

# Volunteers Policy

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

## 1. Policy Statement

Volunteering is a powerful expression of civic engagement. Townsville City Council (Council) recognises the importance of volunteers as place-based contributors who foster connection, social wellbeing and collective ownership of community outcomes.

Council is committed to supporting members of the public and community groups who choose to volunteer their time to enhance the provision of Council's services to the community. Volunteers form a strong bond between Council and the community that extends and enhances the quality of services provided to the community by:

- increasing community engagement;
- providing access to resources and information;
- promoting social interaction and satisfaction;
- participating in established Council services, programs and events; and,
- enhancing viability of core Council operations.

This policy establishes a consistent practice for the engagement of volunteers for undertaking a role on behalf of Council.

## 2. Principles

Council will:

- engage volunteers in meaningful and appropriate roles which contribute to Council's corporate values, goals and objectives;
- ensure the health and safety of volunteers participating in Council functions in accordance with its Work Health and Safety Policy, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and other relevant legislation; and,
- acknowledge and appreciate the value and impact of volunteer contributions to Council and the local community.

Volunteer positions are not to be created as an alternative to the appointment of paid employees, and the work undertaken by a volunteer is not to replace work which would normally be completed by a paid employee.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all Council managers and workers involved in the engagement of volunteers,

and to all members of the public and community groups who perform volunteer work for Council. This policy applies to all Council-related activities and workplaces.

## 4. Responsibility

Role	Responsibility
<b>Workers (including Volunteers)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrating full understanding and compliance with this policy;</li> <li>modelling appropriate behaviour and treating others with dignity and respect; and,</li> <li>promoting a positive, inclusive and constructive workplace culture.</li> </ul> <p>Volunteers must comply with the same standards of conduct as are expected of paid Council workers.</p>
<b>Supervisors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the recruitment, selection and site-specific induction of volunteers;</li> <li>forwarding electronic copies of Volunteer Worker Agreements to the People and Culture Section for retention in the Register of Volunteers;</li> <li>retaining all documentation relevant to the volunteers; and,</li> <li>providing ongoing supervision and, where necessary, training of volunteers in their respective areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>showing leadership by personally demonstrating appropriate behaviours and adherence to this policy;</li> <li>monitoring the workplace to ensure acceptable standards of conduct are observed; and,</li> <li>promoting a positive culture towards volunteer involvement.</li> </ul>
<b>General Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>authorising the engagement of volunteers; and</li> <li>authorising the withdrawal or termination of a volunteer's services.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Officer and Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring this policy is understood and adhered to by all Councillors and workers.</li> </ul>
<b>People and Culture Section</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintaining Council's Register of Volunteers and compliance with this policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintaining Council's Contractor Management System (CMS).</li> </ul>

## 5. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Blue Card</b>	means a document, in the form of a card, that is issued upon positive notification of a Working with Children Check. The card includes a photograph of the person and the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the person's name;</li> <li>(b) a registration number for the person's authority to work with children; and,</li> <li>(c) the expiry date of the person's authority.</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Guidance Documents</b>	includes Council policies, administrative directives and associated procedures.
<b>Employees</b>	this includes any person employed directly by Townsville City Council but does not include volunteers, contractors labour hire or contract personnel.
<b>Manager</b>	an individual responsible for overseeing and coordinating specific functions, departments, teams or projects within Townsville City Council.
<b>Project Worker</b>	a person involved in a defined project or community event, typically of a short-term duration.
<b>Supervisor</b>	an individual responsible for overseeing and guiding the work of a team or specific functions within Townsville City Council.
<b>Volunteer</b>	a person who wishes to contribute to the community in useful and meaningful ways by undertaking activities of their free will, or to gain work experience, without monetary reward.  Activities undertaken by volunteers will complement rather than replace the activities of paid Council workers.
<b>Work Experience Volunteer</b>	a person involved in Council work to gain work experience which may assist them in obtaining paid work. Such people may work under a contractual arrangement with another organisation, school or tertiary institution.
<b>Workers</b>	includes employees, contractors, volunteers and all others who perform work on behalf of Council.
<b>Working with Children Check</b>	assessment administered under Blue Card Services to determine a person's eligibility to work in the areas of child-related work. This assessment is regulated by the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</i> and <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020</i> .

Term	Definition
<b>Workplace</b>	<p>is a place where work is carried out for the Townsville City Council and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. A 'place' includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other mobile structure; and</li> <li>(b) any waters and any installation on land, on the bed of any waters or floating on any waters.</li> </ul>

## 6. Policy

Council is committed to inclusive volunteering practices that welcome participation from all backgrounds, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- multicultural communities;
- people with disability;
- older and younger residents; and,
- remote or digitally-connected individuals.

General Managers may consider the use of volunteer positions to enhance service delivery to Council's customers. Volunteer positions must be either for a defined short-term period or event, or for the purposes of providing work experience in a particular field.

### 6.1. Conditions and Considerations

The following conditions apply prior to engaging a volunteer:

- volunteers under 15 years of age will only undertake work suitable to their age and will be required to provide a consent form signed by their parents or guardian. The consent form must include details as to the nature of the volunteer work to be undertaken;
- background checks must be conducted to confirm the validity of claimed relevant qualifications;
- background checks of other aspects such as criminal history and a Working with Children Check must be conducted where specified in a position description or otherwise directed or required by law; and,
- it is a requirement that all Council workers who work with children have appropriate statutory documentation including a Blue Card as prescribed by the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*.

Consideration must be given to the candidate's:

- knowledge and skills in the required field;
- physical ability to perform the range of tasks required; and,
- motivation for undertaking the voluntary work.

## 6.2. Volunteers

At all times when performing work on behalf of Council, volunteers:

- must comply with Council's corporate guidance documents including but not limited to the Work Health and Safety Policy and Code of Conduct;
- who are required to work with children under the age of 18 are required to hold a current Blue Card;
- must wear appropriate clothing and footwear when performing work on behalf of Council. Such clothing should maintain personal presentation standards appropriate to the task being conducted and must take into consideration work health and safety (WHS) requirements; and,
- must be added to Council's CMS as a "volunteer" and be compliant prior to attending a Council workplace (refer to section [6.2.2 CMS Requirements](#) for more information).

### 6.2.1 Types of Volunteer Engagement

Community contribution takes many forms. Volunteer engagement may include the following:

Type of Engagement	Description
<b>Formal</b>	Formal volunteering programs tend to have a business management structure, with managers of volunteers working, resourcing, supervising and checking outcomes. They involve defined supervision structures and the organisation of work into structured roles involving long-term, regular attendance. There is often a strong emphasis on policies and procedures and quality management of the services being delivered.
<b>Informal</b>	Informal volunteering occurs in a range of settings but predominantly transpires in local communities to address specific social needs. These volunteering programs are often relatively unstructured and may have only a few defined roles.
<b>Stewardship</b>	In a volunteer context, stewardship goes beyond simply performing tasks; it's about the volunteer taking ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of their actions.

### 6.2.2 CMS Requirements

Volunteers can either be added to Council's CMS under:

- the volunteer's organisational contractor profile; or
- the individual Council team's CMS profile (e.g. Galleries, Animal Care and Adoption Centre, etc.).

#### 6.2.2.1 Volunteer Induction

Volunteers must complete the Volunteer Induction prior to commencing work with Council. This may be completed:

- (preferred) online through CMS (i.e. WHS Induction); or
- in circumstances where the volunteer is unable to complete the online induction or it is not the preferred induction method, a paper version is available. In this instance, volunteers can complete the paper version with their engaging Council worker, who can then add the completed induction to their CMS profile.

## 6.2.3 Provisions

### 6.2.3.1 Council-Issued Uniforms

Volunteers will not be issued with Council-supplied clothing or uniforms unless otherwise required for compliance with WHS requirements or for promotional purposes associated with a specific event or program.

### 6.2.3.2 Council Vehicles

Volunteers may be permitted to use Council fleet vehicles for the purposes of work-related travel. A volunteer must not drive any Council fleet vehicle unless:

- the volunteer has provided Council with a copy of their driver's licence;
- the licence is current and applies to the class of vehicle being driven; and,
- the volunteer is travelling with a Council employee.

The permitted travel must occur from one Council workplace to another. The permitted travel does not include travel to and from the volunteer's place of residence and the place of work.

### 6.2.3.3 Insurance

Limited insurance coverage is provided for volunteers when they are performing work on behalf of Council. Refer to Council's Insurance Team for details of Council's Personal Accident - Volunteer Workers insurance policy.

## 6.2.4 Volunteer Feedback and Recognition of Experience

Volunteers will be encouraged to provide feedback and reflections on their experience and impact. The volunteer's supervisor and/or manager will collaborate with the volunteer to determine an appropriate method for recognition of their experience with Council. Examples include storytelling, public appreciation or peer celebration.

## 6.2.5 Cessation of Service

Volunteers may withdraw their services, or a relevant General Manager may terminate a volunteer's services, at any time by notifying the other party of their intentions.

If a volunteer withdraws their services or has their services terminated, the volunteer will be treated with dignity and respect, and their privacy will be maintained in accordance with Council's Information Privacy Policy.

## 7. Legal Parameters

*Human Rights Act 2019*

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Government Regulation 2012*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

*Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011*

*Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*

*Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020*

## 8. Associated Documents

Child and Young People Safety Policy

Code of Conduct

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

[Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020 2024](#)

Information Privacy Policy

[National Strategy for Volunteering 2023 2033](#)

[Queensland Volunteering Strategy 2024-2032](#)

[Reconciliation Action Plan 2020 - 2024](#)

Townsville City Council Volunteer Worker Agreement

Volunteering Queensland

Work Health and Safety Policy