



Volunteer Handbook

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Acknowledgement of Country

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land – the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk people. We recognise the importance and ongoing part that all Indigenous people hold in our community and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

Welcome to Volunteering with HRCC

Thank you for offering your time and skills to volunteer with Horsham Rural City Council (HRCC). As a volunteer, you help to provide services that make our community stronger.

This handbook provides information about volunteering with us. This handbook should clarify expectations and responsibilities about being a HRCC volunteer.

HRCC Volunteer Policy

Horsham Rural City Council believes volunteers are an important community resource and actively incorporates their assistance in the provision of some services to the community. Volunteers bring knowledge, skills, networks and experience to programs and services, actively forming a bridge between Council and the community, enabling Council to extend both budget and resources, promoting better outcomes and enhancing the health and wellbeing of the community.

Volunteering Opportunities at HRCC

HRCC provides a variety of different services including Maternal and Child Health, Engineering, Planning, Urban Design, Community Safety, Communications and Events.

Not all HRCC service areas are supported by volunteers, but wherever possible we are committed to offering opportunities to volunteer.

Opportunities for volunteering at HRCC include:

- Horsham Town Hall
- Horsham Regional Art Gallery
- Visitor Information Centre
- Multiple Births Program
- Emergency Volunteer Program

Volunteering makes a positive difference to the community. It also provides benefits to volunteers, as it offers opportunities to:

- feel a sense of achievement in making a contribution
- boost confidence and use strengths
- forge new friendships and build networks
- develop skills and experiences
- challenge yourself in a supportive environment
- have fun and enjoy yourself.

HRCC's Vision and Values

HRCC vision:

A progressive and innovative organisation, delivering high quality and sustainable services.

HRCC values, that volunteers must demonstrate:

Flexibility

We are adaptable to different circumstances.

Accountability

We are responsible for our behavior and actions.

Integrity

We are ethical, transparent and honest in our conduct.

Respect

We value diversity and appreciate others and will not tolerate sexual or other forms of harassment.

Looking After Our Children and Mandatory Reporting

Everyone has a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children.

It is mandatory to report suspected or actual child sexual abuse in Victoria. Failure to disclose is a criminal offence and applies to **all adults** not just professionals who work with children.

HRCC is a Child Safe Organisation. Volunteers are expected to abide by HRCC's Child Safe Code of Conduct (Located on *myvolunteerpage*).

Contact numbers:

If a child is in immediate danger phone 000

Otherwise call Child Protection on 1800 075 599

Afterhours Child Protection 13 12 78

To speak with a Horsham Rural City staff member please call 5382 9777 and ask for a staff member in one of the following roles:

- Manager Community Services and Safety
- Director Communities and Place

Concerns of Corruption or Improper Conduct by Staff

HRCC is committed to the aims and objectives of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (Whistleblower), and recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices.

If you have concerns corruption or conduct concerns about a staff member or area of Council please do not be afraid to report it. You will be protected by law if you make a disclosure.

People at HRCC that you can contact:

The Public Interest Disclosures Co-ordinator

Chief Executive, 03 5382 9720.

Public Interest Disclosures Officer

Director Corporate Services, 03 5382 9785.

The Welfare Manager

Human Resources Lead, 03 5382 9719.

Or you may contact the Ombudsman.

Victorian Ombudsman (03) 9613 6222 / 1800 806 314

Principles, Rights and Responsibilities

Principles of Volunteering

- benefits the community and the volunteer
- is unpaid
- is always a matter of choice
- is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances
- is not a substitute for paid work
- does not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers
- is a legitimate way in which people can participate in the activities of their community
- respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- promotes human rights and equality.

Volunteer Rights

These include, to:

- be acknowledged as a valuable contributor to programs and objectives
- be informed of whom you are accountable to
- be well supervised and supported in your role
- have a safe and healthy volunteering environment
- have insurance cover by Council
- refuse an activity at any time that is not part of your role
- a dedicated role description
- be consulted and/or informed on significant changes that affect you or your volunteering
- have access to how grievances and disputes will be managed
- receive communication about the program and your involvement
- be inducted into the team and organisation
- not fill a previously paid position or be deployed during industrial disputes
- receive a reimbursement or honorarium for approved out-of-pocket expenses.

Volunteer Responsibilities

These include, to:

- meet HRCC volunteer registration and induction requirements as may be applicable
- undertake screening checks as required
- be reliable and punctual
- advise if you cannot make your shift as soon as possible
- practice confidentiality
- conduct specified roles as instructed
- be accountable for your actions
- be willing to accept supervision
- wear your program uniform or ID tag when volunteering
- record your start and end times at each shift into the log provided
- be committed to the role being undertaken
- undertake mandatory training
- undertake other professional development opportunities as appropriate to your role and your capacity to do so
- ask for support when required
- give as much notice as possible when no longer able to continue volunteering
- value and support other team members
- do not speak to the media on behalf of HRCC, if media approach volunteers they must report that to their supervisor
- conduct the agreed work responsibly and ethically.

General Information

Screening Checks

All HRCC volunteers need to have a Working with Children Check. References will need to be provided for some volunteer roles with HRCC.

Depending on your volunteer role you may be required to undergo a Police Check. Volunteers who have resided overseas for more than 12 months in the past 10 years must obtain an international criminal police check. Where this is not possible two references of people who knew the volunteer during this time must be provided.

Position descriptions will clearly outline which checks are required for each role. HRCC will pay if there is a cost.

Supervision

Volunteers will be assigned a supervisor when they apply for a volunteering role. Your supervisor will be your first point of contact for any aspect of your volunteering.

Your supervisor's name and contact details will be outlined in your volunteer role description.

Training

Volunteers will need to attend an induction prior to and whilst volunteering with HRCC. This will ensure that you are:

- familiar with the environment in which you will volunteer
- understand the responsibilities and duties of your role
- have the information you need to safely volunteer at HRCC.

There may be some program-specific training. For some volunteers certain training will be mandatory. Volunteers may also choose to participate in optional training sessions that are offered.

Introductory Periods for Volunteers

All volunteers will be subject to an introductory period. During this time, there will be extra support and feedback available from the supervisor and there may be mentoring from an experienced volunteer.

At the end of the introductory period volunteers will meet with their supervisor and together assess their ongoing suitability of the role.

Volunteer Managers

Each volunteer program is coordinated by a Volunteer Manager. These roles will be filled by a HRCC staff member.

Volunteer Managers will be the primary contact for volunteers in their respective programs. Volunteer Managers will securely store some personal information about volunteers that is necessary for participation as a volunteer with HRCC.

Volunteer Performance

It is expected that all volunteers will maintain a high standard of conduct and performance, adhere to regulations around health and safety, confidentiality and privacy, and observe standards of equity and fairness in dealing with the public, staff and other volunteers.

If a volunteer's performance falls below an acceptable standard, supervisors may provide encouragement through additional training, support and mentoring. In exceptional circumstances, after ongoing unsatisfactory performance or misconduct you may be advised that you are no longer required as a volunteer.

Appearance, presentation and language

Volunteers must dress in a neat, clean and appropriate manner. Please make use of any uniform, badges or personal protective equipment.

Please be conscious about the topic and tone of any discussions which can, or could, be overheard by others and ensure language and behavior is respectful, professional and courteous.

Attendance/absence from duties

Where possible, please advise your supervisor at least 48 hours prior to a shift if you are unable to attend. Some areas may allow volunteers to swap shifts.

Please be mindful that last minute cancellations can have a significant impact on clients, volunteers and other staff.

Signing in and out of shifts

Volunteers are required to sign in and out. This can be done via the volunteering portal or another way, agreed with your supervisor. HRCC keeps records of the hours that volunteers donate/contribute. This process also assists with safety and our insurance in the event of a fire, emergency or accident.

Breaks from duty

Breaks depend on the context of your role and you will be treated with the same courtesy and respect as staff. You will find out more in your induction.

Smoking Policy

Horsham Rural City Council is a smoke and vape-free environment. There is no smoking or vaping within 10 metres of Council buildings.

Reimbursements for Volunteers

Volunteers are entitled to reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering. Volunteers should pre-arrange reimbursement prior to incurring the cost. A Volunteer Claim for Reimbursement form should be submitted with all receipts and/or tax invoices.

Photographic Consent

As part of your induction as a volunteer with HRCC you will be offered to sign a photographic consent form. If you choose to sign the form this will give HRCC permission to take your photo as part of organisational or volunteer activities and use it in media publications.

Mobile Phones

For some volunteering tasks a mobile phone might be used. If you do not own a mobile phone, HRCC might be able to allocate one to you so that you can perform your role. Volunteers are asked to limit the personal use of their mobile phone while on shift, and to refrain from allowing mobile phone use from interfering with their tasks.

Driving

Volunteers may be asked to drive their vehicle as part of their volunteering role. If you volunteer to drive, we will require proof that:

- you have a valid driver's licence

- the vehicle is covered by at least third party insurance
- Victorian road rules are followed
- you do not drive if you are affected by a medical condition or medication/s which may affect your judgment and/or ability to be in charge of a motor vehicle.

Alcohol and Drug use

Volunteers are asked not to present themselves for duty whilst under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug.

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs by volunteers at any time when on duty is prohibited. Any person whom a supervisor might consider is under the immediate influence of alcohol and drug use will be prevented or relieved from duty on that occasion.

Employee Assistance Program

HRCC subscribes to an assistance program that offers confidential counselling and support. Volunteers are able to access this service. Please note this can be about any life issue, not just in relation to your volunteering role. More information can be found in the files on *myvolunteerpage*.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Privacy Act 2000 governs any personal information Council collects from volunteers.

Horsham Rural City Council is committed to protecting your privacy. Any personal information provided by you will only

be used to facilitate your participation in Council's volunteer program. Your personal information will be stored on a web-based system which meets all provisions under Victorian Privacy regulations. Your information will not be disclosed to any external party without your consent, unless required or authorised by law. We can archive your details on the database at any time on your request.

The HRCC records department will securely retain a copy of any working with children check, referee or other checks, induction paperwork and the details of any check in sessions. You may request to see information that we have about you, at any time.

Confidentiality

Volunteers need to know the basic rules of confidentiality and be prepared to follow them. They are:

- Keep information that could identify someone private
- Ensure confidential information is not given to anyone outside the group or organisation
- Be sensitive to what level of information is shared to achieve a task
- Information should only be passed on with the permission of the person concerned
- Information learned during your volunteering role must always remain confidential, even if you are no longer volunteering

- Volunteers need to be cautious with their own personal information.

Disclosure of Information

Although it is very important to maintain confidentiality, people need to be kept safe from any kind of harm. There are three instances when a breach of confidentiality may be necessary, and acceptable without the individual's consent. These are:

- Where required by law to divulge specific information (eg. if the volunteer is involved in legal proceedings)
- If there is a threat of harm or injury to people
- For the mandatory reporting of breaches of child safety (see section on child safety for more information).

Internet Use and Social Media

HRCC has a social media and internet policy that applies to volunteers. The main points are:

- Do not share photographs of volunteering on social media unless specifically approved by your supervisor or director.
- If accessing the internet as part of your role, please abide by the Internet Acceptable Use Policy. A copy of this policy is available on request or will be provided when you are given a HRCC login.

Media Disclosure

In any situation where you might be approached for comment by the media, you should advise that you are not authorised to make comments on behalf of HRCC and refrain from expressing personal opinions on Council activities.

Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

HRCC is committed to the provision of volunteer opportunities and wants the volunteer experience to be free from any discrimination, harassment or bullying. Similarly, those who interact with HRCC and its volunteers are entitled to expect that they will not be discriminated against, harassed or bullied by any person representing HRCC, which includes its volunteers.

HRCC recognises and encourages gender equality, diversity and inclusivity, and strives to be equitable. We value all individuals across our organisation.

What to do if you Experience Harassment

Anybody who experiences or observes harassment, discrimination or bullying is encouraged to either:

- inform the offender that the behaviour is offensive and unacceptable, and / or,
- report the issue to your supervisor.

Resolution of Complaints, Grievances and Issues of Concern

HRCC will treat all complaints confidentially, seriously and empathetically. Volunteers will not be penalised, disadvantaged or victimised if raising concerns or complaints.

Resolution Process

If issues can be resolved initially between parties involved it will not be escalated. If this is not the case the volunteer supervisor will attempt to resolve the conflict. If this is not possible the issue or complaint will be escalated to each level of hierarchy at HRCC, including managers, directors and the CEO.

Risk management

HRCC has a duty to provide a safe environment. There are established risk mitigation procedures in place to ensure that risks are minimised. Volunteers have an important role to play as they can help to identify issues by reporting anything of concern to their supervisor.

Insurance for volunteers

HRCC's insurance policy covers volunteers while they are carrying out authorised volunteering duties. You will be expected to:

- comply with relevant legislation
- undertake necessary training
- follow instruction
- adhere to guidelines
- abide by procedures
- only act in the scope of your role
- take care to prevent injury or damage to property
- stop and check, if unsure

HRCCs insurance covers a volunteer until the age of 90. However, the amount of cover significantly decreases after 85 years. Persons in this age group need to understand this when volunteering.

The Council's personal accident insurance policy will only cover:

- non-Medicare expenses
- income loss benefit
- pay-out in the unfortunate event of severe accident or disablement (amount paid will depend on the extent and type of injury sustained)

The volunteer is unlikely to receive insurance cover if they are:

- acting out of scope of their role
- under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs
- negligent
- breaking significantly from protocol or procedure

Corporate volunteers and Not-for-profit groups conducting voluntary activities with HRCC on behalf of their organisation, will have the appropriate insurances in place on their behalf from their own organisation.

Code Red Fire Danger Days

HRCC may cancel volunteer services on designated Code Red Fire Danger days and/or provide additional equipment, clothing and safety procedures. Your supervisor will advise.



Evacuation and Emergency Procedures

Volunteers will be provided with information about evacuation and emergency exit procedures at induction and orientation.

If you are unclear as to your required response or duties, please ask for clarification. Volunteers must adhere to the instructions of the designated emergency warden during an emergency situation.

Recognition and Thank you

At various intervals throughout the year HRCC will take time to thank you for volunteering and for supporting Council and the community. There will be different opportunities to come together and share food or a social activity. However, we want you to know, that we are grateful every day and not just on those occasions. We appreciate the great service of our volunteers in helping the community that we are all a part of and that HRCC serves. We sincerely thank you.



Volunteer Agreement

Please sign this agreement if you have read and understand the volunteer rights and responsibilities detailed in this Volunteer Handbook.

By signing below you are also agreeing to adhere to the other policies and processes outlined in this Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteer Name: _____

Volunteer Program: _____

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Supervisor Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____



Council Offices

HORSHAM:

Civic Centre, 18 Roberts Avenue,
Horsham 3400

P: (03) 5382 9777

F: (03) 5382 1111

E: council@hrcc.vic.gov.au

W: www.hrcc.vic.gov.au

Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 5pm

Postal Address:

PO Box 511, Horsham 3402

DEPOT:

Selkirk Drive, Horsham 3400

P: (03) 5382 9600

F: (03) 5382 5358

Monday to Friday – 7.30am to 4.30pm

NATIMUK:

Natimuk Community Centre,
62 Main Street, Natimuk 3402

P: (03) 5387 1304

Thursdays only – 9am to 12pm



Add TTY Dial 133 677 then ask for the number listed