

Volunteer Policy

Acknowledgement

The City of Monash acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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1. Purpose

Monash Council (Council) manages a large group of volunteers across a diverse range of community programs and along with the Volunteer Handbook, this policy is designed to provide guidance on the responsibilities of Council and volunteers.

Council is committed to providing the community with the best possible service delivery. To achieve this, Council requires a high level of commitment and competence from all those who provide that service, including volunteers.

Monash Council is committed to supporting its community to lead healthy, happy, and thriving lives. Volunteering in Monash is valued for its ability to strengthen social connections, prevent loneliness, and provide meaningful opportunities to contribute to community life. Volunteering activity in Monash is shaped by the pillars that make up the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025, specifically in supporting a city that is.

- engaged, confident and connected,
- safe and respectful and
- a city that is inclusive for all.

Monash draws pride and strength from our diverse community and supports, celebrates, and promotes volunteering for all communities and in all its forms and different meanings. We aim to create an environment free of harassment and discrimination, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect. Council values individual differences and experiences; and recognises unique contributions of people from our entire community, regardless of their age, cultural background, ability, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, intersex status, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

2. Scope

This Policy is intended as an outline for all Council business units that deliver services and programs that utilise volunteers registered with Council. The policy will also guide Council's vision for the ongoing recruitment, management and recognition of volunteers that encourages community participation and social interaction through volunteering opportunities.

The Policy applies to all volunteers and to those employees who work in activities, programs, and services where volunteers are involved.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to provide a best practice framework for the management and support of volunteers by:

- clarifying who/what a volunteer is as defined by this Policy
- articulating the underlying philosophy of involving and providing direction and structure to the way volunteers are managed

- defining the responsibilities and the relationship between Council's employees and volunteers
- providing an understanding of Council's expectation and standards for volunteers in accordance with the National Standards
- defining the entitlements and responsibilities of volunteers
- providing guidance on the resolution of any disputes which arise in connection with any of the volunteer programs and
- ensuring vulnerable people are not placed at risk because of being a volunteer or accepting the service of a volunteer program

4. Principles

The following principles are based on the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations

https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Standards-Document-FINAL_Web.pdf and are aimed at respecting the rights and responsibilities of the volunteer, involving organisations and the customer/client of the organisation.

Council commits to upholding the principles of the National Standards for Involving Volunteers to ensure that volunteer rights are protected, their role is explicit, and they work in safe and healthy environments.

Principles:

- acknowledgement by Council that volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer and is a legitimate way in which people can participate in the activities of Council and the community
- documentation of Council's support for volunteering and of the policies and procedures surrounding that involvement including workplace health and safety, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination, grievance, and disciplinary procedures
- recognition that volunteers work is unpaid, should not be used as a substitute for paid work and not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances
- volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- ensuring that volunteers are managed within a defined system and by capable employees
- provision of clear recruitment and selection procedures for volunteers including documented role descriptions and information on their rights and responsibilities
- provision of orientation, education and ongoing training and development opportunities for volunteers

5. Definitions

Following a review by Volunteering Australia, a succinct definition was established accompanied by a set of explanatory notes that provide clarity on what is considered volunteering and what is outside the definition (but is part of the broader civic participation area) that will assist in measurement. Therefore.

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

There are explanatory notes set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

PEOPLE AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE FRAMEWORK

DATE: FEBRUARY 2023

REVIEW: BI ANNUALLY NEXT REVIEW: DUE 2025

PEOPLE SERVICES

6. Council's Responsibilities

Council is committed to best practice in volunteer management based on the National Standards. Volunteers will be:

- recruited in a fair, equitable and formal manner with support for reasonable adjustments and access requirements in the workplace
- provided with training to undertake their tasks
- inducted to Council by local management and orientated to their workplace
- ensure national police checks and working with children checks in accordance with child safety standards are completed prior to volunteer commencing work
- provided with a role description that outlines their roles, responsibilities and expected performance standards of service delivery
- given a Volunteer Handbook that acts as a guide and to instruct them in quality service and professional standards pertaining to volunteering
- provided with safe workplaces as per legislative requirements contained in the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 supported by the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
- provided with insurance cover when they are registered and have the approval of Council whilst undertaking their designated volunteer roles
- provided with support and direction from the nominated supervisor, including opportunities to give and receive feedback
- notified that appropriate Due Diligence is undertaken by Council
- have complaints and grievances addressed in accordance with Council's policy and procedure

7. Volunteer's Responsibilities

It is important for volunteers to understand what is expected of them and the business area they are volunteering in. Volunteers need to:

- attend Southeast Volunteers for an interview/reference checks/education on "The Role of the Volunteer"
- learn about the City of Monash, including orientation of the local area
- undertake training to ensure they are able to perform their duties
- be punctual for their duty or shift
- be reliable and responsible
- undertake duties as directed
- accept guidance from the relevant Council employee
- be willing to learn and participate in orientation, compliance training, training programs, and meetings
- understand the role of the Council staff member, maintain a professional working relationship and work within the expected duties of the volunteer position, as defined by their position description
- Always maintain confidentiality, regarding both the organisation and clients
- agree and adhere to Council's Code of Conduct
- comply with the policies and procedures of Council, and
- communicate any issues or concerns which are likely to affect the duties or undertaking those duties.

8. Volunteer roles

Volunteer hours and attendance times will be negotiated between the volunteer and their supervisor based on the requirements of the role and the availability of the volunteer. The maximum regular commitment by a volunteer will be capped in line with Volunteering Australia guidelines at 16 hours per week. All core work at the City of Monash is carried out by paid staff.

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the City of Monash by undertaking value-added tasks that would not be delivered by the City of Monash if not carried out by volunteers. Volunteers do not replace staff or carry out the work of paid staff.

9. Recruitment and selection

Recruitment of volunteers is coordinated by a staff member at the City of Monash in discussion with management. The staff member supervising volunteers is responsible for interviewing and selecting candidates to meet the requirements of the volunteer role.

In accordance with its policies and legislation, the City of Monash embraces diversity and values the unique contributions of all people regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, age, religion, sexual preference, marital status, pregnancy, disability, or carer responsibility. We are committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination.

All volunteer applications are considered on a merit basis. Assessment of suitability includes relevant experience and competencies that demonstrate the ability to achieve agreed outcomes, and capacity to attend at agreed times.

Reference checks, Police Background and/or Working with Children Checks will be conducted as part of the assessment process. Any possible conflict of interest a volunteer may have will be openly declared and satisfactorily resolved as soon as possible between the volunteer and the City of Monash.

The City of Monash has the right to offer or withhold an offer of a volunteer placement to any applicant at their discretion and without explanation. The offer of a volunteer role at the City of Monash is in no way a commitment to an offer of a future paid role at the City of Monash.

10. Performance and conduct

If there are concerns with a volunteer's performance or behaviour, these will be addressed by their supervisor according to The City of Monash's policies and procedures. Termination of volunteers may be necessary where it is determined a volunteer:

1. Fails to adhere to the Volunteer Agreement and all relevant policies and procedures
2. Does not have the necessary skills for the role
3. Breaches safety, privacy or confidentiality obligations specified by The City of Monash
4. Breaks the law

Volunteers are entitled to end their volunteering activities at any time. Upon request, volunteers may be given an appropriate reference detailing their contribution to The City of Monash, such as length of hours, range of activities and achievements.

All aspects of volunteer involvement need to be regularly reviewed in line with the organisation's evaluation and quality management frameworks.

Opportunities are available for volunteers to provide feedback on the organisation's volunteer involvement and relevant areas of the organisation's work. This includes monitoring and reviewing:

- how well volunteer recruitment and management systems are working for volunteers and the organisation.
- the extent to which volunteer involvement is providing a positive impact on the organisation outcomes.
- how effectively volunteer time is being used.

Feedback and input from volunteers about their experience as volunteers is regularly sought and is recommended to be done by program leaders every six months. A range of methods is used to gain volunteer feedback, appropriate to volunteers and their roles. Volunteers are provided opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the organisation.

11. Privacy and confidentiality

In accordance with its Privacy policy, The City of Monash respects the privacy and confidentiality of personal information supplied by volunteers.

12. Health and safety

The City of Monash is committed to providing volunteers with a safe workplace. On commencement, volunteers will be provided with relevant information and guidelines to ensure the maintenance of a safe and healthy workplace along with training and information regarding emergency procedures.

Volunteers are required to report all incidents to their supervisor as soon as possible, as outlined in any relevant Organisation incident reporting procedures guidelines. Volunteers are expected to comply with the relevant OH&S policies and procedures of The City of Monash.

Volunteers are required to adhere to COVID safe practices in accordance with the Monash policy.

13. Further Information

If you require additional information, please speak with your Volunteer Supervisor or Team Leader, Volunteering Monash on 0427600314 or volunteer@monash.vic.gov.au.

14. Related Documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the:

- Volunteer Handbook
- Volunteer Induction pack
- Council Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
- COVID Safe Plans and Procedures | Monnet (monash.vic.gov.au)
- Volunteer Role Descriptions
- Monash Loneliness Framework 2020 – 2025