

Surf Coast Shire  
Volunteer Handbook



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CONNECTING COMMUNITIES





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**How can volunteering benefit you?**

Volunteering offers individuals many benefits including:

- Extending your existing skills and being part of a team
- Opportunity to learn or develop new skills
- Meeting new people from diverse backgrounds and making new friends
- Recognition for doing valuable work in your community
- Improving your overall health, wellbeing and happiness
- Creating new interests and hobbies
- Broadening career options and gaining workplace skills and experience
- Feeling connected to the community you live in

THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS BY CONNECTING OUR PEOPLE TO BUILD ACTIVE, HEALTHY AND COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITIES.



# Council's Commitment to you

## When involving volunteers Surf Coast Shire Council commits to;

- Developing a Volunteer Agreement for the volunteer and designated supervisor to sign and to provide a role description, expected hours, anticipated expenses, name and contact details of supervisor(s) and any other relevant information
- Providing a safe working environment, as far as reasonably practicable. Undertake a risk assessment for each volunteer role in and ensure that activities involving volunteers comply with relevant workplace health & safety and risk management requirements
- Providing a supervisor who will be the volunteer's point of contact
- Providing induction, support and suitable training for volunteers in order to carry out the activities of the role safely and effectively
- Providing an environment free from discrimination, harassment and bullying
- Proactively address areas of conflict or grievance
- Encouraging and maintaining open communication with volunteers regarding their role satisfaction and training needs, and to update volunteers on relevant Council activities or information
- Ensuring volunteers are appropriately registered and covered by relevant insurance
- Not using volunteers to replace or cover paid employee positions.

# We value our Volunteers

## HOW MUCH YOU MEAN TO US.

Volunteers get involved for a variety of reasons. Some want to make a difference in the community they live in, others want to develop new skills and some simply want to meet new people and have fun. We don't have a typical volunteer.

What we do know though is that every person who volunteers for the Surf Coast Shire has one thing in common: they are absolutely vital to connecting our people.

We hope that you find your volunteering role to be a rewarding experience and we thank you for the invaluable contribution you will be making to your community.



# Insurance

Volunteers must be registered as a volunteer for Surf Coast Shire to be provided cover under the terms and conditions of the Council's Public Liability, Personal Accident insurance or other related insurance.

Volunteers, between 16 and 90 years of age, who are registered with the Surf Coast Shire will, while acting as a volunteer, be covered by the limited personal accident insurance cover effected by Council, and for third party personal injury or damage to property caused by an occurrence in connection with the business of the Council, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy.

Please note:

- Council retains ownership of the policy and retains discretion in terms of any benefits payable under the policy
- Volunteers are only covered by Public Liability Insurance while assisting Council in clearly defined Council activity, and while the volunteer's assistance is approved/controlled and/or known by Council
- As Surf Coast Shire Council's insurance policy does not cover volunteers while driving their own vehicles, it is strongly recommended that all volunteers using private vehicles are covered by their own comprehensive insurance policy. Council does not pay for insurance costs for private vehicles and will not cover costs incurred by volunteers driving uninsured vehicles
- If volunteers wish to take helpers (eg friends or relatives) to assist them with volunteer duties, these individuals must also be registered with Surf Coast Shire Council to be covered by Public Liability Insurance
- Volunteer parents or guardians who take children along while they participate in volunteer work, must be prepared to do so at their own risk. **Children under the age of 16 years cannot be registered as volunteer**
- Please contact your Supervisor/Liaison Officer immediately should any of the following incidents occur while you are volunteering for council
- You suffer any injury
- Any incident occurs in which injury or property damage occurs to other parties (Third Parties)

## When involving volunteers Surf Coast Shire Council has the right to;

- Decide on the volunteer role that best matches a volunteer's skills, interest and experience
- Carry out checks to determine a volunteer's suitability for the role, including a Police check, Working with Children checks (where appropriate), health checks and reference checking
- Expect each volunteer to agree and sign a Volunteer Agreement
- Expect volunteers to maintain confidentiality of information and documents relating to Council, Councillors, staff, clients, other volunteers and the general public
- Expect volunteers to abide by the Volunteer Agreement and other Council policies, protocols and procedures
- Expect volunteers to perform the designated tasks to the best of their ability
- Terminate the services of a volunteer for improper conduct.

# Your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer

## Volunteer Rights

Registered volunteers carrying out authorised duties on behalf of Surf Coast Shire Council have the following rights<sup>1</sup>:

- To work in a healthy and safe environment
- To be treated in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination/harassment legislation
- To be adequately covered by Council's insurance
- To be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation
- To be provided with a copy of the organisation's volunteer policy and any other policy that affects their work
- Not to occupy a position previously held by a paid worker
- Not to do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
- To have a description of duties and agreed working hours
- To have access to a grievance procedure
- To be provided with orientation to the organisation
- To have their confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, and
- To be provided with sufficient training to carry out their duties.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

In return Volunteers have the following responsibilities;

- Treat other volunteers, staff members, Councillors, contractors, clients and members of the community with respect and dignity;
- Perform their volunteering role with integrity and honesty;
- Respect and abide by the Volunteers' Agreement and other relevant policies, procedures and work instructions;

# Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

AS A VOLUNTEER YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE WHILE PERFORMING YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLE.



## Why

Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our volunteers, so far as practicable, is of utmost importance to realising our vision and fulfilling our legal obligations. We cannot effectively care for others if we do not care for ourselves.

## What

Surf Coast Shire Council expresses its commitment to health, safety and wellbeing through:

- Policies and procedures
- Information, training and supervision will be provided to ensure we understand and fulfil our responsibilities
- Personal protective equipment will be provided for use as and when necessary
- Incident reporting. Please contact your supervisor immediately should any of the following occur while you are volunteering for Council:
- You suffer any injury or accident or have a pre-existing injury or disease that could affect your capacity to carry out the role
- If an accident occurs in which injury or property damage occurs to other parties
- You identify a hazard or risk to you, other volunteer staff or the public.

To assist in the safety of volunteers all volunteers must "sign in" and "sign out" when they start and finish a volunteering shift, meeting or training.

For health and safety reasons, delivered meals volunteers must not allow pets in the car when transporting food. Please remove from your vehicle any items that could impact upon the safe transportation of food.

## Volunteer Recognition

Council acknowledges the significant contributions of its volunteers through 'Years of Service' awards, annual National Volunteer Week celebrations and ongoing training and support.

## Smoking/Alcohol/Illegal Substances

Smoking is prohibited in the workplace, which includes all buildings, client's homes and vehicles. If a participant is found, or suspected to be, under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs they can be asked to leave the premises.



- Perform their volunteer activities in accordance with the Volunteer Agreement and agreed working arrangements
- Maintain confidentiality regarding information involving Surf Coast Shire Council, staff, Council, Councillors, other volunteers, contractors and the public
- Inform their volunteer supervisor of any change to their eligibility or suitability for the agreed volunteer role
- Inform the volunteer supervisor as soon as possible if they are unable to attend
- Sign in when starting and sign out when leaving each time volunteer duties are completed
- Be prepared to undertake a Police check with an outcome that is suitable for the role
- Inform the supervisor of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect or be worsened by the volunteering role
- Work in alignment with Council's health and safety policies, procedures and principles in the duties they conduct on behalf of Surf Coast Shire Council, and to comply with occupational health and safety legislation and principles, for example:
  - Be familiar with the organisation's health and safety procedures
  - Know who is responsible for health and safety
  - Follow health and safety instructions
  - Report any health and safety issues and incidents as soon as possible
  - Tell someone with authority if you are suffering from any illness or injury that is related to or may affect your volunteering
  - Be aware of own health and safety and also that of other people, including other volunteers.

<sup>1</sup> As defined by Volunteering Australia

# The Essentials

AS A VOLUNTEER YOU WILL NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL. PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO HAVE A GOOD READ THROUGH AND FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THEM.

## Expected Behaviours

Volunteers will act with honesty and integrity at all times and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds legal, regulatory and ethical requirements of their tasks. Surf Coast Shire Council offers an environment free of bullying, harassment and other forms of discrimination. In turn participations must not discriminate against others. This includes bullying, harassment, victimisation and alienation.

Volunteers will perform all tasks that they have volunteered to undertake with all due care, skill and diligence to protect the interests and safety of clients, volunteers, staff and Council.

## Volunteer Personal Details

You will be asked to complete some essential paperwork before you commence including a national Police check. Council commits to treating information collected from and about volunteers in accordance with the Principles of the Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014. Your personal information will not be disclosed to any other party unless Council is required to do so by law. It is necessary to ensure that staff and volunteers do not have a criminal record which may adversely affect council's duty of care.

## Privacy of Information

As a volunteer you must be respectful of the way you represent Surf Coast Shire Council in comments internally or externally which includes via computer, social media or other forums. It is expected that confidential

information will not be disclosed or released in a manner that violates the privacy rights of an individual or the organisation.

## Gifts

Giving or receiving gifts may give the impression of favouritism and could raise expectations of the level of support you can provide in your role. As such, we ask that volunteers don't give or receive personal gifts.

## Training

We want to ensure that you feel happy and confident to carry out your role and will provide on the job training for all positions.

## Dress Code

When on duty your clothing and appearance are to be neat, clean, suitable and safe for the duties being undertaken. Where appropriate Council may provide protective personal equipment and/or clothing which must be utilised by the volunteer as instructed.

## Inappropriate Conduct or performance

Breaches of this agreement and other inappropriate conduct may lead to dismissal from the volunteer role. Examples of inappropriate conduct or performance include (but are not limited to):

- Workplace violence
- Breach of confidentiality and privacy
- Disruptive behaviour
- Harassment, discrimination, bullying, victimisation
- Neglect of duties and responsibilities
- Theft or inappropriate use or removal of property
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs while undertaking volunteer duties
- Committing a criminal offence while undertaking volunteer duties
- Intended breach of Surf Coast Shire's Occupational Health and Safety policy and procedures.