



Volunteer Policy

REFERENCE NUMBER: P-42
ORGANISATION UNIT: All
RESPONSIBLE POSITION: Director Finance and Corporate
RELEVANT DELEGATIONS: NIL
DATE ADOPTED: December 2013 (CRN 672/2013)
REVIEW DATE: Every three years

Objectives:

The Central Desert Shire Council acknowledges and respects the importance of the role of volunteers and voluntary groups for community development and engagement. The objective of this policy is to formalise the commitment of the Council to supporting volunteers and to minimise the risks to all parties.

Legislation and Reference:

- NT Local Government Act
- NT Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011
- Personal Injuries (Liabilities and Damages Act) 2003

Scope:

This policy will cover volunteers participating in all Council activities and projects.

Definition:

A volunteer:

- Is an individual who undertakes nominated activities within an organization for no financial payment.
- Undertakes the activities on their own free will and without coercion from the organization or their staff.
- Undertakes activities, which are not wholly, or part of, a position that is designated as a paid position.

Policy:

General principles:

- Volunteer positions will be developed in response to an identified need and where it has been assessed that the need would be more appropriately met by a volunteer.
- To engage and retain volunteers the work must be meaningful, not contrived or designed to 'make work', nor should involve volunteers inappropriately.
- Volunteers will not be expected to undertake roles they have not agreed to do.
- Volunteers will be placed in activities and programs that match their skills, interests and experience.

- Council may work in partnership with key agencies that support volunteering within the Central Desert Shire Council.
- All volunteers must submit an application form for approval by the CEO before they are engaged.
- All volunteering duties are to be performed during the normal CDSC office hours of 8.00 am to 4:36 (Monday to Friday).

Rights of Council volunteers

Volunteers have the right:

- To a plainly written job description and mutual understanding of their role as a volunteer.
- To be placed according to their abilities.
- To be given accurate information about the project being undertaken.
- To work within the guidelines of Council's Volunteer Policy and associated Procedures (policy to be provided to volunteers upon request).
- To be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and antidiscrimination legislation.
- To have personal and confidential information dealt with in accordance with the relevant Acts.
- To make a choice about the type of involvement and time committed.
- To undergo appropriate training and induction.
- To be supported and supervised.
- To have a designated supervisor to provide volunteers with instructions.
- To be acknowledged as a valued member of the Council volunteer team.
- To regularly receive constructive feedback.
- To be informed and consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect the volunteer or their work.
- To be informed of their entitlement to out-of-pocket expenses, if applicable.
- To have a working environment that meets all WH & S requirements.
- To be adequately covered by insurance.
- Not to do the work of paid employees during industrial disputes.

Responsibilities of Council volunteers

Volunteers have a responsibility:

- To be reliable and punctual.
- To notify their supervisor or activities co-ordinator if unable to attend or perform duties.
- To be accountable and accept constructive feedback.
- To undertake relevant training when necessary to perform designated volunteer tasks.
- To ask for support when needed.
- To carry out agreed duties.
- To respect decisions made by staff.
- To respect confidentiality at all times as defined below.
- To provide truthful and accurate information to Council, fellow volunteers and community members.
- To register with Council and complete and sign any relevant documentation.
- To comply with Council's WH & S practices to protect themselves, fellow volunteers, staff and clients.
- To comply with Council's policies and procedures, particularly in regard to dangerous and emergency situations.
- To immediately report all incidents/accidents.

- To notify Council of any potentially hazardous situations or unsafe working conditions.
- To take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others.
- To report any damage to Council or other parties' equipment or possessions.
- To provide parent/guardian consent if the volunteer is under 18 years of age.

Council rights

The Central Desert Shire Council has the right:

- To make a decision as to where the volunteer would fit best.
- To expect acceptance of responsibilities as to policies, procedures, confidentiality, reliability and good performance.
- To expect loyalty to Council and communicate constructive criticism.
- To expect enthusiasm and belief in the work the volunteer is doing.
- To expect from the volunteer clear and open communication at all times.
- To expect volunteers to perform the given tasks to the best of their ability.
- To expect from all volunteers, respect and courtesy towards all customers and members of the team.
- To express opinions about poor volunteer effort in a diplomatic way and suggest a change to another job.
- To release an unsuitable volunteer with a days notice.

Council responsibilities

The Central Desert Shire Council has the responsibility:

- To assess volunteer skills to match tasks with expectations, interest and time commitments.
- To recognise the different roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers.
- To provide appropriate induction, training and support.
- To provide written job descriptions and procedures for volunteer jobs when appropriate.
- To provide a safe work environment free from discrimination with an environment of mutual respect.
- To ensure volunteers are appropriately registered and have access to insurance cover for Personal Accident and Public Liability.
- To require volunteers to work under the supervision of paid staff and/or appointed coordinators.
- To address areas of conflict between volunteers, other volunteers, and customers.
- To ensure volunteers are not used to permanently replace paid staff.
- To respect the confidentiality of both volunteers and customers.
- To formally and informally recognise the contribution of volunteers.

Confidentiality

Volunteers working with Council must keep all privileged information in relation to Council, other employees and clients confidential. Volunteers are expected to maintain the same standards of confidentiality as Council's paid employees. This includes information held by the Council; information shared between volunteers and the designated managers; and information about particular circumstances. Any written and verbal communication must be treated as confidential by volunteers. Volunteers are required to read and sign the Council's Confidentiality Agreement for Volunteers. Any breach of this confidentiality requirement will be taken seriously and lead to:

- The termination of the volunteer's services.

- Any other action deemed necessary by the Chief Executive Officer or Council.

Working with Children and Police Checks

Council may require the volunteer to undergo the Working with Children Check or relevant Police Checks for certain activities as appropriate. If a Police Check is required, Council will provide the volunteer with a Police Check form and pay for the Check to be processed. If the Police Check confirms a criminal record, the Supervisor will assess the suitability of the volunteer for the role in question. If a volunteer does not consent to a Police Check where required, they will not be eligible to work in this area of Council.

Insurance

All registered Council volunteers who have attended an induction session are covered by the Council's insurance policy whilst undertaking approved duties on behalf of Council, unless otherwise arranged (eg. work experience students). Council will maintain appropriate insurance cover for volunteers engaged in Council activities as outlined in their written job description. Council may require volunteers to undergo a medical examination, dependent upon the nature of the volunteers work.

Driving Council and private vehicles

Volunteers may need to drive either their own vehicle or a Council vehicle whilst undertaking their duties. 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. The drivers licence must be sighted and a copy taken for Council records.

Volunteers must notify Council should the conditions of their licence change for any reason. Volunteers must have the approval of Council prior to driving a Council vehicle. Council does not provide insurance for volunteers' private motor vehicles. 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. The vehicle must be registered and in a roadworthy condition.

Volunteers are responsible for any parking or traffic offences and/or fines incurred.

Failure to meet the above requirements will exclude the volunteer from driving a Council vehicle or providing transport for customers of Council. In the case of any motor vehicle accident, the volunteer must immediately inform Council and provide all details.

Occupational Health and Safety

Like all Council staff, volunteers are entitled to work in an environment that is safe. OH & S requirements will be made clear to volunteers during induction and training. Further WH & S training will be provided as required.

Supervisors will perform risk and hazard assessments at the job site. The supervisor will ensure that activities involving volunteers are in keeping with the relevant WH & S and risk management policies.

Volunteers shall follow all safe work procedures and seek instruction when required.

Unsatisfactory Performance

Volunteers are to be treated in the same manner as paid employees in respect to performance management and discipline. If a volunteer's work is not up to standard, deviates from principles and goals of the service, contravenes the rights and

responsibilities of volunteers or places a client, employee or any other person at risk, Council will issue a verbal warning. Such warnings are to be placed on file for Council records. If the volunteer's actions cause an immediate and/or significant danger, or harm to others, or is regarded as significantly inappropriate, the volunteer arrangement may be terminated immediately.

Cessation of volunteering arrangement

In the case of a volunteer's resignation, all materials, files and equipment are to be returned to Council prior to leaving. Council asks that volunteers intending to resign give as much prior notice as possible to their supervisor.

History:

The policy was first adopted on 06th of December 2011 (CRN: 240/2011) – Ref. No. P42