



# Latrobe City Council VOLUNTEER MANUAL

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## INTRODUCTION

Latrobe City Council is fortunate to have a large number of community members who have chosen to volunteer their time to assist in the provision and enhancement of some of Council's services, for the benefit of the community at large.

Council's commitment to volunteering is reflected in Latrobe's 2021 vision 'to create volunteering opportunities for people to make a difference to their communities and neighbourhoods'.

Volunteers currently work in areas such as:

- Recreation
- Tourism
- Community
- Children Services
- Special Events, such as Australia Day, Clean-up Australia, etc.
- Aged and disability services
- Environment
- Land Care
- State Emergency Services

In moving towards 2021, Latrobe City Council ensure that the community's sense of inclusiveness is encouraged, particularly for people from different culturally diverse backgrounds. Policies have been developed to encourage diversity of social, cultural and community activities that promote inclusiveness and connectedness.

It is anticipated that the use of volunteers will continue to be expanded into other areas of Council as the municipality continues to grow.

This manual outlines both volunteers' and Latrobe City Council's rights and responsibilities. It also ensures that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate in a variety of volunteering activities.

## DEFINITION OF A VOLUNTEER

A volunteer is considered to be a person who undertakes an activity on behalf of Council either directly or indirectly, and where the intent is to provide a tangible benefit to the community. As such, a volunteer is not party to an employment contract with council in regard to that activity. The volunteer may be invited to participate directly by council or through another third party group which is involved with council in undertaking the activity. Although there is no direct personal remuneration which could be considered as income for the volunteer undertaking the activity, there may be arrangements made for the payment of out of pocket expenses associated with the activity.

## ROLES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Council and the individual volunteers each have an obligation to ensure that volunteer participation is safe, effective and most of all enjoyable. Volunteers contribute to a range of activities and through their commitment and energy volunteers enrich the fabric of the local community. Volunteers will be recruited in line with the procedures outlined in this manual.

### Rights and Responsibilities of Latrobe City Council

- Acknowledge the extent and importance of volunteer contributions
- Increase awareness both internally and externally of the contribution of volunteers
- Conduct relevant induction and training for volunteers

- Provide information on Council policies and procedures impacting on activities
- Provide clear operational guidelines for each activity
- Ensure staff provide open and honest information and respond to concerns and queries
- Provide clear guidelines on the relationship between staff and volunteers and Councillors
- Consult on matters that will impact on volunteers participation
- Provide opportunities to engage in worthwhile activities
- Regularly review the role of volunteers and volunteer activities
- Maintain adequate volunteer recruitment processes
- Maintain Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies in engaging volunteers
- Provide a safe working environment
- Provide relevant insurance cover
- Provide adequate resources for volunteers to conduct activities in accordance with adopted Management plans and policies
- Acknowledge and identify the skill levels of individual volunteers
- Where appropriate, identify and provide opportunities for skill development for individuals
- Actively promote volunteer and group activities
- Where appropriate, provide each volunteer with identification whilst undertaking volunteer work.

#### **Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers**

- Complete the work that was volunteered for and be dependable;
- Work as part of the team;
- Be willing to learn and continue learning;
- Follow any guidelines, policies and procedures relevant to the volunteering position;
- To act in a manner that does not undermine Council in the community;
- Ask for help when needed, ask questions when more information is required;
- Accept supervision in the spirit in which it is meant;
- Provide proof of identity to Latrobe City Council;
- Respect the confidentiality of other volunteers, Council employees, Council and others as appropriate;
- Where requested, record details in an attendance register or log book on each volunteering occasion (for insurance purposes);
- Where required, undertake a Police Check and/or Prohibited Employment Declaration as per the Child Protection Prohibited Employment Act, 1998 (please note, police check will remain the property of Latrobe City Council); **(and aged - from Alison)**
- Work within your own physical limits and area of skill;
- Notify volunteer co-ordinator of any issue relating to work task allocation which may impact on your participation, for example prior or existing physical restrictions.

## RECRUITMENT

### How Volunteers can be recruited

Volunteers will be recruited by advertising or word of mouth. The relevant volunteer coordinator or representative of a Management committee is to make contact with each person to disseminate all relevant information.

### Prohibited Employment Declaration (Still current?)

All persons looking after **vulnerable people, such as the aged**, children and young people have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for them. Legislation was introduced in Victoria that affects all people working with children and young people.

- Commission for Children & Young People Act, 1998
- Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998
- **Aged - Alison**

These laws make up the Working with Children Check, the goal being to create workplaces where children are safe and protected.

The Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 defines child-related employment as:

“any employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised”

It is the responsibility of those seeking volunteer work that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised to:

- Complete a declaration saying whether or not they are a prohibited person when applying for child-related employment
- Agree to allow the employer to undertake all aspects of the employment screening process.

It is an offence for a prohibited person to apply for volunteer employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised. It is therefore the responsibility of a prohibited person NOT to apply for any such position. The Council may, at its discretion, require a Police check on any volunteers where deemed appropriate.

### Termination of a Volunteer

In instances of misconduct or breaches to the volunteer responsibilities, the Volunteer Coordinator has the right to dismiss the Volunteer, and depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, dismissal may be without prior warning and be immediate. This includes:

- Theft of property or funds
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances whilst or during volunteering
- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, clients or staff
- Disclosure of confidential information regarding the Council and/or clients
- Breaching any other volunteer responsibilities
- Malicious damage to Council or community property
- Not working in a safe manner

**Application Form**

A volunteer application form is required to be completed by all volunteers and as such, all volunteers should complete the form prior to their commencement of their volunteer activities.

The details on these forms should be entered into the Latrobe City Council volunteer database.

**Volunteer Database**

A centralised volunteer database has been developed to ensure that all appropriate information required for OHS and Insurance purposes relating to the use of volunteers is maintained.

The database is maintained by the HR department. (in Chris, with self service for volunteer coordinators?)

Information contained in the database is held in accordance with Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA).

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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

**Council's Responsibility** (probably not doing most of this. Will we? Should be, but need to be realistic. Not write something that we will never actually do)

When satisfied that the activity is appropriate for volunteers Council is to ensure the following matters are addressed before the activity is commenced and within agreed timeframes:

- all potential hazards have been identified;
- a risk assessment has been completed;
- consultation has been undertaken with the volunteers regarding safe work methods;
- appropriate risk management procedures have been developed;
- volunteers have been provided with information, instruction and training with regard to risk management procedures;
- any plant or equipment to be used by volunteers is safe and complies with any Act or legislation;
- there is in place a system of work for the safe handling, use, storage and transport of plant, equipment or any substances to be used in the activity;
- at the location for the activity there are safe means of entry and exit which are identified to the volunteers;
- arrangements are in place for the appropriate monitoring and supervision of the activity;

- records are kept of attendance, tasks undertaken and information on incidents including near misses.

### **Volunteers Responsibility**

While undertaking activities on behalf of Council, volunteers have responsibilities for health and safety. In particular volunteers, through their actions or omissions, are not to place themselves or other persons at risk while undertaking Council related activities. Depending upon the nature of the activity the responsibilities for volunteers may include the following:

- be aware of and follow the approved risk management procedures for the activity;
- follow the directions of the person in charge of the activity;
- use plant or equipment in accordance with the correct procedures;
- bring to the attention of the appropriate person any matter which could affect the safe undertaking of the activity;
- report to the appropriate person as soon as practical any incidents or near misses which relate to health and safety of the voluntary activity.
- attend a medical if requested, in order to confirm you are physically capable of undertaking the tasks

### **Training (are we/will we?)**

Council also has the responsibility to ensure volunteers are provided with appropriate training which, depending on the activity, may include the following:

- OHS induction training;
- hazard identification;
- first aid;
- responding to an emergency;
- use of communication equipment (where required);
- on the job and/or formal training specific to the activity.
- on the job training in specific risk management procedures as required.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT / VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**

Latrobe City Council is committed to promoting a working environment that recognises and values the diverse social profile of its volunteers. Council will develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and procedures for all volunteers, both existing and potential, that are fair and do not discriminate unlawfully, either directly or indirectly, against any volunteer.

In all policies and practices of Latrobe City Council, there shall be no discrimination or harassment in voluntary employment with regard to:

Race (including colour, nationality, descent, ethnicity, ethno-religious origin), Gender, Pregnancy, Marital Status, Disability, Sexual Preference, Age, or Carers responsibilities.

It is unacceptable for volunteers to make comments to other volunteers, Council employees or members of the public which are discriminatory with regards to:

- sexuality or sex;
- health or marital status;
- physical or intellectual ability; and
- race, ethnic or religious background.

Discrimination and/or harassment will not be tolerated. Where instances of discrimination and/or harassment occur, they will be investigated in a confidential manner. If proven, the person responsible will be dismissed from their voluntary engagement.

## **VOLUNTEERING CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers shall not use confidential information gained through their activities as a volunteer for the purpose of securing a private benefit for themselves or for any other person.

Volunteers shall not disclose any confidential information for any reason without the authority to do so.

Volunteers shall not disclose private or personal information as defined in the Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998.

### **Acceptance of Gifts/Benefits**

Individuals and groups you deal with through volunteer work may want to express their appreciation for services or assistance by the giving of some form of gift, benefit or hospitality. Latrobe City Council's Gifts and Hospitality Policy sets out the requirements for acceptance of gifts, in line with the Local Government Act 1989 (section 95).

The policy defines 'token gifts' as being those under \$50 value, and 'gifts of value' as those over \$50 in value. Any acceptance of a gift, whether it is a gift of value or a token gift, must be disclosed to your volunteer supervisor. Any offer of a gift of value must also be disclosed, whether it was accepted or not. If a gift of value is accepted, permission from the volunteer supervisor must be sought to keep it. Permission shall not be unreasonable withheld. Gifts of cash, or where there is implication that the person may receive favour in return may not be accepted.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Volunteers may not use their position to gain profit or advantage. They will be aware of circumstances where a possible conflict of interest may arise and declare it if necessary

### **Use of Resources**

- Volunteers must not improperly use council resources
- Volunteers shall use Council resources effectively and economically
- Volunteers shall not use Council property for their own purposes

### **Policy and Procedures**

Volunteers agree to be bound by relevant policies and procedures of Latrobe City Council applicable to their volunteering position.

**Equitable Treatment of People and Situations**

- Volunteers shall treat members of the public, Council Staff and Councillors fairly and equitably and with respect, courtesy, compassion and sensitivity.
- Volunteers shall not act contrary to any law in their voluntary capacity
- Volunteers shall not act unreasonably, unjustly, oppressively or in a discriminatory manner.
- Volunteers shall refrain from any form of conduct, in the performance of their duties, which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment or give rise to the reasonable suspicion or appearance of improper conduct

**Duty of Care**

Council has a legal responsibility to provide a duty of care to all volunteers to ensure that they are not exposed to any risk of injury or illness from either the tasks they are undertaking, the equipment they are using or the environment that they are working in.

**Dress**

To protect persons from UV exposure, volunteers working outdoors will be required to wear long sleeve or three quarter length sleeve shirts with collar, loose fitting long trousers, enclosed footwear, hat with a broad brim and sunglasses. It is also recommended that volunteers be "sun-smart", using appropriate sun-protective lotion/cream. Volunteers working indoors will wear appropriate and sensible clothing and footwear for the activities they may be undertaking.

**Alcohol and Drugs**

Volunteers are not permitted to drink alcohol or take illegal drugs while they are performing work on behalf of Council, or report for duty when their job performance is likely to be affected by alcohol or illegal drugs.

**Reporting of Corrupt Conduct**

Council is committed to an ethical workplace and requires volunteers to report corrupt conduct, maladministration or serious and substantial waste of public money.

**MEDIA PROTOCOL**

Volunteers are not permitted to make any comments to the Media on behalf of Council, except where approval has been provided. Any queries for a statement to the media must be referred to the Council supervisor/manager of the work activity.

**PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT**

Council will obtain personal information from volunteers including names, address, telephone numbers, police check, child protection screening (where applicable) and other contact details. Personal information obtained by Council is governed by the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA). This legislation provides direction for the collection, protection, storage, disposal, access and use of personal information by Council.

Council will take all reasonable care to protect personal information from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. To ensure that personal information held by Council is current, please notify Council if any of your details change.

For further information, please contact your Council supervisor.

## INSURANCE

### Personal Accident Insurance

Council's personal accident insurance policy covers registered volunteers whilst performing activities authorised by Council. The insurance also covers volunteers on direct route to and from the authorised event or activity.

It should be noted that the policy only covers volunteers aged between **18** and **90** years. As a result persons outside of this age bracket are not able to be engaged in any voluntary activities.

Council will take all reasonable care to ensure that volunteers operate in a safe working environment. Volunteers are required to act in a responsible manner and in accordance with standard operating procedures. Wilfully or deliberately causing injury is not covered by Council's insurance.

Any accident that occurs whilst under the care and control of Council should be reported to the immediate supervisor as soon as possible. A report must be completed by the supervisor and returned to Council's Risk Management/OH&S Officer within 24 hours.

### Public Liability Insurance

Whilst working under the care and control of Council, volunteers are protected against Public Liability claims under Council's Public Liability insurance cover. Council's insurance does not cover incidences where damage has been caused through wilful or deliberate acts.

If damage is caused or an incident arises, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to Council's Risk Management/OH&S Officer.

### Volunteer's Personal Property

Volunteer's personal items are not covered by Council's insurance whilst undertaking volunteer activities. Volunteers are encouraged **not** to bring or wear items of any significant value (including jewellery). All attempts should be taken to secure personal items against theft or damage. It is also recommended that only small cash amount be carried, sufficient for the needs of the day.

## USE OF COUNCIL EQUIPMENT

Volunteers may be provided with Council equipment to assist in performing various activities. If a licence or qualification is required to operate plant or equipment, a volunteer must provide evidence of such qualification or license. All care should be taken to ensure that equipment is used correctly and within the guidelines or instructions provided by supervisors.

Damage to Council equipment by volunteers whilst working under the care and control of Council is covered by Council's Property Mutual Insurance. Council's policy does not cover any wilful or deliberate damage to Council property.

If equipment is damaged, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed and returned to Council's Risk Management Officer.

## USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Volunteers may be required to use a motor vehicle during the course of performing their volunteer activities. If the volunteer is required to use a car during their volunteering activities they must submit a copy of their license to their volunteer supervisor/coordinator. If using their own vehicle they must submit a copy of their personal car insurance.

Latrobe City does not cover or compensate any damage incurred to ones own vehicle. It is a mandatory requirement to have a current Victorian Drivers License and adequate third party car insurance while you are volunteering for Latrobe City Council. If these requirements cannot be adhered to, the individual will not be able to participate in volunteer activities that require a vehicle.

Damage to a Council vehicle by a volunteer whilst working under the care and control of Council is covered by Council's Motor Vehicle Insurance policy. Council's policy does not cover any wilful or deliberate damage to Council property.

If a motor vehicle is damaged, the supervisor must be notified immediately and an incident report completed.

The vehicle log book must be completed correctly each time a Council vehicle is used.

### Fines and Infringements

Any court imposed fine or infringements received as a result of the actions or omissions of a Volunteer will be the responsibility of the volunteer. They are wholly responsible for payment of such fines and infringements.

They include, but are not limited to:

- Parking
- Speeding
- Littering
- Red light camera

## OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES

From time to time, volunteers may need to use their own money to purchase materials or pay fees. Volunteers must have prior approval from their supervisor before they use their own money.

Out of pocket expenses will only be reimbursed if a claim is submitted with proof of payment attached i.e. a tax invoice, unless previously agreed/approved. The supervisor must sign the claim form and supply a general ledger number for allocation of the expense.

## RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are entitled to request a statement of tasks that they have undertaken in their role with Council.

Council may also at their discretion, conduct special functions such as hosting a “Volunteers Morning Tea” function specifically held to thank volunteers for the contribution that they have made to the community throughout the year.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

If a volunteer has a grievance about any aspect of their tasks, other volunteers or Council staff, the following process should be followed:

- Step 1                    If you feel comfortable to approach the person directly to discuss the issue, do so.
- Step 2                    The volunteer can approach the Co-ordinator or the Committee President in the area they are working within for a discussion and advice on how to best resolve the issue. This discussion should be treated as strictly confidential.
- Step 3                    If Step 2 does not help resolve the problem, then the issue should be notified to the Department Manager in writing.
- Step 4                    If the matter remains unresolved, the volunteer(s) may request the matter be referred to the General Manager of the department or other authorised officer for discussion. A further meeting between all parties shall be held as soon as practicable.
- Step 5                    If the matter remains unresolved the General Manager shall provide the volunteer(s) with a written response. The response shall include the reasons for not implementing any proposed remedy.

**Reference:                Local Government (State) Act 2001.**

**ANNEXURES**

Volunteer Application Form - General

Volunteer Application Form – Community Bus Driver

Volunteer Conditions of Engagement

The Working with Children Check – Consent Form

The Working with Children Check – Prohibited Employment Declaration

Volunteer Induction Record

Volunteer Program Services Policy 09 POL-3