



**CORANGAMITE
SHIRE**

Volunteer Handbook

Corangamite Shire
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Introduction and Welcome

Volunteering at Corangamite Shire enables people to participate in activities to achieve positive results for both their community and themselves.

This handbook has been developed for Volunteers supporting community life in the Corangamite Shire.

The handbook contains a wide range of information about roles and responsibilities as a volunteer and will help you understand and enjoy your time as a volunteer. Take some time to read and absorb the handbook and if necessary, seek further information from your Program Coordinator. They are here to help you get the most from your volunteering experience.

The Program Coordinator will be responsible for organising your activities and is an important person as your point of contact with the Corangamite Shire. The Program Coordinator will answer any questions you have and assist with any difficulties that may arise in regard to being a volunteer.

As in any organisation, you will meet a diversity of people undertaking a wide range of activities and meet a wide variety of personalities. It is this diversity that helps make our organisation a great place to be involved in and we look forward to your contribution in this regard.

Once again, thank you for your interest and commitment to volunteering.

Principles of Volunteering

The principles of volunteering are the result of national consultations with a wide range of stakeholders from not-for-profit organisations, volunteers and unions.

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- A Volunteer's work is unpaid
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in activities in their community
- Volunteering is a way for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality

General Information

The role as a volunteer with the Corangamite Shire is a vital contribution to the services and programs provided by Council. Volunteers' commitment of time and skills is greatly appreciated by the Corangamite Shire, staff and the community.

Volunteers are provided with information and guidelines that they need to be aware of and comply with. If circumstances arise that are not covered by these or other guidelines, volunteers should talk to their Program Coordinator.

Volunteers are able to withdraw their involvement as a volunteer at any time that suits them, we only ask that they advise their Program Coordinator to ensure minimal disruption to Council services.

If volunteers have any concerns about the activities or conduct of any aspect of the Corangamite Shire's business, its employees or other volunteers, these should be directed in the first instance to the Program Coordinator.

Prior to being accepted, volunteers must complete a registration form and, if required, consent to a Police Check and Working with Children Check. Volunteers are only permitted to commence as a volunteer after the Corangamite Shire receives their signed registration form and required checks.

Volunteers whose role involves direct contact with children will be required to complete the online childsafe training module. No volunteer will not be permitted to perform volunteer services without completing the training.

No payment for wages will be made for any volunteer activity undertaken, however expenses incurred by the volunteer relevant to volunteer tasks or programs will be reimbursed by Council where agreed to by the Program Coordinator.

The undertaking of volunteer activity does not create any right or expectation of future paid work.

An Officer of the Corangamite Shire is appointed to direct and supervise the activities and volunteers are expected to undertake all reasonable requests and directions given in order to perform tasks and activities by their appointed Program Coordinator.

Any plant, property or equipment that is provided for use by a volunteer is only to be used to undertake assigned tasks and remains the property of Corangamite Shire at all times. Volunteers are expected to maintain the security of Council property to minimise against potential loss.

Volunteers Rights & Responsibilities

Volunteer responsibilities include:

- being reliable, accountable, responsible and ethical
- respecting confidentiality, privacy and security of information
- exercising due care and security of Council property and assets
- undertaking training if required
- asking for assistance or support as required
- valuing, respecting and supporting other team members and customers
- being culturally sensitive and aware of the differing needs of people

- adhering to Corangamite Shire policies and procedures including performance standards
- presenting a neat and tidy appearance and wearing any recommended safety protection when required
- knowing and stating their limits
- providing feedback and communicating relevant and important information
- ensuring a safe working environment for other volunteers, paid staff and members of the community
- upholding Council's reputation and image
- only undertaking the tasks that they are registered to perform
- reporting any injury or incident to the volunteer coordinator immediately or as soon as possible.

Volunteers have the right to:

- know who their Program Coordinator is
- be engaged in accordance with equal opportunity legislation
- be recognised as a valuable team member
- be informed and supported in their role
- a safe working environment
- access to a grievance procedure
- have their confidential and personal information handled in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.
- a working environment free from harassment and discrimination
- be informed on matters which directly affect their voluntary role

Occupational Health & Safety

Corangamite Shire volunteers must observe the following broad rules:

1. Familiarise themselves with the safety requirements and procedures for the area in which they work.
2. Report all accidents, injuries or incidents immediately to their Program Coordinator.
3. Obey all safety instructions given for their own health and safety or for the health and safety of others.
4. Wear personal protective equipment as directed.
5. Safety devices and guards must not be removed or made inoperative. All defects must be immediately reported to their Program Coordinator.
6. Vehicles, plant and other equipment must not be started, moved or operated by an unauthorised person. Drivers must obey all road signs and speed limits. Plant or equipment requiring special licences, certificates or training must not be operated unless they are authorised to do so.
7. Familiarise themselves with the workplace layout, location of first aid facilities, emergency procedures and exits etc,

8. No person should use any item of plant or equipment, which is in any way damaged, or defective. They must report the above to their Program Coordinator for repair or replacement.
9. Never wander about any workplace site unless authorised to do so, or touch machinery or equipment which they are not authorised to.
10. No alcohol or illegal drugs are to be taken to any work site. Do not undertake voluntary work under the influence.
11. Participate in random drug and alcohol testing in accordance with the Drug and Alcohol Policy and Procedure

Equal Opportunity & Sexual Harassment

Corangamite Shire Council is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and to providing a workplace that is free of all forms of harassment and discrimination. All Council employees and volunteers have a responsibility to comply with their legal obligations in relation to equal opportunity, discrimination and occupational health and safety.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Council undertakes to ensure full compliance with its obligations under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*, this includes protecting the privacy of employees, volunteers and the general public.

Volunteers must keep all privileged information in relation to Council, other employees, volunteers and clients confidential, however information affecting the health and safety of clients, employees or others must be reported to Council.

Dealing with the Public

The majority of services and programs that the Corangamite Shire provides involve direct dealings with the community in various situations. The same applies to volunteers undertaking various activities within those services and programs.

The Corangamite Shire has procedures in place to assist volunteers in providing services to the public.

These include:

- Volunteers have the right to withdraw from contact with a member of the public at any time they feel uncomfortable with the situation. They do not have to explain to the member of the public their reasons for doing so but must immediately advise their Program Coordinator.
- Where a volunteer is subject to any level of verbal abuse, they are never to respond in kind but immediately advise the Program Coordinator, or in their absence, another member of staff in regard to the situation and any relevant circumstances leading up to the incident.
- In regard to the previously described situations the volunteer should, where possible, advise the member of the public that a staff member will be advised and will deal with the matter.
- Volunteers have a responsibility to themselves, the Corangamite Shire and the public that they do not engage in any activity, while in their capacity as a volunteer that brings

discredit on themselves, the Corangamite Shire or the program in which they are operating.

Volunteer Grievances & Complaints

It is possible that at some time during their involvement as a volunteer matters will arise that are of concern. Most of these are able to be resolved easily and informally by talking to the Program Coordinator.

The Program Coordinator would be expected to make some brief notes about the issue and ask for views on how the matter could be resolved. Volunteers may wish to put their concerns in writing, although this is not mandatory. The Program Coordinator is required to treat the matter with strict confidentiality.

If they wish, volunteers may ask someone to accompany them to the meeting with the Program Coordinator as an independent observer.

If the matter remains unresolved, it would be expected that the Program Coordinator institute any measures that need to be taken to resolve the matter.

If they are not satisfied with the outcome, volunteers will need to address their concerns in writing to the Human Resource Department who will then investigate the matter.

Volunteers will be advised of the progress and outcome of the investigation of their concern, however where it is appropriate for Corangamite Shire to maintain confidentiality in regard to any aspects of its investigation, they will not be given details of information where personal or other sensitive information is concerned.

Unsatisfactory Performance

If a volunteer's work is not up to standard, contravenes the Employee Code of Conduct or places another person at risk then:

- The Coordinator will discuss the issue with the volunteer and establish the appropriate standard of conduct expected
- If there is no improvement or there are deliberate or negligent acts that contravene the Employee Code of Conduct, misconduct or actions or statements that discredit Council or other similar incidents, the volunteer arrangement will be terminated immediately.

Gifts

It is against Council policy to accept gifts from any person or organisation for any duties performed on behalf of Council, therefore volunteers should not accept any gifts in relation to their volunteering duties. If it is impossible to refuse a gift or the refusal would cause offence, the gift must be declared to the CEO's office. The Coordinator will provide volunteers with a gift declaration form.

This does not apply to gifts or hospitality that the Council may provide to volunteers in recognition of their service.

Insurance Information

- Volunteers who are registered with Corangamite Shire Council are covered within the terms and conditions of the Council's Public Liability Insurance Policy for third party personal injury or damage to property caused by an occurrence in connection with the business of Council.

- Council maintains limited Personal Accident Insurance for volunteers who are registered with Corangamite Shire Council. **It is important to note that this policy does not cover medical expenses resulting from injury or illness sustained while serving as a volunteer.** Any claims will be subject to the terms and conditions of this insurance policy. Council retains ownership of the policy and discretion in relation to any benefits payable under this policy.
- The above insurance policies do not cover volunteers while they are driving their own vehicles. Therefore, Council strongly recommends that all volunteer staff using private vehicles are covered by their own comprehensive insurance policy.
- Volunteers should note that the Council does not pay insurance costs for private vehicles. Corangamite Shire Council will not cover costs incurred by volunteers driving uninsured vehicles.
- If volunteers wish to take assistants (eg: friends or relatives) to assist with volunteer duties, these individuals must also be registered with Corangamite Shire Council to be covered by Public Liability Insurance
- Volunteer parents who take children along whilst the parents participate in volunteer activities, must be prepared to do so at their own risk.
- Please contact the Program Coordinator immediately should any of the following incidents occur while are volunteering for Council:
 - Any injuries are sustained
 - Any incident occurs in which injury or property damage occurs to other parties (ie: third parties)

Motor Vehicles & Licences

Only volunteers with appropriate licences will be permitted to drive or operate Corangamite Shire vehicles, plant or equipment.

Before volunteers can drive or operate any vehicle or item of plant or equipment on behalf of Corangamite Shire, they will be required to provide proof of appropriate licences.

The Corangamite Shire will not pay or reimburse the cost of retaining or renewing any licence except in the case where the Corangamite Shire asks, and a Volunteer offers, to obtain a specific licence to ensure the provision of a particular service or program (eg: Community Bus Driver).

It is the volunteers' responsibility to ensure the roadworthiness and registration of their own motor vehicle or any vehicle (other than a Corangamite Shire owned vehicle) that they propose to use as part of their involvement in the volunteer program.

If the Program Coordinator suspects that a motor vehicle is not roadworthy or in any other way unsafe for use within the volunteer program, they will advise the volunteer that it is not to be used in the program.

The laws relating to motor vehicle offences and criminal offences involving motor vehicles place a strong emphasis on the driver of the vehicle being responsible for complying with all laws relating to the operation of and driving of the motor vehicle. Any fines incurred or driving or other offences committed are the sole responsibility of the driver of the vehicle. This applies where volunteers drive their own or a Corangamite Shire vehicle.

Volunteers will be reimbursed for using their own motor vehicle when asked to do so at the Program Coordinator's request to undertake activities associated with the volunteer program. The rate of reimbursement will be that of the ATO cents per kilometre rate.

Reimbursement will not apply for travel to and from the location at which volunteers report to undertake their involvement in the program.

Volunteers must submit a receipt and written claim that must be signed and approved by the Program Coordinator for reimbursements.

If volunteers drive a motor vehicle as part of their involvement in the volunteer program and they lose their licence, they must notify your Program Coordinator so they can be re-assigned to other voluntary activities where possible.