



Adelaide Hills Council Volunteer Handbook

A guide to Volunteering with Adelaide Hills Council



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Welcome to the Adelaide Hills Council’s Volunteer Services

Thank you for registering as a volunteer with the Adelaide Hills Council. We recognise and value our volunteers’ contribution to assisting Council build a strong and well-connected community through delivery of services, programs and events. Volunteers are an important part of our organisation and we want to ensure you have an enjoyable, safe and supportive volunteering experience.

This *Volunteer Handbook* provides you with general information relevant to all our volunteer programs. If you have any specific questions relating to the duties that you are undertaking, or the program that you are in, please refer to your People Leader or Team Leader.

We trust that your time with us is enjoyable, rewarding, and meets your expectations.

Volunteering in the Context of Adelaide Hills Council

Council’s Vision for the district	“Nurturing our unique place and people”
Strategic Goal	A Safe and Connected Community
Volunteering value proposition	<i>Volunteers are crucial to the ongoing management of activities, programs, community events, facilities and projects. Continuing support from Council is high priority and will maximize the potential to build our community’s capacity.</i>

Principles and Definition of Volunteering

Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through not-for-profit organisations or projects. It is undertaken:-

- *To be of benefit to the community and the volunteers.*
- *Of the volunteer’s own free will and without coercion,*
- *For no financial payments, and*
- *In designated volunteer positions only*



About Volunteering

We support volunteers to:-

- Develop and strengthen the links between the Council and our community.
- Provide personal development opportunities for individuals in our community.
- Tap into skills, expertise, talents, energies, ideas and knowledge of people in our community.
- Extend and expand services to our community.
- Enable local people to play an active role in our Council.

Benefits of volunteering:-

- Meet new people and expand your networks.
- Be involved in activities and programs that make a real difference to your local community.
- Gain new skills and experience in an area of interest that can create a pathway to employment or further education.

Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

As a volunteer you have a right:-

- To make a choice of type of involvement, commitment of time, and the right to say no;
- to be provided with a clearly written job description and to receive appropriate orientation and ongoing training;
- to have access to designated employees with queries or support relating to your volunteer role;
- to receive ongoing support and direction from designated employees;
- To be provided with the appropriate resources to undertake your volunteer duties as required;
- to be treated with respect and as a valued member of the team;
- to receive reimbursement for approved out-of-pocket expenses;
- To be consulted, valued and welcomed regarding ideas and suggestions for improvements to the program with which you work;
- to have complaints or grievances heard by an appropriate supervisor and to be aware of the grievance procedures;
- to work in a safe environment; and
- to be covered by appropriate insurance whilst engaged in their volunteer duties.

As a volunteer you have a responsibility:-

- to make a realistic commitment in terms of involvement and reliability;
- to understand and acknowledge the requirements of the Code of Conduct and relevant policies and procedures;
- to participate in the appropriate induction and ongoing training as provided;
- to report to their People Leader any damage to property or a third party.
- to notify their supervisor if they are unable to undertake duties;
- to report any unsafe working conditions / potential hazards to their People Leader; and
- to report to their supervisor any damage of property or a third party.
- to operate under the direction and supervision of Council employees to achieve the objectives required;
- to maintain confidentiality regarding Council business, program information or any other sensitive, private information you come across during your volunteer duties;

Orientation

Our approach to volunteer involvement is based upon the Volunteering Australia *National Standards for Volunteering*. Our Council works across all departments to ensure we provide good leadership, management and support of our volunteers. As we welcome you into the organisation you are required to undertake an induction

process which will provide you with important information relevant to performing your role and familiarize you to the organisation

1. **Corporate Induction** – provides an overview of our approach to volunteering covering corporate policies including the *Volunteer Policy, Code of Conduct, Work Health & Safety and Injury Management Policy, Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities, Insurances, and Complaint Handling Procedure*, together with the structure of Council, its Elected Members and its departments.
2. **People Leader Induction** – is tailored specifically to your role and workplace. Your immediate People Leader will take you on a tour of your workplace and introduce you to your team, go through your position duties, health and safety requirements and identify any training requirements.
3. **Orientation** – is a two-way process that occurs in your first week of volunteering. Your People Leader will assist you to become familiar with your duties and ensure you feel part of the team. You in turn should talk with your People Leader if there is anything of which you are unsure.

Position Descriptions

All volunteers will have a clear, complete and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position they are undertaking. Positions will be reviewed and updated periodically or when there is a substantial change in the position, or if your circumstances require change.

Supervision and Support

There is a probationary period of three months when first undertaking a volunteer role which enables both you and your team to get to know each other. You or your People Leader may decide during this time that the role is not suitable. We will endeavor to refer you to another suitable volunteer role if this is appropriate. Every 12 months you and your People Leader will undertake a mutual review which provides the opportunity to reflect on your volunteering and identify highlights, future training needs and your volunteering goals for the coming year.

Your People Leader will:-

- Organise regular and ad hoc meetings to discuss your performance and development or any issues and concerns.
- Provide encouragement and constructive feedback.
- Offer meetings and training with other volunteers who may be working in a similar role and who are experiencing similar issues.
- Share feedback from customers or other stakeholders on any aspect of service delivery.
- Consider your interest in decisions that affect you.
- Invite you to team meetings and special events, where deemed necessary.
- Celebrate your achievements and efforts.
- And, where appropriate, People Leaders may provide references to your prospective employers.

Communication

Your program will have its own way of keeping you up to date with anything new that is happening in your area.

This may include:

- *Volunteer Vibe* newsletter
- Notice board information
- Memos, bulletins
- Team meetings
- Breakfast, morning or afternoon tea get-togethers.
- Advisory Groups
- Email message or letters
- SMS / Text messages

Recognition

As a volunteer with Council you will be recognised for your valuable contribution to our community on a regular basis and in an appropriate and timely manner.

Personal Information and Privacy

We have a volunteer database that holds each volunteer's name, address, telephone number, emergency contact details and the program they volunteer in. Only authorised staff can access the database but volunteers can access their own records following training from their People Leader.

Volunteer Protection Act and Insurances – what you need to know.

It is Council's responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is provided to protect volunteers, employees, the community and the organisation against damage, loss and injury.

The Volunteer Protection Act 2001 protects volunteers from personal liability for loss, injury or damage caused as a result of an action on their part while performing volunteer duties. Exclusions are applicable in cases where a volunteer has been deliberately negligent. A copy of the Volunteer Protection Act can be downloaded by visiting <http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/VOLUNTEERS%20PROTECTION%20ACT%202001.aspx> Your People Leader will provide a printed copy upon request.

We have arranged for personal accident insurance to cover volunteers in the event that they are injured in the course of their duties. The policy provides for:-

- Death and permanent or total disablement benefits.
- Weekly benefits payable to salary / wage earners for temporary disablement.
- Modification benefit for home and motor vehicle for total disablement.
- Non-medical expenses.

The provision of personal accident insurance ensures that a volunteer is not out of pocket in the event of injury and should not be confused with private medical cover. If you are injured, you should still seek treatment under Medicare or your own private medical cover.

If you are using your own vehicle as part of your volunteering, you will be required to have full comprehensive insurance. In the event of a vehicle accident whilst undertaking your volunteer duties, we will reimburse the excess for that claim to you.

Pain and suffering is not claimable under the personal accident insurance.

Attendance

Your volunteer contribution helps to support many of our programs, services and activities. When making a commitment to volunteer it is therefore important to be punctual and reliable. As a courtesy to volunteer colleagues, staff, clients and customers, please let your People Leader know as soon as possible if you will be late or cannot attend a particular shift.

It is important that you sign on when you arrive to undertake your volunteer duties and sign off at the end of your roster. This advises us where you are in case of an emergency and ensures that we record your attendance for insurance purposes. We also collate the number of volunteer hours worked, to recognise our volunteers' contribution and for reporting requirements.

Training

It is important that we provide you with the necessary training to undertake your volunteer role. Some training will be a legal requirement to ensure the safety of volunteers, staff, clients and customers. Other training provides you with opportunities to refresh skills and to learn more about the program for which you have volunteered. Your volunteer training and hours can also contribute towards recognised prior learning for subjects offered through TAFE (e.g. Certificate in Active Volunteering or Community Services).

Police Checks and Working with Vulnerable Groups

All positions working with Council must undergo a National Criminal History Record Check (NCHRC). Volunteers cannot undertake their duties until a satisfactory NCHRC has been completed, and this check must be undertaken at least every three years. Your People Leader will arrange this during your orientation and there will be no expense to you for this requirement. If your volunteering duties involve children under 18, you will also be required to participate in Child Safe Environments training.

Resignations

A volunteer may decide to finish their volunteering for a variety of reasons. Notice of resignation should be communicated as soon as possible to your People Leader, preferably giving Council two weeks' notice before finishing date. ID name tags, safety items, forms etc. are to be returned on your last day. If you are finding that your volunteering role no longer fulfils your needs but you want to continue volunteering, please let your People Leader know. We have many positions available across Council and you may be interested in a different section or location.

Safety and Wellbeing

Holidays: Taking holidays is an important part of looking after yourself. Please let your People Leader know in advance so that alternative arrangements can be made until you return. If leave is over three months, we may not be able to guarantee the same shifts, as rosters may change to maintain program service levels. We will endeavor to arrange a suitable alternative if required.

Work Health and Safety: In line with WH&S legislation a worker is anyone who carries out work for Council such as a volunteer. Adelaide Hills Council will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that volunteers are safe while at work.

Council will ensure that all volunteers are appropriately trained to undertake their specific tasks safely. As a volunteer you have a responsibility to take reasonable care for your own health and safety while at work and to ensure your acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others in your workplace.

As part of your orientation to a volunteer role, you will be instructed in safe work procedures and provided with appropriate personal protective equipment, where required.

Any injury, incident or near miss involving a volunteer must immediately be reported to your People Leader, also ensure that you report any identified hazards.

If you witness something that has caused or has the potential to cause harm to a person or damage to property please:-

- Ensure you are safe.
- Call 000, or 112 from a mobile, for emergency services if required.
- If possible make the area safe
- Contact your People Leader to obtain further instructions.

General Safety Issues:

- If you are unsure of a particular task or do not feel safe, cease or refuse to carry out that work if you have a concern. Discuss the issue/s with your People Leader as soon as possible.
- Be aware of your surroundings and the impact of items (such as bags or equipment) being placed where people could trip over them.
- We believe in taking good care of yourself and each other. When attempting to lift an item, test the weight of the article first. Do not attempt to lift anything on your own that requires 2 people to lift. Council provides lifting aids in many different forms- speak to your People Leader for further advice on manual handling techniques.
- If you are feeling unwell, let your People Leader know and stay home to recover. For your health and safety and that of your coworkers and community members, we would much rather you take some time out to recover than worrying about 'letting the team down' or 'pushing through it'.
- Due to legislation and Council Policy, smoking is not permitted in any Council owned building, work area (indoor and outdoor) or Council vehicle.

Equity and Diversity: Equal opportunity law is applicable to all staff, volunteers, agency personnel and work experience students. We respect diversity in others such as different values, beliefs, opinions and ways of doing things. We are firmly committed to creating a workplace environment which is safe from discrimination, sexual harassment and workplace bullying.

Definitions:

Discrimination: Unlawful discrimination means treating someone differently and less favorably because of the person's sex, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy, race, disability or age.

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment covers many forms of unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature or having sexual connotations. It is important to note that the key word in this type of harassment is *unwelcome*. Both men and women can sexually harass or be harassed. Humor, friendship and relationships based on mutual consent are not sexual harassment.

Workplace bullying: Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety. '*Repeated behaviour*' refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can refer to a range of behaviours over time. '*Unreasonable behaviour*' means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard for the circumstances, would see as victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening.

Bullying can occur face-to-face, over the phone, via email, instant messaging or using mobile phone technologies including text messaging. Bullying can involve many different forms of unreasonable behaviour, which can be obvious (direct) or subtle (indirect).

Many things that happen at work are generally not considered to be bullying, although some experiences can be uncomfortable for those involved. Differences of opinion, performance management, conflicts and personality clashes can happen in any workplace, but usually they do not result in bullying.

A single incident of unreasonable behaviour is not bullying, although it may have the potential to escalate into bullying and therefore should not be ignored.

Reasonable management action, carried out in a fair way, is not bullying. Managers have a right to direct the way work is carried out and to monitor and give feedback on performance, but the way that this is done is a risk factor in determining the likelihood of bullying occurring.

Victimisation: Is treating people unfairly for complaining or supporting others with a complaint, either within the Council or to an external body. If you feel you are being treated unfairly, please discuss the situation with one of the following staff before deciding what action you want to take:-

- Coordinator
- Team Leader
- Departmental Manager



A growing body of research indicates that volunteering is good for both physical and mental health. As well as the social benefits, volunteering contributes to:-

- ✓ Lower rates of depression in later life.
- ✓ Less incidence of heart disease
- ✓ Greater functional ability.

Looking After Yourself

Staying healthy while you volunteer is very important. If you are not feeling well either physically or mentally, you will not be able to undertake your volunteer work as effectively as you would if you were feeling well. There are a variety of ways you can ensure you feel confident in your volunteering. These include making sure you look after yourself both at work and at home. The following are a few tips:-

- Avoid over commitment of your volunteering time - your home and personal life is important.
- Be realistic about your goals and ambitions and avoid setting unrealistic deadlines for yourself.
- When your role is no longer fulfilling, change your role or perhaps consider other opportunities within Council or external to it.
- Accept that there are some things you may not be able to change.
- Ask for help from others when you need it.
- If you are finding your volunteer role to be stressful discuss this with your People Leader.
- If you are sick or are due for holidays it is OK to take time off from your role.
- Give yourself plenty of time to relax and unwind.
- Keep things in perspective, have fun, and remember to laugh.

Code of Conduct for Council Volunteers

Principles

Council volunteers in South Australia have a commitment to serve the best interests of the people within the community their Council represents and to discharge their duties conscientiously and to the best of their ability. Council volunteers will act honestly, be open and transparent in every aspect of their work. Council volunteers will perform their official duties in such a manner as to ensure that public confidence and trust in the integrity and impartiality of their Council is strong.

Conduct Required of Volunteers

Council volunteers must also comply with all relevant statutory requirements to the role they are undertaking.

General behaviour

- Act honestly in the performance of their duties at all times
- Act with reasonable care and diligence in the performance of their duties.
- Undertake duties in a professional manner.
- Act in a way that generates community trust and confidence in the Council.
- Act in a reasonable, just, respectful and non-discriminatory way when dealing with all people.
- Ensure that personal interests, including financial interests, do not influence or interfere with the performance of their role.
- Comply with all relevant Council policies, codes and resolutions of which they have been made aware, relevant to their particular role.
- Not make improper use of information, including confidential information, acquired by virtue of their position.
- Ensure that relationships with external parties do not amount to interference by improper influence, affecting judgement, decisions and/or actions.
- Comply with all lawful and reasonable directions given by a person with authority to give such directions.
- Not make any public criticism of a personal nature of fellow Council Volunteers, Council members or Council employees.
- Take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons, as required by the Work Health and Safety Act 2012.

Gifts and Benefits

Council volunteers must not:

- Seek gifts or benefits of any kind.
- Accept any gift or benefit that may reasonably create a sense of obligation on their part or may be reasonably perceived to be intended to or would reasonably be likely to influence them in carrying out their public duty.
- Accept any gift or benefit from any person who is in, or who seeks to be in, any contractual relationship with the Council.

Where any Council volunteer receives a gift or benefit, details of each gift or benefit must be recorded within a gifts and benefits register, notified through their People Leader.

Complaints

Any person may make a complaint about a Council volunteer under this Code.

Complaints about a volunteer's behaviour that is alleged to have breached this Code should be brought to the attention of the relevant Manager of the Council, or a delegated person.

A complaint may be investigated and resolved and action may be taken to address the situation with the volunteer, which could include no longer volunteering with Council.

Unsatisfactory Performance and Unacceptable Behaviour

We have a responsibility to ensure that our volunteers maintain high standards of conduct and performance and that we carry out our duties in accordance with the *Code of Conduct* for Council Volunteers and relevant policies and procedures. Unsatisfactory performance or unacceptable behaviour will be managed in a fair, reasonable and timely manner. The following processes may be used to address each situation on an individual basis.

Informal Action: The People Leader may advise a volunteer of any issue and work with them to rectify the situation, where necessary, identifying if additional support or training is required.

Disciplinary Counselling: If the situation continues the People Leader may meet with the volunteer to discuss possible solutions and identify strategies to address the behaviour and time lines to be met. A support person can be present during the meeting. The agreed outcomes of the meeting will be confirmed in writing by all parties.

Disciplinary Action: If the behaviour continues the People Leader may arrange a meeting to reconfirm the expected behaviour or performance and provide a second written warning. A third and final warning will be given if the behaviour has not been amended to expected standards with the agreed time line.

Dismissal: If the behaviour or performance issues do not improve the volunteer will be dismissed. This step can be taken immediately if the individual situation is of a serious nature or is a serious breach of the Code of Conduct.

Serious Misconduct: The following list does not cover all types of misconduct but is intended as a guide to what may constitute serious misconduct and result in the discontinuance of a volunteer:

- Any deliberate unsafe act committed as a volunteer of the Council.
- Deliberate vandalism, sabotage or damage to Council property.
- Physical, psychological or verbal abuse by a volunteer against any other volunteer, employee, client or member of the general public during the course of duties. This includes threatening behaviour or other forms of harassment.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or using illicit substances whilst undertaking volunteer work for the Council.
- Theft of Council property or stealing from employees, clients, residents or other volunteers.
- Unauthorised use of a Council vehicle.
- Unauthorised private use of Council equipment or facilities.

Grievances and Complaints

We make every effort to maintain an atmosphere of trust and open communication for staff and volunteers so that grievances are resolved promptly and in a constructive and respectful manner. We focus on the re-establishment of good relationships and positive outcomes. Every effort will be made to resolve a grievance informally. If you are not satisfied with the result of any informal discussion you may make a formal complaint in writing.

Informal complaint – “self-help”: We encourage you to resolve the issue with the person involved. This option allows you to feel that you have handled the situation yourself and keeps the issue at a local level. It also allows the person who has been complained against, the opportunity to put forward their side of the matter. You may find it useful to seek advice from your People Leader or Team Leader before you approach the person concerned.

Informal complaint – “intervention”: You may prefer to ask your People Leader or Team Leader to approach the person who is the subject of the complaint on your behalf.

Formal intervention: This option is usually applied when the informal resolution process has been unsuccessful. A volunteer grievance form is available for you to submit a written complaint. Assistance in preparing the complaint can be provided. The grievance will be investigated and decisions made to determine the appropriate actions to resolve the grievance. If the grievance is against a volunteer’s People Leader, you need to refer the matter to the relevant Manager.

Improving and Developing

We have adopted the Volunteering Australia *National Standards for Volunteering* to ensure we are providing safe and satisfying volunteering opportunities. To keep us on track we need you to tell us how well things are going, what could improve, and provide any new ideas that you may have. We welcome your involvement in decision making that affects your volunteer role. Please take advantage of opportunities to provide your feedback through our volunteer feedback form, volunteer meetings and our annual volunteer survey.

Thank You!

We hope that this *Volunteer Handbook* has provided you with useful information to support you in your volunteering. Every day people make an extraordinary contribution in their communities by supporting many valuable projects and services. We look forward to working with you and genuinely thank you. We wish you every success in your volunteer role with the Adelaide Hills Council.

Further Information and Resources

Volunteering is constantly adapting to keep up with changes in society and technology. Find out more about national and international volunteering trends through the following sites:-

Volunteering Australia www.volunteeringaustralia.org

The National peak body for volunteering - volunteering facts, research, best practice in volunteer management and national standards for involving volunteers.

Volunteering SA and NT www.volunteerings.org.au

South Australia's peak body for volunteering, training, and advocacy.

Hills Volunteering www.hillsvolunteering.org.au

Our local Volunteer Resource Centre supporting communities with volunteer referral services, management support, networking and training.