



City of  
Mount Gambier



# Volunteer Management Plan

## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

**We acknowledge the Boandik peoples  
as the Traditional Custodians  
of the land on which we gather today.**

We respect the spiritual relationship with the land  
and recognise the deep feelings of attachment  
our First Nations people have with the land.

Cultural design elements by Belinda Bonney – a Meintangk/Boandik/Ngarindjeri/Kooma, Murniwarri woman who lives on Boandik Country.



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# Introduction

## Defining Volunteering

### What is Volunteering?

*Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain* (Volunteering Australia, 2015).

This definition recognises that there are many ways people give their time, service or skills, including:

- formal volunteering that takes place within organisations (including institutions and agencies); and
- informal volunteering (volunteering that takes place outside an organisational setting).

While the vast majority of volunteering is undertaken by individuals, this definition also recognises that entities also can volunteer, as they can donate employee time.

Volunteering generally does not include paid activities or those linked to some other obligation. For example, caring for family members and domestic duties, paid work, training programs and work experience are not considered volunteering.

### Types of volunteering

**Formal volunteering** includes activities within an organisation, club or group. It usually involves a level of structure, support or management.

**Spontaneous volunteering** includes activities that happen without planning. It often occurs during or immediately after an event – for example responding to an accident or a natural disaster.

**Workplace volunteering (or corporate volunteering)** includes activities where an employer supports staff to offer professional skills or practical supports to others during work or paid time. It is one way that businesses might choose to “give back” to community.

**Virtual volunteering** includes activities performed online. Communications and social media, fundraising and advocacy are common forms of virtual volunteering.

**Informal volunteering** includes activities outside of an organisation and often involves a private arrangement - for example looking after a neighbour's children, house or pets or providing personal help.

### Valuing volunteering

As outlined in the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia, volunteering plays a key role in sustaining healthy, resilient communities and contributes significantly to the quality and vibrancy of our society.

Volunteers of the City of Mount Gambier get personal satisfaction from giving back and making a difference to our community. They feel that volunteering gives them a sense of purpose and opportunity to socialise, network and connect with others in the community.

There are organisations within the City of Mount Gambier who benefit from volunteering. Organisations that use volunteers have access to a wider pool of skills and experience. Volunteers are an important resource and support, with many organisations being unable to survive without the commitment of their volunteers.

Members of our community also benefit from volunteering. Volunteering helps build social networks, increase shared values and strengthens social cohesion. People who volunteer are more likely to take part in other aspects of community life. Communities that harness volunteers are more resilient.

This Volunteer Management Plan aims to improve the experience of our volunteers, enhance outcomes for volunteer involving organisations and supports our community to reach a higher volunteer participation rate.

## Policy Context

### Local Context

Strategic Document	
City of Mount Gambier Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024	<p>Goal 1, Our People, brings together five key themes that affect our people – whether they live, work, study or visit the City of Mount Gambier.</p> <p>Within this, Council commits to developing a Volunteer Management Plan to maximise the benefit of volunteering to the community for those who choose to donate their time to Council.</p>
City of Mount Gambier Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024	<p>One of the key focus areas outlined in our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is to promote skill development for individuals with disabilities through volunteering and support to navigate the pathway between learning and earning. Council's goal is to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to inclusive places of study, and that education and training provides them with pathways to meaningful and inclusive employment and volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>To achieve this goal, Council is committed to partnering with relevant agencies to create volunteering and employment opportunities for people living with disabilities. Through these partnerships, we aim to provide the necessary support and resources to help individuals with disabilities develop their skills, gain experience, and access opportunities that will enable them to lead fulfilling and rewarding lives.</p>
City of Mount Gambier Regional Public Health Plan 2021 – 2026	<p>Council's Regional Public Health Plan recognises the benefit that volunteering can provide to personal health and wellbeing. The Plan also highlights that the level of volunteering can be indicative of the cohesiveness of the community.</p> <p>With this in mind, the Regional Public Health Plan further endorses Council's commitment to developing a Volunteer Management Plan and the importance of volunteer programs for our community. It highlights Council's commitment to providing ongoing assistance to a number of local services through a unique corporate volunteering program which connects staff to a range of key local service providers during times of need.</p>
City of Mount Gambier Sport Recreation and Open Space Strategy	<p>The vision for Open Space across the City of Mount Gambier is to: Create a network of accessible and connected high quality open spaces that encourage a range of physical activities and social opportunities for the Mount Gambier community.</p> <p>In line with this vision, one of the six guiding principles that support this strategy acknowledges the important role that volunteers play in our community with a commitment to ensure that our sport and recreation facilities are inclusive,</p>

fit for purpose, and share resources to reduce the burden on our volunteers.

### South Australian Policy Context

The Volunteering Strategy for South Australia is a 'world first' partnership agreement that has been collaboratively developed, is sector-led, and has cross-sector support.

The State Government committed to continue to support this second Volunteering Strategy for a further 6 years (2021 – 2027) and ensure the partnerships sustained focus and commitment to the volunteering sector with a particular emphasis on growing and supporting volunteering in South Australia.

There are four focus areas outlined within the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia, with underpinning work to progress them:

1. Invest in the foundations of volunteering – build the capability of volunteer involving organisations to inclusively engage, training and support volunteers.
2. Communicate the benefits of volunteering – raise the profile of volunteering in the community to encourage greater participation.
3. Implement leading practice and high quality standards – organisations have access to relevant information, resources and networks to establish effective management practices.
4. Continuous Improvement – continue to build relationships, networks and partnerships to maintain the impact of volunteering on our communities.

The Local Government Association of SA is party to this partnership with a commitment for local government to support the initiatives within this Strategy.

### National Policy Context

In Australia, the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023 – 2033 is the main national policy statement on volunteering. The strategy includes three inter-connected focus areas, each with a clear aim, as a framework for the National Strategy for Volunteering:

1. Individual Potential and the Volunteer Experience — volunteering is safe, inclusive, accessible, meaningful, and not exploitative.
2. Community and Social Impact — the diversity and impact of volunteering is articulated and celebrated.
3. Conditions for Volunteering to Thrive — the right conditions are in place for volunteering to be effective and sustainable.

The purpose of the National Strategy for Volunteering is to guide the actions needed to achieve a better future for volunteering. It sets out the desired outcomes for volunteering in Australia over the next ten years. It provides a clear and compelling case, underpinned by robust data and evidence, for targeted and sufficient investment in volunteering and celebration of the role it plays in creating thriving communities.

In addition, the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement exist to help organisations:

- Incorporate the values and maximise the benefits of volunteer involvement;
- Develop effective volunteer involvement strategies and practices;
- Involve volunteers in meaningful and useful activities that contribute to the outcomes of the organisation's work;

- Ensure the rights of volunteers are protected and that they are supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

City of Mount Gambier has utilised the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement as a foundation and framework to inform that actions contained within this Volunteer Management Plan.

## State of Volunteering

Across Australia, more than half of adult Australians volunteered formally through an organisation or informally in the community in the period leading up to April 2022. In South Australia alone, volunteers are estimated to have an economic impact of \$5 billion with over 900,000 South Australians engaging in some kind of formal or informal volunteering. However, the rate of formal volunteering has been declining for decades and in Mount Gambier we are not immune to this impact.

While Mount Gambier has had a relatively strong volunteering profile, (compared with State and National averages) since 2016 we have seen a significant decline in the rate of formal volunteering according to ABS Census data.

**Table 1: Percentage of Population (people aged 15 years and over) that did voluntary work through an organisation or group (last 12 months)**

	City of Mount Gambier	South Australia	Australia
2021 Census*	16.8%	17%	14.1%
2016 Census	22.1%	21.4%	19%
2011 Census	22.2%	19.8%	17.8%

(Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2021, 2016 & 2011)

The National Strategy for Volunteering reports that several factors are responsible for this decline (across Australia), many which relate to challenges people face in their broader lives such as being time poor or having to balance paid work and unpaid care.

Decreased participation in formal volunteering creates significant challenges for volunteer involving organisations and for the general population, with many critical services such as emergency management, 24-hour helplines and food security programs being heavily dependent on volunteer involvement.

COVID-19 also had significant impacts on rates of volunteering. Whilst many people continued to volunteer during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabled through organisational innovation and individual resilience, overall, there was a dramatic decrease in volunteering levels.

City of Mount Gambier has established volunteer programs across many of its programs and services, including:

- Advisory Groups
- Community Events
- Library
- Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre
- ReUse Market
- Valley Lake Conservation Park

\*In 2021, 16.8% of City of Mount Gambier residents reporting performing voluntary work, which was consistent with the rate of volunteering across South Australia at 17% (2021 ABS Census).



## Volunteer Management Plan

The Volunteer Management Plan has been broken down into four key focus areas, with deliverables over a three year timeframe. The focus areas are a further consolidation of our required actions against the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, with some additional actions determined necessary by City of Mount Gambier.

The key focus areas are as follows:

- Key focus area 1: Leadership and Governance
- Key focus area 2: Integration and Planning
- Key focus area 3: Support and Development
- Key focus area 4: Quality Management and Continuous Improvement

### Key focus area 1: Leadership and Governance

The City of Mount Gambier understands the importance of a positive culture of volunteer involvement within our organisation. To achieve this, our organisation will demonstrate leadership in promoting and embracing volunteering, while implementing efficient management systems to support the engagement of volunteers. By aligning our commitment to volunteer involvement with our strategic direction, we aim to create a cohesive and impactful volunteer program that benefits the volunteer, our community and our organisation.

Council will:

- 1.1. Develop a City of Mount Gambier Volunteer Policy that outlines our philosophy and formal commitment to volunteering and is endorsed by Council.
- 1.2. Ensure all Council policies, principles, and procedures that have application to volunteers reflect this.
- 1.3. Centralise the management of volunteer files and data, utilising CM9 and SkyTrust to ensure appropriate management of personal and confidential information.
- 1.4. Develop a process and approach for the development of volunteer partnerships and associated compliance requirements.

### Key focus area 2: Integration and Planning

The City of Mount Gambier will focus on the inclusion of volunteers in overall organisational planning and budgeting processes to ensure their integration into the broader workforce. This focus area aims to recognise the value and contributions of volunteers by incorporating them into the organisation's strategic plans and allocating resources for their support.

- 2.1. Ensure volunteers are captured in organisational planning and budgetary processes by implementing the Volunteer Management Plan.
- 2.2. Include volunteers in Council's Workforce Management Plan and ensure adequate funds annually for volunteer registration requirements, recognition, and training.
- 2.3. Update Council's website to provide information about volunteer opportunities and associated volunteer programs.
- 2.4. Develop an induction program that is consistent across the organisation and includes necessary site, role, and WH&S requirements.
- 2.5. Develop a process for recording volunteer hours and participation.

### Key focus area 3: Support and Development

The City of Mount Gambier will focus on supporting and developing volunteers within the organisation. This focus area emphasises the important role of our volunteer managers and ensuring that they are provided the necessary resources, training, and recognition to empower volunteers and enhance their experience. It is also about supporting and developing volunteers so that they feel safe, fulfilled and recognised for their valuable contribution.

- 3.1. Develop and implement role descriptions for volunteers ensuring their role responsibilities and requirements are clear and well documented and that a diverse



range of volunteering roles are available to be inclusive of a diverse volunteer workforce.

- 3.2. Ensure roles with volunteer management responsibilities are reflected in position descriptions and provide relevant training, capacity, and support.
- 3.3. Provide opportunities for professional development to volunteers.
- 3.4. Ensure volunteers have the capacity to report hazards and incidents.
- 3.5. Develop a volunteer recognition program.

#### Key focus area 4: Quality Management and Continuous Improvement

Once the foundations and a framework are in place for effective volunteer involvement, focus area 4 ensures that City of Mount Gambier has a system of good practice, review and continuous improvement to ensure the sustainability and ongoing effectiveness of the volunteer program. It also provides the foundation for leadership to our community on effective volunteer involvement.

- 4.1. Develop appropriate procedures that guide the organisation regarding recruitment, selection, induction, onboarding, performance management, and reimbursement for volunteers.
- 4.2. Centralise the management of the volunteer program with a dedicated resource to ensure quality management and continuous improvement.
- 4.3. Provide regular formal and informal opportunities for volunteers to provide feedback.
- 4.4. Incorporate volunteers in Council's Risk Framework.

#### How will we know we have succeeded?

At the end of each year of the plan, City of Mount Gambier will measure its performance against the following performance indicators in order to measure success:

- City of Mount Gambier has implemented the recommendations of the Volunteer Management Plan.
- City of Mount Gambier will improve its completion rate, against the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, to at least 75% by the end of Year 3.
- Through seeking regular feedback, City of Mount Gambier will maintain a volunteer satisfaction score of at least 90%.
- City of Mount Gambier will have introduced new volunteer programs and increased its volunteer workforce by the end of Year 3.

## Volunteer Management Plan – Implementation Framework

Volunteer Management Plan 2023 - 2026			
Key Focus Areas	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<b>I. LEADERSHIP &amp; GOVERNANCE</b> We will align our commitment to volunteer involvement with our strategic direction, resulting in the development of a cohesive and impactful volunteer program that benefits the individual volunteer, our community and organisation.	Develop City of Mount Gambier Volunteer Policy.  Centralise management of volunteer files and data.	Audit relevant Council Principles and Procedures to reflect application to volunteers (where applicable).  Develop process and approach for volunteer partnerships  Include volunteers in Council's Workforce Management Plan.	
<b>II. INTEGRATION &amp; PLANNING</b> We will enhance the recognition of the value and contributions of volunteers by incorporating them into our organisation's strategic plans and allocating dedicated resources to support their efforts.	Capture volunteers in organisational planning and budgetary processes by implementing the Volunteer Management Plan.  Develop process for recording volunteer hours and participation.  Develop and implement volunteer induction and onboarding program.	Update Council's website	
<b>III. SUPPORT &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b> We will ensure that our volunteer managers are equipped with the necessary resources, training, and recognition to effectively support and develop our volunteers, fostering a safe, fulfilling, and recognised environment for their valuable contributions.	Ensure volunteer coordination responsibilities are captured in staff PDs.  Ensure volunteers have capacity to report incidents & hazards.  Develop & implement role descriptions for volunteers	Provide Volunteer Coordinators with training & development.  Extend applicable training & development activities to volunteers.  Develop and implement volunteer recognition program.	Develop professional development program for volunteers.
<b>IV. QUALITY MANAGEMENT &amp; CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b> We will implement a system of good practice, review, and continuous improvement to ensure the sustainability and ongoing effectiveness of our volunteer program.		Incorporate volunteers in Council's Risk Framework.  Develop volunteer procedures for recruitment, selection, induction, onboarding, performance management & reimbursement.  Centralise the volunteer program with a dedicated resource.	Consider strategy and approach to enhance volunteering in our community.  Provide regular formal opportunities for volunteers to provide feedback.