

Volunteer Rights

The rights of volunteers are addressed by a range of legislation but volunteers are not covered by awards or work-place agreements.

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- work in a healthy and safe environment
- be adequately covered by insurance
- be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- have a job description and agreed working hours
- have access to a grievance procedure
- be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are working
- be provided with orientation to the organisation
- be provided with sufficient training to do your job
- be given a copy of the organisations volunteer policy and any other policy that affects your work
- be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- not fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- not do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
- have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988

Volunteer Responsibilities

While you might not have a formal contract with the organisation, just as the organisation must ensure your rights, you must fulfil your responsibilities to the organisation. This will involve you in:

- following policies and procedures of the organisation such as: accounting for finances, recording information, protecting privacy, following anti-harassment or grievance procedures
- being loyal to the organisation
- accepting direction
- respecting and maintaining privacy and confidentiality
- maintaining safe work practices in accordance with health and safety
- speaking up regarding important issues or concerns regarding regulations that apply to the organisation
- carrying out your agreed duties in the agreed time frame
- being dependable and reliable
- working the hours agreed
- being accountable and accepting evaluation and feedback
- complying with the legal and organisational requirements of your volunteer position

Definitions and Principles of Volunteering

Principles of Volunteering

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer;
- Volunteer work is unpaid;
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice;
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances;
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community;
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs;
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only;
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work;
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers;
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others; and
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

Volunteer Checklist:

Check that:

- The organisation is a not for profit;
- The purpose of the organisation matches your own values and beliefs;
- The organisation carries volunteer insurance;
- Your role is clear and specific;
- The organisation can provide you with written information about its purpose and activities; and
- You are satisfied that the funds of the organisation are expended in accordance with its mission.