



VOLUNTEER POLICY

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1. OBJECTIVE

George Town Council's Strategic Plan encompasses Community Pride which encourages volunteering across all ages. Council's aim is to foster and support the development of a community with a strong sense of ownership and pride in place by acknowledging and encouraging the role of volunteers.

This policy is underpinned by Volunteering Australia and is guided by the National Standards and aims to assist George Town Council to strengthen community well-being by inspiring, valuing and celebrating volunteering. It provides direction and structure to the way Council engages volunteers, ensuring that the relationship between Council and its volunteers is clearly defined and formalises the commitment by Council to support its volunteers and minimise risk to all parties.

2. TYPE OF POLICY

As Section 8 of Policy GTC-12, this policy is categorised as a Council Policy.

This categorisation is consistent with the definitions as stated in Policy GTC-12 which are as follows:

Council - Policies pertaining to the Governance of the Council and the activities of its elected members, including the establishment of Committees, and the government of the municipality including resident and ratepayer compliance policies and by-laws.

Operational - Policies pertaining to the operational, administrative, and internal matters of the Council, including internal governance, internal committees, and operational matters of service delivery.

3. SCOPE

This policy will provide scope to cover volunteers participating in Council activities and projects, while assisting Council in meeting the best practice in volunteer management.

4. DEFINITIONS

Volunteers are defined as persons who undertake activities:

- without monetary reward
- of their own free will
- of benefit to the community and Council
- that complement but do not replace the services provided by paid staff

5. LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This action relates to the following components of the Community Strategic Plan 2020-2030:

Future Direction One - Community Pride

1. All are valued and included

Taking a 'whole of community' approach to everything.

Encouraging volunteering across all ages.

Future Directions Three - Progressive Well-Resourced Communities

2. Diverse and active volunteering base

Diversifying and encouraging the volunteer base.

Actively encouraging and mentoring young people to be a part of volunteering efforts around things they are interested in.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION

This policy relates to and depends on other Council policies, as well as legislation, including:

- Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988
- Local Government Act 1993
- Work Health and Safety Act 2012
- Personal Information Protection Act 2004
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1998
- 06 Work Health and Safety Policy
- GTC 31 - Workplace Behaviour Policy
- 43 Grievance Resolution Policy Procedures 1
- Employee Code of Conduct
- IHR 12 Fitness for Work Alcohol and Drugs Policy
- Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- GTC 10 Gifts and Donations Policy 2
- GTC-26 Youth Policy V2
- GTC-46 Safeguarding Children Policy 1
- GTC-C-05 Customer Service and Complaints Handling

7. RISK CONSIDERATIONS

Implementation of a Volunteer Policy reduces risk to both volunteers and Council by providing clear information.

8. POLICY

Council commits to the recruitment, engagement, support and recognition of volunteers across a range of Council services and programs.

The following principles have been developed to articulate the role of Council in supporting, engaging and protecting Council volunteers.

Council will:

- Support the involvement of volunteers in the development and delivery of a range of Council services and programs;
- Provide leadership, support and advocacy to increase volunteer participation within Council;
- Raise the profile of volunteerism through positive promotion and education;
- Acknowledge, recognise and celebrate the contribution volunteers make to the George Town municipality through Council's service delivery;
- Facilitate access to information, advice, and volunteering opportunities within Council;
- Provide ongoing support, training and recognition for volunteer staff;
- Protect volunteers in the workplace through its duty of care to provide a safe work environment;
- Ensuring all Council volunteers are provided with appropriate volunteer insurance coverage;
- Cover the costs of out of pocket expenses where appropriate;
- Respond to current practice in the sector and legislative change;
- Provide the opportunity to participate voluntarily on Council reference groups through community member roles.

Council recognises 'Formal Volunteering' which responds to specific identified community needs and is conducted in a structured environment.

8.1 Volunteering Standards

The National Standards provides a framework for the development and implementation of volunteer programs within Council. These standards address eight key areas of volunteer governance and implementation which Council supports and encourages.

Council supports and encourages volunteering by:

- Leadership and Management
 - o Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer. Volunteering is a matter of choice, of one's free will and without coercion.
 - o Council will promote a positive culture towards volunteering and encourage the implementation of effective management systems to support volunteer staff internally.
- Commitment to Volunteer Involvement
 - o Volunteering is a legitimate way for individuals to participate in supporting their community through Council services, programs and advisory committees.
 - o Council's commitment to volunteering is set out within the George Town Community Strategic Plan 2020-2030 and supports the Council's strategic direction.

- Volunteer Roles
 - o Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.
 - o Council will promote the engagement of volunteers in meaningful roles including, where appropriate, working from home roles, which contribute to Council's purpose, goals and objectives.
- Recruitment and Selection
 - o Volunteering is an activity performed solely in the not for profit sector and is unpaid.
 - o Council will promote volunteer recruitment and selection strategies that are planned and consistent with service and program requirements. Volunteer opportunities are available to people aged 16 years and over, and participation does not take the place of paid staff. Volunteer roles are promoted via Council's website.
 - o Recruitment of volunteers is coordinated by Council's Human Resources staff. The Officer is responsible for interviewing and selecting candidates to meet the requirement of the volunteer role.
 - o All volunteer applications are considered and assessed for suitability. This includes all relevant checks and references.
 - o The exception of this practice is participation of volunteers as community member participants in endorsed Advisory Committee. These volunteers apply under a defined Advisory Committee Terms of Reference document providing guidelines on selection criteria, expectations of members, and a Code of Conduct. Advisory committee members are formally endorsed through a Council Report.
 - o In accordance with its policies and legislation, Council embraces diversity and values the unique contribution of all people regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, age, religion, sexual preference, marital status or disability. Council is committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination.
- Support and Development
 - o Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.
 - o Council ensures volunteers understand their roles and gain the knowledge, skills and feedback necessary to safely and effectively carry out their duties through induction, position descriptions and training programs.
- Protecting Volunteers - Workplace Safety and Wellbeing
 - o Protection for volunteers has been afforded through legislation and public policy. For example, national workplace health and safety legislation recognises the importance of protecting volunteers in the workplace, and where working from home arrangements are in place, through its duty of care to provide a safe work environment and the need to provide appropriate volunteer insurance coverage for active volunteers.
 - o Council will continue to adopt and promote such practices through Council policies and procedures.
 - o Volunteers will participate in volunteer orientation and training programs that provide information and resources in order to safely and competently carry out volunteer roles.

- o Council supports practices that ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers are protected.
- Volunteer Recognition
 - o Recognition of volunteer involvement is an important aspect of Council's Volunteer Program.
 - o Council will continue to ensure the value, contribution and impact of the role of volunteers is understood, recognised and promoted within the organisation.
- Quality Management and Continuous Improvement
 - o Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.
 - o Council will promote effective volunteer management strategies by implementing good practice, reviews and continuous improvement.

8.2 Termination

Council reserves the right to terminate the engagement of a volunteer, should a volunteer breach the terms and conditions of their engagement. This will be in accordance with guidance supplied by the Strategy, Performance and Development.

9. IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW OF POLICY

Implementation of this Policy rests with the General Manager. This Policy will be reviewed in the 2028-2029 period or in accordance with legislative requirements.



Shane Power
GENERAL MANAGER

DATED 27/ 11 / 2