

POLICY NAME

Volunteer Policy

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ORG 001

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Adopted by General Manager

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Organisation

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RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Workforce & Workplace

RELATED DOCUMENTS

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Purpose

Recognise and value the substantial and ongoing contribution made by volunteers and voluntary groups to the quality of life of the citizens of Penrith.

Work in partnership with community groups, the business sector and relevant stakeholders to develop volunteering opportunities, promote volunteering, raise the profile of volunteering and facilitate access to information about volunteering opportunities

Encourage and support volunteering within the Penrith community.

Policy Statement

Penrith City Council recognises the benefits and contributions volunteers make to the community in the Penrith Local Government Area. The contribution made by volunteers is highly valued by Council, as it is through their input that they enable Council to enhance and extend the quality of services and programs to the community. The role of a volunteer is not intended to be a substitute for the functions of Council paid employees. The role of volunteers is to complement the work of Council employees and services provided by Council.

Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers involved in Council organised activities or programs, including Council staff that volunteer to be involved in such activities or programs which is external to their normal workplace duties. To avoid doubt, this policy applies to volunteer committees established for the purposes of section 355 and 377 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

POLICY:

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Definitions

<i>Council</i>	Penrith City Council
<i>Designated Staff Member</i>	means a manager or supervisor of a section of Council or such other member of staff so appointed to supervise volunteers. This role will form part of the Designated Staff Member's normal duties.
<i>Vocational placement</i>	<p>means an arrangement undertaken as a requirement of an Australian based educational or training course, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorised under a law or an administrative arrangement of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory, and• Undertaken with an employer for which a person is not entitled to be paid any remuneration.
<i>Volunteer</i>	<p>means a person who performs an activity which is undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;• of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;• for no financial payment or benefit, and• in designated Council volunteer positions only

Policy Detail

1. Responsibilities of this Policy

- 1.1 The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all Managers who use the services of volunteers.
- 1.2 Services may develop ancillary procedures or guidelines which reflect the types of programs and volunteers required for their specific areas of activity.
- 1.3 The development of any operating procedure or guideline must compliment this policy.

2. Role of the Designated Staff Member/s

- 2.1 Each service of Council which utilises the services of volunteers must have at least one Designated Staff Member.
- 2.2 Designated Staff Member/s will be responsible for supervising a volunteer. A Designated Staff Member can be a Manager, Supervisor of a section or such other member of staff so appointed to supervise volunteers. This role will form part of the Designated Staff Members normal duties.
- 2.3 The Designated Staff Member/s responsibilities are as follows:
 - Develop a role description or list of duties for the volunteer;
 - Ensure a set of standard operating procedures for the volunteer's work;
 - Development and review of operating guidelines or procedures regarding volunteers every three years;
 - Conduct the induction of the volunteer;
 - Ensure all induction requirements are complete;
 - Provide leadership and support to the volunteer;
 - Organise and allocate tasks and coordinate operational work where required;
 - Ensure appropriate performance by the volunteer;
 - Registering the expression of interest form in RMS and entering the volunteer's details in the Volunteer Register.

3. Selection and Appointment

- 3.1 People expressing an interest in a volunteer role with Council will complete a Volunteer Registration Form.
- 3.2 At a minimum, the Designated Staff Member/s must meet with any prospective volunteer/s prior to appointing them to a volunteering role within Council to ascertain their suitability to the volunteer role and work.
- 3.3 If a volunteering opportunity requires specialist knowledge or involves a degree of complexity, a selection process must be established. The selection process must:
 - Consist of an interview with at least two staff members being panel members. One of the panel members must be the Designated Staff member.

- The interview will be conducted by having the applicant address criteria relevant to the volunteer role.

3.4 A Volunteer Register is to be created and will assist each Designated Staff Member access volunteers who have expressed interest to volunteer across Council's services.

3.5 The relevant Designated Staff Member is responsible for registering the expression of interest form in RMS and entering the volunteer's details in the Volunteer Register.

3.6 Where a person has volunteered in more than one area of Council, a coordinated approach should be taken between each Designated Staff Member of the respective areas. It is the responsibility of each Designated Staff Member to liaise with other Designated Staff Members where a volunteer has expressed an interest to work in that particular area.

3.7 Council staff wishing to volunteer in activities or programs, which is external to their normal workplace duties, must seek their Managers approval in the first instance. Council staff will not be permitted to volunteer if Management considers that the volunteering will conflict or impede upon their normal workplace duties. To avoid doubt, Council staff are required to complete the same documentation and undertake the same processes as outlined in the policy.

4. Role statement for a volunteer position

4.1 A role statement confirms the understanding that volunteers are engaged for specific tasks. It ensures that all volunteers are clear about what is expected of them in their role.

4.2 The relevant Designated Staff Member is responsible for developing a role statement that clearly outlines the volunteer's role and the expectations of them.

4.3 Prior to the volunteer's commencement with Council the volunteer will be provided with a copy of their role statement to Council.

5. Working with Children Checks

5.1 Council will require the volunteer to have a valid Working with Children Check where the volunteer is undertaking child-related work.

5.2 Details of the volunteers Working with Children Check must be forwarded to Workforce and Workplace.

5.3 A volunteer cannot commence their appointment until the volunteers Working with Children Check number has been verified by Workforce and Workplace.

6. Induction

- 6.1 Once a volunteer has been offered a placement an induction will be undertaken to ensure the volunteer is provided with all the information necessary to begin meaningful participation with Council.
- 6.2 The induction will cover the following broad areas:
- Completion of relevant paperwork
 - Introduction to Council
 - Information about the group/work area
 - Code of Conduct and other relevant policies
 - Work Health and Safety
- 6.3 During Induction, volunteers are to be issued with a copy of:
- This Policy
 - Council's Code of Conduct
 - Council's Values and Behaviours
 - Drug and Alcohol Control Policy
 - Social Media and Communication Devices Policy
 - Prevention & Management of Harassment and Bullying Policy
 - Anti-Discrimination and EEO Policy
 - Any other relevant policy
- 6.4 To avoid doubt, this policy extends the application and operation of the above policies and standards to volunteers of Council.
- 6.5 The relevant Designated Staff Member is responsible for conducting the induction of the volunteer.
- 6.6 The volunteer must sign a volunteer agreement at the induction to indicate that they have had an induction and that they understand their obligations and responsibilities as a volunteer with Council. This volunteer agreement must be registered in RMS.
- 6.7 Volunteers returning after an absence of twelve months or more need to undertake a new induction.
- 6.8 The Designated Staff Member/s must conduct refresher training with their volunteers should any policies or procedures change.

7. Work Health and Safety

- 7.1 Council as a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers engaged in work for the business or undertaking. This duty is owed to a PCBU's workers including to volunteer workers. A duty of care under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (NSW)* (WHS Act) and relevant legislation is owed to volunteers who carry out work for a PCBU.
- 7.2 Volunteers have the same duties and responsibilities as other 'workers' at the workplace:

- to take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- to take reasonable care that their conduct does not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- to comply with any reasonable instruction that is given by the PCBU (to assist it to comply with the WHS Act)
- to cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety at the workplace.
- report to the relevant Designated Staff member any occurrence of an incident or near miss.

8. Out of Pocket Expenses, Use of Vehicles

- 8.1 Volunteers must have prior approval from the relevant Designated Staff Member before they use their own money for purchases related to their volunteering with Council.
- 8.2 Out of pocket expenses incurred by the volunteer will only be reimbursed if prior approval from the relevant Designated Staff Member is obtained and a claim is submitted with proof of payment attached i.e. a tax invoice.
- 8.3 Clauses 8.1 and 8.2 do not apply to some volunteer committees established under section 355 and 377 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Volunteers must refer to the committees own procedures in this regard.
- 8.4 Any volunteer who is required to operate a vehicle as part of their volunteering duties (whether Council owned or not) must provide Council with proof of their current drivers licence.
- 8.5 If using a private vehicle as part of their volunteer role, the volunteer must provide evidence of their motor vehicle third party and comprehensive insurance details.
- 8.6 Volunteers are permitted to use Council owned vehicles in performing their volunteer functions. Council's policies and procedures must be adhered to by volunteers when in care and control of a Council owned vehicle. Any accident or damage involving a Council owned vehicle should be reported to the relevant Designated Staff Member immediately.
- 8.7 Volunteers must drive in accordance with the rules and regulations set down by the Transport Roads and Maritime Service (formerly RTA) and NSW Police and are responsible for any parking or traffic offences incurred by them for not complying with these rules and regulations.

9. Cessation of Service

- 9.1 Volunteers are an invaluable resource to Council but it is recognised that due to changing circumstances the volunteer may need to resign from their voluntary role.
- 9.2 All volunteers are to return any materials, files (electronic or otherwise) etc belonging to the Council prior to leaving.
- 9.3 Council is committed to constantly improving volunteer opportunities and all feedback regarding the volunteer's experience at Council would be appreciated.

- 9.4 If the volunteer is leaving due to any sort of issue or dissatisfaction with Council it would be beneficial if they notified the relevant Designated Staff Member as to their reasons. Confidentiality will be respected in all matters.
- 9.5 A Manager may terminate the services of a volunteer at any time without notice.
- 9.6 The following instances of misconduct will warrant instant cessation of the volunteers services:
- Theft of property or funds
 - Intoxication through alcohol or other substances whilst or during volunteering
 - Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, staff or stakeholders
 - Disclosure of confidential information regarding the Council and/or clients
 - Breaching any other volunteer obligations outlined in this policy
 - Malicious damage to Council or community property
 - Not working in a safe manner
 - Breach of Council's policies or procedures
- 9.7 In the event of a dispute in relation to the cessation of a volunteer's appointment the Grievance Procedure in clause 12 will apply.
- 9.8 A Statement of Voluntary Service will be available upon request after the completion of three months voluntary service or more with Penrith City Council.
- 9.9 The relevant Designated Staff Member will be responsible for completing the Statement of Voluntary Service. The Statement of Service must be registered in RMS.
- 9.10 The Statement of Voluntary Service will contain the following information – Commencement date, length of voluntary service and key duties and responsibilities.

10. Obligations of Volunteers

- 10.1 Volunteers are expected to maintain the same standards of confidentiality, courtesy, organisational discipline and compliance with Penrith City Council's Code of Conduct, Work Health and Safety and other relevant policies as are required of paid employees.
- 10.2 Volunteers are required to behave in a manner which reflects favourably on both themselves and Council.
- 10.3 Volunteers recognise that engagement and service as a volunteer with Council will not be construed as providing any access to, or right for consideration for, future paid employment with Council.
- 10.4 Volunteers are required to advise the relevant Designated Staff Member as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a day that they are scheduled to volunteer, preferably the day prior.
- 10.5 Clause 10.4 does not apply to some volunteer committees established under section 355 and 377 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Volunteers should check with their Designated Staff member the arrangements in this regard.

- 10.6 Volunteers, under no circumstances, should offer to answer any questions or comment in any way to the media.
- 10.7 Volunteers must follow all procedures and guidelines established by the relevant area of Council that they are volunteering in at all times.
- 10.8 Volunteers are not authorised to speak as representatives of Council, nor give the impression that their views expressed are those of Council.
- 10.9 Volunteers are expected to comply with Council's accounting practices and related operational procedures.
- 10.10 Any injuries suffered whilst volunteering must be reported immediately to the relevant Designated Staff Member in accordance with Council's relevant procedure. The relevant Designated Staff member must report the injury to Council's Risk Management Team.

11. Council's Obligations

11.1 Council have the following obligations to volunteers

- Acknowledge the extent and importance of volunteer contributions
- Promote awareness both internally and externally of the contribution of volunteers
- Conduct relevant induction for volunteers
- Provide information on Council policies and procedures impacting on activities
- Provide clear operational guidelines for each activity
- Regularly review the role of volunteers and volunteer activities
- Provide a safe working environment
- Provide relevant insurance cover
- Actively promote volunteer and group activities

12. Grievance Procedure

12.1 The following is a model grievance procedure which may be used if a volunteer has a grievance about any aspect of their tasks, other volunteers or Council staff.

- **Step 1** - If the volunteer feels comfortable to approach the person directly to discuss the issue, they should do so in the first instance.
- **Step 2** - The volunteer can approach the relevant Designated Staff Member 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 relevant Manager in writing.
- **Step 4** - If the matter remains unresolved, the volunteer may request the matter be referred to the Executive Manager 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 with a written response. The response shall include the reasons for not implementing any proposed remedy.

References

- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (NSW)

Policy Contact

For information regarding this policy please contact the Office of General Manager who will direct your enquiry.

Document Control

POLICY HISTORY	DATE
Version 1 – Adopted by General Manager	11 November 2013