



Volunteer Policy 2021

Department/Unit	Community Services	First Implemented	17 May 2016	Review Date	20 April 2023
Origin	General Manager Community and Corporate Services	Reviewed	20 April 2021	Version	V3
Authorising Officer	Chief Executive Officer	Effective From	20 December 2018	TRIM Reference	E18

Purpose/Objective

The Volunteer Policy outlines the principles by which Mansfield Shire Council will recruit, manage and support volunteers engaged across the organisation's programs, activities, events and committees.

The purpose of the Volunteer Policy is to:

- a) provide strategic direction to develop and support voluntary activity within Mansfield Shire Council, which reflects the unique needs of the Mansfield community;
- b) provide a consistent and standardised approach to the way in which volunteers are recruited, managed and supported in their roles and work practices at Council;
- c) recognise and formalise the commitment of Council and the role of volunteers within Mansfield Shire Council; and
- d) ensure Council continually strives to meet the minimum requirements of the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)*.

Policy Statement

Volunteers and voluntary groups are an invaluable resource to our community making a significant contribution to the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural fabric of the local community. Support for volunteers and the development of volunteering within the Mansfield Shire Council will help ensure the services and facilities we provide are responsive, sustainable and effective.

Mansfield Shire Council | Volunteers Policy 2021

Guided by the Volunteer Policy, Council will adopt an integrated, whole of Council approach to support and strengthen volunteering within Council, for the mutual benefit of Council and the broader Mansfield Shire community.

The Volunteer Policy articulates Council's commitment to the following eight key areas of responsibility, consistent with the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)*:

1. Leadership and management
2. Commitment to volunteer involvement
3. Volunteer roles
4. Recruitment and selection
5. Support and development
6. Workplace safety and wellbeing
7. Volunteer
8. Quality management and continuous improvement

These Standards have been developed by Volunteering Australia as a best practice guide to supporting voluntary personnel in not-for-profit organisations.

Council and its officers are also committed to meeting the *Child Safe Standards (2016)* for all activities involving volunteers, where they are in contact with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

Definitions

Council	Mansfield Shire Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>
Councillors	The individuals holding the office of a member of Mansfield Shire Council
Council Officers	The Chief Executive Officer and employees of Council, appointed by the Chief Executive Officer
Program Coordinator	The Council employee directly responsible for managing an individual or group of volunteers.
Volunteers	<p>People who deliver a Council endorsed service that benefits the community, of their own free will and without personal financial gain.</p> <p>Volunteers in terms of this policy do not include incorporated bodies, community groups, or individuals that have no established agreement for activities to be undertaken on behalf of Council.</p>

Spontaneous volunteers Individuals or groups of people who seek or are invited to contribute their assistance during and/or after an event, and who are unaffiliated with any part of the existing official emergency management response and recovery system and may or may not have relevant training, skills or experience (Red Cross Australia, 2008).

Volunteering Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

Scope

The Volunteer Policy applies to:

1. All Council employees, Councillors, contractors, volunteers and other authorised personnel of Mansfield Shire Council;
2. All individuals volunteering within services and/or programs that are funded and/or managed by Council;
3. All vocational placement personnel undertaking their placement at Council;
4. Managers of spontaneous emergency volunteers (MSEV), in the event of an emergency.

This policy does not apply to:

- Other not-for-profit or voluntary organisations operating in Mansfield Shire using volunteers and/or vocational placement personnel to deliver their services
- Volunteers providing their services in the event of an emergency, where this is managed externally by a partner organisation
- Volunteers of sporting clubs
- Volunteers of Service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Apex and RSL
- Volunteers of Public Halls
- Volunteers of all other community groups within the Shire
- Volunteers of committees of management who are under a Service and Funding Agreement with Council

It is expected that these organisations and groups will implement their own policy, relevant to their specific requirements.

Responsibilities

Principles of Volunteering

Council is committed to the Principles of Volunteering as documented by Volunteering Victoria (2012):

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- Voluntary 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
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality

Council's responsibilities

Council is committed to supporting volunteers within Council by:

- Recruiting volunteers in a proactive and professional manner
 - Ensuring volunteer roles are defined, documented and clearly communicated
 - Providing a formal induction and orientation program that will provide information about the role, and policies and procedures of Council
 - Ensuring volunteer involvement records are maintained
 - providing appropriate support to volunteers to assist them to perform their role at the highest standard
 - Providing a supervising officer to provide volunteers with a clear point of contact within Council
 - Recognising and upholding the contribution that volunteers within Council make in supporting the delivery of Council services, programs and events Ensuring that volunteers enhance the work of paid employees, never replace or supersede it
 - Providing a supportive and safe work environment
 - Celebrating, recognising and acknowledging the contribution of all volunteers within Council
- The Volunteer Policy will be referenced in any induction program for Council volunteers. Volunteers may seek access to the documentation via their supervising officer.

Volunteer responsibilities

Volunteers will:

- Ensure their motives and objectives are consistent with the specified role and Council's expectations before accepting a role;
- Follow, and be aware of the policies and procedures for Council that are relevant to their role;
- Be a positive contributor to Council and uphold Council's values and aims;
- Be willing to take part in induction, orientation and ongoing training as required;
- Accept support, guidance and supervision by the responsible Council supervisor;
- Be open and honest in all communications;
- Work as a member of the team;
- Not represent themselves as a paid employee of Council or obligate Council in any way;
- Respect privacy and confidentiality of fellow volunteers and Council employees, and the members of the public they assist;
- Where required, be willing to sign and adhere to the position description relevant to their role;
- Be willing to undertake evaluation as required;
- Contribute to a safe working environment for other voluntary personnel, paid employees, and members of the public.

References / Related Policies

Council Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Mansfield Shire Council Plan
- First Aid Policy and Procedure
- Working Alone Procedure OHS-PRO-11
- Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct 2018
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy 2018
- Bullying and Harassment Policy 2017
- Complaint Resolution Policy 2019
- Information Security Policy and Procedures 2020
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure 2014
- OH&S - Occupational Health and Safety Policy 2019
- Drug and Alcohol Policy 2013
- Risk Management Policy 2019
- Fleet Policy 2020
- Equal Opportunity and Human Rights 2019
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy 2017
- Fraud Prevention and Control Policy 2019
- Privacy and Data Protection Policy and Procedures 2017
- Council Expenses Policy 2020
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2018-21
- Volunteer handbook 2021

Relevant Legislation

- *Commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*
- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*
- *Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000*
- *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Victorian Disability Act 2006*
- *Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act (Vic) 2001*
- *Victorian Health Records Act 2000*
- *Victorian Working with Children Act 2005*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*

Standards

- Volunteering Australia – National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)
- Child Safe Standards 2016

Implementation

Overall responsibility for the application of this Policy is held by the Chief Executive Officer.

Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff comply with the principles, practices and any associated procedures of this policy. Management, employees, contractors and volunteers are to be familiar with, and competent in, the application of this Policy, and are accountable for the delivery of this policy within their areas of responsibility.

The Senior Coordinator Community and Economic Development is the owner of this policy. Any reviews of this Policy must be made in consultation with staff responsible for Volunteers, and General Manager Community & Corporate Services.

This Policy is effective from 20 December 2018.

Review Date

This Policy is to be reviewed by 20 April 2023.

Authorisation to Implement Policy

Signed: _____

Councillor

Witnessed: _____

Chief Executive Officer

Approval dated:

Mansfield Shire Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this Policy at any time.



Volunteer Policy Procedures

Department/Unit	Community Services	First Implemented	17 May 2016	Review Date	20 April 2023
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The following procedures are to ensure that all decisions relating to this policy are made in a consistent and open manner.

Description of Volunteer Role and Responsibilities

The Program Coordinator must ensure that a statement or *Volunteer Role Description* is prepared for each volunteer role that clearly sets:

- the requirements, duties and responsibilities of the role;
- the occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience or attributes;
- the required pre-engagement checks.

If there is an existing statement or description of the volunteer role, this should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it accurately reflects the role in consideration of the ongoing needs of Council.

Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers is the responsibility of the Program Coordinator and is to be carried out as outlined in the *Checklist for Engagement of Volunteers* and the *Volunteer Handbook*.

All volunteers are required to undergo a formal interview process conducted by Council Officers. The Council Officer responsible for Volunteers will co-interview applicants, with an employee from the nominated service and oversee the recruitment process.

Mansfield Shire Council | Volunteer Policy Procedure

If at any stage an application is deemed unsuitable, it is the responsibility of the Program Coordinator to ensure the applicant is thanked for their interest and advised of the outcome in a timely manner.

Application

All potential Council volunteers, regardless of whether they are expressing an interest in general volunteer work at Council or applying for a specific volunteer role, must complete a *Volunteer Application Form*.

Provision of the *Volunteer Application Form* should be accompanied by:

- Volunteer Role Description and/or Information about Volunteering at Council
- Council's Code of Conduct
- Volunteer Handbook

Pre-Engagement Checks

Mansfield Shire Council has a responsibility to ensure all personnel including volunteers, undergo police and relevant checks prior to commencing with Council, to ensure that they are suitable for the roles they are performing and have no prior criminal convictions which would put community safety at risk.

Referee Checks

Referee checks are to be completed for all volunteer positions. Following a successful interview, at least one reference check, preferably two, must be completed by the Program Coordinator for the volunteer position.

Working with Children Check (WWCC)

The *Working with Children Act 2005* (Victoria) requires that any person doing child-related work, and who is not exempt, must have a valid WWCC.

Any Council volunteer over the age of 18 who is likely to come into regular contact with children through their work with Council is required to hold a WWCC that lists Mansfield Shire Council as an associated organisation.

WWCC are valid for 5 years, during which time the holder is periodically screened for reported criminal activity or professional misconduct.

As required by law, all holders of a WWCC must notify the Department of Justice and Regulation with 21 days of any changes to their personal, contact and organisation's details.

Mansfield Shire Council | Volunteer Policy Procedure

Volunteers are required to apply for their own WWCC through the website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au. There is no cost involved to obtain WWCC as a volunteer.

National Police Record Check

A Police Check is a list, at any given point in time, of the offences a person has committed.

Unlike the WWCC, a Policy Check is only current up to the date on which it was issued and therefore does not have an expiry date. A current police check, paid for by Council, is required for all active Council volunteers over the age of 18.

Police checks are to be renewed every 3 years or more frequently if required by the relevant funding authority.

Police checks are conducted by the Council Officer responsible for Volunteers at the request of the Program Coordinator or when due for renewal.

Supplementary Safety Screening

Where a volunteer has been a citizen or permanent resident of a country other than Australia after the age of 16, the Immediate Supervisor must ensure the volunteer candidate completes any supplementary safety screening required as directed by the Volunteer Coordinator. A statutory declaration is required for any staff or volunteers who have been a citizen or permanent resident of a country other than Australia after turning 16.

Induction

All volunteers must attend an induction and orientation process with the Program Coordinator and the Council Officer responsible for volunteers before commencing any volunteer duties.

The formal induction includes an overview of:

- Workplace Occupational Health and Safety procedures;
- Volunteer Handbook; and
- Council Code of Conduct.

As part of the induction, a *Volunteer Induction Checklist* and attached statement must be completed and signed by both the Volunteer and the Immediate Supervisor.

All Volunteers will need to complete Council online training modules prior to commencing placement.

Occupational Health and Safety Induction modules, this includes COVID safe practices. Council can provide the above training in different format upon request of the Volunteer

Use of Council Vehicles

Where volunteer roles involve the use of Mansfield Shire Council fleet vehicles, it is the responsibility of Program Coordinators to ensure authorised drivers have:

- Supplied a copy of their current driver's licence;
- Received adequate instruction in line with the Council's Motor Vehicle Fleet Policy

Use of Private Vehicles

Use of Private vehicles by volunteers is to be consistent with guidelines for Council employees as outlined in Council's Fleet Policy and the Mansfield Shire Council Enterprise Agreement, which specifies:

- A volunteer may only use their own vehicle for Council business when no Council vehicle is available;
- Prior approval for such use must be obtained from the Immediate Supervisor and only after all other options have been exhausted;
- The private vehicle must be covered by a comprehensive private insurance policy, a copy of which must be submitted when seeking approval.

Replacing Paid Staff with Volunteers

It is against Fair Work regulations to deploy a volunteer in a position that can be undertaken by a paid staff member. In addition, any work that exceeds the definition of "time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain", would contradict the definition of a voluntary role.

Council employees wishing to undertake volunteer work within Council must only do so if there is a clear delineation between their volunteer and paid roles and if the volunteer work is undertaken in a location away from their normal place of work to avoid unintentional contravention of Fair Work regulations.

Maximum Hours of Work

In line with recommendations from Volunteering Australia, no voluntary role should exceed 16 hours per week, unless the individual volunteer requests to undertake more than this.

Insurance

Under the *Wrongs Act 1958* (Victoria) volunteers are protected from personal liability if something goes wrong while they are carrying out their agreed volunteering duties with liability instead falling to Council.

Council's insurance policy covers Council's liability of its Volunteers whilst carrying out authorised duties, as well as covering Council's liability to such volunteers should they themselves be injured in circumstances where Council is found to be negligent.

For Volunteers to be covered by Council's insurance (further to the policy terms and conditions), Council must ensure:

- The volunteer activity is wholly Council owned, organised and supervised with appropriately competent people carrying out the activity for and on behalf of the Council;
- Each volunteer completes and signs the appropriate Volunteer Registration form and that these are kept on file for future reference; and
- The volunteer is under the age of 90.

Supervision and Attendance

All volunteers shall receive appropriate supervision in the exercise of their functions.

For legal and reporting purposes, all volunteer hours of service are required to be recorded.

Where volunteers do not work internally, the Program Coordinator will record attendance hours on behalf of the volunteer.

Volunteer Identification

Volunteers are to be issued with a name badge clearly stating "Volunteer", which is to be worn at all times while volunteering for Council.

This serves to clearly identify a volunteer and their role within Council.

When a volunteer ceases their role with Council, the name badge is to be returned to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Database

A centralised volunteer database ensures that all appropriate information required for OHS and Insurance purposes relating to volunteers is maintained.

Information contained in the database is held in accordance with the Privacy and Personal *Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000*

Grievance Procedure

Volunteers have the right to raise and have resolved any grievances they may have without fear of retribution.

Mansfield Shire Council will treat every concern or complaint raised seriously and in a confidential and sensitive manner with the view to resolving any issues as quickly as possible.

Occupational Health and Safety

Volunteers, whilst not considered employees are still owed a statutory duty of care while undertaking designated activities. Before volunteers are permitted to undertake an activity on behalf of the organisation, 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; and
- the volunteer has the knowledge and skills required to undertake the activity in a safe manner.

Attachments

Attachment 1: [Checklist for the Engagement of Volunteers](#)

Attachment 2: [Volunteer Role Description Template](#)

Attachment 3: [Volunteer Interest Registration Form](#)

Attachment 4: [Volunteer Handbook](#) 2021

Attachment 5: [Record of Volunteer Interview Template](#)

Attachment 6: [Volunteer Reference Check Template](#)

Attachment 7: [Volunteer Induction Checklist](#)