

# VOLUNTEER

## GUIDE



**SINGLETON**  
COUNCIL



# SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Singleton Council is seeking expressions of interest from the community who may be interested in volunteering with Council.

There are numerous opportunities for volunteering in Singleton. Whether you want to make a hands-on contribution, gain new skills and experience, help others, share your knowledge, form new friendships or just stay active, Council may have just the right thing for you. This information pack has been designed for residents of Singleton interested in volunteering within our local community. Whether you are an experienced volunteer, new to volunteering, new to the world of work or new to Australia, this Information Pack will help you have a successful volunteering experience in Singleton.. The information presented here will help you understand the concept of volunteering, your rights as a volunteer and provides tips and advice on finding the right volunteering opportunity for you.

People engage in volunteerism for a great variety of reasons. The terms which define it and the form of its expression may vary in different languages and cultures, but the values which drive it are common and universal: 'a desire to contribute to the common good, out of free will and in a spirit of solidarity, without expectation or material reward'. Volunteering can be seen to represent many of the intangible aspects of our values, customs and patterns of life.

## WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER?

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain' (Volunteering Australia 2015).

The definition is accompanied by a set of explanatory notes providing clarity on what is in and what is out. Volunteering is a way for people to become involved in their community that is interesting, satisfying and fun. It can be formal or informal, full time or part time, occasional or even once off. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Singleton community.

Here at Singleton Council, our goals are to foster a dynamic, inclusive volunteering culture across our shire, celebrate the value of our volunteers and to be an innovative, proactive and leading organisation in volunteer management and engagement.



## SECTION 2

# WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Singleton Council is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for everyone in the workplace. We achieve this through our commitment to policies and systems, leadership, accountability, consultation, education, awareness and participation. Responsibility and accountability for workplace safety lies with all staff and volunteers.

In NSW, we are governed by the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. This act describes the general requirements necessary to ensure a safe and healthy workplace. Under the amendments in 2011, volunteers are deemed as “workers”, and as such are given the same duty of care.

Under this legislation, Council is referred to as a “Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking” (PCBU). A PCBU must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all its workers, including volunteers. If you carry out work for Council as a volunteer, then you are owed a duty of care under the WHS act. Council must provide, so far as reasonably practicable:

- safe work premises
- safe plant and substances
- safe work procedures
- protective equipment
- information, instruction, training and supervision
- adequate facilities

Volunteers have the same duties as “workers” in the workplace, being:

- to take reasonable care for your own health and safety
- to take reasonable care that your conduct does not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- to comply with any reasonable instruction that is given to you by council
- to cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety in the workplace

### VOLUNTEER INSURANCE

Volunteers receive the same legal protection as paid workers. Insurance policies are in place to cover Council's volunteers, and is provided for volunteers who are injured while engaging in authorised volunteer work. To be covered by our insurances, volunteers must:

- be aged between 10 - 90 years
- be registered with Council by completing an application form
- this policy does not extend to other family members or friends that assist you in your duties.
- if using your own car, you are required to have your own comprehensive car insurance policy. Council does not provide any compensation or insurance cover for property damage to motor vehicles
- If you sustain an injury whilst undertaking volunteer duties for Council, you may be covered by our insurance policy, but you first needs to claim from Medicare and your health fund (if applicable).

Remember, safety does not just happen, it is the result of good planning and a shared responsibility. Accidents can be prevented if you follow standard operating procedures.

So, you see any condition, practice or method that appears hazardous, report it to your supervisor immediately.

It is Council's sincere wish that every volunteer accepts safety rules willingly and with enthusiasm as an essential aid to their own safety, and for the safety of fellow volunteers, staff and the community.



## SECTION 3

# PRE-VOLUNTEERING CHECKS

A number of documents to prove your identity and credentials are required:

- Proof of identity - birth certificate, current drivers licence or current passport
- Qualifications
- Police check - you may be required to consent to a police check. If you decline to consent to a police check, Council may decline to engage your services as a volunteer. It is Council's discretion that determines whether a police check is required or not, and depends on the nature of the work involved.
- Working with Children Check - if your volunteering activities involved face-to-face interaction with children, Council is required to obtain your consent to a "Working with Children Check" (WWCC). If you decline to consent, Council may decline to engage your services as a volunteer. Under the Working with Children Act 2005, if you are engaged in child-related work and not exempt, you must have a WWCC even if you have undergone a police check..

## SECTION 4

# RESPONSIBILITIES

### VOLUNTEERS

- To adhere to Council's Code of Conduct
- To undertake Council's induction
- To participate in training and development as determined by the relevant program supervisor
- To perform duties as defined in Role Activity Statements
- To work within a team structure and accept direction and supervision from a designated supervisor
- To inform a supervisor if they are unable to attend their volunteer role at any time
- To attend to their duties punctually and perform tasks appropriately
- To work in a safe manner and not put themselves or others at risk
- To report any instances of corruption, maladministration or serious or substantial waste to the General Manager or Director/s. Alternatively, you can report any suspected instances of corruption to ICAC or maladministration to the Ombudsman
- Volunteers are required to wear a Singleton Council badge as deemed appropriate by supervisor

### COUNCIL

- Interview interested volunteers and, if deemed suitable, they will be placed in activities that match their skills, interest, knowledge and experience
- Provide clear definitions of duties, responsibilities and working environment
- Provide current Role Activity Statements that clearly sets out duties, requirements, authority, responsibilities and benefits of the role
- Provide relevant corporate and site inductions that clearly outline Council's operations, policies, and safety requirements
- Review the volunteer's role and level of satisfaction on an annual basis
- Provide ongoing support, communication, direction and appropriate training as deemed suitable for the role by the nominated supervisor
- Provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace

