VOLUNTEER POLICY

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Council Policy Manual

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1. Introduction

Brewarrina Shire Council;

- Recognises and values the substantial and ongoing contribution made by volunteers and voluntary groups to the quality of life of the citizens of Brewarrina.
- Manage and support Council volunteers in accordance with the National Standards for involving Volunteers in not-for-profit Organisations.
- Work in partnership with community groups, the business sector and relevant stakeholders to develop volunteering opportunities, promote volunteering, raise the profile of Volunteerism and facilitate access to information about volunteering opportunities.

2. Rationale

Council acknowledges that volunteers contribute to the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community by:

- Strengthening community cohesion, social wellbeing, and trust.
- Expanding the ability of the community to respond to the needs of its citizens and provide a range of services and activities.
- Engaging the community in protecting local resources, improving the physical environment and support for environmental issues.
- Encouraging understanding of, and acceptance of, culture, diversity and difference.

Council believes that volunteers are a key resource in the achievement of our vision for our community. The importance of volunteers is demonstrated in a key action related to volunteering and community participation and building a stronger community within Councils Community Strategic Plan. Support for Council volunteers and the development of volunteering within the town of Brewarrina will enhance Council's vision of building a stronger, sustainable and healthy Community for future generations.

3. Definition of Volunteering

This volunteer policy acknowledges the importance of volunteering to a diverse, vibrant, cohesive and sustainable community. Furthermore, the aim of policy is to formalise the commitment of Council to supporting:

- Volunteers who assist in the provision of Council services and programs, and the volunteer based clubs, groups and organisations (community groups) who provide services to the people of Brewarrina.

In accordance with the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-For-Profit Organisations, Council adopts as its definition of volunteering:

Formal volunteering is an activity that takes place in 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.

Council volunteers include:

- Volunteers who are members of Council managed Advisory Groups.
- Volunteers who participate in Council managed projects and events.
- Volunteers who are members of Committees of Management which operate Council venues.

Council volunteers do not include:

- Volunteers involved in Work for the Dole initiatives.
- Volunteers involved in not-for-profit and/or non-government organisations delivering Services within Brewarrina, unless they are part of a partnership program.

4. Guiding Principles for Volunteer Programs and Activities

Within volunteer programs:

- Council supports the principle that volunteers are managed, supported and resourced in accordance with the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in not-for-profit organisations, developed by Volunteering Australia.
- Council acknowledges the principle that volunteer initiatives require a commitment to resourcing and that it can play a dual role of supporting volunteers who assist in the provision of Council services and programs, and play a leadership role of developing volunteering within the town of Brewarrina.
- Council advocates strongly that volunteer or unpaid positions not be used to replace paid positions.
- In relation to Council's role in developing volunteering within the town of Brewarrina,

Council through its Volunteer Policy will work to:

- Join in partnership and collaboration with community groups, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders to further develop volunteering opportunities, promote volunteering, raise the profile of volunteerism, and facilitate access to information about volunteering opportunities.
- Facilitate access for community groups (and their volunteers) to information, expert advice, training and resources.
- Advocate on matters related to volunteering and volunteers.

5. Policy Guidelines

Best Practice Standards:
As volunteers are a key resource, Council will aim to achieve best practice standards in volunteer management. Hence, management of Council's own volunteers will be further developed to meet the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-For-Profit Organisations, developed by Volunteering Australia, which are designed to:

- Ensure that volunteers are protected and not exploited;
- Provide healthy and safe working environments for volunteers;
- Ensure volunteers know what their role is;
- Encourage organisations to develop and maintain a comprehensive 'program' for managing volunteers; and help organisations involve and retain volunteers.

Council recognises the nine standards to follow are:

1. Policies and Procedures
That policies and procedures are in place in all areas, which directly or indirectly

affect volunteers and their work. This would include for e.g. a procedure requiring volunteers working with clients or as part of service delivery to undergo a police check.

2. Management Structures
That resourcing is necessary to support the efficient management of volunteers.

3. Administrative Systems
That effective administrative systems are necessary to ensure the volunteer program operates efficiently and that the privacy and rights of volunteers are not compromised.

4. Role Statements
That volunteer roles are identified and translated into role statements, which ensure the aims and objectives of Council are being met, the rights of residents and volunteers are protected, and the boundaries between paid and unpaid roles are delineated.

5. Volunteer Recruitment
That a clearly planned and documented recruitment strategy supported by policy and procedures is necessary.

6. Selecting Volunteers
That volunteers are interviewed and selected in a fair, open and equitable manner.

7. Orientation, Education and Training
That volunteers are provided with orientation, education and training programs where necessary that meets the information and skill requirements of the volunteer role.

8. Recognition, Support, Supervision and Monitoring
That recognition, support, supervision and monitoring of volunteer activity appropriate to the range and level of volunteer involvement is provided.

9. Planning and Education
That planning, evaluation and continuous improvement occur in its volunteer program to ensure effective outcomes for clients, volunteers, paid employees and the broader community.

6. Statement of Commitment to Council Volunteers

In order to enhance the volunteers' experience and comply with legislation and duty of care, Council will aim to:

- Interview and employ volunteers in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation.
- Provide volunteers with orientation and training.
- Provide volunteers with a healthy and safe workplace.
- Provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage for volunteers and ensure they understand the coverage provided for them.
- Not place volunteers in roles that were previously held by paid employees or have been identified as paid jobs.
- Differentiate between paid and unpaid roles.
- Define volunteer roles and develop clear role statements.

- Provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteers.
- Provide volunteers with a copy of policies pertaining to volunteers.
- Ensure volunteers are not required to take up additional work during industrial disputes or paid employees shortages.
- Provide all volunteers with information on grievance and unsatisfactory performance policies and procedures.
- Acknowledge the rights of volunteers.
- Inform volunteers of their responsibilities as volunteers and ensure that their work complements but does not undermine, the work of paid employees.
- Offer volunteers the opportunity for professional development within the scope of their role.
- Reimburse volunteers for out of pocket expenses as agreed.
- Treat volunteers as valuable team members, and advise them of opportunities to participate in decision-making; and;
- Acknowledge the contributions of volunteers.

7. Rights and Responsibilities of Council Volunteers

Volunteers assisting in the provision of Council services have the right:

- To work in a healthy and safe environment.
- To be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and antidiscrimination legislation.
- To be adequately covered by insurance.
- To be given accurate and truthful information about Brewarrina Shire Council.
- To be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses as agreed.
- To be given a copy of Brewarrina Shire Council's Volunteer Policy and any other relevant policies and procedures.
- Not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker.
- Not to do the work of paid employees during industrial disputes.
- To have a role statement and agreed working hours.
- To have access to a grievance procedure.
- To be provided with an orientation to Brewarrina Shire Council and the specific service for which the volunteer is working.
- To have personal and confidential information dealt with in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2000 and the Health Records Act 2001, in particular the Information Privacy Principles and the Health Privacy Principles contained in these Acts.
- To be provided with sufficient training to perform their role.

Volunteers assisting in the provision of Council services have a responsibility to:

- To respect and adhere to Council policies and procedures.
- To ensure a safe working environment for other volunteers paid employees, clients and members of the public.
- To provide truthful and accurate information to Council employees, other volunteers and community members.
- To perform volunteer activities in accordance with the agreed role statement and working arrangements.
- To treat Council, personal and confidential information in accordance with the Privacy Act 2000 and the Health Records Act 2001, in particular, the Information Privacy Principles and the Health Privacy Principles contained in these Acts.

- To attend orientation and other training activities as required.

8. Role of Council in Developing Volunteering

Brewarrina hosts a myriad of clubs, groups and community organisations and each add to the diversity and sustainability of community life. Every aspect of community life is enhanced by the efforts of community groups including: sporting activities, recreation and leisure pursuits, the environment, the arts, culture and heritage, education, childcare, community safety, emergency relief, social clubs and the care of the aged and of people with a disability. Many of these community groups are managed exclusively by volunteers and the services of the groups are delivered by volunteers.

Council acknowledges and supports its role in developing volunteering within the town of Brewarrina. Council, through its Volunteer Policy will work towards further developing this role with an aim to:

- Provide leadership and support to volunteer based community groups.
- Promote and encourage volunteering to the community and to the business sector.
- Raise the profile of volunteerism and of the work of voluntary community groups.
- Work in partnership and collaboration with community groups, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders to further develop volunteering opportunities.
- Advocate on matters related to volunteering.
- Establish and maintain a system of reward and recognition of the contribution made by volunteers and voluntary groups.
- Facilitate access for community groups to information, expert advice, and training to further develop their leadership, management and operational skills.
- Ensure community groups have access to Council resources and facilities on a fair and equitable basis.

Councils Vision

A diverse, vibrant, and proud town focused on people-based places, environmentally sustainable practices, and opportunities to enhance community health and wellbeing through education, responsive services and participation in community life.

Values – The Brewarrina Way

Staff at Brewarrina Shire Council will be guided in their behaviour and conduct in the delivery of its services by the values listed below:

Respect
This includes the promotion of: inclusiveness, empathy, communication, good will.

Integrity
This includes the promotion of: honesty, loyalty, ethical behaviour, trustworthiness.

Courage
This includes the promotion of innovation, considered risk, creativity, problem solving, initiative, accountability, responsibility.

Our Principles and Values

Council's most important role is to govern for everyone. Therefore, we will provide local leadership and govern based on a set of guiding principles and values that are at the core of all our activities.

Active Engagement and Inclusion

Council will actively engage and encourage diverse local communities and individuals to participate in the life, activities and decision making in the town.

Advocacy

Council will strive to bring the needs, strengths and opportunities of our diverse community to the attention of government, business and other organisations, to have them acted upon in the interests of the community.

Equality

Everyone will be treated equally and awarded every human right and responsibility.

Equity and Accessibility

Council will work to make the town a fair place by addressing people's restrictions or barriers to accessing services, opportunities and resources.

Partnership

Council will seek to strengthen the trust and confidence of our community partners. We will work closely with groups, organisations and communities to achieve a shared vision.

Public Service

Council takes its obligations of working for the community seriously. Council will strive to ensure all activities are planned, designed and implemented in the public interest by balancing and responding to changing needs, strengths and opportunities in a manner that is sustainable.

Respect

Council will be respectful and treat with dignity all people, ideas, beliefs and lifestyles.

Transparency and Accountability

Council will ensure all its processes, decisions and actions are carried out in an honest and transparent manner, and are open to regular public monitoring and scrutiny.

Accountabilities

Managers, Coordinators and Supervisors

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace as far as is practicable for volunteers to perform their role for Council.
- Provide volunteers with induction and ongoing supervision.
- Provide volunteers with all necessary safety information, instruction, personal protective clothing and equipment.
- Provide training to volunteers where required.
- Treat volunteers as valuable team members, inform and consult them on matters that

affect their work and acknowledge their contributions.
- Report incidents involving volunteers to Organisational Development.
- Provide advice to departments engaging volunteers on the requirements in Councils' Police Check and Working with Children Check policies
- Ensure an appropriate level of insurance coverage for volunteers engaged by MCC.
- Provide guidance to supervisors in developing and assessing safe work procedures for volunteer roles.
- Retain confidential volunteer documents according to privacy principles. (e.g., registration form, confirmation of police check form etc)

Volunteers
- Comply with all relevant Council policies and procedures.
- Work in a safe manner at all times.
- Provide truthful and accurate information to Council employees, other volunteers and community members.
- Perform volunteer activities in accordance with the agreed role statement and working arrangements.
- Treat Council, personal and confidential information in accordance with any legislation or Council Policy
- Attend orientation and other training activities as required.