

Lithgow City Council Volunteer Policy (Draft)

Lithgow City Council is committed to promoting equitable access to services and facilities that address our community's needs.

Council recognises the significant and valuable contributions volunteers can make in supporting the delivery of services, maintaining and improving council assets and in turn improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of our community.

Volunteers may be involved in improving and maintaining community-owned assets, caring for the environment, or public contact roles.

To ensure the safety of all volunteers working on Council sites, this corporate policy has been developed. It provides a framework for how Council will engage with and manage volunteers and volunteer organisations, ensuring their workplace safety is the key consideration.

Scope:

This policy applies to volunteers who carry out work for Council, and for Council employees who manage and supervise volunteers and their work.

This policy will be a pathway to expand the community's capacity to respond to public needs by providing a broad range of community services and activities.

Definitions

Volunteer A person who gives their time to the Council, without financial remuneration and for the benefit of the community at the direction of Council employees.

Principles

The principles of volunteering for Lithgow City Council are:

- Volunteering is undertaken freely, by choice.
- Volunteering is an inclusive activity open to all who are able and suitable.
- Volunteers freely contribute their time, effort, knowledge and skills and develop formal and informal networks, while gaining experience and social inclusion.

Limitations

The policy applies to people who volunteer their services to Lithgow City Council only.

This policy does not apply to:

- Students or interns on formal vocational placements.
- Community members engaging in community engagement or community participation activities, including events.
- Volunteers working for other organisations that are partnering with Council.

- Members of the Council's Advisory Committees or people who provide expert advice to the Council on specific matters.
- Volunteers should not be placed in roles that were previously held by paid employees or have been identified as paid positions.
- Ensure volunteers are not required to take up additional work during industrial disputes or employment shortages.
- Ensure volunteers are not used in positions of responsibility for security issues, and/or health and safety issues.

Volunteer Management Procedure Manual

Council recognises that volunteers from the community make a valuable contribution to a range of council services and activities. To guide the day to day operations a Volunteer Management Procedure Manual will be established.

All current Volunteer Management Procedure documents are to be reviewed to formalise roles and responsibilities for all involved in the volunteering process and support volunteering opportunities in our community.

This procedural manual will provide the framework for volunteers and council workers to work cooperatively and safely at all times.

Council is committed to the health and safety of its workers, volunteers and the community. Through their commitment and energy, volunteers strengthen the fabric of our local community.

2. Use of Volunteers

Approval for directorates to engage volunteers for Council projects will be via a business case process approved by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

Council must approve the work undertaken by volunteers, and must prepare all necessary engagement documents in accordance with this policy. These documents must be completed and executed prior to a volunteer commencing works.

3. Working with Children

Where volunteers will be working in a child-related capacity, please refer to Lithgow City Council's Child Related Work Policy.

Child-related work includes positions where an employee / self-employed person / volunteer in the course of their duties, is involved in working with, or will have contact with children. This includes work that obtains access to confidential records regarding children and supervised work. Examples include but are not limited to;

- Youth Services
- Transport Services for Children.
- Entertainment for Children.
- Cultural, recreation, sporting or community services that involves providing programs for children.
- Any location where the volunteer may be supervising children or young people.

It is mandatory that a “Working with Children Check” must be obtained (and verified) by Council’s Human Resource service prior to the volunteer commencing this kind of work with or for Council.

A risk assessment will be made prior to commencing work activities to determine if children are permitted on site, whether a safe workplace can be provided for children, and if children can be engaged to carry out volunteer work activities.

4. Insurance

Public Liability Insurance cover is provided by Council for all volunteers. Personal accident insurance for all volunteers under 90 years of age will be provided by Council, when undertaking Council approved activities on Council managed/owned land.

Volunteers are not covered by Workers Compensation insurance as they are not ‘workers’ or ‘deemed workers’ under the Workers Compensation Act 1987.

5. Work Health and Safety

Where Council directly engages volunteers, Council has responsibility to those volunteers under the WHS Act (as if those volunteers were paid employees).

Section 19 of the WHS Act outlines Council’s duty of care; volunteers engaged directly will be required to follow Council WHS policies and procedures.

Council is responsible for, as far as is reasonably practicable, the following:

- providing a safe workplace for all workers (volunteers) including relevant training and access to information and facilities by;
- providing an induction and activity specific training where appropriate.
- providing information on the Council’s Work Health and Safety procedures, including correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required.
- informing volunteers of their responsibilities.
- maintaining a full and accurate record of volunteers in accordance with the Council’s Records Management Policy and Privacy Management Plan.
- ensuring that machinery is only to be used if approved by the works manager as part of a risk assessment.

A volunteer is responsible for ensuring that they work safely and in line with Council’s WHS policy and guidelines.

Where a volunteer organisation is supervising the site where volunteer work activities will be carried out, Council will coordinate WHS policies with the volunteer organisation to the extent that Council controls the workplace but will not provide on-site supervision to the volunteer organisation.

6. Equal Employment Opportunities

Lithgow City Council is committed to equal employment opportunity (EEO), fair treatment, and non-discrimination for all workers (volunteers).

7. Confidentiality/Improper use of information

Volunteers who are engaged by Council will respect the confidential nature of information that may be acquired during the course of their duties.

Volunteers are not to use, or take advantage of, confidential information gained through a position in the Council for the benefit of other organisations or other parties.

8. Training

8.1 Induction

Council will provide volunteers with an induction and other appropriate information prior to a volunteer commencing works.

8.2 Code of Conduct

Council must ensure that volunteers understand what is required under Lithgow City Council's Code of Conduct while working under the direction of Council. Volunteers will be provided a copy of the Code of Conduct before commencement.

8.3 General

Council will ensure volunteers are suitably trained in all relevant areas of safety, EEO and other relevant processes / activities related to the volunteer works, so that the volunteer can properly and safely carry out their assigned work activities.

9. Volunteer Coordination

Each service will be responsible for ensuring the following:

- A Register of Volunteers is maintained. This register must include relevant details such as name, contact details, emergency contact details, and type of volunteer work being conducted;
- Ensuring each volunteer has a valid, current, and executed Volunteer Agreement, and that they were engaged directly by Council or a partner Volunteer Association;
- Ensuring all requirements of this policy and all other council policies are adhered to at all times;
- Existing medical conditions are identified through the Volunteer Agreement and notified to the Safety Team. This must be completed prior to the volunteers work commencing.

If you would like to become a volunteer with Council, please complete the online form below.

References and related documents.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

Legislation

- Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011
- Industrial Relations Act 1996
- Local Government (State) Award 2020
- Local Government Act 1993
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Child Protection (Working with Children)
- Amendment (Statutory Review) Act 2018
- Privacy and Personal Information
- Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA)
- Health Records and Information Privacy
- Act 2002 (HRIPA)
- Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986

- Australian Taxation Guide-Volunteers and Tax-NAT 4612 (List related legislation and standards)
- Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW)
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 NSW
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 NSW
- Volunteering Australia, National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015

Other Laws and Standards

All Lithgow City Council policies and procedures relating to:

- Workplace Health and Safety
- Child Related Work
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Council Insurance
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary and grievances
- EEO and Anti-Discrimination
- Harassment and Bullying
- Social Media
- IT Systems Security
- Privacy Management
- Records Management

Review period

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Approval Status

The Chief Executive Officer approved this policy on

Commence Review Date

Approval Due Date

Ownership and approval

Responsibility Role

Author Owner Endorser Approver

Director

Chief Executive Officer

Volunteer Policy – date