

Nillumbik Volunteer Handbook and Code of Conduct





Acknowledgement of traditional owners Nillumbik Shire Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of Land known today as Nillumbik. We pay respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

Contents

Welcome and purpose of this handbook	2	Induction	8
National Standards for volunteer involvement	3	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	10
Recognition	4	Reporting	10
What you can expect when volunteering at Council	6	Feedback and raising concerns	10
What Council asks of its volunteers	6	Fitness to perform the role	10
Role description	6	Emergency Response	11
Better Impact Volunteer Management Database	7	Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination	11
		Bullying and Harassment	11
		Grievance Procedures	12
		Media and Social Media Policy	12
		Child Safe Standards	12
		Interacting with children and young people and the Child Safe Standards	12
		Privacy and Confidentiality	13
		Insurance	14
		Public Liability Insurance	14
		Personal Accident Insurance	14
		Gifts, benefits and hospitality	14
		Fraud and Corruption	15
		Service Excellence Charter	15
		Code of Conduct	16
		Respect	16
		Accountability	17
		Integrity	17
		Training	18
		Motor vehicles and fuel reimbursement	20
		Leaving your volunteer role	20

If you require the Volunteer Handbook in an alternative format, please contact 9433 3111 or email volunteer@nillumbik.vic.gov.au



Welcome and purpose of this handbook

This handbook will provide you with the information to help you feel supported in undertaking your volunteer role at Nillumbik Shire Council.

The success of our Volunteering Program is dependent on the good relationship between Council and its volunteers. Council has a duty of care to all of its volunteers.

Likewise, volunteers also have a responsibility towards the organisation.

Information contained in this handbook explains these rights and responsibilities.

Please take the time to read the information carefully and if you require clarification of any of its contents, speak with your program supervisor.

Thank you and welcome to the Nillumbik Shire Council Volunteering Program!

National Standards for volunteer involvement

Volunteering Australia has developed National Standards for volunteer involvement. These standards represent what Volunteering Australia regards as 'best practice' in the management of volunteers.

Council is committed to using these standards as a way of benchmarking and informing our systems based approach to managing our volunteers.

The standards cover the following aspects of volunteer involvement:

1. Leadership and management
2. Commitment to volunteer involvement
3. Volunteer roles
4. Recruitment and selection
5. Support and development
6. Workplace safety and wellbeing
7. Volunteer recognition
8. Quality management and continuous improvement

The National Standards incorporate the following principles:

- Volunteer involvement should be a considered and planned part of an organisation's strategic development, aligning with the organisations strategic aims and incorporated into its evaluation framework.
- Effective volunteer involvement requires organisational leadership, and a culture and structure that supports and values the role of volunteers.
- Volunteers have rights, which include the right to work in a safe and supportive environment with appropriate infrastructure and effective management practices.
- Volunteers have responsibilities, including acting responsibly, being accountable for their actions to the organisation, and respecting the organisation's values and practices.

Recognition

In recognition of the significant contribution that volunteers make to the Nillumbik community various events and activities are held throughout the year to thank Council volunteers.

Each year Council celebrates National Volunteer Week, this celebration includes the annual Volunteer Appreciation event.

This event provides a great opportunity for Council to say thank you to all of its volunteers for their contribution to the Nillumbik community.

Other forms of recognition include:

- Christmas and end of year program celebrations
- Length of Service awards
- Volunteer interviews featured in staff and volunteer newsletters
- Promotion and recognition of volunteers and volunteer programs in Council's quarterly publication *Nillumbik News*
- Professional development training
- Recognising and using the potential and expertise of our volunteers to further enhance and support the Volunteering Program



What you can expect when volunteering at Nillumbik Shire Council

Council values its volunteers and will provide you with:

- A role description outlining the key responsibilities and required skills of the role.
- A full induction, orientation and training necessary for your role.
- A safe work environment and practices.
- Respect for your privacy, including keeping your private information confidential.
- A supervisor, so that you have the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback (including grievances).
- Information relating to changes to policy, procedures or legislation that may affect your role.
- Insurance as stated within Council's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance Policy.
- Reimbursement for any approved out of pocket expenses incurred while undertaking your role.

What does Council ask of its volunteers?

We ask that you:

- Participate in all required induction and training programs.
- Only undertake duties you are authorised to perform and always operate under the direction and supervision of your supervisor and adhere to reasonable directions and instruction.
- Understand and comply with all applicable Council policies and procedures (including the Occupational Health and Safety, Equal Opportunity, Privacy and Child Safe policies).

- Ensure all your personal information provided to Council is true and accurate.
- Notify your supervisor of any health and safety issues or potentially hazardous situations that may pose a risk to you or others and report any accidents or incidents (including near misses) relating to paid staff, volunteers, clients or the workplace.
- Act in a professional manner at all times when representing Council in your volunteer role.
- Use any property or equipment given to you in your role safely and only for the purpose of the role.
- Comply with the law at all times.
- Give adequate notice if you are unable to assist at agreed times and dates.
- Be open and honest and let us know if we can improve our Volunteer Program and the support you receive.

Role description

Each volunteer role has a role description or is covered by a terms of reference.

These documents ensure that both Council and volunteers have a clear understanding of the duties required of the role.

The role description is negotiated and agreed to as part of the recruitment process, and reviewed periodically as needs and abilities change.



Better Impact Volunteer Management Database

Council uses the Better Impact Volunteer Management Database to assist in the management of information about our Volunteer Programs and our volunteers.

Better Impact also provides an online platform to advertise and apply for volunteering vacancies at Council (known as Volunteering@Nillumbik).

The Better Impact database securely stores volunteers' information. This includes:

- Contact information
- Emergency contacts
- Completed training
- Uniform allocation (if applicable)
- Length of service details
- Completed application form(s)
- Policy and procedure files
- Interview details
- Other relevant information

Please ask your supervisor if you require assistance.

Use of My Volunteer Page is a key responsibility for all Council volunteers.

The My Volunteer Page enables you to:

- Update your contact details, emergency contacts etc (when required).
- View and access all policies and procedures.
- Change your password and photo.
- Browse and apply for other Council volunteer opportunities.
- Accept or decline shifts.
- RSVP to events and training.
- Enter hours and other relevant feedback after each shift.
- Stay in touch with volunteering and community news at Council.
- View any other relevant information e.g. length of service, uniform allocation, training completed.

Better Impact ensures process compliance across all Council volunteer programs.

Induction

All Council volunteers are required to complete an induction. Induction will include information about:

- Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment
- Child Safe Standards
- Insurance
- Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Feedback
- Conflicts of interest, gifts, benefits and hospitality
- Media and Social Media Protocols
- Issue resolution

Program and site specific induction will also be included after the Council induction has been completed.



Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Council is committed to providing an environment which is safe and without risk to health and safety and free from all forms of inappropriate behaviour.

Council's responsibility and commitment to health, safety and wellbeing is guided by the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

Council's responsibility for safety includes:

- Providing and maintaining suitable equipment.
- Implementing and observing safe work practices.
- Providing adequate information, training and supervision.
- Identifying hazards to safety and health and implementing appropriate controls.

As a volunteer you are required to:

- Take reasonable care of your own health and safety.
- Take reasonable care that your actions or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others.
- Follow policy, procedure or instructions as they relate to providing a safe workplace for volunteers, paid staff, contractors, clients and members of the public.
- Actively participating in induction and training.
- Contribute to and work in accordance with established safe work instructions.
- Wear any required protective equipment.
- Report incidents, accidents or near misses promptly.

Reporting

To assist Council to meet its obligation to provide a safe workplace, incidents, hazards or near misses must be reported promptly to your program supervisor. This enables Council officers to ensure you are safe, to investigate the events surrounding the incident, hazard or near miss and to promptly put in place any actions required.

Feedback and raising concerns

If you have a particular concern regarding the safety of the workplace or work processes please ensure that these are raised with your program supervisor.

You are also welcome to raise any issues with the Volunteer Development Coordinator at Council by calling 9433 3147.

Fitness to perform the role

Council is committed to ensuring that you are provided with a safe place to undertake your volunteering duties. Council must therefore be satisfied that you are fit to perform your role without compromising your own health and safety, or the health and safety of other volunteers, paid staff or members of the public.

Council expects that you will:

- Be aware of how your own health and wellbeing may impact on your capacity to perform your role effectively.
- Notify your program supervisor as soon as possible if you are unable to perform your role due to illness or injury.
- Ensure that you are not adversely affected by prescription or other medications.
- Ensure that you are not under the influence of illegal or legal drugs, including alcohol when performing your role.
- Follow instructions of your supervisor if requested to cease performing a particular task due to illness, injury or other factors that might be causing you to be unfit to volunteer.

Emergency Response

Each work site will have emergency response procedures. As part of your induction to your specific volunteer role these will be explained to you.

You must ensure that you are made aware of evacuation plans and assembly points.

**In case of fire or emergency call 000
At any point if you feel unsafe call 000**

The Occupational Health and Safety Policy can be found at myvolunteerpage.com

Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination

Council volunteers are included in Council's Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy. This policy also complements Council's Volunteer Code of Conduct.

All Council volunteers have the right to a workplace free of discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence.

Council will ensure that access to and conduct of all volunteer activities and programs are unaffected by an individual's race, age, sex, marital status, pregnancy, family commitments, religion, political beliefs, physical features, disability, sexual preference or socio economic background.

Volunteers also have a responsibility to treat all volunteers, paid staff and clients equally and in a non-discriminatory manner. Any form of bullying or harassment will not be tolerated.

Measures that are in place to prevent and respond to discrimination or other unfair treatment include:

- Having an Equal Opportunity policy in place which is understood by paid staff and volunteers.
- Having a grievance and dispute procedure in place.
- Ensuring all volunteer roles have role descriptions or are covered by a terms of reference.
- Ensuring recruitment decisions are made, taking into account only those facts that are relevant to the applicant's skills, qualifications and ability to perform the role.
- Ensuring that information regarding Equal Opportunity and Resolution Procedures are included in the induction and orientation process.

Bullying and Harassment

Harassment is a form of discrimination that has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person's work performance whilst creating a workplace that is intimidating and/or hostile.

Harassment is defined as behaviour or conduct:

- That is unwelcome or unsolicited.
- That may reasonably be said to offend, humiliate, intimidate or distress the person(s) who are the target of the behaviour.

If you believe you have been subjected to or have witnessed bullying behaviour by paid staff or another volunteer, you are urged to report this to your program supervisor.

Council aims to cultivate a culture of openness and transparency, where all paid staff and volunteers have working relationships characterised by mutual respect.



Grievance Procedures

All volunteers have the right to fair and equitable treatment of grievances and complaints in a timely and professional manner.

It is Council's aim to resolve disputes amicably through conciliation and negotiation.

Council's Grievance Procedure is covered during Induction and Orientation.

The Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedures can be found at myvolunteerpage.com

Media and Social Media Policy

In all circumstances, media inquiries are to be directed to Council's Corporate Affairs Department.

Council also has a Social Media Policy that is relevant to all Council volunteers. Whether using social media at home or at work, you are using it in the context of the Nillumbik Shire Council Social Media Policy as a 'private user'.

All Council volunteers do not have permission to answer questions or make any comments about Council on any social media sites.

Child Safe Standards

Interacting with children and young people and the Child Safe Standards

Council prides itself on being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Council adheres to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related legislation including Reportable Conduct, Failure to Disclose, Failure to Protect and Grooming offenses.

In meeting Council's obligations under the Child Safe Standards, you are responsible for ensuring that you adhere with Council's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Reporting processes.

You are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and support the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children, including by:

- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, culturally and linguistically diverse children and children with a disability.

- Where practicable, and unless it is within the scope of their role, adults are not left alone with a child.
- Reporting any child safety concerns or allegations of child abuse to Council's Child Safety Officer and the direct supervisor/manager, and ensure any allegation of child abuse be reported to the police or child protection.
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.

Council's Child Safe Policy can be found at myvolunteerpage.com

Volunteers must not:

- Develop any relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical.
- Put children at risk of abuse.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- Discriminate against any child because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Where prior relationships outside of work do not exist, staff should not have contact with a child or their family outside of Council without our Child Safety Officer's knowledge and consent.
- Where prior relationships outside of work do not exist, staff should not have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters).

Privacy and Confidentiality

All volunteers must comply with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001* to protect personal information of clients, volunteers and paid staff.

As a volunteer, you may have authorised access to information relating to clients, paid staff, members of the public or the overall operations of Council. This information must be stored securely and appropriately at all times and not disclosed to any person including other paid staff, volunteers, friends or family except in the course of your volunteer duties.

Confidentiality of information must be respected for:

- Protection of the client and their right to privacy.
- Protection of the service and its reputation.
- Protection of the reputation of paid staff and volunteers.

Council is also committed to protecting your right to privacy. Council respects all personal and confidential information you give and will store all personal data and information according to the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. It is also important that you do not disclose your personal details to clients.

Your volunteer role needs to remain at a professional level at all times.

All volunteer personal information is stored within the Better Impact Volunteer Management Database. Your personal and other information can be found at myvolunteerpage.com

Insurance

Volunteers who are registered by Council and undertaking Council approved activities with reasonable care and due diligence are covered by the following insurance arrangement.

Public Liability Insurance

Whilst you are volunteering with Council you are deemed to be acting on behalf of Council and as such, are indemnified under Council's general Public Liability Insurance Cover. This extends to third parties for personal injury and property damage caused by a Council volunteer whilst performing their volunteer role.

Personal Accident Insurance

Council has a Personal Accident Insurance Policy in place to provide limited income protection, disablement and death benefits to you while performing your role.

You are not covered:

- For any incident that is covered by other insurance mechanism such as TAC.
- For any out of pocket medical expenses. Medical expenses should be claimed from Medicare or your private health insurer*
- For ongoing Medicare gaps and other medical expenses.
- By Workcover.
- If reasonable care is not taken when performing duties or you act outside the scope of either Council authorised work or the instructions given, or you are impaired by alcohol, drugs or prescription medication, or are otherwise not physically or mentally able to undertake your duties.

* *The Private Health Insurance Act 2007* excludes all local governments from accessing insurance to cover out of pocket medical expenses for their volunteers. This Act prevents insurers from being able to provide such cover for volunteers unless they are providing services "educational, religious, charitable, benevolent, sporting or youth organisations."

Gifts, benefits and hospitality

Receipt of a gift from a person or organisation can result in a conflict of interest.

A gift can include money. It can be a non-monetary gift or service such as free or discounted memberships, travel or hospitality. It can also include any disposition of property by one person to another without payment or without adequate payment.

Paid staff and volunteers may be offered hospitality in a range of situations and possibly by persons who want to be considered favourably in Council matters. If the hospitality exceeds \$500, and the gift giver subsequently has a direct interest in a matter before Council, it will give rise to a conflict of interest on the staff member or volunteers' part.

Where reasonable hospitality is received from an organisation at an event that a staff member or volunteer attended in an official capacity, a conflict of interest will not occur. A conflict of interest will also not apply where Council, the staff member or volunteer pays for the hospitality.

You should avoid putting yourself in situations where you are likely to create a conflict of interest.

Don't seek or accept gifts from people where the receipt of the gift is likely to create a conflict with your public role. There can be serious consequences if you do.

On occasions, a volunteer may be given a gift that cannot be politely refused such as a presentation at a function as an appreciation gift. If there is any risk that the gift may give rise to an indirect interest, or otherwise compromise the receiver, it should be accepted on behalf of Council and passed on to your supervisor for use by Council. A gift received on behalf of Council, and passed on this way, does not give rise to an indirect interest.

Volunteers who receive a gift or benefit of any value must complete a Gifts Register form (provided by the supervisor). This information will then be recorded on the Gifts Register maintained by the Governance Unit.

Fraud and Corruption

Council is committed to protecting its finances, properties and intellectual rights from any attempt, to gain personal or other advantages by deception by paid staff, volunteers, members of the public and contractors, subcontractors or agents.

Paid staff, volunteers, contractors and other service providers of Council are required to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the public resources for which they are responsible.

Where fraudulent or corrupt conduct has been observed or suspected, paid staff and volunteers have an obligation to report matters in conformance with the Fraud Policy and Protected Disclosure procedures.

If a breach constitutes fraud or corruption then Council's Protected Disclosure Procedures apply. The Protected Disclosure Procedures can be found at myvolunteerpage.com

Service Excellence Charter

Council is committed to providing excellent service to the community. To demonstrate this commitment, a Service Excellence Charter (the charter) has formed an integral part of the organisations operations.

The Charter provides an overview of the services we provide, outlining our commitment to high quality services and our commitment to meeting customer's needs. The Charter sets out how we will meet the commitments to our customers.

All paid staff and volunteers are required to comply with the charter. Council's Service Excellence Charter can be found at myvolunteerpage.com





Code of Conduct

Council's Volunteer Code of Conduct centre around:

- Respect
- Accountability
- Integrity

The Volunteer Code of Conduct identifies that volunteers have the same level of responsibility as paid staff with regard to their behaviour and activities while carrying out their duties.

In addition to all legislative requirements and any specific directions or guidance provided by Council, you should recognise the requirements of this Code of Conduct as the standards to be adopted in the performance of your role.

A description of each of the values is outlined below.

Respect

I respect and acknowledge paid staff, volunteers, clients and community member's individual values, beliefs, efforts and ideas.

I demonstrate this by:

- Treating everyone fairly, courteously and with respect
- Dressing in an appropriate manner when volunteering on behalf of Council
- Abstaining from all forms of unacceptable or unlawful behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation
- Seeking to develop a relationship with fellow volunteers and paid staff that is cooperative, productive and constructive and based on mutual trust and respect
- Acknowledging the value of diversity and the right of all points of view to be heard and considered
- Avoid criticism of Council, paid staff and other volunteers
- Being punctual and reliable and advise my supervisor in a timely manner if unable to perform my role

Accountability

I acknowledge and assume responsibility for my actions and behaviour and am entitled to expect the same from others.

I demonstrate this by:

- Being actively engaged in contributing to a safe workplace
- Ensuring that a Council officer is present where there is a need to meet with other government or statutory bodies
- Abiding by Councils media and social media policy
- Not being affected by drugs or alcohol whilst volunteering for Council
- Ensuring a smoke free work environment
- Ensuring appropriate use of resources, reducing waste and duplication
- Respecting and protecting the physical and intellectual property of Council
- Raising a perceived breach of this Code in good faith
- Taking responsibility for my contribution and performance
- Recognising good performance and addressing performance shortfalls

Integrity

I will maintain high standards of integrity and be diligent in the performance of my role.

I demonstrate this by:

- Behaving in a reasonable, just and non-discriminatory way
- Using Council resources in an honest and responsible manner
- Appropriately disclose or avoid any situation that may create a conflict of interest
- Adhering to Council's guidelines regarding receiving of gifts, benefits and hospitality Ensure that personal interest does not influence the way in which my volunteer duties are carried out
- Respect and maintain privacy and confidentiality regarding Council business unless Council has officially made the information public
- Ensure all actions and decisions as a Council volunteer are aligned with the aims of the volunteer program Appropriately report, record and distribute information relating to the volunteer program
- Refraining from political activity while publicly representing Council as a volunteer

Training

Council is committed to providing training opportunities for its volunteers.

Training options that may be offered will either be professional development opportunities specific to your role (for example First Aid) or may cater more broadly for all Council volunteers such as unconscious bias training.

Training opportunities including Child Safe Standards training will be offered online and in accessible formats wherever possible.

As mentioned, required training specific to your role must be completed before you commence volunteering for Council.



Motor vehicles and fuel reimbursement

Some volunteers may be required to use their own vehicles to carry out official Council duties for example the Delivered Meals Program.

The vehicle must be registered and be in a road worthy condition. Council is unable to provide insurance to cover damage to, or caused by, volunteers private vehicles.

To insure for any possible damage to other vehicles, volunteers are required to maintain third party property cover but are strongly advised to have full comprehensive insurance.

Any speeding offenses and traffic parking infringements incurred while performing a volunteer role will not be paid for by Council.

Volunteers will be reimbursed for fuel usage when using their own vehicle in accordance with the prescribed award rate and upon receipt of a duly completed, signed and authorised fuel reimbursement claim form.

Leaving your volunteer role

Council understands that sometimes, due to changing circumstances and other opportunities, volunteers may need to cease their volunteer role.

If this is the case:

- Give as much notice as possible
- Provide your supervisor with an update on the progress of your work
- Return any Council assets that you may have in your possession such as identification, name badge, uniform and equipment.

Thank you for volunteering and for your diligent attention.



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