

# Coffs Harbour City Council

## Volunteer Handbook





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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Coffs Harbour City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Gumbaynggirr people, who have cared for this land since time immemorial. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and commit ourselves to a future with reconciliation and renewal at its heart.



**ARTWORK: BEACH CAMPS  
BY REECE FLANDERS, 2019.**

About this image: This painting represents the coastline, where there are camps that the old people would sit and eat shellfish leaving behind middens. The designs show the ever-shifting coastline and dune as well as the through tide & wind that shape our coasts.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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Coffs Harbour City Council  
Corner of Coff and Castle Streets  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450  
Phone: 02 6648 4000

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## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

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Thank you is too small a word for the job that you do, however it is very heartfelt.

I meet a lot of volunteers in my role as Mayor and it is one of the most humbling and satisfying aspects of the job. People like you – the unsung heroes – are really what keeps a community like ours moving.

I'm always amazed to find out just how many hours of their lives people are happy to give up to help others, or to give back to their community. In some cases, when you add it up, it's literally years.

Without your help, Council simply wouldn't be able to offer the range of community, sporting and cultural facilities we have in the area, or the events that residents and visitors alike enjoy throughout the year.

Your contribution is simply invaluable.

Thank you.



Cr Denise Knight RN

Mayor, City of Coffs Harbour



# WELCOME

Louet Hollen and Rhonda Sorensen Eco Surf Fest Volunteers



Welcome to Coffs Harbour City Council and thank you for your decision to become a volunteer. Our organisation is very proud of its volunteering programs and acknowledges the significant contribution made by volunteers who generously give their time and skills to service their local community. Volunteers play a vital role in the successful delivery of many essential Council programs, services, facilities and venues, events and projects for the community. Volunteering is integral in creating a strong, resilient community and is a powerful way of helping others and making a lasting impact.

Coffs Harbour City Council adopts the Australian National Standards of Volunteering to ensure we are providing best practice guidelines for our volunteer programs. Our handbook has been developed to assist you in your volunteering role and provides you with general information about volunteering at Council to ensure that you have a safe, enjoyable and meaningful experience with us. We sincerely thank you for your time, enthusiasm and commitment and for making a difference in our community.

**WELCOME TO THE TEAM!**



## WHO WE ARE

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Rebecca Blayne Harmony Festival Volunteer



Coffs Harbour City Council serves a population of more than 77,000 people and is renowned for its rich cultural and ecological diversity. We are responsible for providing services across our local government area of approximately 1175 km<sup>2</sup>, stretching from Red Rock in the north, south to Bundagen and west past Brooklana and Lowanna. The city has:

- 32,383 rateable properties
- 6,027 local businesses
- 968 km of Council roads
- around 140 km of footpaths and cycleways
- around 2,500 ha of reserves, parks and sporting fields
- 78.8 km of coastline.

Council also manages the C.ex Coffs International Stadium, the Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, Coffs Harbour Regional Museum, Jetty Memorial Theatre and three branch libraries.

Council supports more than 300 volunteers who contribute approximately 10,500 hours of service annually, across 30 programs.

## OUR VISION AND VALUES



COMMITTED TO THE PURSUIT OF  
**EXCELLENCE**

Council has a shared set of values which guide our day-to-day activities.

### INNOVATION

We deliver excellence in our services through innovation

### CUSTOMER CENTRIC

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do

### COLLABORATION

We work together to seek solutions both internally and externally

### EMPOWERMENT

We support our people and provide them the scope to deliver outcomes

### ACCOUNTABILITY

We are transparent and responsible in all that we do

## Our Vision

...

Committed to the Pursuit of Excellence.

...

To deliver excellent services that are desired and valued by our community, now and into the future.



Harmony Day Festival Volunteers

"Volunteering gives you an opportunity to meet new people and to give back to our local community."

Liz O'Sullivan

Jetty Memorial Theatre Volunteer



## VOLUNTEERING WITH COUNCIL

Toormina Community Centre 355 Committee with Festival of Small Halls artists and crew



‘Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.’

Volunteering Australia July 2015.

Volunteers are fundamental to the successful provision of our much needed services and programs. The vital contribution of volunteers enables us to reach out to more people and provide an invaluable contribution to the community.

As a volunteer, you are part of a team of staff and volunteers working together to serve the community in line with Council’s vision and goals.

Volunteering is a great opportunity to contribute to the local community, make new friends, develop new skills and have fun!



Coramba Community Hall 355 Committee



## OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Coffs Harbour City Council offers a number of exciting and diverse ways to volunteer your time, skills and enthusiasm.

We support our volunteers by offering opportunities to contribute to the community and gain experience that may enhance pathways to future employment or alternatively, transition out of paid employment and into retirement.

We welcome volunteers across many areas including:

- Arts and Culture—Jetty Theatre, Library, Gallery and Museum
- Community Village
- Visitor Information Services
- The Friends of the Park
- The Friends of the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden Inc.
- C.ex Coffs International Stadium
- Special Community Events
- Council 355 Committees
- General Committees and Advisory Panels.



Shalla Thomas, Disability Access and Inclusion Committee Member

“We have so many wonderful ways of supporting and giving back to our community, volunteering is a no stress, wholesome way of connectivity.”

Shalla Thomas

Disability Access and Inclusion Committee  
Member

## PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

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As volunteers, you are required to follow Coffs Harbour City Council's policies and procedures, available on the volunteer portal. Below is an [outline of the key policies](#). For more details, please contact your supervisor.

### VOLUNTEER POLICY

Council's Volunteer Policy defines the role of volunteers within Council and ensures that our volunteer management systems and processes:

- acknowledge the valuable contribution of volunteers
- identify areas of operations where volunteering can contribute to the optimum delivery of services to the community
- enable compliance and best practice volunteer management, particularly in areas such as recruitment, training and support of our volunteers.

### GIFTS OR BENEFITS

Occasionally, as a volunteer, you may be offered a thank you gift from a customer. Volunteers may accept token gifts or benefits (e.g. flowers, chocolates or biscuits) that do not exceed \$50 in value over a 12-month period which must be promptly disclosed to your supervisor. Volunteers must not accept an offer of cash or a cash-like gift.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

In all situations, Council's Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy applies and must be followed. The general duty of Council's volunteers is to act honestly and with reasonable care and diligence and to behave in a way that upholds Council's values, integrity and good reputation. All volunteers must complete the online Code of Conduct training prior to commencing their first roster.

### BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and be able to undertake their role without fear of bullying, harassment or discrimination. Council makes every effort to maintain an atmosphere of trust and open communication, ensuring grievances are resolved promptly and in a constructive, informal and respectful manner. If you have a concern, we encourage you to discuss it with your supervisor as soon as possible. If you cannot discuss the matter with your supervisor, or you are not satisfied with the result, you can escalate your complaint by writing to the relevant Director or General Manager in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct - Procedures for the Administration of Model Code of Conduct.



## PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

### USE OF COUNCIL EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

Volunteers may be provided with equipment to assist in performing various activities. It is your responsibility to ensure that equipment is used correctly and within the guidelines or instructions provided by your supervisor.

Any court imposed fine or infringements received as a result of a volunteers actions or omissions, will be the responsibility of the volunteer. They include, but are not limited to, fines related to parking, speeding, littering, and red light cameras.

When using Council's resources, volunteers must:

- not use Council resources to accept or acquire any unauthorised personal profit or financial advantage
- not use Council resources for private purposes unless authorised and/or proper payment is made where appropriate
- not convert any property of Council for their own use
- ensure that Council property, including intellectual property, official services and facilities are not misused by any other person or organisation.
- Report damaged resources immediately to their supervisor



Bob Cockburn Home Library Service Driver Volunteer

‘The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention’

Oscar Wilde



Lorna Gear and Julie Pearce C.ex Coffs International Stadium Volunteers

"You don't have to be special to volunteer, but being a volunteer makes you special"  
Julie Pearce

C.ex Coffs International Stadium  
Volunteer

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest arises if your own interests, or those of others close to you, conflict with your obligations with Council. A conflict would exist where you have a personal interest that could lead you to being influenced in the way you conduct Council duties. If you believe you have a conflict of interest, please contact your supervisor to advise the nature of the potential or realised conflict of interest.

### FINANCIAL DELEGATIONS

Volunteer positions have no financial delegation and no authority to commit Council to expenditure or contractual obligations. For volunteers that are members of relevant management committees, please refer to the Committee Member Handbook.



Barry Schofield C.ex Coffs International Stadium Volunteer



## PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

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### CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

As a Council volunteer, you might have access to and use confidential and/or personal information. If so, you must:

- maintain the security of any confidential or personal information you become aware of
- abide by the privacy legislation governing the collection, holding, use, correction, disclosure or transfer of personal information obtained through your dealings with Council
- not access, use or remove any Council information or personal information from the Council premises, unless authorised by your supervisor
- report any breach of security, or misuse of Council's confidential or personal information to your supervisor.

### COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

As a volunteer, you must not make public comments or statements that would lead anyone to believe that you are representing Council, or expressing its views or policies. This includes comments or statements made at public and community meetings, via the media, or when it is reasonably foreseeable that the comments, or statements, will become known to the public at large. For more information, refer to Council's Social Media and Media Policies.

### VEHICLE USE

If your role as a volunteer requires using a vehicle, you must provide Council with a valid licence. You must not use your private vehicle for work with Council. If you need a vehicle, contact your supervisor. Council expects all volunteers who use a vehicle to:

- complete Council's vehicle induction
- wear a seat belt and follow all traffic rules
- not use hand held phones while driving
- only use vehicles for Council purposes, there is to be no personal use
- report any vehicle damage or accidents immediately to your supervisor.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Council is committed to providing safe and satisfying volunteering opportunities and we welcome volunteer involvement in decision making that affects volunteer roles. To keep us on track, we encourage volunteers to tell us how well things are going, what can be improved, and any new ideas you have to enhance our volunteer programs.

"I enjoy being on hand to assist with information and helping at sporting events"

Lorna Gear

C. ex Coffs International Stadium  
Volunteer

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Both Council officials and volunteers have responsibilities to each other and the volunteer programs. These responsibilities are underpinned by our values and the principles of volunteering and can be found in each volunteer role statement.

### COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- engage volunteers in roles that are best suited to their skills and abilities and where they will be most likely to experience success and satisfaction
- provide a safe and healthy work environment for volunteers and staff
- induct volunteers to provide information about Council and its relevant programs, policies, procedures and safety requirements
- involve volunteers in decisions that will substantially impact their role and/or performance
- provide ongoing support, communicate expectations, give feedback and arrange appropriate training to volunteers to assist their performance
- effectively manage, support and resource volunteer programs
- celebrate, recognise and acknowledge the contribution of volunteers
- ensure that volunteers are not used to replace paid staff .



## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- treat other volunteers and Council employees with respect and fairness
- comply with all of Council's relevant policies, procedures and guidelines and also those of the area they are volunteering in
- be a positive contributor to, and supporter of, the organisation
- accept and perform duties in a responsible, dependable, conscientious and courteous manner
- provide a commitment in terms of rosters, time and regular attendance
- accept support, supervision and constructive feedback on performance
- attend induction and ongoing training as required
- not represent themselves as a paid staff member or obligate Council in any way
- ensure confidentiality is maintained with respect to all confidential and sensitive matters
- wear appropriate clothing, footwear and personal protective equipment at all times
- promptly report all hazards, incidents, accidents and any risks to your supervisor
- any other duties as directed by your supervisor which are within your skill, competence and training.



Rhonda Johnson and Diane Church Jetty Memorial Theatre Volunteers

"It's good for the soul to volunteer in such a positive environment. Thanks for the opportunity Jetty Theatre and Coffs Council."  
Mark Griffiths

Jetty Memorial Theatre Volunteer

## RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION

Dot McLeod, Coffs Harbour Library Volunteer



“Volunteering gives me a meaningful way to spend my time in retirement. I love the books, the staff and the people”

Dot McLeod

Coffs Harbour Library Volunteer

A comprehensive recruitment and induction program is provided to welcome and prepare volunteers to undertake their role.

### APPLICATION, INTERVIEW AND SELECTION

Council is committed to attracting volunteers that are representative of the community we serve. We actively encourage and support the recruitment of volunteers with a diverse range of backgrounds and experience. Volunteer opportunities are advertised on Council’s volunteer recruitment page where applicants will be required to submit an online application form. Informal interviews may be conducted with suitable candidates and volunteers selected based on their suitability to perform required duties. Volunteers under the age of 18 years must have a parent or guardian’s approval.



Community Village Volunteers



## RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION

### BACKGROUND CHECKS

Some volunteer positions may require a NSW Working with Children Check or a National Police Clearance. These requirements will be specified within a volunteer's role statement.

Council will advise volunteers of the procedure required to apply for the checks and will meet the costs associated with obtaining the checks.

### INDUCTION AND TRAINING

An induction process will be undertaken by a supervisor to prepare volunteers for their role and to help them become effective members of the team. An induction checklist and overview of relevant Council policies and safety requirements will be provided. Council will also provide the necessary training, both initial and ongoing, to enable volunteers to undertake the role and meet legislative requirements.

### ROLE STATEMENTS

Every volunteer role has a corresponding role statement that defines the role, lists the duties and outlines the experience, skills and qualities required to undertake the role. Volunteers will receive a copy of the role statement during the induction process to read and sign.

Thorsten Brakenhielm, Lego League Program Facilitator



“Volunteering is at the very core of being a human. No one has made it through life without someone else’s help”

Heather French Henry



Uncle Trevor Wilson, Yandaarra Committee Member



“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart”

Elizabeth Andrew

Coxs Coffs International Stadium Volunteers



### SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Each volunteer will have a supervisor who is responsible for guiding and overseeing them in their program. Supervisors provide support by:

- giving encouragement and constructive feedback
- maintaining communications
- identifying training and support
- organising meetings to discuss performance and development and any issues or concerns
- considering your interests in decisions that affect you
- inviting you to team meetings, special events and social functions
- celebrating your achievements and recognising the value that volunteers bring to Council and the wider community.

## RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION

### ATTENDANCE

Volunteer contributions help to support many of our community services and activities. When making a commitment to volunteer it is important to be punctual and reliable. Please let your supervisor know as soon as possible if you are running late, or are unable to attend a particular shift.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Council maintains a volunteer database which stores information such as a volunteer's name, address, contact information, emergency contact details and the program area they are volunteering in. Access is restricted to authorised staff only. Volunteers can access their individual record through the volunteer portal.

### RECORDING HOURS

As a mandatory Work Health and Safety requirement, it is important that volunteers use the time clock to sign on when they arrive to undertake duties and sign off at the end of their shift. This assists Council in knowing where volunteers are in case of an emergency and to make sure that we record attendance for insurance purposes. Volunteer supervisors collate the number of volunteer hours to recognise volunteer contributions and for annual reporting requirements.



Henry Du Chateau , Disability Access and Inclusion Committee Member

“Impossible is only someone's opinion”

Henry Du Chateau

Disability Access and Inclusion Committee  
Member



Kerry Pritchard Jetty Memorial Theatre Volunteer

“Volunteering at the Jetty Theatre keeps me in touch with the theatre community and provides social interaction with staff, other volunteers and patrons - all of which I enjoy.”

Marion Beer

Jetty Memorial Theatre  
Volunteer

### WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all staff and volunteers. We all owe a duty of care to ourselves and each other and are expected to play our part in keeping the workplace safe. As a volunteer, you will be provided with the necessary safety inductions and training so that you understand your safety obligations and have the skills to safely perform your role.

### DRESS CODE

Volunteers are generally not provided with a uniform, unless the program requires protective or identifying clothing. Neat, clean casual dress that is suitable to the particular volunteer role is encouraged along with appropriate footwear. Coffs Harbour City Council badges which must be worn when working in a volunteer role.



## YOUR VOLUNTEERING

### INSURANCE

Volunteers are insured while undertaking duties authorised and directly related to Council. This cover does not extend to people under the age of 12 years or over the age of 90 years. Insurance provides cover for volunteers for accidental injury, disability or death whilst performing duties on behalf of the Council, including travel directly to and /or from their place of residence and the location where they volunteer. Council's insurance does not cover medical expenses covered by Medicare or other health benefit funds or any gap.

### REIMBURSEMENT

Volunteers may request reimbursement for pre-approved, out-of-pocket expenses relating to their volunteer service delivery. Volunteers are required to submit receipts for any expenses for which they seek reimbursement.

### RECOGNITION

Volunteer recognition events are held throughout the year to highlight, reward and recognise the value that volunteers make to the community. Council recognises its volunteers at events such as National Volunteer Week and our Volunteer end-of year celebrations.



Jane Tavener and Harmony Day Festival Volunteer

### VOLUNESIA:

That moment when you forget you're volunteering to help change lives because its changing yours.

## YOUR VOLUNTEERING

Dale Graham Sustainable Living Festival Volunteer Workshop Facilitator



“You make a living  
by what you get,  
but you make a life  
by what you give”  
Winston Churchill

### CONCLUDING YOUR VOLUNTEER ROLE

A volunteer relationship may end because:

- You may wish to end your volunteering - notice of resignation should be communicated to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- The volunteer position may no longer exist or may no longer be suitable.
- Council may end the volunteer relationship if policies and procedures are not adhered to.

### HOLIDAYS

Taking holidays is encouraged and is considered an important part of looking after yourself. Supervisors need to know one month in advance when volunteers intend to be absent from their role so a replacement can be found.



Elizabeth Brooks Visitor Information Volunteer



## YOUR VOLUNTEERING

### PERSONAL HEALTH

Staying healthy while you are volunteering is very important. If you are not feeling 100%, either physically or mentally, you won't be able to do your volunteer activities as effectively as you would if you were feeling well.

There are a variety of ways you can ensure you feel up to your volunteering. These include making sure you look after yourself both at your volunteering program and at home. The following are a few tips:

- your home and personal life is important; avoid over commitment of your volunteering time and give yourself plenty of time to relax and unwind
- be realistic about your goals and ambitions and avoid setting unrealistic deadlines for yourself
- ask for help from others when you need it
- if you are finding that your volunteer role is no longer fulfilling, debrief with your supervisor
- if you are sick or are due for holidays, it's OK to take time off from your role, but please let your supervisor know. Staying home when you are unwell allows you to take care of yourself and helps protect other people in the community
- keep things in perspective, have fun and remember to laugh!



Geoff McDonald Sustainable Living Festival Volunteer

Recent research indicates that volunteering is good for both physical and mental health. It assists with:

- lower rates of depression in later life
- less incidence of heart disease
- greater functional ability





Coffs Harbour City Council proudly acknowledges the significant contribution by The Friends of the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden Inc., a non-profit organisation of volunteers that works in conjunction with the Coffs Harbour City Council to develop and maintain our wonderful Botanic Garden.





Harmony Friends decorated by local children at the Harmony Festival

# THANK YOU

We hope that this booklet has provided you with useful information to support you in your volunteering. Every day people make an extraordinary contribution in their communities by supporting many valuable projects and services. We genuinely thank you and wish you every success in your volunteer role.

COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL

Locked Bag 155 COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450

[www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au)