



# Volunteer Handbook

*Connecting Communities*

# Welcome to our Volunteer team

## Welcome to the Surf Coast Shire Council Volunteer team.

*Your participation as a volunteer will make an invaluable contribution to our community and we thank you for the time, care and support you will be offering to our people.*

Many of our clients experience a greater sense of belonging, increased self-esteem and wellbeing as a result of interaction with a volunteer.

It is our aim for the experience to be mutually satisfying and rewarding for employees, clients and volunteers.



## 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 Purpose and Direction

## **Purpose**

We exist to help our community and environment to thrive.

## **Direction**

Our organisation will be:

An innovative and flexible leader,

and a constructive partner,

that values the strengths of others;

a place where people can do their best and be proud of their achievements.

## Child Safe environment

Surf Coast Shire has a commitment to creating child safe and child friendly environments where children and young people are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Volunteers and employees are expected to recognize their responsibilities and comply with the Child Safe Standards.

# 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, including 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 and ensure that activities involving volunteers comply with relevant workplace health and 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

## **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 national 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, employees, 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, or, in accordance with Human Resources policies, the volunteer is not able to perform the duties of the role at the level required.

# 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 employees 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, employees, 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

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

- Perform their volunteer activities in accordance with the Volunteer Agreement and agreed working arrangements
- Maintain confidentiality regarding information involving Surf Coast Shire Council, employees, 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.

# 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, employees 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 employees 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.

## **Continually Improving**

We encourage you to discuss your ideas with your Volunteer Supervisor. You may also be asked to participate in feedback surveys and complete an exit interview to help us recognise our strengths and develop our programs.

## **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.

### **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.



# Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

*As a volunteer you have a right to feel safe while performing your volunteer role.*



**SafeCoast**  
STOP THINK ASSESS REVIEW COMMUNICATE

## **Why do we do this?**

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 are our and your obligations?**

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

- Policies and procedures: These are available for you to read and discuss
- Information, training and supervision will be provided to ensure we understand and fulfil our responsibilities to you and the Shire
- Personal protective equipment will be provided for use as and when necessary
- Encouraging you to exercise a duty of care to yourself and others
- 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 incident occurs in which injury or property damage occurs to other parties
  - You identify a hazard or risk to you, other volunteer employees or the public.

## Sign in and sign out

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. Please ask your Volunteer Supervisor for instructions.

## Workplace Health and Safety Instructions relevant to your role

For example: Delivered Meals volunteers must not allow pets in the car when transporting food. Please remove from your vehicle any items that could impact the safe transportation of food.

Please ask your Volunteer Supervisor if you have questions about Workplace Health and Safety.

# 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.

Council accepts volunteers between the ages of 16 and 90 years (For young people involved in FReeZA activities, a lower limit of 12 years may apply). In accordance with Human Resources policies, there must be a suitable vacancy and the volunteer must be able to perform the duties of the role at the level required.

Please note:

- Council retains ownership of the policy and retains discretion in terms of any benefits payable under the policy
- Volunteers must be registered volunteers involved 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 a volunteer role involves driving a motor vehicle, the volunteer is required to hold a current, valid and full Victorian driver licence. It is a requirement that the volunteer advises Council if your licence is cancelled or suspended during the term of your volunteer role
- If volunteers wish to take helpers (eg friends or relatives) to assist them with volunteer duties, these individuals must also be registered as volunteers with Surf Coast Shire Council.
- 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)

# 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.











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