

1. BACKGROUND

Volunteers contribute significantly to the achievement of Coonamble Shire Council's strategic and service delivery outcomes in conjunction with Council employees to enhance the broad range of Council services, projects and programs.

Council also recognises that volunteering enhances social capital within the Coonamble community.

This policy provides a clear definition of the responsibilities of Council volunteers and employees, as well as outlining procedures and processes for effective management of volunteer programs within the organisation. It enables Council to fulfil its duty of care to volunteers, employees who work with volunteers and members of the community by services provided from Council volunteers.

2. PURPOSE

Coonamble Shire Council recognises volunteers are an integral part of the organisation and a valuable asset to the community. This policy provides the framework to successfully implement volunteers into Council and/ or activities.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVE

- Guide Council's vision for ongoing recruitment, volunteer management and recognition of volunteers.
- Assist in defining the role and responsibilities of volunteers.
- Encourage active community participation, involvement and social interaction through appropriate volunteering opportunities within the organisation.
- Facilitate engagement, supervision and training of volunteers.
- Provide a framework for the relationship between Council Staff and Volunteers.

4. LEGISLATION & RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Coonamble Shire Council Volunteer Management Procedures
- Local Government Act 1993
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Industrial Relations Act 1996
- Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW – 2020
- Private and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- Private and Personal Information Protection Regulation Act 2014
- Workplace Surveillance Act 2005
- Coonamble Shire Council's Operational Plan
- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
- Commonwealth Volunteer Protection Act 2003
- Equal Employment Opportunities
- School to Work Program

5. APPLICATION/SCOPE

The following individuals and groups are deemed to be 'volunteers' for the purposes of this policy:

- Entities of Council set up under the provisions of Section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993.
- Individuals recruited (or whose application is accepted) to volunteer with Council.
- Members of Council-managed Reference Groups and Advisory Committees.
- Volunteers who participate in Council managed projects and events.
- Individuals and organisations undertaking work on Council property, with formal Council consent and/or supervision, i.e. Service Clubs, Showground Trusts, Roadside Clean up campaigns, Environmental groups, School Project Groups, Sport and Recreation Groups.
- Volunteers involved in mutual obligation activities.
- Volunteers undertaking activities by way of a Sub-delegation of Functions in accordance with Section 378 of the Local Government Act 1993.

The following individuals and groups are excluded from this policy:

- People undertaking activities on behalf of Council in return for a fee or charge.
- People undertaking work experience with Council.
- Licensees of Council-owned community facilities.

- Volunteers delivering services on behalf of not-for-profit, government and/or non-government organisations within the Coonamble Local Government Area (LGA).
- Volunteers working for not for profit organisations, who are co-delivering projects with Council staff and/or volunteers.
- Participants completing work on Council projects or programs under a Community Service Order.
- Individuals undertaking routine work on Council property.

6. POLICY

Coonamble Shire Council recognises the importance of volunteers within its community and acknowledges their contribution to improving the services provided and the quality of community life within the local council area. Volunteer Programs help to forge a bond between the Council and the local community by:

- Encouraging community participation, independence and interdependence.
- Providing additional access to resources and information.
- Increasing opportunities for social interaction, support and satisfaction.
- Adding value to services and programs.
- Extending the reach of Council services and events within the community.

6.1 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Coonamble Shire Council aims to provide an environment of equal employment opportunity in the workplace. Council encourages people from diverse and cultural backgrounds, woman and people with all abilities to apply for all volunteering opportunities.

6.2 IMPLEMENTATION

Volunteers are recruited by the relevant Council department requiring the assistance of volunteers. All recruitment and selection of volunteers will be based on merit and interest of the volunteer without bias and inline with Council's Equal Employment Opportunities Policy.

Prospected volunteers will need to complete a volunteer application form, undertake necessary checks and induction prior to commencement. The People, Risk & Improvement department will assist with volunteer engagement within Council.

Coonamble Shire Council provides work experience and work readiness to students through the School to Work Program Policy.

6.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers are not paid for their services, nor are they free labour. As with paid staff, in order for volunteers to effectively fulfil their duties and meet legislative requirements, they need to access information and appropriate resources – human, physical and financial. The resources need to be allocated in line with relevant Council policies and the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

6.3.1 Council's Responsibilities

Council will:

- Recognise the different roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers.
- Create a climate of mutual respect.
- Provide a safe and effective work environment.
- Induct and train volunteers in relation to their activities.
- Ensure that volunteers are not used to permanently replace paid staff.
- Require volunteers to work under the direction and supervision of paid staff and/or appointed coordinators.
- Volunteers can expect a clear description of their duties, responsibilities and working environment which promotes productivity and satisfaction.
- Volunteer details will be kept on record.
- Regular reviews will provide both the Council staff and the volunteer with an opportunity to assess satisfaction and make adjustments.

6.3.2 Volunteer's Responsibilities

Volunteers have obligations to Council and are required to:

- Act honestly and with reasonable care and diligence.
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviour while volunteering including:
 - Not attempting to influence another person for advantage or favour.
 - Reporting potential conflicts of interest.

- Not soliciting, demanding, requesting or accepting any gift or benefit from another person.
 - Maintaining confidentiality and privacy.
- Acquaint themselves with the objectives and functions of Council and the services they are providing.
 - Participate in appropriate induction and training.
 - Operate under the direction and supervision of Council personnel to achieve the objectives required.
 - Notify of any potentially hazardous situation to themselves or a third party.
 - Report any injury/damage to themselves or a third party.
 - Make a realistic commitment in terms of involvement and reliability.
 - Be aware of and adhere to Council's policies and procedures, relevant legislation and relevant organisational policies, including Code of Conduct.
 - Ensure confidentiality of information relating to clients and respect the rights of clients.
 - Notify appropriate staff of accidents, unsafe working conditions, or inability to perform required tasks.
 - Undertake necessary training to maintain skills required.
 - Follow all instructions, consistent with the volunteer's job description, that may be given by the nominated supervisor.
 - Always portray Council in a positive and competent manner.

6.3.3 Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers usually assist Council in the following functions, depending on available resourcing:

- Administration.
- Library Services.
- Visitor Information Centre.
- Youth Services.
- Museum Operations.
- Recreation & Open Spaces (Cemetery).
- Short term community projects or events.

6.3.4 Volunteer Recognition

Council will recognise the importance of volunteers and the valuable contribution they make to our community at an appropriate annual function.

6.4 COUNCIL'S RIGHTS

Council has the right to:

- Negotiate a commitment from a volunteer.
- Expect a volunteer to undergo appropriate induction and training.
- Expect to be notified in advance if a volunteer is unable to undertake duties.
- Refuse a volunteer placement.
- Request that a volunteer undertakes a police check or medical predetermined by the chosen area of work.
- Expect a volunteer to embrace privacy and confidentiality obligations.

6.5 COUNCIL'S GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Council will ensure that volunteers:

- Do not take responsibility for duties assigned to paid staff.
- Have adequate skills and knowledge to undertake duties.
- Are provided with an induction and appropriate training.
- Receive appropriate support and supervision.
- Are registered with Council and insured whilst understanding approved work activities.
- Have a safe working environment, safe equipment and safe systems for volunteers.
- Have adequate resources to ensure the sustainability of the volunteer.

This policy shall be subject to a three (3) yearly review by Council during the development of the annual Operational Plan or at an earlier time as determined by Council.

7 DEFINITION

| Term | Meaning |
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| Volunteers | Defined as persons who undertakes activities without monetary reward, of their own free will, to be a benefit to Council and the local community. Volunteers will complement but do not replace the services provided by paid staff. |
| Employees | A worker who gets paid an hourly wage or annual salary for a set job. Performs work, under the direction and control of their employer , on an ongoing basis. |

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| Induction | A process that ensures new workers receive accurate and consistent information on how to perform work tasks safely. |
| Conflicts of Interest | Arise when the personal interests of an employee or volunteer conflict with the professional interests of a business. |
| Gifts or Benefits | Any product or service (including hospitality) voluntarily provided to a Council Official, which represents an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. |
| Confidentiality and Privacy | <p>Privacy refers to the right of an individual to keep his or her information private.</p> <p>Confidentiality refers to the duty of anyone entrusted with information to keep that information private.</p> |
| Code of Conduct | <p>Sets the minimum standards of conduct for Council officials. It is prescribed by regulation to assist Council officials to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and comply with the standards of conduct that are expected of them. • Enable them to fulfil their statutory duty to act honestly and exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence. • Act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government |

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| Title: VOLUNTEER POLICY | | |
| Department: People, Risk & Improvement | | |
| Version | Date | Author |
| 1.1 | 14/04/2021 | Human Resources Officer |
| <p>This policy may be amended or revoked at any time and must be reviewed at least three (3) years since its adoption (or latest amendment).</p> <p>Review Date: April 2024</p> | | |
| Amendments in the release: | | |
| Section Title | Section Number | Amendment History |
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| Annexure Attached: | | |