

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL

**Kempsey Shire Council Volunteer Handbook**

**Procedure 2.7.4**

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**VARIATION**

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this procedure which will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is relevant and appropriate.



# VOLUNTEER Handbook

Kempsey Shire Council



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## Introduction

Kempsey Shire Council's (Council) Volunteer Handbook is for the use of volunteers, community representatives, supervisors and coordinators. It offers guidance on Council's volunteer procedures to ensure the volunteer program continues to meet the needs of both volunteers and the community.

It is a generic guide for the use of all volunteer program areas. Any additional information and requirements that are specific to a volunteer program area and not within this Handbook will be provided to volunteers, as required.

This Handbook is to be read in conjunction with Kempsey Shire Council Policy 2.7.5 Volunteer and Community Representatives Code of Conduct.

## Council Volunteer Policy

The Policy defines volunteering as *"the commitment of time and energy to the provision of services and programs that benefit the community and the volunteer. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without financial gain and in designated volunteer position only. Volunteering takes many forms and can take both an informal and a more structured formalised approach"*.

## Roles and Responsibilities – Council and Volunteers

Both the volunteer and Council have rights and responsibilities to each other.

### Council will:

- Communicate clear expectations and provide written role statements and procedures for volunteer roles where appropriate.
- Undertake a formal induction program for volunteers that will provide information about the Council and the relevant programs, training, policies and procedures, where appropriate.
- Consult with volunteers on decisions that will substantially affect a volunteer's role and/or performance.
- Provide a volunteer supervisor/coordinator within each program or facility that has the skills and knowledge to develop and supervise an effective volunteer program, where appropriate.
- Allocate work to volunteers that would be enriching to Council, program participants and volunteers.
- Effectively manage, support and resource the volunteer program.
- Ensure that volunteers enhance the work of paid staff, never replace it.
- Provide a supportive and safe work environment.

### Volunteers will:

- Be sure their motives and objectives match the volunteer role and the Council's expectations before accepting a role.
- Follow and be aware of the relevant policies, procedures and guidelines of Council and the area they are working in.
- Be a positive contributor to the organisation.
- Accept and perform the responsibilities of the role to the best of their ability and in a prompt and reliable manner.
- Be willing to take part in Induction and ongoing training as required.
- Accept support and supervision and constructive feedback on performance.
- Be open and honest in all communications.
- Not represent themselves as a paid staff member or obligate Council in any way.
- Work as a team member.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Carry out tasks in a way which corresponds with the aims and values of Council.
- Use Council's resources effectively and economically and must not use them for private use unless authorised to do so and proper payment is made where appropriate.
- Comply with their obligations in relation to confidentiality.

## Volunteer Recruitment

### Application

Volunteers may approach Council to volunteer in a number of ways – some may apply for a particular venue/interest area and others may express a general desire to volunteer without being sure of which program area may suit. A volunteer may also respond to an advertised position available in Council through the website and notices in the paper.

Others may apply for volunteering opportunities to gain experience to assist their future employment options. Each volunteer will have different expectations of their role and it is important this is understood so that the role meets the needs of both the volunteer and Council.

Volunteering opportunities will be advertised in ways that are accessible to all sections of the community, including on the Council website at [www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au). The website provides links to the Volunteers of Council Procedure, Volunteer Handbook and Volunteer Application Form.

Council volunteers can be over 10 years of age. Any volunteers under this age must be approved and have a parent or guardian sign an Insurance Waiver. Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 years must have a parent or guardian sign the Volunteer Application Form.

Recruitment of Council Volunteers will require the completion of:

- **Volunteer Application:** The application form will collect contact information, relevant personal details and may request additional information for the position, for example, WorkCover General Construction Induction Card, driver's licence, and health conditions depending on the role.
- **Volunteer Agreement:** Volunteers are required to sign the Council Volunteer Agreement, acknowledging that they have read and understand their responsibilities and will comply with the relevant Council policies and corporate requirements, including confidentiality.

All volunteer application forms and personal details will be held centrally and kept strictly confidential. Volunteers will need to notify their supervisor/coordinator of any change to their personal details.

### Selection

Volunteers will be selected in a non-discriminatory manner in line with Councils' recruitment procedures, taking into account the person's ability and suitability to perform the duties of the volunteer role, as well as any site or program specific requirements.

All volunteer applications will be formally acknowledged. Unsuccessful volunteer applicants will be notified, and where appropriate, advised of any other suitable volunteer opportunities within Council or the community.

### Informal Interview

Prior to any appointment, volunteers will have an informal interview with the Volunteer Supervisor or Coordinator of the program they may volunteer in, to explain the volunteer role and to assess whether the role is suitable for the applicant, where appropriate.

### Background Check/Screening

For each role and program area the level of screening may differ, including whether a medical clearance, WorkCover General Construction Induction Card or Police Criminal Check is required. The applicant's consent will be required to check this information as part of the application process. Volunteers will have to submit personal and/or professional referees prior to acceptance as a Council volunteer.

## **Working with Children Check**

Council may require Volunteers to complete a Working with Children Check. There is no cost to apply for a Volunteer Working with Children Check.

The simple form can be completed online at **[www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)** (Council can assist where volunteers are unable to access online services).

- Once you have submitted the form online you will receive an application number.
- Go to a NSW Motor Registry, RMS agency or Service NSW office (find a location at [www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre)). You will need to take your application number and proof of your identity.
- The Volunteer must also provide the RMS application number to Council as soon as possible.
- When advised of clearance by NSW Working with Children Check, the Volunteer must advise Council of the WWC number provided on the notification.

If an application is rejected, the Volunteer will not be able to work in a volunteer role with Council.

## **Induction**

A Council Induction and Orientation process will be undertaken to prepare volunteers for the role and to help them to quickly become effective members of the team. The Induction may be done on a one-on-one or in a group and conducted by an authorised representative of the particular facility/workgroup or by Council staff.

The formal Induction includes an:

- Induction Checklist and Work Health & Safety (WHS) Checklist
- Overview of the Volunteer Handbook, Application Form and relevant Council policies and requirement, including components of the Code of Conduct.

Volunteers will be required to comply with this information and any other relevant policies and procedures to assist them in meeting their responsibilities for legal, ethical and appropriate conduct.

An Orientation will also be undertaken to welcome volunteers to the team, and to help them become familiar with the layout/site where they will be located. Supervisors/Coordinators may also go through any particular dress, behaviour and specific site/program requirements, where appropriate.

## **Volunteer Work and Centrelink**

Some programs/services within Council are approved through Centrelink to engage unemployed customers in voluntary work. A program/service needs to be registered with Centrelink and volunteers need to make sure that Council can provide the required number of hours to meet the Centrelink agreement.

Once a volunteer has commenced Centrelink approved volunteer work with Council, it is their responsibility to ensure that the required number of hours are completed.

If for any reason, a volunteer is not able to meet their agreed hours, they need to discuss this with their supervisor/coordinator and Centrelink to make alternate arrangements.

## **Central Records and Database**

A central Volunteer Database will be kept at Council to record the volunteers' personal details, role and location/s, training undertaken, licences and permits held and a record of hours worked. Volunteer coordinators will have access to their area in the database to update details as required. When a volunteer ceases to volunteer for the Council this will be registered on the database. Potential volunteers, not yet placed in a role, will also be registered on the database for supervisor/coordinator information.

Volunteer's personal details will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be released to any other person (Council or external) without the prior approval of the volunteer or where Council is lawfully required to do so. The Volunteer Application Form will authorise use of the contact details for any Council volunteer recognition event/activity.

## **Supervisor/Coordinator**

Each Council area with volunteers will have a volunteer supervisor/coordinator with the responsibility of supporting and overseeing the volunteers and the associated processes and procedures.

The supervisor/coordinator will monitor their volunteers and have regular communication with them to identify any issues or training and support needs that would assist them to fulfil the role. This also provides opportunity for a volunteer to provide feedback and to raise issues.

Volunteers who have a complaint or grievance should first refer the matter to their supervisor/coordinator and both will work to resolve the issue. If this is not possible the matter can then be taken to the Manager responsible for the program area and if this does not reach a satisfactory outcome it can be taken to the Director of the Department.

## **Training**

Council will aim, where possible, to make provision for any additional identified training and development needs of volunteers and volunteer supervisors/coordinators, required for their role.

## **Intention to Cease a Volunteer Role**

A volunteer's service with Council can be discontinued if:

- Council receives notice from the volunteer of their decision to cease the role;
- Council considers the volunteer has acted contrary to the Volunteer Agreement, Handbook, relevant program guidelines and documentation and/or Council Policy;
- Council determines that the volunteer role is no longer required; or
- Council determines that the volunteer does not have the capacity to undertake the role.

The volunteer and supervisor/coordinator will discuss a mutual finish date and try to allow for volunteer replacement if needed. When a volunteer leaves they need to return any Council property in their possession to their supervisor/coordinator.

## **Statement of Volunteer Services**

A Statement of Volunteer Service will be available at any time after the completion of three (3) months service with 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. Council does not provide written references.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted by law in Council buildings and vehicles. If you wish to smoke you must do so in Council designated smoking areas or outside the premises and not within 4 metres of the entrance of the building. Waste products must be disposed of in appropriate bins.

## **Drug & Alcohol Policy**

Council is a drug and alcohol free workplace, as such:

- All persons at Council workplaces and work sites are not to possess or consume alcohol whilst at work.
- All persons at Council workplaces and work sites are not to possess or take/use any illegal drugs and/or substances.



- Person taking prescription medication that may affect their work must notify their supervisor or designated officer prior to commencement of their role with Council.
- Council conducts random drug and alcohol testing. Volunteers on site will be subject to testing.

## Attendance/Register

For legal and reporting purposes all volunteer hours of service are required to be recorded in a daily attendance register. Where volunteers do not work internally, each program will record attendance hours on behalf of the volunteer. Council acknowledges that at times volunteers will not be able to meet their commitment due to sickness or a prior commitment and where possible adequate notice will help staff to find a replacement volunteer if needed.

## Motor Vehicle Use

Approval is required of the volunteer supervisor/coordinator prior to use of a Council or private vehicle to undertake the volunteer role.

### Using Council Vehicles

A valid driving license needs to be produced and the supervisor/coordinator will arrange a familiarisation exercise with the vehicle. **The supervisor/coordinator will need to sight (annually) a current and valid classed drivers licence.**

A Volunteer Licence Registration Form must be completed prior to using Council vehicles.

### Using Private Vehicles

The volunteer must have and be able to produce if requested, the following:

- Current and valid classed drivers licence for the vehicle to be used.
- Proof of registration showing Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance.
- Proof of comprehensive insurance for the vehicle being used.

Volunteers must maintain road worthiness and cleanliness of their vehicle and drive responsibly. Spot checks will be made of private vehicles that are used regularly to perform a volunteer role.

If requested, Council can provide verification that a volunteer is using their vehicle for a Council volunteer program.

## Fines

All volunteers, whether driving their own vehicle or a Council vehicle, will be responsible for their own fines. As part of the volunteer role, it is important to always adhere to parking rules and speed limits, all road rules and to drive safely.

## Work Health & Safety

Council has a legislative requirement under the Work Health & Safety Act (WHS Act) to the health, safety and welfare at work of all the workers of the Council including volunteers.

A volunteer has the same work, health and safety duties as other Council workers.

These include:

- Taking responsible care for their own health and safety.
- Taking responsible care for the health and safety of others.
- Complying with any reasonable instruction by Council.
- Cooperating with any reasonable policies and procedures of Council.

## **Risk Assessment & Safety**

A risk assessment will be undertaken on any project/program identifying any hazards or risks to the safety of the volunteers. Where the risk assessment identifies activities or work locations that could cause risks to the volunteers' safety then appropriate control measures must be documented and implemented.

Where required Personal Protective Equipment must be provided and used.

All risk assessments undertaken are to use the appropriate Council safety forms which will be made available to the supervisor/coordinator. If any concerns or questions regarding risk assessments, contact Council's WHS Support & Audit Officer contacted for assistance (Phone: 6566 3321 or 0427 896 849).

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) shall be completed for any project/program that is to be conducted in any work area and will be readily available for the information of volunteers or workers.

## **Reimbursement of Expenses**

If a volunteer needs to incur an out of pocket expense, he/she must have prior approval from the supervisor/coordinator and the expense must be incurred during the performance of the role e.g. travel, vehicle. Note this does not include travel to and from home and the location of the volunteers normal rostered duties. Receipts and/or records need to be kept and lodged with any claim for reimbursement.

## **Incident Reporting**

All accidents, incidents, injuries and near misses must be reported to your Supervisor immediately. If you were to sustain an injury or near miss you will be required to complete an Incident Early Notification Report (WHSF 0051) which your Supervisor will assist you with. It is important to report everything no matter how small so we can make improvements to minimise the risk of something similar reoccurring.

## **Insurance Coverage**

Volunteers are insured while undertaking duties authorised and directly related to Council. This cover does not extend to volunteers under the age of 10 years or over the age of 90 years. Any volunteer outside this age range must complete a waiver form.

Volunteer Workers Insurance provides cover for volunteers following accidental injury, disability or death whilst performing duties on behalf of the Council, including approved direct travel during Council voluntary work and while engaged in direct travel between their place of abode and the location where the volunteer undertakes their role. The volunteer supervisor/coordinator can supply further details of the level of insurance cover available upon request.

No cover is provided for those medical expenses covered by Medicare or other health benefit funds as it is illegal to offer this form of insurance unless the organisation is a registered medical fund provider.

All claims will be put through the supervisor/coordinator and will need to be assessed and verified by Council and/or the Insurer.

## **Future Employment**

Voluntary work will not entitle a volunteer to an automatic progression to a paid position. Applications for recruitment to paid positions of Council will be considered on the basis of merit as per Councils normal recruitment process and procedures. Volunteers are only able to apply for externally advertised positions. If required, the Council can supply a statement of service detailing the volunteer's role and the period of time they have been in that role.

## **Communication**

Volunteers should have access to all information that the supervisor/coordinator feels is relevant and necessary for the satisfactory performance of the volunteer role. All policies and practices pertaining to volunteer's role and that will affect the performance of their duties will be fully documented and clearly communicated to the volunteer.

Volunteers are a part of the team and where appropriate, it would be valuable to include them in some of the facility and section specific communication e.g. meetings, team newsletter.

In accordance with the WHS Act, volunteers will be consulted with on matters affecting their health and safety.

## **Confidentiality**

A confidentiality statement is included in the Volunteer Application Form. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information that they are exposed to while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, customers, or overall Council business.

Confidential information includes information which is oral, written or pictorial.

The volunteer's obligations in relation to confidential information continue after they cease volunteering with Council

## **Council Property**

- All work of any type conducted by a volunteer belongs to Council and cannot be used or sold without the permission of Council.
- All confidential records, documents and other papers, together with copies or extracts thereof, made or acquired by the volunteer in the course of their work shall be the property of Council.
- All Council property must be returned to Council on completion of volunteering.

## **Assistance to Undertake the Volunteer Role**

Council aims to provide excellent customer service and exceed customer expectations. Volunteers should always be polite and helpful and assist the customer promptly where possible as first impressions are lasting. It is important that Council staff and volunteers promote a positive image for Council.

Any volunteer who is unsure, at any time, of their role, a course of action, a customer request or how to deal with a customer, should seek help from their supervisor/coordinator. For a query that cannot be answered, the customer should be advised that the query is not one the volunteer is familiar with and that their name, contact number and details of the query will be referred to another staff member who will be able to assist.

Volunteers should not make any action or statement which might affect or obligate the Council and are to refer any such request to the supervisor/coordinator or Manager. Volunteers are only authorised to act as representatives of Council as outlined in their role statement.

Although volunteers are unpaid it is expected that volunteer relationships with customers will have the same boundaries as those of paid staff. It is normal for customers to sometimes want to establish friendships with their volunteer. Volunteers can be friendly and supportive but it is not appropriate to become "friends" with a customer or provide their personal details. Volunteers must notify their supervisor/coordinator if the nature of the relationship with a customer becomes difficult to manage.

## **Personal Presentation/Dress Code**

In some program areas there may be a requirement for volunteers to wear a uniform and/or safety wear e.g. footwear, apparel. While carrying out volunteer work, volunteers are responsible for ensuring their personal presentation and dress is appropriate. That includes having neat casual clothing, and good personal hygiene and ensuring all health and safety considerations of the volunteer's role are met. Clothing or accessories worn while volunteering should not cause offence to any customer, other volunteers or staff, for example, political or religious slogans, badges or symbols.

## **Contracted Supervisors/Coordinators**

Any persons contracted by Council to supervise/coordinate a Council volunteer program will read, understand and abide by all relevant Council policies and procedures and the Volunteering Handbook and program specific handbooks/guidelines and documentation.