



Ashfield Council

Volunteering Policy

March 2012

This policy will be reviewed triennially by: Community Services
Next review date: March 2015



Title:	Volunteering Policy
Summary:	This policy sets out the principles and framework for the engagement of volunteers at Ashfield Council.
Record Number:	
Date of Issue:	March 2012
Approval:	Council Meeting 28/2/2012
Version Control:	V3
Contact Officer:	Manager Community Services
Relevant References:	Volunteer Policy and Procedure, Maribyrnong Shire Council Parkes Shire Council Volunteer Policy Volunteering Australia
Main Legislative or Regulatory References:	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 NSW Ombudsman Child Protection in the Workplace Australian Road Rules Act Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
Applicable Delegation of Authority:	As per delegations schedule
Related Ashfield Council Policy:	Code of Conduct Internet and email policy Expenses and facilities policy – staff
Related Ashfield Council Procedure:	Volunteer Application Form Volunteer Registration Form Volunteer checklist Role Statement template Induction Declaration



Policy Background

Ashfield Council is committed to providing excellent service to its customers and ratepayers throughout all areas of Council's activities and with a variety of engagement mechanisms. The existing and future contribution made by volunteers in this regard is highly valued by Council, as it is through the input of volunteers that Council is able to offer extended assistance in a variety of the services which it offers.

In accordance with the NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2012 and supporting regulations, Council must provide a safe environment for its employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors who are all deemed as workers under this Act. It is therefore imperative that the following policy is adhered to by all of Council's volunteers. Ashfield Council has a limited number of areas within Council that can offer volunteering opportunities so the content of volunteer roles can vary, as can the skills required to carry out the role.

Volunteers will only undertake duties that assist Council to enhance the quality of lifestyle within Ashfield Local Government Area (eg the Library Service). The role of a volunteer is not intended to be a substitute for the functions of qualified, employed staff.

Policy Purpose

Council acknowledges that volunteers contribute to the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the Ashfield community by:

- Strengthening community cohesion, social wellbeing, and trust.
 - Expanding the ability of the community to respond to the needs of its citizens and provide a range of services and activities.
 - Engaging the community in protecting local resources, improving the physical environment, support for environmental issues and extending the range of Council services to the community.
 - Encouraging understanding of, and acceptance of, culture, diversity and difference.
- It is acknowledged that there has been a growth of volunteers across Council programs and this policy includes clear procedures and processes to support volunteering.

This policy applies to all volunteers involved in Council organised activities, including Council staff who volunteer to be involved in activities external to their normal workplace duties. The primary purpose of the Ashfield Council Volunteer Policy is to define clear guidelines for participation by volunteers to allow individuals to have a clear understanding of the nature and commitment of their involvement in Council activities

Policy Objectives

- Recognise and value the substantial and ongoing contribution made by volunteers and voluntary groups to the quality of life of the citizens of Ashfield LGA.
- Manage and support Council volunteers in accordance with the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in not-for-profit Organisations.
- Work in partnership with community groups, the business sector and relevant stakeholders to develop volunteering opportunities, promote volunteering, raise the profile of Volunteerism and facilitate access to information about volunteering opportunities.

Implementation and access

Role statement for a volunteer position

The relevant supervisor (or designated staff member as supervisor) will develop a role statement that clearly outlines the volunteer role and the expectations of Council. The 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. If the role is very short term, like a tree-planting day for example, the tasks will be listed in the registration form. Longer-term placements and roles that are more complex require a more extensive role statement.

Selection and Appointment

People expressing an interest in a volunteer role with Council will complete a registration form and be given a role statement for the role they are interested in. The role details may be listed on the registration form or within a stand alone volunteer role statement. This will depend on the duration and complexity of the role. Prospective volunteers will be required to meet with the relevant supervisor for the position or such other staff member designated to be responsible for volunteers in a department of Council and depending on the duration and complexity of the volunteer engagement, may be required to attend an interview.

At the time of the interview, volunteers will be given information about the role and any associated conditions required for the placement.

Applicants who do not meet the selection criteria may not be accepted for the role and will be advised of the outcome. Once selected the supervisor will ensure that the all documents are placed in a secure file and recorded in EDM and as appropriate also inform Workplace Relations.

Obligations of Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to maintain the same standards of confidentiality, courtesy, organisational discipline and compliance with Code of Conduct and other relevant policies as are required of paid employees. Volunteers who are required to enter the homes of customers of Council are, at all times, to remember that they represent Ashfield Council and are to behave in a manner which reflects favourably on both themselves and Council. Volunteers are to be issued with a copy of Council's Code of Conduct. 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.

Volunteers assisting in the provision of Council services have the right:

- To work in a healthy and safe environment,
- To be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and Anti discrimination legislation,
- To be adequately covered by insurance and effective workplace health and safety procedures,
- To be given accurate and truthful information about Ashfield Council,
- To be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses as agreed,
- To be given a copy of Ashfield Council's Volunteer Policy and any other relevant policies and procedures,
- Not to fill a position previously or intended to be held by a paid worker,
- Not to do the work of paid employees during industrial disputes,
- To have a role statement and agreed working hours,
- To have access to a grievance procedure,
- To be provided with an orientation to Ashfield Council and the specific service/program for which the volunteer is working,



- To have personal and confidential information dealt with in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998,
- To be provided with sufficient training to perform their role,
- Be provided with sufficient resources and support to undertake the tasks for which they have volunteered.

Definitions

Volunteering is an activity which takes place through a not for profit organisation and is:

- of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- for no financial payment; and
- in a position not designated as paid.

A Designated Staff Member will be responsible for supervising a volunteer. The 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 Member's normal duties. The Designated Staff Members responsibilities may include to:

- 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;
- Conduct the induction of the volunteer;
- Ensure all induction requirements are complete;
- Conduct the probationary review of the volunteer;
- Provide leadership and support to the volunteer;
- Organise and allocate tasks and coordinate operational work where required;
- Ensure appropriate performance by the volunteer;
- Review the volunteer's performance annually during the time they volunteer with Ashfield Council
- Engender an environment of inclusion of the volunteer in processes and decision making of the work area;
- Ensure appropriate access to training for the volunteer.

The Designated Staff Member will be provided with appropriate guidance to fulfil their responsibilities to the volunteer.

Responsibility

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all Council departments who use the services of volunteers. Departments may develop additional procedures which reflect the types of programs and volunteers required for their specific areas of activity and to give effect to this policy.

Procedure

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.

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



- Training
- Work Health and Safety legislation and application
- Work Site Introduction and availability of resources

Each area utilising volunteers must maintain a register of all volunteers, and the original of this form is to be registered in EDM.

Application and Approval

Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application Form and a Volunteer Agreement Form (copies attached). Before volunteers can start work, the General Manager (or a Director) must approve their appointment. The Designated Staff Member in charge will provide the volunteer with a copy of this policy and a copy of Council's Code of Conduct.

Recruitment

Ashfield Council does not regularly conduct recruitment programs for volunteers. Volunteers are welcome to apply to an approved Council organised activity in line with this policy.

Working with Children and Police Checks

Council will require the volunteer to undergo the working with children check or relevant police checks for certain activities as appropriate.

Procedure and Outline of Duties

Volunteers are to be provided with the activity-specific procedures including risk assessment, hazard identification and control measures for the duties being undertaken.

Workplace Accident Cover

Volunteers are covered by relevant insurances including Personal Accident Insurance. Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012, volunteers are considered workers for the purposes of the Act and are to be afforded all appropriate considerations as employed staff in their role with Council.

Confidentiality

Volunteers must ensure that any information accessed through their volunteering duties remains confidential. Any breach of this confidentiality requirement may result in termination of the volunteer's services.

Probation/Trial Period

In some circumstances Volunteers may be subject to a probationary period. Volunteers will be advised at their induction of the length of their probation/trial period. In most cases a trial would continue for a period of 3 months. Normally a volunteer will have their performance reviewed after one month and then at the completion of the 3 month period. If at the end of this time either party does not feel that the arrangement is working, the voluntary opportunity may be terminated.

Volunteers should expect to have their performance reviewed on a regular basis throughout the duration of their participation with Council as determined by their Designated Staff Member.

Use of Private Vehicle

Any volunteer who is required to operate a vehicle as part of their volunteering duties must provide Council with proof of their current drivers licence.

If using a private vehicle, the volunteer must provide evidence of their motor vehicle third party and comprehensive insurance details by 1 July each year. Volunteers must drive in accordance with the rules and regulations set down by the Roads and Traffic Authority and NSW Police and are responsible for any parking or traffic offences incurred by them for not complying with these rules



and regulations. Failure to meet the above requirements will exclude the volunteer from driving a Council vehicle or providing transport for customers of Council.

Attendance

Volunteers are required to advise their supervisor or manager if they are unable to attend work, where scheduled.

Basic Work Health and Safety Training

Before starting work volunteers must participate in a program which familiarises them with workplace health and safety requirements. This program includes consultation with the supervisors as to the hazards at the site and controls developed. Volunteers must take reasonable care for the health and safety of people at work. Volunteers are also required to cooperate with the supervisor in the interest of health, safety and welfare and report any unsafe acts or unsafe conditions associated with their work.

Volunteers will be provided with a brief induction to the organisation by the organising staff member. Further training will be provided as required.

Volunteers who will be working on Council land, which is deemed to be a Construction Site, must have attended a WorkCover Accredited OHS General Induction for Construction Work in NSW Course and have with them at all times their Construction Induction Certificate.

Media Protocols

Council policy states that only authorised personnel will provide comment to the media. All media inquiries must be directed to the Communications Team Leader. If this person is not available, an appropriate person will be appointed as media liaison at the time of the event. Under no circumstances should the volunteer offer to answer any questions or comment in any way.

Cessation of service

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to Ashfield Council but it is recognised that due to changing circumstances the volunteer may need to resign from their voluntary role. Ashfield Council asks all volunteers to give as much notice as possible to their Designated Staff Member before leaving Council. Cessation can occur by either party giving one week's notice or by mutual agreement by both parties. All volunteers are to return any materials, files (electronic or otherwise) etc belonging to the Council prior to leaving.

Ashfield Council is committed to constantly improving volunteer opportunities and all feedback regarding the volunteer's experience at Council would be appreciated. If the volunteer is leaving due to any sort of problem or dissatisfaction with Council it would be beneficial if they notified the Designated Staff Member as to their reasons. Confidentiality will be respected in all matters.

Terminating Service

The General Manager or a Director may terminate the services of a volunteer at any time without notice.

Statement of Volunteer Service

A Statement of Voluntary Service will be available at any time after the completion of 3 months voluntary service with Ashfield Council. It will contain the following information - Commencement date, length of voluntary service and key duties and responsibilities. The Statement of Service will be signed on behalf of the Designated Staff Member. Ashfield Council does not provide written references. Individual work sections may wish to provide their own informal recognition to their volunteers where it is considered that such voluntary service merits such recognition.



Checklist for Volunteer positions

Please circle as appropriate

Title of volunteer position: _____

Role Statement for position completed Yes/No

Registration Form received Yes/No

Agreement Form received Yes/No

Designated staff member appointed Yes/No
[name of staff member]

Designated Staff member has reviewed requirements of this policy and for their specific role:

Yes/No

Interview conducted Yes/No
Date(s) of interviews:

/ / / /

Police check and/or Working with Children check undertaken (if applicable) Yes/No

Code of Conduct provided to volunteer Yes/No

Induction program organised (see page 5) Yes/No

The induction will cover the following broad areas:

- o Completion of relevant paperwork
- o Introduction to Council
- o Information about the group/work area
- o Code of Conduct and other relevant policies
- o Training
- o Work, Health and Safety
- o Work Site Introduction

Designated Staff member / Manager name

Date ____/____/____

Designated Staff Member /Manager
Signature

Director name

Date ____/____/____

Director's signature



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Name	
Phone	
Address	
Email	
Why do you want to work at Ashfield Council ?	
Skills, interests or work experience	
Days & Times Available	
What volunteer positions are you interested in?	
Do you speak a language other than English?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, specify:
Do you have any medical or other health conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, specify:
Emergency contact	Name: Telephone: Relationship to you:
Referee	Name: Telephone:
I declare this information to be true and correct to the best of my knowledge.	
signature of applicant:	Date: / /



Volunteer Agreement Form

I, (volunteer's name) _____ agree that:

- I understand volunteer rights & responsibilities
- I understand referees may be contacted by _____
- I will carry out volunteer duties as set out in the job description
- I will be reliable and accountable
- I understand probity checks will be conducted where necessary
- I will read and comply with Council's Code of Conduct and Work Health and Safety policies
- I will undertake any training provided by Ashfield Council
- I will undertake the induction program provided by Ashfield Council
- I will respect confidentiality and privacy
- I will ask for help and support when needed
- I will give reasonable notice when I no longer wish to volunteer

Ashfield Council may terminate my volunteering services if I do not comply with this agreement

Signature of applicant: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Note: if applicant is under the age of 18 a parent or guardian must co-sign this application and the volunteer must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult.

Name of Parent/guardian (print) _____

Signature of Parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

ROLE STATEMENT**Position Title:** _____**Section/Unit:** _____**Staff member responsible:** _____**Primary Purpose of the position:** _____**Duties of the position:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

I _____ understand that the above are duties for the volunteer position.

Volunteer name_____
Volunteer to sign

Date: / /

Name of Manager or Designated staff member_____
Signature of Manager or Designated staff member

Date: / /

Declaration of Volunteer – Induction Program

I acknowledge I have attended the induction program at Ashfield Council.

.....
Name of volunteer

.....
Signature of Volunteer

Date / /

Name of Manager/ Designated Staff member

Signature of Manager/Designated Staff member

Date / /