



## **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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## **1. Introduction**

Mareeba Shire Council acknowledges and values the significant contribution that volunteers make to the Mareeba Shire community. Council recognises that people volunteer for a range of different reasons and volunteers enhance the quality of life and community spirit in their regions.

Volunteers work across a wide variety of function areas within Council, and without the contribution of volunteers Council could not deliver these services. Council is committed to making the volunteer experience a mutually rewarding, enjoyable and enriching one for all involved.

Mareeba Shire Council's Volunteer Handbook is for the use of volunteers and Council staff. It offers guidance on a range of issues and procedures to provide consistency across the organisation and ensure the volunteer program meets the needs of the volunteers and the community.

This handbook endeavours to be comprehensive, but situations not covered by this handbook will be handled by the specific location.

## **2. Volunteering with Mareeba Shire Council**

Mareeba Shire Council's Volunteer Policy outlines a consistent approach to the engagement and management of volunteers, and the commitment, obligations and expectations of Council.

The Policy aims to provide opportunities for Mareeba Shire residents to contribute to the community by participating in meaningful unpaid work as volunteers in a Mareeba Shire Council volunteer program.

Volunteers make an important contribution within several areas across Council including advisory committees, tourism and heritage, arts and culture, libraries, community services, events, sport and recreation. Additional information relating specifically to volunteering in these areas will be provided to volunteers separately.

Many volunteer roles exist within Council for people with a range of skills, experience and interests. Further information on volunteer opportunities within these different areas of Council is available on Council's website [www.msc.qld.gov.au](http://www.msc.qld.gov.au) or by contacting Council's Customer Service line on 1300 308 461 and speaking to the appropriate staff member.

Applications from volunteers are welcome at any time throughout the year.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

Council's responsibilities to volunteers

- Ensure that volunteers are covered by appropriate Council insurance policy/s.
- To treat each volunteer with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- To receive guidance and support from the staff within each work area.
- To provide volunteers with appropriate training, regular evaluation and recognition.
- To provide a safe work environment.
- To provide opportunities for volunteer input.
- Volunteers will not be expected to undertake work that they have not agreed to.
- Ensure that volunteers work under the supervision of paid staff and/or appointed coordinators.
- Assess volunteer skills to match tasks with expectations, interests and time commitments.
- Provide access to all relevant Council Policies and Procedures including Council's Code of Conduct.

- Provide access to grievance procedures.
- Ensure the work of volunteer staff complements but does not replace the work of paid staff
- If required, ensure that volunteers comply with the Blue Card requirements of the Commission for Children and Young People, police check, or similar requirements.

#### Responsibilities of volunteers

- Participate in induction and ongoing training as appropriate.
- Operate in accordance with relevant Council Policies and Procedures including but not limited to, the Employee Code of Conduct, Workplace Health and Safety requirements and functional area operating procedures.
- To carry out conscientious work performance with punctuality and reliability.
- To treat visitors and members of the public with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- To treat fellow volunteers and staff members with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- To contribute positively to the organisation.
- Operate under the directive of Council personnel to achieve the required outcomes.
- Not to represent themselves as a paid staff member of Council.
- Report any unsafe work environment.
- Report any injury or damage to themselves or a third party.

## **4. What can you expect as a Volunteer?**

### **4.1 Volunteer/Staff Relations**

The volunteer's supervisor will ensure that volunteers are not expected to undertake roles more properly carried out by paid staff. Volunteers will not be expected to:

- Participate in a program or service without direct access to, or support from, the designated supervisor.
- Provide advice on behalf of Mareeba Shire Council.
- Undertake work where they do not feel competent to do so.

Volunteers will not be permitted to:

- Commit to the provision of Mareeba Shire Council funds or services.
- Resolve complaints about a service or program.
- Determine the safe method of work where a standard operating procedure does not exist.

All Council volunteers will be designated a supervisor who is directly responsible for their support and wellbeing, ensuring they have received adequate training to undertake their role and provide opportunities for regular reviews and feedback. It is the responsibility of Mareeba Shire Council to ensure volunteer supervisors have appropriate skills and are provided with ongoing training for the role.

Volunteers should not expect that their involvement as a volunteer will provide them with an opportunity or preference in regard to paid employment with Mareeba Shire Council.

### **4.2 Confidentiality**

All personal information regarding volunteers participating in the volunteer program with Mareeba Shire Council is treated in the strictest of confidence, and access to this information restricted to those staff involved in the volunteer program on an absolute need-to-know basis. Information about volunteers, such as contact details, will not be given out without the permission of the volunteer. Where it is helpful to the management of that program to make available information such as phone numbers to other members of the program, prior agreement will be sought.

Volunteers are required to respect the confidentiality of Council's information and shall not disclose any confidential information for any reason without the authority to do so.

Volunteers shall not disclose private or personal information as defined in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

#### **4.3 Rosters and Attendance**

All volunteers will be provided, where possible, with a planned roster in accordance with their preferred times of attendance within the scope of the service in which they are participating. Where the volunteer prefers to participate at the same time(s) and day(s) each week they will be rostered to do so where this is practical.

All supervisors will ensure that volunteers record the time and duration of each attendance. This record will be checked regularly by the supervisor. The attendance register is an important record in circumstances where insurance or liability claims are made.

It is acknowledged that volunteers may be absent from time to time for a variety of reasons. When possible, volunteers should give adequate notice to their supervisor so alternative arrangements can be made.

#### **4.4 Training and Development**

Mareeba Shire Council is committed to providing the community with the best possible service delivery. To achieve this requires a high level of commitment, motivation, and competence from all those who provide that service, including volunteers.

It is essential that volunteers participate in training and this will be provided as and when required.

Suggestions and feedback on training is always welcome.

#### **4.5 Review Procedures**

Volunteers may be asked to provide feedback on their placement from time to time.

### **5. Recruitment**

#### **5.1 Application**

Volunteers may find out about volunteer opportunities within Council in a number of ways, and enquiries are always welcome. From time to time, specific opportunities may be advertised in the local media, through libraries and other community centres, or on Council's website, otherwise applications are welcome at any time.

Members of Council's advisory committees apply by nomination form and are appointed by resolution of the Council.

All new volunteers are required to complete Council's volunteer application form (*Appendix 1*). All volunteer applications will be treated as strictly confidential. All applications will be acknowledged and where no suitable opening is available, unsuccessful applicants will be advised verbally.

Applications to volunteer will be accepted at the absolute discretion of Council and considered in line with the needs of the organisation. Correspondence relating to these matters will not be entered into.

Applicants will be required to attend an informal interview with the relevant Council supervisor or other designated person. Where necessary, a reference check, police check, blue card application or other information may be sought. Where applications are not suitable, the applicant will be advised.

### **5.2 Age Eligibility**

Volunteers of all ages are welcome to apply depending on the suitability of the particular role. Persons under the age of 18 must have parental/guardian consent. Persons under the age of 15 must also be in the care of a responsible adult other than the Council's designated volunteer co-ordinator while participating in the volunteer program. Volunteers over the age of 75 may volunteer but will be advised of the specific insurance conditions that apply.

### **5.3 Volunteer Register**

All successful volunteer applicants will be registered with the relevant section within Council and when a volunteer has been assessed as suitable for inclusion in the volunteer program, all documentation will be maintained by the appropriate section. Details will include:

- Contact details (including emergency contacts);
- Roles in which the volunteer is involved;
- Availability and roster arrangements;
- Any special health issues, skills and interests;
- Training undertaken.

All records kept will be treated as confidential with access restricted to staff on a strict need-to-know basis.

## **6. Induction**

All volunteers will be given an induction at the commencement of their role by the relevant supervisor. This will include a site-specific induction and orientation, completion of Council's Workplace Health and Safety induction checklist, and an introduction to members of the team. The induction will also include covering aspects of the Volunteer Handbook, Code of Conduct, and any specific requirements such as equipment and procedures. Volunteers will be asked to sign:

- Volunteer Agreement;
- Site Induction Form (Contractor/Volunteer/Work Experience Student);
- Take 5 Paper - Volunteers and the Employee Code of Conduct;

to confirm their willingness to abide by Council's policies and commit to the requirements of the position including dress, training and reliability.

### **6.1 Job Description**

The functions the volunteer will be undertaking will be clearly explained. This is to ensure that everyone understands their respective responsibilities.

### **6.2 Badges and Identification**

If required, generic MSC badges may be provided for identification when volunteering.

## **7. Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S)**

The responsibility for working safely is a dual responsibility between Mareeba Shire Council and those who act on its behalf.

Mareeba Shire Council has a responsibility under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to provide a safe work environment and systems of work. Where hazards are identified, the risk they pose must be evaluated and appropriate control measures put in place to eliminate or minimise the risk.

Volunteers undertaking a task on behalf of Mareeba Shire Council have a responsibility to work in a safe manner to ensure that their health and that of all other persons is not put at risk.

It is a requirement that as part of their induction each volunteer is advised of the respective responsibilities of both the employer and employee and complete the Mareeba Shire Council's Volunteer WH&S Induction checklist. It is equally important that volunteers are trained in safe work practices and advised of the local area procedures in emergencies. Where volunteers undertake the use of specialised equipment as part of their duties, they will be provided with necessary training. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to advise HR of all WH&S training undertaken by volunteers.

## **8. Code of Conduct**

Council's Code of Conduct applies to all individuals acting for or on behalf of Council, and applies equally to staff, volunteers, and contractors. Volunteers will be provided with access to a copy of the Code during their induction and training.

Mareeba Shire Council is an equal Opportunities employer and complies with the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 and Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Act 1992.

### **8.1 Social Media.**

Volunteers should not comment on Council business publicly, including on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.

We must all treat others with trust, respect, honesty, fairness, sensitivity and dignity. This responsibility extends to work related activities outside normal working hours and to postings on social media sites and other internet forums that could be accessed by other volunteer/staff members.

### **8.2 Personal Presentation**

At all times, volunteers are responsible for ensuring personal presentation and dress is appropriate to the role, including good personal hygiene and health and safety considerations. Volunteers should not cause offence to colleagues or members of the public through inappropriate dress or accessories.

Depending on the role or location, if required, volunteers may be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), or required to wear a uniform. Where a uniform or PPE is provided, volunteers are expected to always wear them when volunteering. All PPE/uniforms are to be returned on cessation of volunteer's role with Council.

### **8.3 Reimbursement of Expenses**

In the unlikely event a volunteer incurs costs, approval must be sought before incurring the expenses for which they later seek to be reimbursed. Volunteers will be required to provide relevant tax invoices/receipts to their supervisor and need to be aware that reimbursement may not be possible on the spot.

## **9. Working with the Public**

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



Mareeba Shire Council has procedures in place to assist volunteers in providing these services to the public. These include:

- If required, volunteers will undergo training in customer service where this is applicable to the role.
- In difficult situations volunteers should withdraw and immediately advise the supervisor, or, in their absence, another member of staff.
- Volunteers have a responsibility to themselves, Mareeba Shire Council and the public not to engage in any activity, while in their capacity as a volunteer that brings discredit on themselves, Council or the program in which they are operating.

Some program areas involve volunteers working directly with clients of Council, and in these circumstances, additional procedures are in place to protect the interests of the volunteer, staff and the client. These include:

- Always follow the directives from the supervisor.
- Do not reveal any private or confidential information about a client.
- Do not offer or impose personal values or beliefs on clients.
- Where a volunteer has a concern about the personal welfare of a client they should advise their supervisor immediately.
- The seeking or acceptance of gifts from clients for personal use is not permitted. However, where the refusal of a small gift, genuinely offered, would cause affront to the donor, acceptance is permitted but the supervisor should be notified.
- Under no circumstances should a volunteer provide their own personal details to a client. Should a client seek a meeting with a volunteer in their home or some other private situation, the volunteer should advise their supervisor.
- If a volunteer feels uncomfortable dealing with a particular client, group of clients or their involvement with a particular service or program, they should notify their supervisor immediately.

## **10. Insurance**

As a volunteer, you are not covered for Workers Compensation Insurance the same as paid employees, however, Council does have a Volunteers Accident Insurance Policy in place to cover injuries sustained while performing your volunteer duties.

Note, however, that it is not an open-ended policy and there are limits to the benefits that can be claimed under the policy. A copy of the policy is available at each workplace and volunteers should take the time to read the policy and familiarise themselves with its contents.

If there is difficulty in understanding the policy or what is covered by the policy, please consult with Council's Insurance officer who is based in the Council's Mareeba office.

In the event of an accident requiring hospitalisation, it is expected that the injured person will be admitted as a public patient, the cost of which is met by the public health system. Note that Council's policy does not cover the cost of hospitalisation.

If an injured person chose to be admitted to hospital as a private patient, they would need to ensure that they have private health insurance with private hospital cover. Accounts issued by a hospital for private hospital accommodation need to be referred to the relevant private health insurer (eg Bupa, Medibank Private), not to Council.

In the event of any accident or injury, full details including medical reports, doctor's certificates, accounts etc need to be provided to Council's Insurance officer who will complete and lodge a claim with Council's insurer.

The insurer may request further information in relation to a claim and in this regard may contact either Council or the injured person direct.

If contacted direct by the insurer and you have difficulty providing the requested information or understanding what is required of you, please contact Council's Insurance officer who will assist you with the claim.

If you do not receive advice from the insurer within a reasonable time frame as to the status of your claim, please contact the Insurance officer who will follow the matter up on your behalf.

Note that unless Council is advised of any delays or issues with a claim, it will assume that the matter is progressing satisfactorily.

## **11. Council Assets**

### **11.1 Use of Council's Motor Vehicle Use**

Volunteers are required to have an appropriate licence to be permitted to drive or operate any Mareeba Shire Council vehicle, plant or equipment, or to use their own vehicle on behalf of Council. Before permitting a volunteer to drive any vehicle their supervisor will establish that the volunteer has the appropriate licence and that a current copy has been provided to Council.

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

Any fines incurred, or driving or other offences committed, are the sole responsibility of the driver of the vehicle, whether the volunteer is driving a privately owned or a Council vehicle.

In the unlikely event a volunteer incurs costs through use of their own vehicle, approval must be sought before incurring the expenses for which they seek to be reimbursed. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed for travel between home and the volunteer location.

Volunteers are *not* covered by Mareeba Shire Council's vehicle insurance policy in the event of an accident whilst using their private vehicle for approved activities. It is therefore the volunteer's responsibility to ensure they have adequate insurance cover.

Where a volunteer who drives a motor vehicle as part of their involvement in the Mareeba Shire Council's Volunteer Program loses their licence, they must notify their supervisor.

### **11.2 Use of Council Equipment**

Where necessary, volunteers may be given use of Mareeba Shire Council's equipment such as a computer or telephone. Except in emergency situations, these are only for use in relation to the activity undertaken on behalf of Mareeba Shire Council and are not for private use.

## **12. Volunteer Grievance/Complaints Procedure**

It is possible that at some time during their involvement as a volunteer, matters will arise that are of concern to them. Most of these will be easily resolved by talking informally to their supervisor. Where this is not possible, a formal procedure is in place.

Unless the issue relates to their supervisor, the volunteer should discuss the matter with their supervisor in the first instance. The supervisor will make brief notes about the issue and ask the volunteer their views on how the matter could be resolved. The volunteer may wish to put their concerns in writing, although this is not essential. The supervisor is required to treat the matter with the utmost confidentiality. If the supervisor feels it necessary, they may involve the Section Co-ordinator or Manager in the matter.

A volunteer may ask someone to accompany them to the meeting with their supervisor and/or Section Co-ordinator or Manager. This could be another volunteer, a friend, or a representative from the Human Resources Unit of Mareeba Shire Council to attend as an independent observer. Any agreed course of action as a result of this meeting should be put in place as quickly as possible to resolve any ongoing grievance.

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome from their meeting, they should address their concerns in writing to the Section Co-ordinator and or Manager or Council's Human Resources department, who will then investigate and act as necessary.

The volunteer will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation, except where personal or other sensitive information is concerned which requires confidentiality.

It should be understood that, as volunteers with Mareeba Shire Council (without limiting their personal rights), Council expects volunteers to respect its decisions even though they may have personal disagreement with them.

### ***13. Suggestions and Feedback***

Council is continually looking to improve and refine the volunteer program and all suggestions about this Handbook, or the procedures contained within it should be directed to the appropriate staff member within Council.

### ***14. Ceasing to Volunteer/Termination***

Volunteers can withdraw their involvement at any time. Where possible reasonable notice should be given to their supervisor to ensure alternative arrangements can be made to continue to provide the service.

Where the services of the volunteer are no longer required, they will be advised promptly and courteously by the supervisor. This can occur at any time at the discretion of Council.

# Volunteer Application Form

**Collection Notice**

Mareeba Shire Council is collecting your personal information for the purpose of assessing and processing this volunteer application and administering the volunteer program. Your information will not be used for any other purpose and will not be disclosed to any other person or entity without your express consent or where such disclosure is required by law.

<b>Applicant Details</b>			
Name:			
Address:			
Postal address:		Date of birth:	
Phone number:		Mobile number:	
Email address:			
Have you previously volunteered with MSC?	Yes    No	Are you volunteering as part of Centrelink's requirements?	Yes    No
Do you hold a current driver's licence?	Yes    No	If required, do you agree to undergo a police check?	Yes    No
Do you hold a current Blue Card?	Yes    No	If yes, please provide card number and expiry date:	
<b>Emergency contact details:</b>			
<i>This form requires the personal information of an individual you have nominated as your emergency contact. Under Mareeba Shire Council's privacy obligations, you are required to obtain the consent of the nominated individual for the collection of their personal information in this form.</i>			
Name:			
Address:			
Contact Number(s):		Relationship:	
<b>Employment status:</b> (tick more than one if applicable)			
Full time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Studying	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Volunteer areas:</b> (tick more than one area of interest if applicable)			
Library	<input type="checkbox"/>	Events	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:			
<b>Availability and Preferred Location:</b> (please indicate when and where you are available)			
Day(s):			
Time(s) e.g. am, pm:			
Location(s):			

# Volunteer Application Form

**Why would you like to volunteer?**

**Health and fitness:** *(please provide details of any disabilities, allergies or other health issues we should be aware of)*

**Skills and abilities:** *(include information even if it may not seem relevant, you never know what might be useful)*

Formal qualifications		Languages		Business/admin	
Computer skills		First Aid		Cash handling	
Public speaking		Hospitality		Marketing	
Trades		Teaching		Research	
The Arts		Museums		Tourism	
Events		Libraries		Gardening	

Other:

**Additional Comments:**

**Applicant signature:**

Signed:

Date:

**If Applicant is under the age of 18 parental/guardian consent:**

Name:

Signed:

Date:

**Office use only**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview date: \_\_\_\_\_ Induction date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

Signed: