



## **COUNCIL POLICY**

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

**Approved by:** *City and Community Services Committee on 23 July 2007*

**Next Review Date:** **July 2010**

**Responsible Officer**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The importance of volunteers in the community is significant, with volunteering contributing an estimated \$5 billion into the South Australian economy (source: Office of Volunteers 2006). South Australia leads the nation in volunteer involvement with a recent survey commissioned by the State Government showing that 51 per cent of the population are involved in volunteering. Council's 2006 land use survey identified 12,000 volunteers working in the City.

Volunteers make up one fifth of the Council's workforce (unpaid) and they work alongside staff to deliver and enhance a broad range of services and programs offered by Council. They also assist Council by developing strong links in the local community and encouraging community independence.

Council recognises that volunteering contributes to the vibrancy and vitality of the City life and in meeting Council's goals and objectives.

## **2. POLICY SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the Volunteer Policy is to outline the scope of the Corporation wide volunteer program run by Council including the role and contribution of volunteers to Council programs and services and Council's commitment to volunteers.

## **3. VOLUNTEERING DEFINITION**

As outlined by Volunteering Australia, formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through not for profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- To be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;
- Of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- For no financial payment; and
- In designated volunteer positions only.

Principles of volunteerism include:

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer.
- Volunteer work is unpaid.
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice.
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances.
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community.
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only.
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work.
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

These principles were developed and adopted in 1997 by Volunteering Australia Inc through consultation with volunteers, Unions and the Government.

## **4. POLICY STATEMENTS**

### **4.1 Council involves volunteers in relevant and appropriate work and ensure ACC volunteer work is meaningful.**

Volunteer positions will be developed in response to an identified need and where it has been assessed that the need would be more appropriately met by a volunteer. To engage and retain volunteers the work needs to be meaningful, not contrived or designed to 'make work', nor should we involve volunteers inappropriately. Volunteers should not be expected to undertake roles they have not agreed to do.

Likewise, volunteers will be placed in activities and programs that match their skills, interests and experience.

Current Council programs that involve volunteers are:

- Ask About Adelaide - City Guides, Rundle Mall Visitor Information Centre, Adelaide Greeters, First Steps Orientation Tours and Central Market Information Booth.
- Home and Community Care (HACC)
- North Adelaide & Adelaide South West Community Centres - administration, reception, maintenance and group leading.
- Library Services - Volunteers deliver library materials to housebound city residents, shelf reading in the branches and assisting member support services.
- Parklands Bush Volunteers - Wirranendi project, South Parklands Land Care, Trees for Life.
- Adelaide Pride - reporting anything a visitor may see as inappropriate such as graffiti, general untidiness and signage.
- Golf Links - assisting with the gardening and maintenance of the grounds.
- Adelaide Town Hall Tour Guides – provide town hall tours to the general public.
- South West Community network - beautification projects in the South West Corner.

### **4.2 Council supports volunteers to do their job with training and adequate resources.**

Volunteers are not paid for their services, nor are they free labour. As with paid staff, in order for volunteers to effectively fulfil their duties and meet legislative requirements, they need access to information and appropriate resources – human, physical and financial. The resources need to be allocated in line with relevant Council policies and the National Volunteering Australia Standards.

### **4.3 Council recognises volunteer contributions at all levels of the organisation through appropriate reward and recognition.**

Council is committed to ensuring that the volunteers are valued and recognised for their contribution, through planned events and activities including (but not limited to):

- Annual Mayoral reception
- Celebration during Volunteers week in May
- Brian W Varcoe Volunteer Recognition Award
- Work, Rest & Play (W.R.A.P) staff entitlements
- Inclusion in the Corporate Values and Behaviours program – Viva

#### **4.4 Council works in partnership with key agencies that support volunteering in the City.**

Council will work with key agencies including Volunteering SA, Office for Volunteers and the Local Government Association to support and develop initiatives that encourage volunteer participation in the City.

Networking and partnering with these bodies enables more effective and sustainable use of resources, contributes to decision making, establishes and maintains best practice for the management of volunteer programs and activities, offers cross organisational skills development and training and provides volunteers other opportunities to participate in their community and City life.

### **5. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND CORPORATE POLICY CONTEXT**

In adopting this policy, it is recognised that there are specific legislative requirements to be met as well as other Corporate goals.

Relevant major legislative requirements are the:

- Local Government Act
- Volunteers Protection Act 2001
- Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986
- South Australian Strategic Plan 2007

This Policy is to be implemented in conjunction with the Council's Strategic Directions and other relevant Council Policies and Strategies including:

- Annual Business Plan and Budget
- Social Development Strategy
- Aging Well in Adelaide (Older Persons Policy and Action Plan)
- Disability Access Action Plan
- Grants and Sponsorship Policy
- Youth Policy "The Time of Your Life" and Action Plan
- Community Services Policy (to be endorsed)

### **6. APPROACH**

Council will use the Volunteer Decision Making Tree (See Appendix 1) to determine the appropriateness of volunteer involvement in any proposed activity.

### **7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

#### **7.1 Indicators of effectiveness**

##### **7.1.1 Volunteer Satisfaction Survey**

A volunteer satisfaction survey is to be undertaken annually, surveying every volunteer to indicate 80% satisfaction, rating agree or above.

### **7.1.2 Service Provider Satisfaction Survey**

A service provider satisfaction survey is to be undertaken annually, surveying relevant internal program coordinators to indicate 80% satisfaction, rating agree or above.

### **7.1.3 Volunteer Numbers**

Volunteer numbers must be sufficient to match the needs of the programs and services.

## **7.2 Timelines for Review**

This Policy will be reviewed in July 2010.

## Volunteer Involvement Decision Making Tree

