



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Volunteer Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

Warrnambool City Council values the work of volunteers and is committed to providing an inclusive, valuable and enjoyable volunteering experience for all.

Volunteers enrich our community and contribute towards Council's diverse range of programs and services that make Warrnambool a vibrant and desirable place to live.

Volunteers support the achievement of Council strategic objectives through participation in a range of programs and projects that draw on volunteer skills and experience, within a safe and supportive environment.

The Volunteer Policy is aligned with Council strategic objectives including:

- *WCC Volunteering Strategic Plan (2021 – 2024)*
- *The Warrnambool W2040 Plan*
- *Council Plan 2021-25*

This Policy incorporates best practice principles of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (*Volunteering Australia 2015*).

1.2. Scope

The Volunteer Policy validates the relationship between Council and volunteers.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers participating in Council activities and projects, including advisory committees and fundraising groups.

The Volunteer Policy provides relevant requirements and processes to:

- Guide Council staff who have responsibility for the supervision and support of volunteers
- Provide volunteers with sufficient information, orientation and support to enable them to perform their roles with safety and enjoyment
- Promote Council Values of Accountability, Collaboration, Respect, Progressiveness and Wellbeing.

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1.3. Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Volunteer | An individual willing to give time for the common good and without financial gain. (Volunteering Australia, July 2015) |
| Council Volunteers | All volunteers participating in Council activities and projects, including advisory committees and fundraising groups. Council volunteers do not include students on work experience, internships, or placement activities that require a contract with external organisations. Volunteers are not to replace paid staff. |
| Volunteer Connect | Council's Volunteer Department |
| Volunteer Supervisor | An employee of Council responsible for the supervision of volunteers in their work area, e.g. Volunteer Coordinator, Service Manager, Team Leader, Supervisor. |
| Volunteer Agreement | A contract signed between Council and a Council Volunteer, setting out the volunteer's role and commitment. |
| EAP | Employee Assistance Program |
| Council / WCC | Warrnambool City Council |

1.4. References

| Legislation & Policy | Title |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Commonwealth Legislation | Commonwealth Volunteers Protection Act 2003 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Fair Work Act 2009 Privacy Act 1988 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Sex Discrimination Act 1984 The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015 |

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| Victorian Legislation | <p>Child Employment Act 2003 Best Practice Guidelines for Meals on Wheels 2023 Disability Act 2006 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Gender Equality Act 2020 Information Privacy Act 2000 Local Government Act 2020 Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006</p> |
| Warrnambool City Council | <p>Bullying and Harassment Policy Child Protection Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Code of Conduct (Staff and Volunteers) Complaints Policy Customer Services Charter Enterprise Agreement Equal Opportunity Policy Gender Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and Gender Equality Action Plan Gifts and Benefits Policy Privacy Policy Light Fleet Policy Occupational Health and Safety Policy Records Management Policy Risk Management Policy Vaccination Policy Volunteer Handbook Volunteer Management Procedures and Resources Toolkit Warrnambool 2040 Plan Council Plan Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan</p> |

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2. POLICY

2.1 Policy Statement

WCC Volunteer Program commits to deliver sustainable, quality and consistent service across all volunteer program sites adhering to the Council Values of Accountability, Collaboration, Progressiveness, Respect and Wellbeing.

Council's Executive Management Team leads a workplace culture that supports volunteering through:

- Establishing high standards of professional conduct for all staff & volunteers.
- Providing equitable recruitment, selection & induction processes to volunteers.
- Promoting volunteer opportunities that are accessible to people from all backgrounds and life experiences.
- Protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of all volunteers.
- Ensuring a safe work environment for volunteers.
- Celebrating volunteer contribution through Council volunteer reward and recognition opportunities.

This is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- All volunteer programs and activities welcome diversity.
- The strengths and abilities of all community members are valued.
- The social justice principles of Access, Equity, Diversity, Participation and Human Rights are fundamental.
- Sound strategic planning and appropriate resourcing, systems and processes will support Council's volunteer programs.
- Council leads a workplace culture that supports volunteering.

3. COUNCIL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Council provides the following services, to support the Policy Statement above:

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a) Volunteer Connect

Council's Volunteer Department "Volunteer Connect" is the entry point to volunteering for all Council programs.

All Council volunteers must register at Volunteer Connect.

Volunteer Connect promotes best practice principles of volunteer management, and assists with training and compliance support to the volunteer management team.

b) Volunteer Management Staff

Council programs allocate dedicated volunteer management staff, including designated volunteer site Supervisors, Volunteer Coordinators, and Service/Branch Managers.

c) Volunteer Management Framework

Council commits to develop and maintain a Volunteer Management Framework consistent with all relevant legislation and Council policies.

Council's Volunteer Management Framework consists of:

- The Volunteering Strategic Plan (2021 – 2024)
- WCC Volunteer Policy
- WCC Volunteer Management Procedures & Resource Toolkit

d) Volunteer Insurance

Council provides insurance cover for designated and agreed volunteer activities. Volunteers must be registered with Council, and work within authorised roles.

4. COUNCIL AND VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council volunteers are bound by WCC Code of Conduct (Staff and Volunteers).

Volunteers also have rights and responsibilities as specified in the Volunteer Handbook via QR code:



5. VOLUNTEER ELIGIBILITY

Volunteers must meet the eligibility criteria below:

- All volunteers must be registered with Council for insurance purposes.
- Minimum volunteer age is 15 years, there is no maximum volunteer age limit.

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- c) Volunteers aged below 18 years must provide written parent/guardian consent.
- d) Volunteers must return satisfactory results on all Volunteer Safety Check requirements at section 6.
- e) Volunteers are required to attend an initial mandatory Child Safety training session
- f) Volunteers must adhere to relevant Council policies as included in section 1.4
- g) Volunteer drivers must submit a valid Victorian driving license to Council and also update Council of all restrictions and/or conditions that are placed on the driving license.

Refer – Volunteer Management Procedures and Resources Toolkit (staff).

6. VOLUNTEER SAFETY CHECKS

Volunteer safety checks are part of the volunteer recruitment and screening process. All necessary safety checks must be satisfactorily completed for a volunteer to engage in Council's volunteer programs.

Council will provide all volunteers (over 18 years) with a National Police Check, which will be renewed by Council every 3 years.

Council volunteers (over 18 years) working directly with children and working in all public facing roles will require a current Working with Children Check, which will be renewed every 5 years by the volunteer.

7. VACCINATIONS

Council does not have any current vaccination requirements for volunteers, unless required by legislative directives for a specific service and position description.

Local Government requirements are subject to Federal and Victorian State Government directives, which may change from time to time.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteer are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement, which includes the following requirements:

- a) volunteers must not disclose information to unauthorised people

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- b) volunteers are not authorised to speak with the media
- c) volunteers will access only authorised IT file permissions and software

9. VOLUNTEER WELLBEING SUPPORT

Volunteers have access to professional, independent wellbeing support services via the Council's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for work related matters. Volunteers can connect with this confidential Counselling Service to make an appointment via QR code:



10. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND REWARD

Council will implement and support volunteer reward and recognition initiatives in line with the Volunteering Strategy and the Volunteer Management Framework.

11. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Volunteers are entitled to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred when undertaking authorised activities on behalf of Council. Reimbursement will be made only where prior approval has been given by the volunteer supervisor and where relevant receipts and/or other documentation is produced as required, based on processes included in the Volunteer Management Framework.

12. GOVERNANCE

12.1 Owner

The Manager Capacity, Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented, progress is monitored and regularly reviewed.

12.2 Review

Council will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after its formulation or after the last review.

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12.3 Compliance Responsibility

12.3.1 Executive Management Team (Chief Executive and Directors)

- Provide leadership and demonstrate the principles outlined in this policy.

12.3.2 Managers and Supervisors

- Ensure this policy is promoted to raise awareness, is understood and observed within the organisation

12.3.3 All Employees

- Demonstrate the Council's values through being positive role models for fellow employees, contractors and volunteers by ensuring compliance with this policy
- Participate in any workplace training provided by WCC, including completing any assessments.

12.4 Charter of Human Rights Compliance Responsibility

12.4.1 This policy upholds all rights and considerations identified in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

12.4.2 It is considered that this Policy does not adversely impact community members of employees of different genders and has been developed in accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020.

12.5 Conflict Resolution

Volunteers have the right to raise grievances without fear of retribution. All grievances and complaints shall be handled in a confidential and sensitive manner and whenever possible, the grievance will be settled at the earliest stage possible. Council's Complaints Policy will guide the resolution of all conflicts.

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