



## 2.11 – VOLUNTEERS POLICY

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Norfolk Island Regional Council (Council) values and recognises the contribution that volunteers bring to Council and the community generally.

### 2 POLICY OBJECTIVE

This Policy aims to provide guidance and assistance to all managers and supervisors who are involved in administering and managing volunteer arrangements. It outlines the issues to consider in connection with volunteering and may also be useful for volunteers in understanding the parameters of their engagement by Council.

### 3 POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council work areas, staff and volunteers.

### 4 DEFINITIONS

#### **Volunteer**

A volunteer is someone who does work for the main purpose of benefitting someone else, for the purposes of this policy the benefit is to the Norfolk Island Regional Council with a flow on effect to the Norfolk Island community.

A volunteer is a person who is motivated to undertake some form of community activity, not for financial gain, and in so doing, the organisation and community derives a benefit from the activity undertaken by the volunteer. Volunteers are not employees and don't have to be paid.

Key characteristics of a volunteering arrangement include:

- the parties did not intend to create a legally binding employment relationship
- the volunteer is under no obligation to perform work or attend the workplace
- the volunteer doesn't expect to be paid for their work.

The more formalised that volunteer work arrangements become, for instance if the volunteer is expected to work according to a regular on-going roster, the greater the possibility that an employment relationship will be found. It is less likely that an employment relationship will be found to exist where the volunteer work is undertaken for selfless purposes.

For volunteers to be provided with coverage under Councils' insurances they need to be engaged in activities on behalf of Council, and under the control of Council.

## **5 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- Work, Health and Safety Policy
- Norfolk Island Regional Council - Code of Conduct
- *Privacy Act 1988 (CTH)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (CTH)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (CTH)*

## **6 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **6.1 Communication**

Following adoption by Council, this policy will be communicated to all staff as well as made available on Council's public website.

### **6.2 Associated Documents**

- Volunteer Application Form
- Volunteer Confidentiality Undertaking Form
- Volunteer Description of the Worksite Form
- Volunteer Management Form

## **7 POLICY**

### **7.1 Volunteers**

A volunteer is understood as a person who willingly gives unpaid help, in the form of time, service or skills. A volunteer undertakes volunteering work for personal, charitable or social motivations without any expectation of financial gains.

Where a volunteer arrangement exists, there will be no intention between Council and the volunteer to enter into a legal relationship of employer and employee.

### **7.2 Selection, Engagement and Management of Volunteers**

Council should select and engage volunteers having regard to both the person's suitability to assist Council and, where appropriate, to anti-discrimination and equal employment legislation.

Where necessary, Council should provide volunteers with the appropriate level of orientation, training and any required personal protective equipment (PPE) to use whilst a volunteer with Council.

Volunteers should be appropriately inducted to the workplace, managed and supported by Council. To this end, it is important that volunteers are supervised in a way that is fitting of the duties they perform.

The supervisor or manager of the Council work area where a volunteer will be working must ensure the four Volunteer Forms detailed in 'Associated Documents' of this Policy are provided to Human Resources no later than the first day the volunteer undertakes work with Council.

Human Resources will keep a register of all volunteer of Council.

### **7.3 Standard of Volunteer Conduct**

Volunteers are expected to maintain an appropriate standard of conduct in the performance of voluntary work. Volunteers must:

- (a) treat employees, agents, contractors, Councillors, ratepayers, members of the public and other volunteers with appropriate courtesy and respect the confidentiality of information and documents to which a volunteer has access to in connection with their volunteer work.
- (b) understand and acknowledge in writing that maintaining confidentiality and privacy is an essential condition of volunteer employment and a breach of that condition will be treated as a serious breach of the *Privacy Act 1988 (CTH)*.

- (c) comply with reasonable instructions of the supervisor or any other officer or employee of Council, acting with authority to give such an instruction.
- (d) comply with Council's policies.

#### 7.4 Safety and Insurance Coverage for Volunteers

Council understands its obligations to provide a safe working environment. Council wishes to provide a safe working environment for all volunteers, staff and visitors.

Council's work health and safety practices and procedures apply to volunteers. Accordingly, Council will explain the relevant safety requirements to volunteers.

#### 7.5 Duties Performed by Volunteers

- 7.5.1 A volunteer may provide assistance to Council in a variety of ways, so long as that assistance is not a substitute for a paid position. Accordingly, Council should not engage a person to perform volunteer work if the work performed would ordinarily be paid for by Council.
- 7.5.2 With this in mind volunteers should not be used by Council to perform routine or specialist duties ordinarily undertaken by paid employees. The limitation includes any instance where work or a position becomes available as a result of an employee's absence from the workplace.
- 7.5.3 A volunteer should not be placed in a role previously held by a paid employee unless the volunteer is appointed on merit in accordance with Council's recruitment process, and subsequently becomes a paid employee.
- 7.5.4 To avoid any confusion about the duties performed by a volunteer, Council may, where appropriate, define volunteer roles, including preparing descriptions of the duties to be performed.

#### 7.6 Reimbursement of expenses

Volunteers will be reimbursed by Council for any pre-approved expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the performance of the voluntary work. A volunteer making a claim for reimbursement must supply Council with proof of the expense claimed.

#### 7.7 Duration of a Volunteer Engagement

A volunteer engagement can come to an end at any time without Council or the volunteer giving notice. Council has the discretion and right to terminate a volunteer arrangement at any time without notice and without having to provide any reasons for such a decision.

### 8 REVIEW AND VERSION CONTROL

Policy Number	2.11		Responsible Officer	Executive Manager Governance and Human Resources
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