



Work Experience and Volunteer Policy (Internal)

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1. POLICY INTENT

Mareeba Shire Council (Council) is approached from time to time by individuals offering their services in either a voluntary or work experience capacity or as a participant in the 'work for the dole' program. Council supports work experience students, 'work for the dole' participants and the use of volunteers as part of its commitment to involvement with the community. This commitment includes providing employment pathways for local students and providing employment opportunities for disadvantaged community members.

The purpose of this policy and associated documents is to identify the principles and process for accepting volunteers and detailing the obligations and expectations of Council. It is intended to ensure that the work performed by volunteers working at Council is safe, meaningful and provides opportunities for learning and professional development.

2. SCOPE

This Policy is binding on each Council employee, whether permanent, temporary, casual or volunteer and may also extend to others such as students on work experience, work for the dole participants, contractors, subcontractors and committee members who are or who may be perceived to be acting on Council's behalf.

The Policy is not intended to create or confer any entitlement on an employee or volunteer. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. Any entitlement conferred or payments made under this Policy are conferred or made at the absolute discretion of Council.

The Council may at its sole discretion, on a case by case basis, alter the manner in which any procedure associated with this policy is conducted to ensure it suits the particular circumstances of the case.

3. DEFINITIONS

'Volunteer' refers to any individual who performs a service for and directly related to the business of Council, without the expectation of monetary or material compensation. In this policy, unless otherwise stated, the term *'volunteer'* includes students on work experience and 'work for the dole' participants.

'Community volunteer' refers to people who volunteer their time to support community activities in areas such as libraries, visitor information centres, special events (such as Anzac Day or Carols in the Park) or serve as members of Council committees and boards.

'Work experience placement' refers to a formal work experience arrangement that forms part of an education or training course (secondary or tertiary students).

'Community project placement' refers to a work experience arrangement through a community based organisation which works with disadvantaged community members, such as the 'work for the dole' program.

'Nominated supervisor' refers to the person who has been nominated by Council to provide the primary supervision to the volunteer or a person nominated by a community based organisation (who is not an employee of Council) to provide the primary supervision to the volunteer.

4. BACKGROUND

Council acknowledges and values the significant contribution that volunteers make to our community and recognises that the work they undertake contributes to improving the quality of life and the environment throughout Mareeba Shire.

Volunteering can improve health, lower stress, provide a connection to the community, reduce social isolation and raise self-esteem. Volunteering can also provide an opportunity to develop new skills or enhance existing ones and improve career prospects. On a broader level, volunteering can contribute to the wellbeing and unity of a community.

Volunteer placements also provide an opportunity to promote Local Government and to attract applicants for future positions within Council or the broader Local Government Sector.

5. COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Specific provisions relate to the engagement of community volunteers. Although the provisions of this policy and related documents may apply to community volunteers in a general context, please refer to the Community Volunteer Policy and Handbook for detailed provisions relating to people who volunteer their time to support community activities in areas such as libraries, visitor information centres, special events (e.g. Anzac Day or Carols in the Park) or serve as members of Council committees and boards.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

6.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Council will only provide volunteer or work experience opportunities where the genuine needs of the person can be met. The placement should provide meaningful duties and opportunities to observe duties that are relevant to the study or career aspirations of the applicant. All volunteers will be treated with respect and gratitude for their contribution.

Volunteers will not be engaged to replace paid staff members.

Volunteer and work experience opportunities will be limited to positions that:

- pose low-risk to health and safety, and
- operate within ordinary working hours.

Volunteers are required to abide by all relevant Council policies and procedures, including but not limited to, the Employee Code of Conduct and Workplace Health and Safety requirements.

Adequate induction, orientation, and support will be provided to enable work experience students or volunteers to carry out their prescribed duties. If the individual is working with machinery or equipment, they must be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) and be supervised by a trained staff member.

The nominated supervisor is responsible for explaining all relevant policies and procedures that apply to the student or volunteer.

In normal circumstances, a voluntary placement will be offered for a defined period of time or the period of a project, activity or event.

Any placement made under this policy is required to meet the unpaid work experience or volunteering requirements for lawful unpaid work in Queensland.

6.2 WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

Council may offer work experience to students enrolled in a course of study in an educational or other institution, provided that the students can provide evidence that the institution agrees to cover the students for insurance purposes while they are at Council.

Council aims to improve the future career prospects of students on work experience by providing them with:

- Improved understanding of the workplace environment and what employers expect.
- The opportunity to explore jobs or industries that interest them to inform future career and study choices.
- The opportunity to develop their skills, both technical and professional (e.g. teamwork and punctuality). These can be very useful as examples of their work in future job applications.
- A network of contacts for personal reference, future study and career advice.

6.3 COMMUNITY PROJECT PLACEMENTS

The Council may work with community based organisations to provide meaningful work experience and skills for disadvantaged community members. These placements, which may form part of a 'work for the dole' or disability support program, are designed as an opportunity for participants to gain an understanding of the requirements of the particular occupational area in which they may wish to work.

6.4 TERMINATION OF PLACEMENT

A voluntary placement can be terminated at the discretion of Council at any time without notice or cause.

7. REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Manager Organisational Development to monitor the adequacy of this policy and recommend appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every two years or as required by Council.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

200-HRR Work Experience and Volunteer Procedure
200-HRF Work Experience Expression of Interest
201-HRF Work Experience Placement Approval
202-HRF Confidentiality Agreement - Work Experience
Employee Code of Conduct
Who Needs a Blue Card (DET)