

MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL VOLUNTEER POLICY (VOLUNTEERS AND VOCATIONAL PLACEMENT)  
(CONT.)

# **MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Council Meeting Attachment**

### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

**15 AUGUST 2016**

**7.7**

#### **MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL VOLUNTEER POLICY (VOLUNTEERS AND VOCATIONAL PLACEMENT)**

**Attachment No: 1**

**Mitchell Shire Council Volunteer Policy  
(DRAFT)**



# Volunteer Policy

## (Volunteers and Vocational Placement)

<b>Policy Owner</b>	{Owner's Title} {Community Strengthening}
<b>Creation Date</b>	{11/01/2016}
<b>Revision Date</b>	{DD/MM/YYYY}

Please check Council's Intranet to ensure this is the latest Revision

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## **Introduction**

Volunteering is an important aspect of the Mitchell Shire community. There are over 240 not-for-profit organisations, community groups, clubs and associations operating within the Shire that benefit from the support of volunteers. Volunteering contributes to community capacity building and provides long-term benefits of community involvement such as skills development and social contact. The connectedness developed through volunteer participation contributes to the overall health and wellbeing of a community. The community groups and organisations which engage volunteers provide diverse services and programs across many aspects of community life including emergency services, sport, recreation, the arts, events, education, health, welfare, aged care, children's programs and environment programs. Volunteering delivers many benefits to the individual, the organisation, our local communities, and our greater Shire. It is critical to understand the volunteer environment within the Shire, in order to encourage and support future volunteering, and to strengthen our community.

## **Purpose**

The Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) (2016) clarifies Mitchell Shire Council's commitment of involving volunteers (including volunteers and vocational placement students), and sets out the expectations of Council.

The purpose of the Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) (2016) is to:

- a) provide strategic direction to develop and support voluntary activity within Mitchell Shire Council, which reflects the unique Mitchell Shire environment
- b) provide a consistent and standardised approach to the way in which volunteers are recruited, managed and supported in their roles and work practices at Council
- c) recognise and formalise the commitment of Council and the role of volunteers within Mitchell Shire Council
- d) ensure Council continually strives to meet the minimum requirements of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)

This policy document will be used in collaboration with the Mitchell Volunteer Framework, which outlines the vision and guidelines/standards for volunteer engagement and development in Mitchell Shire. The Mitchell Volunteer Framework aims to ensure that volunteering is encouraged, supported and recognised by all members of the Mitchell Shire municipality.

## **Policy Objectives**

Many of Council's departments commit resources and take responsibility for guiding the work of volunteers in their programs, which includes the recruitment, induction, supervision, training and management of volunteers. This Policy, supported by the Mitchell Volunteer Framework, provides a consistent and standardised approach to working with, and supporting volunteers across Council.

The Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) aims to:

- ensure consistent and standardised guidance, supervision and support is provided to all volunteers undertaking voluntary activities on behalf of Council, or performing vocational placement duties within Council
- assist Council in its services, programs and projects, which engage volunteers
- assist Council officers to manage, guide and support volunteers in a manner consistent with the:
  - National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)
  - National Child Safe Standards (2016)
  - Council service, program or project aims and objectives
  - relevant legislative and funding obligations for Council services, programs or projects
  - Council Plan (2013-2017)
- facilitate the development of Council's policies and procedures that support the effective involvement of volunteers in delivering services, programs or projects by resourcing, supporting, informing and training volunteers, and setting realistic expectations for both the community and volunteers
- support volunteers through the provision of access to a Council contact officer and all relevant information to assist them in understanding and performing their roles
- ensure all practices involving volunteers at Council adhere to the Child Safe Standards (2016)

### **Scope**

The Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) (2016) applies to:

1. all units of Council who engage volunteers, including vocational placement personnel, to deliver work on behalf of Council
2. all individuals volunteering within services and/or programs that are funded and/or managed by Council
3. all vocational placement personnel undertaking their placement at Council
4. the Mitchell Employee Volunteering Program, which encourages Council employees to provide volunteer assistance to a community not-for-profit organisation within the Mitchell Shire
5. managers of spontaneous emergency volunteers (MSEV), in the event of an emergency

This policy does not apply to:

- other not-for-profit or voluntary organisations operating in Mitchell Shire using volunteers and/or vocational placement personnel to deliver their services
- volunteers providing their services in the event of an emergency, where this is managed externally by a partner organisation
- volunteers of sporting clubs
- volunteers of Service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Apex and RSL
- volunteers of Public Halls
- volunteers of all other community groups within the Shire
- volunteers of committees of management who are under a FASA with Council

It is anticipated that these organisations and groups will implement their own policy, relevant to their specific requirements.

## **Definitions**

*Volunteers* – people who deliver a Council endorsed service that benefits the community, is of their own free will and is without personal financial gain (i.e. Visitor Information Centre, library services, and committees of management for Council properties/facilities).

Volunteers in terms of this policy do not include incorporated bodies, community groups, or individuals that have no established agreement for activities to be undertaken on behalf of Council.

*Vocational Placement* – a placement that is:

- (a) undertaken with an employer for which a person is not entitled to be paid any remuneration; and/or
- (b) undertaken as a requirement of an education or training course; and
- (c) authorised under a law or an administrative arrangement of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory (Fair Work Act 2009)

All vocational placements will be administered according to the requirements outlined by the educational institution, of the particular placement type. All documentation provided by the student will be completed by the responsible supervising Council officer, in order for the student to fulfil the requirements of their placement.

*Student* – an individual undertaking a vocational placement as part of their education, including but not limited to, secondary school students on work experience placement, and tertiary students on tertiary work placement.

*Spontaneous volunteers* - individuals or groups of people who seek or are invited to contribute their assistance during and/or after an event, and who are unaffiliated with any part of the existing official emergency management response and recovery system and may or may not have relevant training, skills or experience (Red Cross Australia, 2008).

The MSEV project will be managed by Volunteering Victoria (VV), on behalf of Council, in accordance to the MOU between Council and VV. Council acknowledges the fact that there may be trained MSEV's provided by VV to assist Council during the event of an emergency, where voluntary support is required. However, it is important to understand that the MSEV project is separate to the volunteers recruited by Council, and spontaneous volunteers are not formal volunteers of Council. However, the MSEV's are still governed by the Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement), where volunteers are provided by VV to assist Council.

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

*Council* – Mitchell Shire Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989

*Councillors* – the individuals holding the office of a member of Mitchell Shire Council

*Council Officers* – the Chief Executive Officer and employees of Council, appointed by the Chief Executive Officer

### **Policy Statement**

Guided by the Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) (2016), Council will adopt an integrated, whole of Council approach to support and strengthen volunteering and vocational placement within Council, for the mutual benefit of Council and the broader Mitchell Shire. Further, Council employees engaging with volunteers will collaboratively facilitate community strengthening initiatives through active community engagement, creating a strong, connected, healthy and sustainable Mitchell Shire. Council acknowledges the vital role volunteers play in the delivery of Council services to the community, and contributing to the health and wellbeing of Mitchell Shire.

In the course of identifying suitable tasks for volunteers, and in recruiting, supporting and supervising them, it is crucial that voluntary work be clearly differentiated from, and is complementary to, that of permanent employees. The involvement of volunteers should always be for the purpose of extending and enhancing Council services, and should be specified and managed in a way that clearly distinguishes it as such. The efforts of volunteers should not deprive others of a livelihood or constitute a threat to the security and job satisfaction of permanent employees.

Council will, where possible, utilise the services of volunteers to enrich its programs and provision of services, thus enabling Council to extend its reach into the community through the effective involvement of these resources. This will be achieved through a consistent approach to the engagement, supervision and support of volunteers, with an emphasis on maximising the effective use of their skills and experience, and appropriate recognition of the contribution they make.

The Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) articulates Council's commitment to the following eight key areas of responsibility, consistent with the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)<sup>1</sup>:

1. Leadership and management
2. Commitment to volunteer involvement
3. Volunteer roles
4. Recruitment and selection
5. Support and development

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteering Australia (2015). *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* [web document]. Available at: [www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org) (28/01/2016).

6. Workplace safety and wellbeing
7. Volunteer recognition
8. Quality management and continuous improvement

Council and its officers are committed to meeting the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)*. These Standards have been developed by Volunteering Australia as a best practice guide to supporting voluntary personnel in not-for-profit organisations. Council and its officers are also committed to meeting the *Child Safe Standards (2016)* for all activities involving volunteers, where they are in contact with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

## **Principles**

### ***Council's responsibilities***

Council is committed to supporting volunteers within Council by:

- recruiting volunteers in a professional manner, through an interview process
- communicating clear expectations and where feasible provide written position descriptions and policies and procedures relevant for each role
- providing a formal induction and orientation program that will provide information about the role, and policies and procedures of Council
- engaging with volunteers on decisions that will substantially affect a role and/or performance
- providing appropriate support to volunteers to assist them to perform their role at the highest standard
- providing a supervising officer to provide volunteers with a clear point of contact within Council
- recognising and upholding the contribution that volunteers within Council make in supporting the delivery of Council services, programs and events
- ensuring that volunteers enhance the work of paid employees, never replace or supersede it
- providing a supportive and safe work environment
- celebrating, recognising and acknowledging the contribution of all volunteers within Council
- adhering to the Mitchell Shire Council's Privacy Statement

### **Vocational Placement**

Under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (the Act), a vocational placement is lawfully unpaid if it meets all the following criteria:

- There must be a placement. This can be arranged by the educational or training institution, or a student may initiate the placement with Council directly, in line with the requirements of their course
- There must be no entitlement to pay for the work the student undertakes. However, Council may provide the student with a nominal payment of \$5 per day during their placement, to assist in covering reimbursement of expenses
- The placement must be done as a requirement of an education or training course. The placement must be a required component of the course as a

whole, or of an individual subject or module of the course. It does not matter whether that subject is compulsory or an elective chosen by the student.

- The placement must be one that is approved. The institution delivering the course which provides for the placement must be authorised under an Australian, state or territory law or an administrative arrangement of the Commonwealth or a state or territory to do so. Courses offered at universities, TAFE colleges and schools (whether public or private) will all satisfy this requirement, as will bodies authorised to offer training courses under state or territory legislation.<sup>2</sup>

### Volunteers

Council is committed to supporting volunteers across Mitchell Shire by:

- providing leadership, advice, support and advocacy to voluntary organisations, to develop and support volunteering within Mitchell Shire
- encouraging and promoting volunteering to the community
- acknowledging, recognising and celebrating the contribution volunteers make to Mitchell Shire
- facilitating access to volunteering information, advice, best-practice guides, training and opportunities for the whole community
- researching and responding to current practice in the sector and legislative change
- encouraging and supporting community organisations to adopt recognised volunteer management procedures, in order to implement best practice
- coordinating the Mitchell Employee Volunteering Program
- manage the agreement with VV, regarding the MSEV program

The Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) will be referenced in any induction program for Council volunteers. Volunteers may seek access to the documentation via the appropriate program specific officer.

Council and its officers are committed to the Principles of Volunteering as documented by Volunteering Victoria (2012)<sup>3</sup>:

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- Voluntary work is unpaid
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only

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<sup>2</sup> Fair Work Australia (2016). *Student Placements* [web site]. Available at: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au>

<sup>3</sup> Volunteering Victoria (2012). *Involving Volunteers: The Principles* [web document]. Available at: [www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au) (02/02/2016).



- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality

### ***Volunteer responsibilities***

Volunteers will:

- be sure their motives and objectives are consistent with the specified role and Council's expectations before accepting a role
- follow, and be aware of the policies and procedures for Council that are relevant to their role
- be a positive contributor to Council and uphold Council's values and aims at all times
- be willing to take part in induction, orientation and ongoing training as required
- accept support and supervision by the responsible Council officer
- be open and honest in all communications
- work as a member of the team
- not represent themselves as a paid employee of Council or obligate Council in any way
- respect privacy and confidentiality of fellow volunteers and Council employees, and the members of the public they assist
- where required, be willing to sign and adhere to the position description relevant to their role
- be willing to undertake training and evaluation as required
- contribute to a safe working environment for other voluntary personnel, paid employees, and members of the public

### **Related Documents**

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Access and Inclusion disAbility Action Plan 2013-2017
- Arts, Culture and Events Strategy 2014
- Child Safe Standards Policy – under development in 2016
- Community Engagement Framework 2015
- Cultural Diversity Plan 2014-17
- Early Years Plan 2012-2016
- Environment Strategy 2014-2024
- Library and Learning Strategy 2014-2024
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2014
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Positive Ageing Strategy 2015
- Privacy Policy
- Youth Strategy 2014-2017

### **Relevant legislation**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Federal Privacy Act 1988

- Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Disability Act (Vic) 2006
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act (Vic) 2001
- Health Records Act 2000

### **Standards**

- Volunteering Australia – National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015
- Child Safe Standards (2016)

### **Values**

Volunteers will endeavour to uphold the values of Mitchell Shire Council:

- Innovation: Inspiring innovation and creativity for positive community outcomes
- Collaboration: Working together enthusiastically to achieve shared goals
- Excellence: Pursuing excellence in everything that we do
- Accountability: Enhancing transparency and accountability in our work
- Integrity: Demonstrating high personal and professional standards

### **Implementation, accountabilities and responsibilities**

- Facilitation to implement the Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) (2016) will be the primary responsibility of the Community Strengthening and People and Culture departments
- The responsibility for implementing the policy and supporting volunteers in a service, program, activity or project will lie with each Unit and Department directly using their support
- Coordinators of services, programs, activities or projects, with support from their managers, will be required to support volunteers, according to the policy, following the guidance and instructions outlined in the Mitchell Volunteer Framework
- All managers are responsible for ensuring their employees understand and comply with this policy, when engaging with volunteers
- All employees are responsible for implementing this policy when working with volunteers
- All employees should ensure the volunteers they work with are aware of this policy and provide access to the policy upon request

### **Policy monitoring and review**

Council departments will use the Mitchell Volunteer Framework as a tool to monitor their own performance in implementing the policy.

The development of the Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) and the Mitchell Volunteer Framework is the result of extensive engagement within Council and across the broader Mitchell Shire. Two Volunteer Advisory Panels were developed

(internal and external), ensuring effective collaboration between, and engagement with, community and Council. Extensive community engagement activities were conducted in order to inform the development of the Framework, Policy, Procedures, Registration Form and Application Form.

The Volunteer Policy (Volunteers and Vocational Placement) will be reviewed every two years, by the responsible officers within both the Community Strengthening and the People and Culture departments:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Review</b>
08 June 2004	Initial issue	HRRC	14 Sept 2004	30 Sept 2007
30 Sept 2007	Review	ODM		30 Sept 2009
27 June 2011	New document	VDO	8 June 2011	01 Sept 2011
Jan 2016	New document	CS/P&C		
	Adoption by Council	CS/P&C		01 June 2018
01 June 2018	Review			01 June 2020
01 June 2020	Review			01 June 2022

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