



WIDE BAY VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER

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HANDBOOK

- Actively involving you in the community
 - Helping you develop skills
 - Meeting new people
 - Building your self confidence
 - Sharing in community events
 - Gaining valuable work experience
 - Exploring different career areas
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Wide Bay Volunteers

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DISCLAIMER

While reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information in this handbook, it is intended to provide information of a general nature only. The contents should not be taken as qualified legal advice and any matter where specific advice is sought, the reader should obtain this from a source appropriately placed to provide such information.

The authors and Wide Bay Volunteers expressly disclaim all responsibility for any damages whatsoever that may arise from acting or not acting in accordance with the contents of this booklet.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteering is a great way of getting experience in your field or in a field in which you are interested. Through volunteering you will meet and network with a wide range of people who may be able to offer advice and assistance in your job search. It is also a way for you to develop skills that may help you get a job. Volunteer experience shows an employer that you have initiative, motivation and a community spirit.

If you have not had much work experience, volunteering can also be useful when you are writing your cover letter and resume. In addressing skills such as communication, client service and teamwork you will then be able to give examples from your study and also from your volunteer work. Employers are very interested in students who are well rounded and have interests outside their studies. Volunteering can earn you valuable points when you are competing for a job.

Before you volunteer it is a good idea to decide on the skills you want to develop. The skills most valued by employers include:

- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Problem solving and analysis
- Enthusiasm, motivation and commitment
- Organisation
- Initiative
- Technological skills

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
- 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

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

People on Income Support volunteer for the same reasons as all Australians to participate in and help their communities. But for job seekers in particular, volunteering provides a number of benefits. It can help someone get a reference, obtain Australian/English-language work experience, apply skills learned in study, re-skill or experience a new sector and develop broader social and work-related networks.

Volunteers can use these benefits to help obtain paid employment. Many not-for-profit organisations are also able to provide formal training that can contribute to obtain subsequent qualifications.

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

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

AS A VOLUNTEER YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

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

AS A VOLUNTEER YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- be reliable
- respect confidentiality
- carry out the specified tasks defined in the job description
- be accountable
- be committed to the organisation
- undertake training as requested
- ask for support when you need it
- give notice before you leave the organisation
- value and support other team members
- carry out the work you have agreed to do responsibly and ethically
- notify the organisation as soon as possible of absences
- adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures

BLUE CARDS & WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

You will need a blue card if you propose to work in a voluntary capacity in a child-related area regulated by the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian.

When you apply for a blue card the Commission conducts a Working with Children Check. This is a detailed national check of a person's criminal history, including any charges or convictions and even allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid because the child was unwilling or unable to proceed.

In most cases organisations cannot accept volunteers for work while checks are pending, regardless of how often they come into contact with children or young people. There are some exceptions to the mandatory requirement for checking - for example parents volunteering at their children's school. Organisations should consult with the Commissioner or Wide Bay Volunteers if they are in doubt as to whether a check is required.

For more information visit: <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au>

POLICE CHECKS

Some Organisations may require a police check to be undertaken for certain volunteer positions with their organisation. Police checks should be initiated by organisations rather than individuals to ensure the greatest level of accuracy and assurance. The first points of contact are usually local police stations, although practices vary in some areas.

A completed consent form must be obtained from the volunteer applicant before the police check is initiated. Organisations wishing to include police checks in their risk management strategies can access police checks from the Queensland Police Service.

INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

It is an organisation's responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is provided to protect their volunteer staff. Whilst volunteer organisations have represented to Wide Bay Volunteers that they have appropriate volunteer insurance, Wide Bay Volunteers cannot certify this, and it is the individual volunteer's responsibility to verify this with the volunteer organisation before accepting a volunteer position.

Insurances held by all Wide Bay Volunteers' members include:

- **Public Liability Insurance** - covers the organisation's legal liability to pay damages to a third party for personal injury or property damage accidentally caused by a member of the organisation including its volunteers.
- **Personal Accident Insurance** - covers volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses following accidental injury, disability, or death while carrying out their work on behalf of an organisation.
- **Motor Vehicle Insurance** –covers vehicles owned by organisations and driven by volunteers, for loss or damage to the vehicle or third party property. Volunteers using their own vehicle for voluntary related purposes will need to take out separate cover.



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QUEENSLAND VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTRES

Brisbane	Volunteering Queensland	(07) 3002 7600
Gold Coast	Volunteering Gold Coast	(07) 5591 8388
Logan	Volunteering Logan River Valley	(07) 3805 6490
Sunshine Coast	Volunteering Sunshine Coast	(07) 5443 8256
Bundaberg	Wide Bay Volunteers	(07) 4151 6644
Gladstone	Central Queensland Volunteering	(07) 4972 9340
Townsville	Volunteering North Queensland	(07) 4721 4775
Cairns	Far North Queensland Volunteers	(07) 4041 7400

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