Responsible Officer
Director Corporate and Community Services

References
Legislation: *South Australian Work Health and Safety Act, 2012* *Local Government Act 1999* *Children's Protection Act, 2010* *South Australia Equal Opportunity Act, 1984* *Volunteer Protection Act, 2001* *Volunteer Protection Regulations 2004* *Related Polices:* *Code of Conduct* *WHS & Injury Management Policy* *Grievance/ Dispute Resolution Policy* *Display Material Policy* *Media Statement Policy* *Social Media Policy*

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February 2024
Next Review*
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VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Introduction

Renmark Paringa Council (Council) engages volunteers to undertake duties for the benefit of the Council and its community. Volunteers must maintain high standards in assisting in the delivery of services to the community based on the principles that include acting with reasonable care, diligence, honesty, respect, integrity and transparency.

Volunteers play an integral role within society in general by initiating and enhancing the services provided by employed staff, without being a substitute for paid work.

Volunteers forge a strong bond between Council and the community and will extend and enhance services to improve the quality of community life by encouraging

- Community engagement
- Access to resources and information
- Social interaction and satisfaction
- Participation in established Council services and events

2. Purpose

This Code sets out the principles of conduct and behaviour expected and required of Council volunteers. The Code is built on Council's values that are designed to assist and provide guidance to volunteers in the fulfilment of their duties and form the foundation of trust and respect from our community.

Council's Corporate Values are:

Accountable	We take responsibility for our actions and behaviours and have confidence in each other to deliver.
Honest	We are fair and truthful in our approach to each other and the community**.**
Respectful	We respect the rules, regulation, the environment and each other.
Unified	We are one team and work together towards our common goals.

This Code is a public declaration of the principles of good conduct and standards of behaviour that Council volunteers are expected to demonstrate in the performance of their duties and functions. By consistently applying these standards of behaviour, we enhance public trust and confidence in each other.

3. Scope

This Code applies in all situations including those outside of normal business hours where a volunteer is:

- Undertaking work for Council
- Officially representing Council; and / or
- Through their volunteer activity with Council, assisting another person

4. Definitions

'Volunteer' means a person who is providing their service of their own free will, without financial reward and undertaking clearly established tasks with and on behalf of Council.

'Communication' captures all forms of communication with another person(s) and includes any verbal, written and physical forms of communication (eg telephone, radio, letter, memo, email, in person or any form of social media).

"Confidential Information' includes any decision, document or discussion which the Council has resolved to treat as confidential under section 90 of the Local Government Act 1999, any matter deemed as confidential by the management team or any information which would breach a volunteer's right to confidential protection of their personal information.

'Council' means Renmark Paringa Council.

"Gifts' or 'Benefits' means meals, tickets to concerts or events, bottles of wine or spirits, money vouchers, discounts, accommodation or any item which may be interpreted or considered as payment or an expression of gratitude for a service provided, or to enhance/build a relationship which may be considered advantageous to the person providing the gift or benefit.

'Media' means all forms of the public media and press including television, radio, newspapers and other publications.

'Member of Council' means the Mayor and all Elected Members of Council.

'Resources' means all property of Council, consumables, plant (eg vehicles) and equipment (eg computers, photocopiers) and facilities (eg telephones, internet access).

'Social Media' includes web and mobile based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organisations, communities, and individuals. Social media can include text, audio, video, image, podcasts and other multimedia communications.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Volunteers must act in a fair, honest and proper manner according to the law.

Volunteers therefore agree:

- To acknowledge the work undertaken by paid staff and other volunteers,
- To apply reasonable, just and non-discriminatory behaviour in all aspects of carrying out their activities,
- That their actions are to be undertaken in good faith and not for improper or ulterior motive,
- To behave in a manner that maintains and enhances the image of Council and does not reflect adversely on Council.

5.2 Volunteers must act with reasonable care and be diligent in the performance of their activities.

Volunteers therefore agree to:

- Respect and adhere to Council policies and procedures,
- Observe and have respect for lawful policies, decisions and practices of Council,
- Be aware of the effectiveness and efficiency of activities and service delivery for which they contribute,
- The proper and responsible use of Council resources,
- Work according to WHS policy in a safe, healthy and professional manner that does not endanger own safety or health or that of others.

5.3 Volunteers must be fair and honest in their dealings with others and behave in a manner that facilitates constructive communication.

Volunteers therefore agree to:

- Honestly and fairly deal with internal and external stakeholders, other external parties and members of the community,
- Act in a courteous and sensitive manner that does not discriminate against people,
- Be aware and disclose any situation that may create a tension between their volunteer and private citizen roles,
- Provide truthful and accurate information to Council employees, other volunteers and community members,
- Notify appropriate staff of any personal changes which may affect their volunteer role, ie changes in health status, personal details, availability, loss of licenses etc.

5.4 Volunteers will establish a working relationship with paid staff and other volunteers that recognises and respects the diversity of opinion and achieves the best possible outcomes for the community.

Volunteers therefore agree to:

- Operate respectfully under the direction and supervision of Council staff to achieve the outcomes and outputs required,
- Conduct the relationship with courtesy and respect,
- Behave in a manner that seeks to establish mature and constructive relationships, the right of all points of views to be heard,
- Accept and take reasonable directions from the volunteer supervisor,
- Promote a positive image of the Council whilst performing their duties.

5.5 Volunteers who obtain information in the course of carrying out their volunteering activities must respect and use such information in a careful and prudent manner.

Volunteers therefore agree:

- That the information obtained as a result of their activity with Council is not to be used for any purpose other than Council business,
- That any information provided to others that is related to Council or Council decisions should be accurate and not a misuse of information,
- To respect and maintain confidentiality.

6. Personal Health

To minimise personal strain or injury, volunteers must report relevant health changes to their supervisor before commencing duties or as soon as practicable after any change or injury occurs.

Volunteers should be realistic about the workload of any volunteer commitment. Flexible programs allow for individual negotiation of hours.

7. Working Relationships

Members of Council, employees and volunteers will achieve the best outcomes for the community by working together as a team and must treat members of the community and each other with respect, courtesy and sensitivity. They should, at all times, act reasonably, justly and in a non-discriminatory manner.

8.Gifts or other Benefits

On occasion volunteers may be offered gifts as a thankyou whether from staff or customers. Volunteers may accept gifts up to the value of $30.00. If the value of the gift is over $30.00 the volunteer is to notify their supervisor, for the gift to be noted in Council's Gift Register.

9. Use of Organisational Resources

Volunteers are provided with the appropriate resources to undertake their duties and responsibilities. These resources are not provided for the private use of the volunteer and cannot be used by the volunteer for private activities unless specifically stated or documented to the volunteer.

Volunteers should at all times:

- Be honest in the use of Council resources of all kinds,
- Seek to use such resources effectively and appropriately in the performance of duties in a proper and responsible manner in accordance with Council policies,
- Advise their supervisor if materials/resources are being used away from Council premises and cannot be returned immediately.

It is particularly important to note that Council's Information Technology Policies set out the responsibilities of employees and volunteers in relation to the access of electronic communication including e-mail, internet and telephone system, and the electronic resources and services emanating from or within Council.

10. Conflict of Interest
No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the organisation, whether personal, philosophical or financial shall be accepted as a volunteer with Council.

11. Dress Code and Name Badges
Council volunteers are issued with a polo shirt to wear while on duty and where relevant, volunteers must wear identification and personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed.

- Council issue name badges to be worn when on duty,
- Volunteers are required to dress in a neat and presentable fashion in accordance with the activities in which they are authorised to perform,
- Thongs are not acceptable footwear,
- Where PPE is supplied, the PPE must be worn while carrying out duties which require PPE.

12. Communication and the Media
All documents and correspondence (including emails) are potentially publicly available under the state Records Act and Freedom of Information Act or "discoverable" for the purpose of litigation. Care should be taken to ensure that the content meets corporate standards and that documents are professional in their nature and content, as every document could be exposed to public scrutiny.

Staff and volunteers are not permitted to liaise with media on behalf of Council.

The CEO and Mayor are responsible for maintaining all media relationships.

13. Confidentiality and Restrictions
Volunteers often have access to, or are provided with, information that may need to be considered or treated confidentially. Such information should be handled in a careful and prudent manner, and the interest of the community must be balanced with the potential for damage if confidentiality is not maintained.

It is illegal if information is used or disclosed in a way that may:

- Cause significant damage or distress to a person
- Cause significant damage to the interests of Council
- Confer a commercial or financial advantage or disadvantage on a person

This means that great care must be taken with information that volunteers access in the course of Council business.

14. Alcohol / Drugs
The possession or being under the influence of any illegal drugs or the abuse of prescription drugs or alcohol during volunteer working hours is prohibited and can result in Council suspending or withdrawing volunteer engagement.

Such activity can adversely affect the safety and well-being of fellow volunteers, Council employees, the public and the individual.

15. Liaison with other Agencies
To eliminate possible misunderstanding when encountering other agencies, volunteers should indicate that they represent Council as a volunteer.

16. Compliance
This Code must be read and acknowledged by volunteers during their induction prior to commencing training within a volunteer role.

Non-compliance with the Code is treated seriously by Council. If it is reported or observed that a volunteer has acted in a manner that is contrary to the principles and standards established by this Code, an investigation will be undertaken and, where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.

In the event of alleged non-compliance with this Code the following will apply:

- Allegations of non-compliance shall be directed to the supervisor and/or Manager People and Corporate
- The matter shall be investigated and resolved following the process outlined in the Grievance Resolution Policy,

Any investigation undertaken will be kept confidential.