



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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History Summary

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1. Introduction

The Shire of Narrogin (Shire) Volunteer Handbook is for the use of volunteers, from our community, including those that become volunteer supervisors, and coordinators. It offers guidance on Shire's volunteer procedures to ensure the volunteer program continues to meet the needs of both volunteers and the community.

It also covers members of the community who volunteer as community members of a Shire Advisory Committee, Working Group or Reference Group.

It is a generic guide for the use of all volunteer program areas. Any additional information and requirements that are specific to a volunteer program area and not within this Handbook will be provided to volunteers, as required.

This Handbook is to be read in conjunction with the [Shire of Narrogin Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct](#) and the [Shire of Narrogin Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates](#).

This Handbook is also to be read in conjunction with the Shire of Narrogin Work Health and Safety (WHS) Manual and the Work Health and Safety Induction Handbook. Volunteers are also required to complete the Volunteer Registration Form (FCEO067), sign the Volunteer Agreement (FCEO066) and complete the Volunteer Induction & WHS Checklist (FCEO068) prior to commencing any volunteer duties.

Shire Volunteer Policy

The Shire defines volunteering as *"The commitment of time and energy to the provision of services and programs that benefit the community and the volunteer. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without financial gain and in designated volunteer position only. Volunteering takes many forms and can take both an informal and a more structured formalised approach"*.

2. Roles and Responsibilities – Shire and Volunteers

Both the volunteer and Shire have rights and responsibilities to each other.

Shire will:

- Communicate clear expectations and provide written role statements and procedures for volunteer roles where appropriate.
- Undertake a formal induction program for volunteers that will provide information about the Shire and the relevant programs, training, policies and procedures, where appropriate.
- Consult with volunteers on decisions that will substantially affect a volunteer's role and/or performance.
- Provide a volunteer supervisor/coordinator within each program or facility that has the skills and knowledge to develop and supervise an effective volunteer program, where appropriate.
- Allocate work to volunteers that would be enriching to the Shire, program participants and volunteers.
- Effectively manage, support and resource the volunteer program.
- Ensure that volunteers enhance the work of paid employees.
- Provide a supportive and safe work environment.

Volunteers will:

- Be sure their motives and objectives match the volunteer role and the Shire's expectations before accepting a role.
 - Follow and be aware of the relevant policies, procedures and guidelines of the Shire and the area they are working in.
 - Follow and be aware of their obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2020 and related Regulations.
 - Be a positive contributor to the organisation.
 - Accept and perform the responsibilities of the role to the best of their ability and in a prompt and reliable manner.
 - Be willing to take part in Induction and ongoing training as required.
 - Accept support and supervision and constructive feedback on performance.
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- Be open and honest in all communications.
- Not represent themselves as a paid employee or obligate the Shire in any way.
- Work as a team member.
- Carry out tasks in a way which corresponds with the aims and values of the Shire.
- Use the Shire's resources effectively and economically and must not use them for private use unless authorised to do so and proper payment is made where appropriate.
- Comply with their obligations in relation to confidentiality.

3. Organisational Values

As a volunteer you are compelled to uphold and demonstrate the Shire's adopted organisational values of:

✓ CARE

We display kindness and concern for one another and our community and...

✓ ACCOUNTABILITY

We accept responsibility for our actions and outcomes and...

✓ RESPECT

We treat everyone how we would like to be treated and...

✓ EXCELLENCE

We go the extra mile to deliver outstanding services and...

✓ TRUST

We share without fear of consequences and...

✓ TEAMWORK

We work together for a common goal and...

4. Volunteer Roles

The following volunteer roles exist at the Shire:

- Jessie House Social Club
- Jessie House Exercise Class
- CATS Driver
- Meals On Wheels Driver
- Homecare
- Transporting clients in Homecare vehicles
- Narrogin & Dryandra Visitor Centre (NDVC)
- Old Courthouse Museum
- Bush Fire Volunteers
- SES Volunteers
- Friends of Foxes Lair
- Narrogin Regional Leisure Centre (NRLC)
- R.W. (Bob) Farr Memorial Library
- Shire Advisory Committees & Reference Groups

5. Volunteer Recruitment

Application

Volunteers may approach the Shire to volunteer in a number of ways – some may apply for a particular venue/interest area and others may express a general desire to volunteer without being sure of which program area may suit. A volunteer may also respond to an advertised position available in the Shire through the website and notices in the paper.

Others may apply for volunteering opportunities to gain experience to assist their future employment options. Each volunteer will have different expectations of their role, and it is important this is understood so that the role meets the needs of both the volunteer and the Shire.

Volunteering opportunities will be advertised in ways that are accessible to all sections of the community.

The Shire volunteers can be over 10 years of age. Any volunteers under this age must be approved and have a parent or guardian sign an Insurance Waiver. Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 years must have a parent or guardian sign the Volunteer Registration Form.

Recruitment of Shire Volunteers will require the completion of:

- **Volunteer Application:** The application form will collect contact information, relevant personal details and may request additional information for the position, for example, WorkCover General Construction Induction Card, Working with Children Card, driver's licence, and health conditions depending on the role.
- **Volunteer Agreement:** Volunteers are required to sign the Shire Volunteer Agreement, acknowledging that they have read and understand their responsibilities and will comply with the relevant Shire policies and corporate requirements, including confidentiality.

All volunteer application forms and personal details will be held centrally and kept strictly confidential. Volunteers will need to notify their supervisor/coordinator of any change to their personal details.

Selection

Volunteers will be selected in a non-discriminatory manner in line with Shire's recruitment procedures, taking into account the person's ability and suitability to perform the duties of the volunteer role, as well as any site or program specific requirements.

All volunteer applications will be formally acknowledged. Unsuccessful volunteer applicants will be notified, and where appropriate, advised of any other suitable volunteer opportunities within the Shire or the community.

Informal Interview

Prior to any appointment, volunteers will have an informal interview with the Volunteer Supervisor or Coordinator of the program they may volunteer in, to explain the volunteer role and to assess whether the role is suitable for the applicant, where appropriate.

Background Check/Screening

For each role and program area the level of screening may differ, including whether a medical clearance, WorkCover General Construction Induction Card or Police Criminal Check is required. The applicant's consent will be required to check this information as part of the application process. Volunteers may have to submit personal and/or professional referees prior to acceptance as a Shire volunteer.

Working with Children Check

The Shire may require Volunteers to complete a Working with Children Check. The cost to apply for a Volunteer Working with Children Check can be reimbursed by the Shire, if the Shire requests it to be supplied.

The simple form can be completed online at www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/online-services (The Shire can assist where volunteers are unable to access online services).

When advised of clearance by WA Working with Children Check, the Volunteer must advise the Shire of the WWC number provided on the notification.

If an application is rejected, the Volunteer will not be able to work in a volunteer role with the Shire.

Induction

A Shire Induction and Orientation process will be undertaken to prepare volunteers for the role and to help them to quickly become effective members of the team. The Induction may be done on a one-on-one or in a

group and conducted by an authorised representative of the particular facility/workgroup or by Shire employees.

All volunteers must complete a formal induction prior to commencing duties. This includes completion of the Volunteer Induction & WHS Checklist (FCEO068), which confirms that the Volunteer Handbook, relevant WHS information, emergency procedures, and role-specific requirements have been explained and understood.

The formal Induction includes an:

- Induction Checklist and Work Health & Safety (WHS) Checklist
- Overview of the Volunteer Handbook, Application Form and relevant Shire policies and requirement, including components of the relevant Code of Conduct (or both if applicable).

Volunteers will be required to comply with this information and any other relevant policies and procedures to assist them in meeting their responsibilities for legal, ethical and appropriate conduct.

An Orientation will also be undertaken to welcome volunteers to the team, and to help them become familiar with the layout/site where they will be located. Supervisors/Coordinators may also go through any particular dress, behaviour and specific site/program requirements, where appropriate.

Induction information is supported by the Shire of Narrogin Work Health and Safety Induction Handbook.

6. Central Records and Database

A central Volunteer Database will be kept at the Shire to record the volunteers' personal details, role and location/s, training undertaken, emergency contact details, licences and permits held. Volunteer coordinators will have access to their area in the database to update details as required. When a volunteer ceases to volunteer for the Shire this will be registered on the database. Potential volunteers, not yet placed in a role, will also be registered on the database for supervisor/coordinator information.

Volunteer's personal details will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be released to any other person (Shire or external) without the prior approval of the volunteer or where the Shire is lawfully required to do so. The Volunteer Application Form will authorise use of the contact details for any Shire volunteer recognition event/activity.

7. Supervisor/Coordinator

Each Shire area with volunteers will also have a volunteer supervisor/coordinator with the responsibility of supporting and overseeing the volunteers and the associated processes and procedures.

The supervisor/coordinator will monitor their volunteers and have regular communication with them to identify any issues or training and support needs that would assist them to fulfil the role. This also provides opportunity for a volunteer to provide feedback and to raise issues.

Volunteers who have a complaint or grievance should first refer the matter to their supervisor/coordinator and both will work to resolve the issue. If this is not possible the matter can then be taken to the Manager responsible for the program area and if this does not reach a satisfactory outcome it can be taken to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

Training

The Shire will aim, where possible, to make provision for any additional identified training and development needs of volunteers and volunteer supervisors/coordinators, required for their role.

8. Procedure for Volunteer Resignation Notification

We understand that from time-to-time circumstances change and if at any time in the future you cannot fulfil your duties and volunteer or need to withdraw your volunteer services, please submit a written resignation email / letter. This letter should include the following information:

- The volunteer's full name and contact details.
- The specific volunteer role they are resigning from.
- The effective date of their resignation.

- The reason for their resignation (optional but encouraged).
- Any outstanding commitments or tasks they are willing to complete before their departure (if applicable).

The resignation email/ letter should be submitted to the immediate supervisor or coordinator responsible for overseeing the volunteer program. If feasible, the Shire of Narrogin may conduct an exit meeting with the resigning volunteer to gather feedback, discuss the reason for their resignation, and ensure a smooth transition. This meeting can help identify areas of improvement within the volunteer program.

The Shire of Narrogin will acknowledge the receipt of the resignation email / letter and confirm the effective date of the resignation. This acknowledgment should be provided in writing or via email.

Before the volunteer's departure date, they should work with their supervisor or coordinator to ensure a seamless handover of duties and any ongoing projects to another volunteer or Shire employee. This helps maintain continuity in the role.

If the volunteer has been provided with any Shire property, such as uniforms, equipment, or documents, they are required to return these items to the Shire before their departure.

9. Intention to Cease a Volunteer Role

A volunteer's service with the Shire can be discontinued if:

- The Shire receives notice from the volunteer of their decision to cease the role;
- The Shire considers the volunteer has acted contrary to the Volunteer Agreement, Handbook, relevant program guidelines and documentation and/or Shire Policy;
- The Shire determines that the volunteer role is no longer required; or
- The Shire determines that the volunteer does not have the capacity to undertake the role.

The volunteer and supervisor/coordinator will discuss a mutual finish date and try to allow for volunteer replacement if needed. When a volunteer leaves, they need to return any Shire property in their possession to their supervisor/coordinator.

10. Procedure for Termination of Volunteer Role

The following procedure applies in the unlikely event of performance management of a volunteer.

Preliminary Review

When a supervising employee identifies concerns about a volunteer's performance or behaviours that are not meeting the necessary requirements or expectations, they will initiate a preliminary review. This review may include gathering relevant documentation and evidence, speaking with other volunteers or employees who have interacted with the volunteer, and giving the volunteer an opportunity to provide their perspective.

Consultation with the Volunteer

The supervising employee will meet with the volunteer to discuss the identified issues and provide an opportunity for the volunteer to address their concerns or provide additional information. During this meeting, the volunteer should be made aware of the areas where improvement is needed and be given a chance to rectify the situation.

Improvement Plan

If, after the consultation, it is determined that the volunteer's performance or behaviours is still not meeting the required standards, the supervising employee should work with the volunteer to develop a clear improvement plan. The plan should outline specific actions, timelines, and expectations for improvement.

Monitoring Progress

The volunteer's progress will be monitored closely over the agreed-upon period in the improvement plan. Regular check-ins should occur to assess whether the volunteer is making the necessary improvements.

Decision to Terminate

If, after the improvement plan period, the volunteer has not made sufficient progress or if the issues persist and are deemed detrimental to the organisation, the supervising employee may make the difficult decision to terminate the volunteer's role.

Notice of Termination

The volunteer should be informed in writing of the decision to terminate their role. This notification should include the reasons for termination and the effective date of termination.

Appeal Mechanism

The volunteer should be made aware of their right to appeal the termination decision. They can appeal to the Shire's Executive Manager responsible for the volunteer area within a specified timeframe. The appeal process should be clearly outlined, and the volunteer should be provided with the advice to that effect to initiate the appeal.

Appeal Review

The Executive Manager responsible for the volunteer area will conduct a review of the appeal. They may consult with relevant parties and assess the fairness and appropriateness of the termination decision. The decision of the Executive Manager on the appeal is final.

Exit Process

Once the decision is finalised, the Shire will ensure a smooth exit process for the terminated volunteer. This may include returning any Shire property, addressing outstanding commitments, and expressing gratitude for the volunteer's past service.

Document the Process

Throughout the entire procedure, the Shire will document all communications, decisions, and actions taken, providing a clear and transparent record of the process.

This procedure ensures that any termination of a volunteer's role is handled fairly, with an opportunity for improvement, and with a built-in mechanism for the volunteer to appeal the decision if they choose to do so.

Summary Dismissal of a Volunteer

There may be rare and exceptional circumstances that could warrant summary dismissal of a volunteer. Summary dismissal is a severe action and would only be used in situations where immediate termination is necessary to protect the Shire, its employees, other volunteers, or the public. Some circumstances that may warrant summary dismissal include:

- **Criminal Offenses:** If a volunteer is charged or convicted of a serious criminal offense that could negatively impact the reputation of the Shire or pose a risk to others, such as theft, violence, or any offense related to children, it may necessitate summary dismissal.
- **Work, Health, or Safety Breaches:** A significant and immediate breach of Work, Health, or Safety requirements that puts the safety and well-being of others at risk may lead to summary dismissal. This includes actions that result in accidents, injuries, or potential harm to employees or the public.
- **Serious Violations of Code of Conduct:** A volunteer may be summarily dismissed if they engage in severe violations of the Shire's Code of Conduct, such as harassment, discrimination, or creating a hostile work environment.
- **Disruptive or Hostile Behaviour:** If a volunteer engages in disruptive, aggressive, or hostile behaviours towards fellow volunteers, employees, or members of the public, which cannot be immediately resolved through other means, summary dismissal may be necessary to maintain a safe and respectful environment.

- **Theft or Misappropriation:** Any incident of theft or misappropriation of Shire property or resources, including funds, materials, or information, may warrant immediate termination.
- **Serious Ethical Violations:** If a volunteer is found to be involved in a significant ethical violation that affects the Shire's integrity or public trust, summary dismissal may be considered.
- **Refusal to Comply with Legal or Safety Requirements:** A volunteer who consistently refuses to comply with legal requirements, safety protocols, or policies that put the Shire at risk may face summary dismissal.
- **Gross Negligence:** If a volunteer exhibits gross negligence in their duties that jeopardizes the Shire's operations or the safety of others, it may necessitate immediate dismissal.
- **Sabotage:** Deliberate acts of sabotage or vandalism to Shire property or systems may lead to summary dismissal.
- **Falsification of Records:** Any deliberate falsification of records, reports, or documentation that could harm the Shire's operations or integrity may result in summary dismissal.

11. Smoking

Smoking is not permitted by law in Shire buildings and vehicles. If you wish to smoke you must do so in Shire designated smoking areas or outside the premises and not within 10 metres of the entrance of the building. Waste products must be disposed of in appropriate bins.

12. Drug & Alcohol Policy

The Shire is a drug and alcohol free workplace, as such:

- All persons at the Shire workplaces and work sites are not to possess or consume alcohol whilst at work.
- All persons at the Shire workplaces and work sites are not to possess or take/use any illegal drugs and/or substances.
- Person taking prescription medication that may affect their work must notify their supervisor or designated officer prior to commencement of their role with the Shire.
- The Shire conducts random drug and alcohol testing. Volunteers on site will be subject to testing.

13. Attendance/Register

For legal purposes all volunteer hours of service are required to be recorded. Where volunteers do not work internally, each program will record attendance on behalf of the volunteer.

14. Motor Vehicle Use

Approval is required of the volunteer supervisor/coordinator prior to use of a Shire or private vehicle to undertake the volunteer role.

Using Shire Vehicles

A valid driving license needs to be produced and the supervisor/coordinator will arrange a familiarisation exercise with the vehicle. **The supervisor/coordinator will need to sight (annually) a current and valid classed driver's licence.**

All Shire prestart checks and logbook entries must be made by the designated driver.

A Volunteer Licence Registration Form must be completed prior to using Shire vehicles.

Using Private Vehicles

The volunteer must have and be able to produce if requested, the following:

- Current and valid classed drivers licence for the vehicle to be used.
- Proof of registration showing Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance.
- Proof of comprehensive insurance for the vehicle being used.

Volunteers must maintain road worthiness and cleanliness of their vehicle and drive responsibly. Spot checks will be made of private vehicles that are used regularly to perform a volunteer role.

If requested, the Shire can provide verification that a volunteer is using their vehicle for a Shire volunteer program.

Fines

All volunteers, whether driving their own vehicle or a Shire vehicle, will be responsible for their own fines. As part of the volunteer role, it is important to always adhere to parking rules and speed limits, all road rules and to drive safely.

15. Work Health & Safety

The Shire has a legislative requirement under the Work Health & Safety Act (WHS Act) 2020 to the health, safety and welfare at work of all the workers of the Shire, including volunteers.

A volunteer has the same work, health and safety duties as other Shire workers.

These include:

- Taking responsible care for their own health and safety.
- Taking responsible care for the health and safety of others.
- Complying with any reasonable instruction by the Shire.
- Cooperating with any reasonable policies and procedures of the Shire.

A copy of the Council's adopted WHS Policy is available [here](#).

16. Risk Assessment & Safety

A risk assessment will be undertaken on any project/program identifying any hazards or risks to the safety of the volunteers. Where the risk assessment identifies activities or work locations that could cause risks to the volunteers' safety then appropriate control measures must be documented and implemented.

Where required Personal Protective Equipment must be provided and used.

All risk assessments undertaken are to use the appropriate Shire safety forms which will be made available to the supervisor/coordinator. If any concerns or questions regarding risk assessments, contact Shire's WHS Support Officer for assistance.

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) shall be completed for any project/program that is deemed High Risk and will be readily available for the information of volunteers or workers.

Safe Operating Procedures (SoPs) are provided for all vehicles, plant and procedures as relevant. These must be read and followed including the wearing of any PPE outlined.

17. Reimbursement of Expenses

If a volunteer needs to incur an out of pocket expense, he/she must have prior approval from the supervisor/coordinator and the expense must be incurred during the performance of the role e.g. travel, vehicle. Note this does not include travel to and from home and the location of the volunteers' normal rostered duties. Receipts and/or records need to be kept and lodged with any claim for reimbursement.

18. Incident Reporting

All accidents, incidents, injuries and near misses must be reported to your Supervisor immediately. If you were to sustain an injury or near miss you will be required to complete an Accident, near miss form which your Supervisor will assist you with. It is important to report everything no matter how small so we can make improvements to minimise the risk of something similar reoccurring.

In the event of an emergency evacuation or evacuation drill, volunteers must follow all directions provided by emergency wardens or supervising coordinators or employees. Evacuation drills are documented in accordance with the Shire's WHS procedures.

19. Insurance Coverage

Volunteers are insured while undertaking duties authorised and directly related to the Shire. This cover does not extend to volunteers under the age of 10 years or over the age of 90 years. Any volunteer outside this age range must complete a waiver form.

Volunteer Workers Insurance provides cover for volunteers following accidental injury, disability or death whilst performing duties on behalf of the Shire, including approved direct travel during Shire voluntary work and while engaged in direct travel between their place of abode and the location where the volunteer undertakes their role. The volunteer supervisor/coordinator can supply further details of the level of insurance cover available upon request.

No cover is provided for those medical expenses covered by Medicare or other health benefit funds as it is illegal to offer this form of insurance unless the organisation is a registered medical fund provider.

All claims will be put through the supervisor/coordinator and will need to be assessed and verified by the Shire and/or the Insurer.

20. Future Employment

Voluntary work will not entitle a volunteer to an automatic progression to a paid position. Applications for recruitment to paid positions within the Shire will be considered on the basis of merit as per the Shire's normal recruitment process and procedures. Volunteers are only able to apply for externally advertised positions. If required, the Shire can supply a statement of service detailing the volunteer's role and the period of time they have been in that role.

21. Communication

Volunteers should have access to all information that the supervisor/coordinator feels is relevant and necessary for the satisfactory performance of the volunteer role. All policies and practices pertaining to volunteer's role and that will affect the performance of their duties will be fully documented and clearly communicated to the volunteer.

Volunteers are a part of the team and where appropriate, it would be valuable to include them in some of the facility and section specific communication e.g. meetings, team newsletter.

In accordance with the WHS Act, volunteers will be consulted with on matters affecting their health, safety and welfare.

22. Confidentiality

A confidentiality statement is included in the Volunteer Application Form. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information that they are exposed to while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves employees, volunteers, customers, or overall, Shire business.

Confidential information includes information which is oral, written or pictorial.

The volunteer's obligations in relation to confidential information continue after they cease volunteering with the Shire.

Shire Property

- All work of any type conducted by a volunteer belongs to the Shire and cannot be used or sold without the permission of the Shire.
- All confidential records, documents and other papers, together with copies or extracts thereof, made or acquired by the volunteer in the course of their work shall be the property of the Shire.
- All Shire property must be returned to the Shire on completion of volunteering.

23. Assistance to Undertake the Volunteer Role

The Shire aims to provide excellent customer service and exceed customer expectations. Volunteers should always be polite and helpful and assist the customer promptly where possible as first impressions are lasting. It is important that Shire employees and volunteers promote a positive image for the Shire.

Any volunteer who is unsure, at any time, of their role, a course of action, a customer request or how to deal with a customer, should seek help from their supervisor/coordinator. For a query that cannot be answered, the customer should be advised that the query is not one the volunteer is familiar with and that their name, contact number and details of the query will be referred to another employee who will be able to assist.

Volunteers should not make any action or statement which might affect or obligate the Shire and are to refer any such request to the supervisor/coordinator or Manager. Volunteers are only authorised to act as representatives of the Shire as outlined in their role statement.

Although volunteers are unpaid it is expected that volunteer relationships with customers will have the same boundaries as those of paid employees. It is normal for customers to sometimes want to establish friendships with their volunteer. Volunteers can be friendly and supportive but it is not appropriate to become “friends” with a customer or provide their personal details. Volunteers must notify their supervisor/coordinator if the nature of the relationship with a customer becomes difficult to manage.

24. Personal Presentation/Dress Code

In some program areas there may be a requirement for volunteers to wear a uniform and/or safety wear e.g. footwear, apparel. While carrying out volunteer work, volunteers are responsible for ensuring their personal presentation and dress is appropriate. That includes having neat casual clothing, and good personal hygiene and ensuring all health, safety and welfare considerations of the volunteer’s role are met. Clothing or accessories worn while volunteering should not cause offence to any customer, other volunteers or employee, for example, political or religious slogans, badges or symbols.

25. Contracted Supervisors/Coordinators

Any persons contracted by the Shire to supervise/coordinate a Shire volunteer program, either as an employee, or as a Volunteer Supervisor/Coordinator, will read, understand and abide by all relevant Shire policies and procedures and the Volunteering Handbook and program specific handbooks/guidelines and documentation.

Other Reference Material

- Please also refer to the specific handbook for your volunteer role as applicable.
- Please also refer to the specific “PD” for your role (if applicable)
- Volunteer Registration Form (FCEO067)
- Volunteer Agreement (FCEO066) / Volunteer Agreement
- Volunteer Induction & WHS Checklist (FCEO068)
- Work Health and Safety Manual
- Work Health and Safety Induction Handbook