

Fact Sheet

Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Updated: Nov 2018

Volunteer Rights

As a volunteer you have the right:

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

It is important to note that volunteers are not covered by awards or work-place agreements, however volunteers do have rights, some of which are legislated, such as occupational, health and safety, and anti-discrimination laws, and others which are considered the moral obligations of organisations involving volunteers.

Volunteer Involving Organisations provide different experiences for volunteers. Apart from legal obligations, it is up to each organisation how they will recruit, support and acknowledge their volunteers.

Volunteer Responsibilities

When you sign up as a volunteer, along with your rights, you also have responsibilities to the organisation you have chosen to volunteer with.

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- work in a healthy and safe environment
- be recruited in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- be engaged in a meaningful role that adds value to the organisation's purpose and goals
- receive relevant induction, training, supervision and feedback to fully understand and carry out your role safely and effectively
- be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation you work with
- be adequately covered by the organisation's insurance

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Volunteer Responsibilities cont...

- have a position description, agreed working hours, reasonable workload and clear tasks
- be trusted with confidential information if necessary for your role
- have your confidential and personal information properly managed and privacy protected
- have choices and feel comfortable about saying no
- have access to volunteer and relevant organisational policies and procedures, including a grievance procedure
- be reimbursed for any agreed out-of-pocket expenses
- be supported in your role and consulted about matters that directly affect you and your work
- participate in organisational life through inclusion in meetings and social events
- not be exploited
- not fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- not do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
- be acknowledged and appreciated for your contribution, value and impact in your volunteering role.

Before you start volunteering, we suggest you check the following:

- The organisation is a not for profit;
- The purpose of the organisation matches your own values and beliefs;
- The organisation carries volunteer insurance;
- Your role is clear and specific;
- The organisation can provide you with written information about its purpose and activities.

If you require any additional information in relation to the rights & responsibilities of volunteers, please contact the Bendigo Volunteer Resource Centre's Volunteer Hub by phoning 03 5441 1404 or by email info@bgovolunteers.org.au