



# **Code of Conduct for Volunteers**

## **Model Code for Councils**

July 2014

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The *Code of Conduct for Volunteers - Model Code* has been prepared by the Local Government Association of SA (LGA), in conjunction with Wallmans Lawyers and with assistance from Holdfast Bay Council, for use by member Councils. The LGA is the statutory peak body for Local Government in South Australia, representing all 68 Councils in the State.

The Model code was first developed in July 2014.

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# Code of Conduct for Volunteers

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## 1. PREAMBLE

### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Volunteers, like paid employees are a public face of the Council they represent and even though they give their time freely, they are still a part of the overall structure of the Council they work within.
- 1.1.2 Rights and responsibilities set the standards of a volunteer program within any Council and assist both the Council and each volunteer to abide by the philosophy and ethos of the Council.
- 1.1.3 The Council has a significant commitment to its volunteers and has substantial responsibilities towards them including recognising the *National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not for Profit Organisations*. Volunteers also have rights which are contained in legislation.
- 1.1.4 Volunteers have the same level of responsibility as the paid workforce with regard to their behaviour and activities while carrying out their duties for the Council.
- 1.1.5 Volunteering is work which is:
  - Of benefit to the community
  - Done of one's own free will, and
  - Done without monetary reward

Volunteers play an integral role within society in general by initiating and enhancing the services provided by employed staff, without being a substitute for paid work.

### 1.2 Purpose

This document sets out the standard of conduct expected of all volunteers registered with the Council.

### 1.3 Scope

The standards outlined in this document relate to all volunteers registered with the Council and are in addition to any statutory requirements of the Local Government Act.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Volunteer** means a person who willingly provides unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills through the Council's volunteer program.

### 2.2 References

- 2.2.1 *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*;
- 2.2.2 *Council's Privacy Policy [if one exists]*;
- 2.2.3 *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012 (SA) (ICAC Act)*;
- 2.2.4 *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) (WHS Act)*;
- 2.2.5 *Volunteering Australia National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not for Profit Organisations (2001)*.

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2.2.6 Volunteer Protection Act (2001)

**2.3 COVERING ALL BASES: A Guide to Best Practice Management of Volunteers in Local Government, Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme.**

**3. CODE OF CONDUCT**

**3.1 General duty of volunteers**

In addition to all legislative requirements and any specific directions or guidance provided by the Council, volunteers should recognise the requirements of this Code of Conduct as the standards to be adopted in the performance of their role.

**3.2 Principles of this Code of Conduct**

There are three broad principles that underpin the ethics and standards of conduct of volunteers engaged in Local Government:

- 3.2.1 integrity;
- 3.2.2 respect; and
- 3.2.3 accountability.

**3.3 Integrity**

3.3.1 Volunteers must act in a fair, honest and proper manner according to the law when carrying out their roles. This includes but is not limited to:

- (a) behaving in a reasonable, just and non discriminatory way;
- (b) acting in good faith and not for improper or ulterior motives;
- (c) adhering to the guidelines that relate to the acceptance of gifts and gratuities;
- (d) being able to formally identify themselves as a registered Council volunteer at all times.

3.3.2 Volunteers must act with reasonable care and be diligent in the performance of their role, ensuring they:

- (a) carry out lawful policies, instructions and decisions of their designated supervisor in a respectful manner;
- (b) in so far as is reasonably practical, based on individual experience and training, be aware of the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and services for which they are responsible.

3.3.3 Volunteers must guard against a conflict of interest by:

- (a) abiding by Council guidelines and policies regarding receiving gifts, benefits or reimbursements;
- (b) ensuring that personal interest does not improperly influence the way in which they carry out their duties;
- (c) declaring any known conflict of interest and not participating in any decision making process where they have a conflict of interest.

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### 3.4 **Respect**

3.4.1 Volunteers must be fair honest and transparent in their dealings with individuals and organisations and behave in a manner that facilitates constructive communication between the Council, its staff, other volunteers and the community.

3.4.2 This means volunteers will:

- (a) be honest and fair with all members of the community;
- (b) demonstrate courteous and sensitive behaviour that does not discriminate against people;
- (c) be aware of and disclose any situation that may create conflict between their voluntary roles and their personal interests;
- (d) guard against the misuse of a volunteer's position to gain an advantage for themselves or others;
- (e) be punctual and reliable;
- (f) advise the designated supervisor in a timely manner if unable to perform the designated role for any reason.

3.4.3 If representing the Council in the community, volunteers will:

- (a) provide an accurate and fair representation of Council decisions;
- (b) abide by the Council media policy;
- (c) conduct themselves in a manner that will not reflect unfavourably on the Council;
- (d) only make public comment in relation to their duties when specifically authorised to do so, and restrict such comment to factual information and professional advice.
- (e) dress appropriately and to the safety standard for their role.

3.4.4 Volunteers will seek to achieve a team approach in an environment of mutual respect, trust and acceptance of their different roles in achieving the Council's objectives by:

- (a) seeking to develop a relationship with fellow volunteers and staff that is cooperative, productive and constructive and based on mutual trust and respect;
- (b) conducting the relationship with courtesy and respect;
- (c) acknowledging the value of diversity and the right of all points of view to be heard and considered;
- (d) contributing to a working environment that is free from harassment or bullying.

### 3.5 **Accountability**

3.5.1 Volunteers understand that:

- (a) information obtained by a volunteer as a result of his or her role is not to be wilfully disclosed for any purpose that may result in an adverse impact on the Council;

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- (b) volunteers will not make comments to the media unless authorised by the CEO or appropriate delegate as outlined in the Media Policy;
  - (c) they must respect and maintain the confidentiality of information that volunteers have as a result of their role at the Council (not being information that is generally available to the public) and acknowledge this obligation extends beyond the term of their engagement;
  - (d) upon leaving the Council, they have no right to any information contained in the Council's e-mail or network file systems.

3.5.2 Volunteers must use Council resources in a proper and responsible way by:

- (a) being mindful of the way in which resources are deployed;
- (b) giving consideration to budget provisions and guarding against wasteful practices;
- (c) ensuring that resources are used in the community's interest; and
- (d) avoiding the wilful damage of Council property including information technology systems.

### **3.6 Compliance with this Code of Conduct**

3.6.1 Volunteers are personally responsible for ensuring their compliance with this Code of Conduct.

3.6.2 Council staff supervising volunteers are responsible for monitoring volunteer compliance with this Code of Conduct.

3.6.3 Questions of compliance raised by other volunteers, staff, Council Members and members of the community regarding this Code will be considered by the Chief Executive Officer or his nominee, in accordance with the Council's complaints handling process.

3.6.4 Volunteers are entitled to representation in the consideration of an allegation of non-compliance against them and investigation and management of the matter will have regard to the principles of fairness, equity and natural justice.

3.6.5 Volunteers may be public officers for the purposes of the ICAC Act. Conduct which breaches this Code may be misconduct under the ICAC Act.

3.6.6 Investigations undertaken by the Council regarding compliance with this Code of Conduct will be kept confidential except where there is a legislative requirement to report information relating to the investigation.

3.6.7 The consequences of breaching the Code may result in a verbal or written warning, suspension, or termination of volunteer engagement. If a volunteer is found to have committed serious misconduct it may result in 'termination effective immediately'.

### **3.7 Training**

Council is committed to providing information and training to its volunteers to ensure that they understand the requirements of this Code of Conduct.

## **4. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 Volunteers have the right to:

4.1.1 be treated fairly and respectfully and as an important member of the team

4.1.2 be recruited in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination

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legislation;

- 4.1.3 be given accurate and truthful information about the volunteer program;
- 4.1.4 work in a healthy and safe environment in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act;
- 4.1.5 appropriate personal accident insurance coverage
- 4.1.6 be given or have access to any Council policy or procedure that affects their roles;
- 4.1.7 have a current written role or position description and agreed hours of contribution;
- 4.1.8 be provided with training relevant to their assigned or agreed roles, or as legislated;
- 4.1.9 have their confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Council's privacy policy];
- 4.1.10 be provided with appropriate training, supervision and support to carry out their roles;
- 4.1.11 not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker;
- 4.1.12 to decline or withdraw from their volunteer role at any time.

4.2 Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- 4.2.1 become familiar with and work within Councils policies and procedures
- 4.2.2 provide current personal details to Council in order for Council to undertake the selection and registration of volunteers and administer their duty of care responsibilities
- 4.2.3 accept any direction and supervision from appropriate Council paid staff
- 4.2.4 be reliable and accountable for their actions;
- 4.2.5 respect and maintain confidentiality
- 4.2.6 carry out the role according to the role description;
- 4.2.7 agree to work in a safe manner and not put others at risk;;
- 4.2.8 be committed to the Council and its volunteer philosophy;
- 4.2.9 undertake training as required by the Council;
- 4.2.10 attend team meetings and performance reviews as required by Council;
- 4.2.11 give reasonable notice before leaving the Council's volunteer program;
- 4.2.12 value and support other team members;
- 4.2.13 have respect for the environment, Council premises and equipment;
- 4.2.14 comply with the requirements of this document.

4.3 Council has a right to:

- 4.3.1 Retain the personal information of volunteers in line with best practice standards
- 4.3.2 make decisions about the placement of volunteers;
- 4.3.3 review volunteer performance according to Council policies and procedures;
- 4.3.4 expect volunteers to perform given tasks to the best of their ability;

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4.3.5 expect from all volunteers respect and courtesy towards clients, paid and voluntary staff and other stakeholders;

4.3.6 establish the parameters and guidelines of volunteer roles;

4.3.7 refuse a volunteer placement or to end a placement if:

- there is a perceived risk to the customers' or volunteers health or welfare;
- suitable volunteer duties are not available or no longer available;
- the volunteer does not comply with Council policy and procedures, including this Code;
- the volunteer does not comply with the role or position statement;
- the volunteer is not covered by the Councils personal accident insurance or other relevant insurance.

4.4 Council has a responsibility to:

4.4.1 Approving any reasonably practicable budgetary expenditure necessary for the effective and efficient management of volunteers

4.4.2 Implement a volunteer management system that meets the best practice management of volunteers and meets audit and legislative requirements; Ensure the staff supervising volunteers have the skills and capacity to do so effectively

4.4.3 Retain volunteer personal information in a secure and safe system to ensure volunteer privacy

4.4.4 provide any necessary training to volunteers or staff with the responsibility for managing volunteers;

4.4.5 set clear lines of communication about complaints and conflict resolution procedures;

4.4.6 provide working conditions that meet safe work standards;

4.4.7 include volunteers in relevant decision making processes;

4.4.8 provide supervision and support by an appropriately skilled staff member;

4.4.9 provide emergency procedures guidelines;

4.4.10 provide clear policies relating to the role of volunteers and their management within the Council.

4.4.11 Recognise the vital role volunteers have within their organisation