Wodonga. In circumstances where City of Wodonga requires the volunteer to commence without delay, the volunteer will be required to complete a Statutory Declaration that declares all or any police records for the individual. It is a legal requirement that anyone over the age of 18 must undergo a police check before they commence working as a volunteer. Ongoing volunteers will require police checks every three years

In accordance with the Children's Services Regulations 1998, early years' volunteers who are responsible for the care or education of children are **not** required to undertake a National Police Check **only** under the following circumstances:

- when the volunteer is immediately supervised by a qualified staff member; or
- when the volunteer is under the age of 18 and is immediately supervised by a qualified staff member; and
- when the volunteer is a school student and is being directly supervised by their teacher.

City of Wodonga will fund the costs of all National Police Records Check for all volunteers, and the National Police Certificate remains the property of City of Wodonga.

8. Termination of a volunteer

In instances of misconduct or breaches to the volunteer responsibilities, City of Wodonga's volunteer co-ordinator has the right to dismiss the volunteer. This includes:

- Theft of property or funds.
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances whilst or during volunteering.
- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, clients or staff.
- Disclosure of confidential information regarding City of Wodonga and/or clients
- Breaching any other volunteer responsibilities.
- Malicious damage to City of Wodonga or community property.
- Not working in a safe manner.
- Non-compliance with rights and responsibilities as outlined in Section 6.



9. Training

City of Wodonga has the responsibility to ensure volunteers are provided with appropriate training which, depending on the activity, may include the following:

- OH&S induction training
- Hazard identification
- First aid
- Responding to an emergency
- Use of communication equipment (where required)
- On the job and/or formal training specific to the activity
- On the job training in specific risk management procedures as required.
- Communication skills
- Basic administration

10. Code of conduct

10.1 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 Act 2000.

10.2 Acceptance of gifts/benefits

Volunteers may accept small gifts from users of their service as appreciation of a job well done, for example, chocolates and flowers. Gifts may not be accepted when they are more substantial in nature and where there is the implication that the person may receive a favour in return.

10.3 Conflict of interest

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

10.4 Use of resources

- Volunteers must not improperly use City of Wodonga resources.
- Volunteers shall use City of Wodonga resources effectively and economically.
- Volunteers shall not use City of Wodonga property for their own purposes.

10.5 Equitable treatment of people and situations

- Volunteers shall treat members of the public, City of Wodonga 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.

10.6 Dress

To protect persons from UV exposure, volunteers working outdoors will be encouraged 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. Volunteers working indoors will wear appropriate and sensible clothing and footwear for the activities they may be undertaking. Uniforms to be worn at specific events will be supplied and are required to be worn. At all times clothing will be clean, neat and will not depict images that may cause offence or undermine the purpose of the City of Wodonga.

10.7 Alcohol, smoking and other drugs

Volunteers are not permitted to drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while they are performing work on behalf of City of Wodonga, or report for duty when their job performance is likely to be affected by alcohol or illegal drugs. Smoking is allowed during allocated break times and must be done in a designated smoking area. It is illegal to litter your butts and to smoke in an enclosed area. Smoking in the eye of the public in a City of Wodonga provided uniform is prohibited.

10.8 Reporting of corrupt conduct

City of Wodonga is committed to an ethical workplace and requires volunteers to report corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious and substantial waste of public money.

10.9 Media protocol

Volunteers are not permitted to make any comment to the media on behalf of City of Wodonga. Any queries for a statement to the media must be referred to the co-ordinator of the work activity.

The City of Wodonga often requires photographs/video footage to be taken of local residents, community members and volunteers using City of Wodonga services or participating in City of Wodonga events for use in publications, on City of Wodonga's website, social media tools and/or by the media and affiliate organisations. City of Wodonga will obtain volunteer permission before proceeding with such photographs. Permission will be sought in writing on the Volunteer's Application Form.

11. Privacy and personal information protection act

Council will obtain personal information from volunteers including names, addresses, telephone numbers, criminal history information and other contact details. Personal information obtained by City of Wodonga is governed by the Privacy Act 2000. This legislation provides direction for the collection, protection, storage, disposal, access and use of personal information by City of Wodonga.

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

12. Insurance

12.1 Motor vehicle insurance

It is strongly recommended that all volunteers who may use their own vehicles for City of Wodonga authorised activities have **comprehensive car insurance** and maintain membership of an ambulance scheme covering cost of ambulance transportation. Limited cover for loss of no claim bonus and/or policy excess is provided for comprehensively insured cars involved in an accident while on authorised City of Wodonga business. Volunteers who choose not to have comprehensive insurance can still volunteer for City of Wodonga however they will not be able to claim as above.

Any queries in relation to insurance should be forwarded to Wodonga Council's risk and community safety officer.

13. Accidents and incidents

It is essential that volunteers are registered as volunteers with City of Wodonga to be covered by the Wrongs Acts 1958 (as amended). This legislation provides that:

- A volunteer is not liable in any civil proceeding for anything done, or not done, in good faith by him or her in providing a service in relation to community work organised by a community organisation.
- Any liability resulting from an act or omission that would but for sub-section (1) attach to the volunteer attaches instead to the community organisation.
- This means that a volunteer is protected from suit if they are conducting community work organised by a community organisation, if they act in good faith. However **volunteers are not protected if** a volunteer knew or ought reasonably to have known that he/she:
 - Was acting outside the scope of the community work organised by the organisation
 - Was acting contrary to any instructions given by the community organisation relating to the provision of the service;
 - whose ability to provide the service was significantly impaired by alcohol or drugs; or
 - Was acting in a deliberate or wilful manner that eventuated in deliberate and wilful damage to property.

Defamation and transport accident proceedings are not covered by this act.

All accidents and incidents that may give rise to a claim against City of Wodonga must be reported to City of Wodonga's risk management adviser as quickly as practicable.

13.1 Injury to volunteer workers

Cover is provided for registered volunteers who are seriously injured / disabled while actively engaged in authorised volunteer work. If the volunteer holds a salaried position, limited cover is provided for loss of wages due to any time off work resulting from injury sustained whilst acting in their volunteer capacity

Any accidents or near misses are to be reported to City of Wodonga's OH&S adviser as soon as practicable.

13.2 Admission of liability

Under no circumstances should a volunteer admit liability on behalf of City of Wodonga where any personal injury or property damage to third parties occurs. Non-admission of liability is a condition of City of Wodonga's insurance policies and must be observed. Admission, or implied admission, limits City of Wodonga's ability to defend any claim.

14. Volunteer's personal property

Volunteer's personal items are not covered by City of Wodonga 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.

15. Use of City of Wodonga's equipment

Volunteers may be provided with City of Wodonga's 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 provide by supervisors.

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

If equipment is damaged, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to City of Wodonga's risk management officer.

16. Use of City of Wodonga's motor vehicles

Volunteers may be requested to use a City of Wodonga motor vehicle during the course of performing various activities. City of Wodonga's volunteer co-ordinator must sight a person's driving licence before allowing them to drive the vehicle.

City of Wodonga's Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy will cover damage to a City of Wodonga vehicle by a volunteer whilst working on City of Wodonga authorised business. City of Wodonga's policy does not cover any wilful or deliberate damage to City of Wodonga property.

If a motor vehicle is damaged, City of Wodonga's volunteer co-ordinator must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and forwarded to City of Wodonga's asset management (plant and fleet) officer within 48 hours.

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

16.1 Fines and infringements

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 are wholly responsible for payment of such fines and infringements.

They include but are not limited to:

- Parking
- Speeding
- Littering
- Red light camera

17. 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 coordinator before they use their own money.

Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed if a claim is submitted with proof of payment attached, for example, a tax invoice. City of Wodonga's volunteer co-ordinator must sign the claim form and supply a general ledger number for allocation of the expense.

18. Recognition of volunteers

City of Wodonga is committed to recognising the efforts of all volunteers on an informal and formal basis, including but not limited to the following

- Certificate of appreciation
- Activities, events (Christmas drinks, morning teas and lunches)
- Letter of service and/or a written reference from your direct co-ordinator

It is the responsibility of the individual volunteer co-ordinator or business unit manager to organise volunteer recognition activities.

19. Grievance procedure

If a volunteer has a grievance about any aspect of their tasks, other volunteers or City of Wodonga staff, the following process should be followed:

Step 1 The volunteer is encouraged to approach the person directly related to the issue if they feel comfortable doing so.

Step 2 The volunteer can approach the co-ordinator or the committee president in the area they are working within for a discussion and advice on how to best resolve the issue. This discussion should be treated as strictly confidential.

Step 3 If Step 2 does not help resolve the problem, then the issue should be notified to the business unit manager in writing.

Step 4 If the matter remains unresolved, the volunteer may request the matter be referred to the relevant director or other authorised officer for discussion. A further meeting between all parties should be held as soon as practicable.

Step 5 If the matter remains unresolved the chief executive officer shall provide the volunteers with a written response. The response shall include the reasons for not implementing any proposed remedy.

