



Visiting Volunteers Program



Handbook for an Organisation –
Information about Visiting Volunteers

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Attachments:

Record of Regional Volunteering

Image Release Form

Checklist for Organisations

About Visiting Volunteers

Hello & welcome to the Visiting Volunteers Program

An Invitation to Volunteers

Many towns in regional WA are experiencing dwindling, aging and in some cases new, expanding populations. These changes significantly impact on the capacity of the towns to provide adequate volunteer resources for a range of community services and projects.

These same communities may annually also experience a population explosion during the winter months as thousands of long and short stay intrastate, interstate and international travellers become 'temporary residents' when they head to warmer locations.

'Temporary residents' contribute to the economic and social fabric of a community, become consumers of local services such as Ambulance, First Aid and Sea Rescue and place increased demands upon tourism related enterprises such as museums/historical attractions and natural attractions, most of which are manned by a diminishing pool of volunteers.

It has been identified that travellers may be willing to become Visiting Volunteers and provide a valuable source of additional volunteers for these and other community services, while enjoying new experiences, meeting new friends and making a difference. Visiting Volunteers assist communities to build their capacity to deliver services, complete outstanding projects or provide assistance in rural and remote community schools. Additional sources of expertise in any fields are always welcome.

For further information please visit www.volunteeringwa.org.au.

An Invitation to Volunteer-Involving Organisations & Communities

If you are a rural or remote local government authority, volunteer-involving organisation or community group in a rural area that needs volunteer assistance, contact Volunteering WA to discuss how we can assist you in identifying and referring volunteer project opportunities in your community as part of the Visiting Volunteers program.

Should there be an existing Volunteer Referral Centre in your region, then Volunteering WA will liaise with the centre to work in partnership to support the Visiting Volunteers program. Where no local Volunteer Resource Centre has been established, groups are asked to register an interest directly with Volunteering WA.

Definitions and Principles of Volunteering

Definition of formal volunteering

Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through not for profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;
- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- for no financial payment; and
- in designated volunteer positions only.

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.
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

Information source - www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Volunteer Rights and Volunteer Checklist

Information Sheet

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by awards or work-place agreements. Volunteers however do have rights, some which are enshrined in legislation and some which could be considered the moral obligations of an organisation involving volunteers. Volunteering Australia promotes the following as the basic rights of a volunteer.

Volunteers have the right:

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

Model Code of Practice for Organisations Involving Volunteer Staff

Volunteering Australia has developed, through consultation with volunteer involving organisations and projects in the not for profit sector, national standards for volunteer involvement which represent and explain the tenets of 'best practice' in the management of volunteers. The following points identify policy considerations for volunteering involving organisations and can be addressed as part of the process to implement the national standards.

- Interview and employ volunteer staff in accordance with anti discrimination and equal opportunity legislation;
- provide volunteer staff with orientation and training;
- provide volunteer staff with a healthy and safe workplace;
- provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage for volunteer staff;
- not place volunteer staff in roles that were previously held by paid staff or have been identified as paid jobs;
- differentiate between paid and unpaid roles;
- define volunteer roles and develop clear job descriptions;
- provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteer staff;
- provide volunteers with a copy of policies pertaining to volunteer staff;
- ensure volunteers are not required to take up additional work during industrial disputes or paid staff shortage;
- provide all staff with information on grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures;
- acknowledge the rights of volunteer staff;
- ensure that the work of volunteer staff complements but does not undermine the work of paid staff;
- offer volunteer staff the opportunity for professional development;
- reimburse volunteer staff for out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation;
- treat volunteer staff as valuable team members, and advise them of the opportunities to participate in agency decisions; and
- acknowledge the contributions of volunteer staff.

Information source - www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Registration Procedure

Organisations may choose to either become a member of Volunteering WA (VWA), for a small annual fee, or to register for our free position listing service. The same online documentation should be completed whichever choice is made.

To become a member of Volunteering WA organisations should access the website www.volunteeringwa.org.au and follow the instructions in the For Organisations section.

If you have any difficulty accessing the web, or have any queries, Volunteering WA team members will be happy to provide assistance.

Regional Projects

All regional volunteering positions (Vis Vols projects) are listed on Volunteering WA's website and interested persons will be able to search positions (using postcode and locality fields) and express interest online to send an email with their details direct to the organisation that has listed the position. This facilitates the sharing of information between the organisation and the potential volunteer.

To ensure a smooth placement process once a potential volunteer has expressed interest in volunteering with your organisation, it is important that you contact that person promptly and that a second coordinator be appointed (as a back-up person), and kept up-to-date with all information pertaining to the situation, in case of unforeseen circumstances occurring.

Visiting Volunteers are 'on the road' and most plan their holiday itineraries with great care. Please understand that firm dates for their volunteer commitment may be of the utmost importance to many of them. This situation should be established in each instance.

Being 'volunteer ready' is of the utmost importance if an organisation agrees to accept a Visiting Volunteer. The capacity of the organisation – for instance, would a coordinator be available - as well as the capacity of the community should be given consideration so that the placement will benefit all parties concerned. If the timing of the proposed visit is unsuitable, the correct approach would be to advise the Visiting Volunteer that your organisation is unable to accept them at this time.

In the event of personnel changes in your organisation, please ensure that Visiting Volunteers information is passed on, including any Vis Vols placements that may be pending. This will enable sustainability and continuity of Program knowledge, as well as providing potential ongoing benefits to the community.

During 2009/2010, Volunteering WA hopes to be able to provide all organisations with the capacity to directly access and upload (or adjust) their volunteer positions online.

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

Volunteering WA provides training to member organisations in the recruitment and retention of volunteers (see the training calendar on the Volunteering WA website). Training may also be accessed by non-member organisations for a small charge.

Although regional volunteer positions are listed on Volunteering WA's website this does not guarantee that anyone will take up the position. However, it will certainly enable a wider market to be reached and thus allow for access to a greater pool of potential volunteers. Regional events requiring the assistance of volunteers may also be given additional exposure on Volunteering WA's website just prior to the timing of the event. Contact Volunteering WA if you wish to discuss this option.

Welcoming the Volunteer into the Community

Everyone likes to feel wanted and useful and appreciated. Every volunteer is an individual, with different personalities, likes, dislikes, interests and abilities.

Some people may feel confident about coming into a community and undertaking some volunteer work, others may be reticent and uncertain. For some Visiting Volunteers (Vis Vols) it may be their first volunteering position. Some may never have lived in a small community.

The success of the volunteer placement could well depend on how the volunteer sees his/her value to the community. The way a volunteer is welcomed on their arrival, and also into the community, will go a long way towards their satisfaction with the Vis Vols project and their time within a community.

Please welcome the volunteer by introducing them to others within the organisation, including them in local community activities and, if possible, providing information and maps about local places of interest.

To avoid any potential conflict of interest, it is important that local volunteers are advised of the temporary volunteer placement prior to the arrival of the Visiting Volunteer. It would be beneficial to include the local volunteers in any aspects of planning whenever possible.

While there is no expectation that accommodation will be provided to Visiting Volunteers, any assistance the local community is able to give by providing volunteers with a caravan site, or a cottage, would be greatly appreciated.

A Checklist for Organisations has been included in this handbook, to assist in enabling 'volunteer readiness' to be ascertained.

Training and Coordination

To facilitate a good match of volunteer skills with the position available, please ensure that the position description section has sufficient detail regarding the actual job to be completed.

It will then be expected that the volunteer will have the knowledge, skills and attitude required to carry out the duties according the position description without the need for

a long period of training. However no prospective volunteer should be put off if they are interested in a position but feel they would benefit from some training. In this case the organisation should determine whether they are able to provide the training required and whether this would suit their own needs.

The organisation will have appointed a contact person, or coordinator, who will be available to provide advice and support to the volunteer. It is best to have a second nominated person who has knowledge of the situation and who would be able to step in should any unforeseen circumstances occur.

Volunteers are keen to give their time and expertise to whichever projects they take on. Ensuring that volunteers are not left waiting around will send the message that their input is valued, and will also keep them motivated. To maintain the volunteer's high level of motivation it is wise to order any equipment and materials required well ahead of time and to ensure that the volunteer has these items in place to commence the job on the agreed day.

Insurance

An organisation that hopes to engage volunteers is responsible for taking out insurance to cover those volunteers from any claim for public liability or costs in the event of an accident.

Copies of certificates of currency for Public Liability and Volunteer Personal Accident insurance need to be provided to Volunteering WA when an organisation completes the registration process; this occurs prior to the listing of volunteer projects.

If the organisation requires volunteers to 'sign on' for insurance purposes this should be discussed with the volunteer well ahead of their arrival, with the paperwork being provided ahead of their commencement.

If an organisation needs to obtain insurance cover, Volunteering WA may assist by providing the names of several insurance companies that have dealt with this type of cover. Please bear in mind that Volunteering WA does not promote any of these insurance companies. Organisations should also do their own research to ensure that the cover to be provided actually meets their specific needs and also obtain several different quotes.

Police Clearance and Working with Children Check

In general having a Police Clearance is a pre-requisite to volunteering. To facilitate this process, organisations may choose to register with the Volunteer National Police Check system and, given the volunteer's permission, would then be able to obtain this Clearance at a reduced cost, on the volunteer's behalf. It is preferable if this cost is able to be borne by the organisation. However if it is anticipated that the cost of the clearance will be charged to the volunteer, this should be shown clearly on the position description form and also discussed with the potential volunteer.

A Working with Children Check is normally only required if a volunteer's core duties involve working with children. The Volunteer Position Form should state whether this Check is a requirement for the position. Whether the organisation or the volunteer

will bear the cost of this Check must be clearly stated on the position description form and verified at the time of the initial volunteer contact.

It is important to note that whether the organisation chooses to waive the fee/s or to charge the volunteer for obtaining the Police Clearance and the Working with Children Check, this situation should be fully discussed with the volunteer prior to agreeing to the placement.

International Volunteers

International volunteers are welcomed however they must be in possession of an appropriate visa. Visit www.immi.gov.au for detailed information.

In lieu of a Police Clearance, international visitors may sign a Statutory Declaration, stating in the content that they do not have any criminal convictions or charges, proven or pending, in their country of origin (country to be named).

Recognition of the Volunteer's Contribution

When the volunteer has completed the assigned task it would be appropriate to recognise this fact and the contribution they have made to the organisation or group, and the community.

There are many simple ways of saying thank you. An appropriate way may be to invite the volunteer to afternoon tea with some community leaders and possibly present them with a certificate or letter of recognition.

A story and photograph in the local newspaper to recognise their contribution could be another way of saying 'thank you'. If the volunteer has already left the town at the time the edition is produced, it would be appreciated by the volunteer to have a copy forwarded.

An advice could be sent to Volunteering WA for their records outlining the completed project, the hours of work provided, the end result of the work and any community comments.

A photographic display of volunteers, with an appropriate title, could be displayed within the organisation itself or on a local community notice board.

Evaluation and Feedback

As the peak body for volunteering in Western Australia, Volunteering WA maintains statistical records of all volunteering that has been completed through our organisation and associated partners. VWA needs to ensure that the valuable time given to the regions by our Visiting Volunteers is collected, recognised, and included in our statistics. Therefore, at the completion of the project placement, we request that your organisation provides VWA with brief details of the following:

- the project name and the location
- the actual duties completed
- the number of hours volunteered

- the value to the organisation of the duties completed.

A Record of Regional Volunteering timesheet has been included in this handbook to facilitate the recording of the volunteer's hours. The Handbook for Volunteers also provides a copy of this same form to the volunteer.

The placement coordinator is also encouraged to provide additional comments to Volunteering WA and the volunteer. These more specific comments could relate to how the organisation:

- enjoyed the volunteer's presence in the community
- benefitted from their assistance
- achieved completion of the project, or a specific part
- considered that the volunteer fitted into their team.

Additional comments are welcomed as these will allow us to continually enhance the delivery of our programs for the benefit of our volunteers. However, if any difficulty should occur during a placement, it is expected that the situation would be discussed and clarified at the time of the occurrence rather than the time of departure.

Photographs

Volunteering WA would welcome copies of any 'volunteering in action' images (in preference to posed images) that you may have taken as a record of progress, especially for larger projects. These images not only provide great reference material but are then available for publicity or media releases if desired. With the organisation's permission, any photographs forwarded to Volunteering WA would only be used for non-commercial promotional purposes.

An Image Release Form is attached should you wish to provide Volunteering WA with copies of your photographs.

Contact Details

Volunteering WA
City West Lotteries House
2 Delhi Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005
9482 4333
visiting@volunteeringwa.org.au
www.volunteeringwa.org.au



**Visiting Volunteers
Program
Record of Regional
Volunteering**



Name of Volunteer: _____

Project Name and Location: _____

| Date | Duties | Hours | Project Notes (optional) | Organisation or Community Notes (optional) |
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2 Delhi Street
 WEST PERTH WA 6005
 9482 4333
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Image Release Form

| Date of photo | Locality and Venue | Activity | Caption |
|---------------|--------------------|----------|---------|
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My signature below indicates that I am providing consent to Volunteering WA or its agents to publish photographs taken while contributing to the Visiting Volunteer Program in 2009, including me and/or my likeness which may be published on the Web and in public information materials. I agree that this image can be used to raise the profile of volunteering in Western Australia.

| Name (print) | Signature | Organisation | Contact (phone or email) |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------|
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Photo Release

I give permission for these photos to be used by Volunteering WA for non-commercial purposes only.

Photos taken by _____

Signature _____ Date _____

- Have the duties and other content as shown on the Volunteer Position Form been viewed by both parties and details discussed/clarified (to alleviate any future misunderstandings) at the time of arranging the placement?
- Have the local volunteers been made aware of the forthcoming Visiting Volunteers (Vis Vols) placement in the organisation and local community?
- Is a package of helpful information e.g. local tourist brochures, potential accommodation, caravan sites, maps etc, available for the Visiting Volunteers? (NOTE: Many Vis Vols seek information about the availability of local accommodation or caravan sites prior to their arrival.)
- Is the coordinator available to meet the volunteer/s and introduce them to other team members, volunteers or locals? Has a second person been nominated, should the designated person not be available?
- Is there the need for the Vis Vols to have some training? If so, has this task been allocated to an appropriate person in the organisation?
- Have arrangements been made to introduce the systems and other practices of the organisation (those applicable to the volunteer's duties)?
- Would materials or equipment be required to complete the volunteer duties? If so, have these been ordered in advance of the Vis Vols arrival?
- Will the materials and equipment be readily available for the commencement of the duties?
- If international volunteers are involved, has there been a check on whether the visa will allow for volunteering?
- Are there local community functions to which Vis Vols could be invited, e.g. a community barbecue or festival?
- Have there been arrangements made for an appropriate way of thanking the Vis Vols for their contribution at the time of their departure?
- If possible, has someone been allocated the task of taking 'action shots' of the volunteers during their placement?
- If desired, have the local media been informed and provided with details?