

BUILDING VOLUNTEERS

FOR COMMUNITY AND
SPORTING GROUPS



Livingstone
SHIRE COUNCIL

NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANISATION DETAILS

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PART A:
CONTEXT AND

1. Introduction

1.1 What is volunteering?

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain. The term 'volunteering' covers a wide variety of activities including formal volunteering (that takes place within organisations in a structured way) and informal volunteering (that takes place outside the context of a formal organisation).

Best practice guidelines provide further consideration for the term 'volunteering'. Volunteering should not be exploitative, or be used to replace paid employment. While volunteering provides substantial benefits to society, importantly it also provides significant benefits to the volunteers themselves.

1.2 What are the benefits of engaging volunteers?

Volunteering is of great benefit to volunteers, community groups and the community at large and offers individuals the opportunity to make a difference in their community. It also provides personal benefits by offering the chance to:

- act on personal values, passions and interests;
- make new friendships and create professional networks;
- gain work experience and learn new skills;
- enjoy new social and cultural experiences; and
- develop personally and build confidence.

Many organisations and community groups heavily rely on or benefit from the contribution provided by volunteers. Volunteer efforts help:

- enhance and extend the work of a cause;
- improve the quality of life for clients;
- spread the word and increase awareness of important issues;
- bring new insights, ideas and introduce new ways of working;
- get people involved in meaningful work; and
- benefit the community at large.

2. Current trends in volunteering

2.1 Who volunteers?

According to Volunteering Australia, volunteer participation and hours have both increased over the past decade in Australia. The following trends have also been identified:

- women are more likely to volunteer than men;
- people aged between 35 and 44 are more likely to volunteer than any other age groups, with 45-55 year olds the second most likely to volunteer; and
- volunteers over 65 years and over volunteer the most hours on average.

2.2 What causes are people volunteering for?

The age of volunteers determines the causes they are more likely to volunteer for:

- younger volunteers (18-24 year olds) most commonly volunteer for religious causes, sports, health and social services;
- those aged 35-44 most commonly reported volunteering for primary and secondary education;
- 45-55 year olds most commonly volunteered in sports; and
- those aged 65 years and over are more likely to volunteer for religious causes, followed by health and social services.

2.3 What are the most common reasons for volunteering?



personal satisfaction



practical benefit (e.g. to gain skills)



mental health benefits



keep busy when no longer working



connection to community



family tradition

PART B:
BUILDING

1. Volunteer policy and procedures

A volunteer policy is a guiding document that sets the direction for the organisation with regards to the volunteers. It may be a simple statement or it may be a comprehensive set out guidelines that outline goals, desirable outcomes and the organisation's approach to achieving them. A volunteer policy formalises the organisation's commitment to its volunteer programs, making clear to members and volunteers their respective roles, responsibilities and entitlements within the community organisation.

A volunteer procedure is a detailed means of how the organisation will accomplish the policy and will ensure that the organisation and volunteers are aware of what is required of them.

Volunteering Australia have developed the *National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-For-Profit Organisations* which outlines 'best practice' in the management of volunteers.



The *National Standards* can be found here:

<https://volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VA-National-Standards-for-involving-volunteers-in-not-for-profit-organisations.pdf>

Standard One identifies that organisations should clearly set out their vision, direction and operational framework for involving volunteers. Community organisations should have an established *Strategic Plan* to guide this process.



If you require assistance with developing a *Strategic Plan*, the Community Development and Sport and Recreation team hold Capacity Building Workshops and can provide materials to assist with this.

1.1 Different types of policy and procedures

General policy

The general policy should commit the organisation to establishing an effective system for managing volunteers and should affirm the organisation's compliance with any standards and codes of conduct. It should state the organisation's:

- philosophy on volunteer involvement;
- commitment to establishing and maintaining an effective system for managing volunteers;
- objectives for involving volunteers;
- understanding what constitutes a volunteer position;
- line of authority for the management system; and
- rights and responsibilities of volunteer.



Council's *Volunteer Policy* is a useful example:

<http://www.livingstone.qld.gov.au/DocumentCenter/Home/View/16024>

Management system policies

Organisations are also able to develop management system policies for specific elements. Each management system policy may state the organisation's intentions with respect to specific elements. Such activities may include:

- developing policies and procedures;
- fulfilling management responsibilities;
- managing the work and workplace of volunteers;
- recruiting volunteers;
- training and developing volunteers; and
- maintaining documentation and record-keeping.

Please note that not all organisations choose to develop management system policies as the development of a general policy and associated procedure is usually sufficient.

Volunteer procedure

The volunteer procedure is an operational procedure that supports the volunteer policy and describes how it will be accomplished. The procedure may include:

- volunteer background checks and screening;
- volunteer induction;
- use of, and access to, confidential personal information;
- use of private motor vehicles and insurance;
- volunteer management processes; and

- volunteer recognition.



Council's *Community Volunteer Programme Handbook* can be a useful tool. This document closely reflects Council's *Volunteer Procedure* and covers content that could be relevant for your own organisation's volunteer procedure: <http://www.livingstone.qld.gov.au/DocumentCenter/Home/View/15556>



Volunteering Queensland recommends these two websites for policy and procedure templates:

- <https://communitydoor.org.au/organisational-resources/administration/policies-procedures-and-templates>
- <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/policybank/>

2. The role of volunteers

2.1 Finding a good fit for the organisation and the volunteer

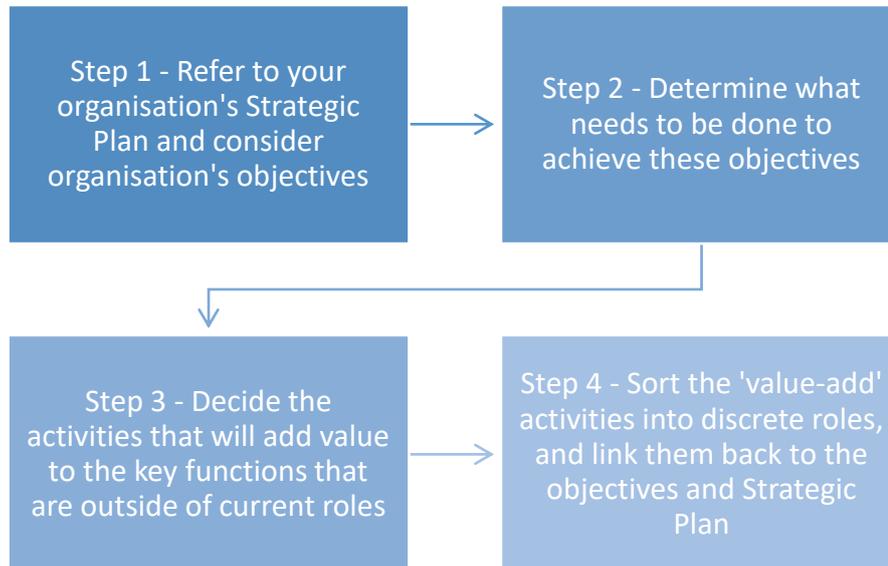
Many community groups and organisations struggle with recruiting members and volunteers. Organisations that are looking to recruit should be mindful of the changing nature of volunteering. While traditionally people volunteered because of a sense of community, there is now a greater tendency towards individualised volunteering that is based on the personal needs and goals of the individual.

It is important to determine exactly what you can offer new volunteers, as well as what you want from them. Consider why people would want to be involved with your group and the rewards of volunteering with you, for example: a sense of achievement, making new friends, work experience or networking.

2.2 Identifying need for volunteer roles

Community organisations will need to have a clear understanding of their purpose, objectives and key functions in order to determine what volunteer positions they may require.

Community organisations should establish and refer to their Strategic Plan to inform the below process.



The challenge for organisations looking to engage volunteers is conceptualising what 'added value' means for your organisation, and then creating positions that do this.

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Volunteers add value to your organisation by bringing skills, knowledge and a willingness to make a contribution. The following table will help you determine where volunteers can add value in your community organisation.

What sort of activities, skills and knowledge would 'add value' to the group/organisation and its services?	Your answers
What needs does your community organisation have that are currently not being met?	
What else would you do if you had the time or resources?	
How could the core functions of your organisation be improved?	
Which skills or new approaches would your members and organisation benefit from learning most?	
How could you improve the quality of your internal activities and processes?	
How could you improve the quality of your service?	
What additional services would the community value most?	

2.3 Considering different types of volunteering

Volunteering Queensland defines five models of volunteer engagement, which reflect the diversity of volunteering. It's essential that community organisations recognise the various ways in which individuals are choosing to volunteer, and offer a variety of models to address their cause.



Formal

These types of programs tend to be organised around volunteer involvement in the delivery of services and generally involve long term, regular attendance. There is often a strong emphasis on policies and procedures and quality management of the services being delivered. Some examples of formal volunteering include:

- delivering meals to the elderly through services such as Meals-on-Wheels;
- providing activities and outing support in aged care facility; and
- volunteering in tourism, museums, large charities and emergency services.



Governance

Governance volunteering is when individuals volunteer as board members or on management committees. Some examples of governance volunteering include:

- secretary for the local soccer club;
- president of the local RSL; and
- volunteer treasurer for a mother's group.



Non-formal

Non-formal volunteering typically occurs in local communities to address specific social needs. Volunteers are generally community members who come together around a shared interest, and work largely in unfunded, less structured settings. Some examples of non-formal volunteering include:

- Volunteering for a neighbourhood group;
 - Running the canteen for a sporting group; and
 - Volunteering for a specific hobby group.
-



Social action

Social action groups are similar to non-formal groups in that people come together around a shared interest, but differ in that social action groups have an interest and passion for bringing about defined changes. Some examples of social action volunteering include:

- Volunteering for an environmental group; and
 - Volunteering for a community action group
-



Project based

Project based volunteering is becoming increasingly popular in contemporary society, reflecting our time-conscious, but outcome-driven way of life. Volunteers often have specific periods of time available, and therefore seek out volunteer projects that have clearly defined timeframes.

The focus may be on skills that people have to offer rather than formalised volunteering role and project based volunteers may be set up exclusively to deliver a specific outcome. Examples include:

- Running or assisting at a specific event;
- Redesigning the website or creating marketing materials for an organisation; and
- Volunteering to oversee the plan and construction of a new building.



Project based volunteering is particularly suited to professionals, students and corporate volunteers.



Virtual volunteering

Virtual volunteering is a great solution for people who would prefer to volunteer from their desk, for those with limited mobility or travel time, or for people who want to volunteer with a community organisation that is not based locally. Virtual volunteering is a great way to engage people through project based volunteering.

Further reading:

https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/Publication_Virtual_Volunteering_Best_Practices_and_Future_Potentials.pdf

2.4 Inclusion and diversity in volunteerism

2.4.1 What is inclusion and diversity?

Social inclusion has the aim of valuing and providing opportunities for all people and so they can participate fully in their community. Inclusion is particularly focussed on providing support and seeking opportunities for people who experience exclusion in their lives. There are many in our community who experience social isolation on a daily basis, often because of issues related to disability, age, culture and language.

Diversity means creating an inclusive environment that accepts each individual's differences, embraces their strengths and provides opportunities for all members and volunteers to achieve their full potential. Valuing difference allows each person to contribute their unique experiences to your group or organisation and can impact positively on internal activities and relationships, as well as the community.

2.4.2 Working with different groups of people

Many community groups are made up of individuals from increasingly diverse backgrounds. This could include members of varying ages, with different skill sets or education levels, from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds, and those with disabilities. Working with unique and diverse individuals can have many benefits for your group, including:

- widening your potential pool of volunteers;
- providing the group with multiple and different perspectives; and
- encouraging creative solutions that incorporate these diverse perspectives.

There are some challenges to overcome for diverse groups to achieve their potential, and attention needs to be paid to trust building and the integration of diversity.

Building trust takes time and experience, so it is important to hold a range of joint activities, informal and formal, where group members can share information and experiences.

2.4.3 Encouraging young people to volunteer

Young people are an important resource to volunteer groups, as they are often enthusiastic volunteers. Volunteering experience is now seen as highly valuable for employers, especially in the case of first time job seekers. Volunteering offers young people the opportunity to bridge the gap between the skills gained from school and those that are desired by potential employers. This offers the opportunity for community organisations to engage young volunteers by providing chances for both professional and skill development.

The below points should be considered when looking to engage young people:

- young people are seeking episodic, project based volunteering opportunities;
- young people are interested in developing professional skills;
- community organisations should seek to provide young people with opportunities to make decisions, network and genuinely contribute their ideas.



Resources for further reading:

https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/VolACT_Lets_Talk_About_Inclusion.pdf

https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/VQ_Engaging_Young_Volunteers.pdf

https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/Publication_Young_People_as_Volunteers.pdf

3. Developing volunteer position descriptions

It is good practice to consult with your volunteer prior to developing the finalised position description. However, having an idea of what duties and timeframes are required through the development of basic position description will help community organisations to advertise for vacant volunteer roles and potential volunteers to understand what might be required of them.

The position description should clearly define:

- the context of the volunteer role in terms of the organisation's objectives;
- the type of volunteer involvement;
- the skills required;
- the duties expected; and
- the expected timeframe.



This toolkit is a useful resource to step you through the processes covered in this section: https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Volunteering_Australia_Volunteer_Roles_Toolkit+1-1.pdf

3.1 Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Volunteering Queensland has developed a *Code of Practice* and Volunteering Australia published the *National Standards* for working with volunteers.

While these rights are not all legally enforceable, as volunteers are not paid employees of the group, it may be beneficial for your organisation to refer to these while developing your volunteer positions. Each standard provides a checklist for organisations to refer against to ensure



The *National Standards* and associated checklists can be found here: <https://volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VA-National-Standards-for-involving-volunteers-in-not-for-profit-organisations.pdf>

The *Code of Practice* can be found here: <https://volunteeringqld.org.au/resources/code-of-practice>

3.2 Sample volunteer position description

Your organisation can use the below template as a starting point for the development of volunteer position descriptions:

Sample Position Description	
Volunteer name	
Position title	
Community organisation name	
Location of position	
Start date	
End date (if short term assignment)	
Hours and days required to work (if required)	
Role or project overview, purpose, and how it relates to the organisation's purpose and strategic objectives	
Key responsibilities	
Skills, experience and attributes	
Training requirements (or training that the organisation will provide)	
Benefits for the volunteer	
Benefits for the organisation	
Other requirements of the role: <input type="checkbox"/> Induction training <input type="checkbox"/> Police check	
Committee member signature	
Volunteer signature	
Date	
Date of position description review	

4. Recruiting and maintaining volunteers

4.1 How can we recruit new members or volunteers?

Many community groups struggle with recruiting enough members to achieve the goals they have set. It is important to recognise that new members and volunteers can come from a variety of sources.



You could advertise the volunteering opportunities through your local community including:

- Letter box drops;
- Posters at local shops;
- Holding regular local events; and
- Promoting through nearby schools and universities.



Consider the networks you belong to and how you can promote volunteer roles through them. These could include:

- local Council;
- tourism Centres;
- other community groups;
- local businesses;
- local schools (e.g. work experience); and
- the media (e.g. local papers, social media).



There are also websites where you can advertise volunteer opportunities with your organisation. These can include:

- Livingstone Shire Council:
<https://www.livingstone.qld.gov.au/1511/Community-Volunteer-Programme>
- Volunteering Queensland: <https://volunteeringqld.org.au/>
- Seek Volunteer: <https://www.volunteer.com.au/>

4.2 How can we retain new members or volunteers?

Community groups provide an opportunity for people to translate their passions into action. It is important that you consider the strengths and interests of the people in your group and link them projects and other people will similar skills.

Encourage and engage volunteers in an increasing level of involvement, providing support to enable them to become confident and comfortable in their roles. There are some key stages to consider:



Linking

Ensure you welcome new individuals and determine their interests, motivations and skills, as well as any barriers to their involvement with your group. During this time, you should develop the position description alongside the new volunteers to ensure their tasks align with their interests.



Belonging

Determine if their interests are being met, overcome any barriers to their connection with the group and try to deepen their level of engagement with the group and responsibility for the group's purpose. Ensure their experiences match with their expectations, where possible.



Development and leadership

Provide training to upskill volunteers or let them know about external training and networking opportunities. Gradually encourage key volunteers to take on leadership roles by delegating specific tasks and responsibilities.

Volunteers are generally not motivated to start or continue volunteering because of financial incentives. Their incentives come from:

- feeling their time is being used valuably to make a difference;
- being treated with respect and feels their input is valued;
- feeling appreciated for their efforts;
- having opportunities to develop personal or professional skills.

Recognition and reward are critical to keeping your volunteers happy. You can show recognition through simple means, including:

- informal recognition of good work, such as a thank you message;
- Greeting volunteers by name and knowing the names of their partners and children;
- reimbursing out of pocket expenses and providing refreshments;
- using quotes from volunteers in newsletter and website articles;
- holding an annual thank you even or award ceremony for your members and volunteers; and
- providing references for work experience and job applications.



This resource provides a few more ideas to provide reward and recognition for your volunteers and group members:

https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/Volunteer_Reward_and_Recognition.pdf

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