

FILE NO: PSC2023-01431

TITLE: VOLUNTEER POLICY

OWNER: COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTION MANAGER

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the importance of volunteering to the delivery of Port Stephens Council (Council) services and programs, and to establish a consistent approach to the engagement, recognition and management of volunteers within Council.

2. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

2.1 Council recognises that it is important for people to have the opportunity to provide a meaningful contribution to their community by sharing and developing their expertise and interests in a voluntary capacity.

2.2 Council values the contribution of volunteers using our Volunteer Recognition Scheme as a way to demonstrate gratitude and applaud the tireless work of volunteers.

2.3 Volunteers work with Council employees to deliver and enhance a broad range of services and programs offered by Council. The activities undertaken are of benefit to Council and the local community and compliment, but do not replace, the services and programs provided by employees. Volunteers also assist Council by fostering community and other relationships and encouraging community cohesion.

3. SCOPE:

3.1 Volunteers with Council include:

- a) Members of 355c Committees.
- b) Members of Parks and Landcare Groups.
- c) Executive Members of Sports Councils.
- d) All individuals approved to volunteer on council owned or managed land.

3.2 The following people and positions are not considered volunteers for the purpose of this policy:

- a) Councillors who carry out activities as part of their local government duties.
- b) Students, including those undertaking work experience activities.
- c) Members of Incorporated Associations or Companies limited by guarantee.

- d) Participants fulfilling Centrelink benefit / mutual obligations.
 - e) Community members involved in community engagement activities.
- 3.4 The Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act considers a volunteer to be a worker. As such, Council has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our volunteers in our workplaces. Similarly, volunteers have a duty of care for their own, and others health and safety.
- 3.5 Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are safe while in contact with any Council volunteers. All Council registered volunteers must undertake child protection related training or modules relevant to their volunteer role.
- 3.6 Council volunteers over the age of 18 years who have direct contact with children in their volunteer role are required to have a Working with Children Check clearance in compliance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 and Council's Child Protection Policy (2021).

4. DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 An outline of the key definitions of terms included in the policy.

Council Registered Volunteer	A volunteer registered on Council's Volunteer Database (through application and approval) completing activities on behalf of Council without remuneration.
Responsible Volunteer Officer	Council employee responsible for monitoring and supervising volunteers for a specific volunteer program.
Volunteering	Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

5. STATEMENT:

5.1 Council is committed to creating opportunities for volunteers that are productive, meaningful and deliver mutual benefit and positive outcomes to Council, community and the volunteer. Council will ensure that all volunteers are engaged, trained and supported to appropriately fulfil their approved volunteering duties. Council is committed to increasing volunteering opportunities that will lead to learning and skills development.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 6.1 **Executive Team** is responsible for ensuring that the Volunteer Policy is effectively implemented.

6.2 **Section Managers** are responsible, and will be held accountable for, ensuring within their respective areas that:

- a) The Volunteer Policy is effectively implemented in their area of control.
- b) Responsible volunteer officers have the capabilities necessary, and are held accountable for, their specific responsibilities.
- c) All expenditure on projects has the appropriate approval.

6.3 **Responsible Volunteer Officers** will be held accountable for implementing and adhering to the Volunteer Policy.

6.4 **Volunteers** are responsible, and will be held accountable, for following instructions of appointed Responsible Volunteer Officer.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- 7.1 Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.
- 7.2 Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.
- 7.3 Local Government Act 1993.
- 7.4 Port Stephens Council Code of Conduct.
- 7.5 Port Stephens Council Child Protection Policy.
- 7.6 Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- 7.7 Port Stephens Council Volunteer Induction Handbook.
- 7.8 Port Stephens Council Volunteer Recognition Policy.
- 7.9 National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033
- 7.10 Safe Work Australia – A Guide to Work Health and Safety for Volunteer Organisations.
- 7.11 The National Standards for Involvement.
- 7.12 Volunteers Statement of Principles, NSW Volunteering.
- 7.13 Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- 7.14 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

This is a controlled document. Hardcopies of this document may not be the latest version. Before using this document, check it is the latest version; refer to Council's website: www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au .

EDRMS container No.	PSC2023-01431	EDRMS record No.	23/252308
Audience	Councillors, Council staff, Volunteers		
Process owner	Community Services Section Manager		
Author	Community Services Section Manager		

Review timeframe	3 years	Next review date	September 2026
Adoption date	26 September 2023		

VERSION HISTORY:

Version	Date	Author	Details	Minute No.
1.0	26 September 2023	Community Services Section Manager	New policy.	220