

Banyule Volunteer Policy

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Acknowledgment of the Traditional Custodians

“Banyule City Council is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as Traditional Custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region’s history.”

Diversity Statement

“Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. We are committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone: principles which empower, foster harmony and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community.”

Volunteer Policy

Banyule City Council Context

The **Banyule Community Vision 2041** describes the community’s aspirations for the future of Banyule over the next 20 years. Two priority areas that relate directly to volunteering include ‘Our Inclusive and Connected Community’ and ‘Our Thriving Local Community’.

Banyule City Council, Council Plan 2021-2025 outlines under key direction ‘Our Thriving Local Economy’ the following strategy:

- Encourage and support volunteerism within Banyule as an important contributor to the local economy and the involvement in community life.

Banyule City Council Volunteer Engagement Framework 2021 outlines the following:

- What the future of volunteering in Banyule looks like
- Definition of Volunteers in Banyule
- Benefits of volunteers’ and volunteering
- Banyule Council’s Volunteer Journey Lifecycle
- Volunteer Engagement Framework Components

Other related Council policies:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy & Guidelines
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy
- Information and Communication Technology Policy
- Psychological Safety Policy
- Safety Management Framework
- Our People Strategy 2024

Relevant legislation

- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

[The National Standards](#) have been developed in consultation with the volunteering sector to support the involvement of volunteers and act as a resource for organisations in which volunteers are involved. They provide a framework for organisations to consider the role of volunteers within the organisation and the impact effective volunteer involvement can have on achieving the strategic goals and aims of the organisation: (Volunteering Australia, 2015).

National Strategy for Volunteering 2023 – 2033

The [National Strategy for Volunteering \(2023–2033\)](#) is a ten-year blueprint for a reimagined future for volunteering in Australia. It provides a strategic framework to guide the actions needed to achieve a better future for volunteering and highlights what is needed to avoid or reverse the damaging effects of the challenges facing volunteering. The Strategy maps how we will create a future in which volunteering can be sustained so it continues to be a rewarding experience for people who volunteer and strengthens our society, economy, and environment.

The National Strategy for Volunteering also seeks to build awareness and understanding of the role of the Volunteer Manager and ensure those roles are appropriately resourced and supported so that the volunteering experience is meaningful and rewarding for all.

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Definitions and key terms used in the Policy.

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will apply:

Table 1 Definitions

Term	Definitions
Volunteers	A person who undertakes activities without monetary reward, of their own free will, will deliver benefits to Banyule City Council and the local community, and that complements but doesn't replace the services provided by paid staff.
Council Volunteer Program Supervisor	Banyule City Council officers that manage a volunteer program and/or recruit and supervise volunteers as part of their responsibilities.
Council appointed volunteer	Volunteers are recruited, managed, and supported by Council.
Banyule Population and Advisory Committees	Committee members are volunteers that are appointed by a Council resolution or via delegation by the Director of Community Wellbeing. The Banyule City Council formed Committees provide advice from a diverse range of perspectives and are reflected in decision making to support Council to deliver their key priorities.
Not-for-Profit services and community groups	Groups and/or services that are located within Banyule City Council that do not operate for the profit, personal gain or other benefit of particular people (for example, its members, the people who run it or their friends or relatives). https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/start-charity/not-profit Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
Volunteer-involving organisations	Volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) are organisations that provide opportunities for volunteering as part of their operation. They take many forms, ranging from local councils and state government departments to grassroots collectives, community groups and local sports clubs www.vic.gov.au/victorian-volunteer-strategy-2022-2027/glossary-key-terms
Volunteer Led Community Groups	Community groups that are organised, managed, and administered solely by volunteers who are not incorporated and generally don't have public liability insurance. There are no paid workers involved in the management or administration of the group.
Environmental Banyule Friends of Groups	These groups are environmental volunteers that operate within our Council bushland reserves that are supported by the Bushland Management Team. They are convened in two ways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer managed and administered groups who are incorporated and have public liability insurance. 2. Independent volunteer groups that work in partnership with Council to complete volunteer work on Council supported activities. These groups are not incorporated and don't have public liability insurance.
Volunteer-involving Groups and services engaging volunteers operating in Council facilities or on Council Land	These groups/services are Incorporated and have Public Liability Insurance and either part or sole use of the Council's facility or land. Council has either a licence, lease and/or funding agreement in place with these groups.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Banyule Volunteer Policy is to:

- Provide Council officers, and Council appointed volunteers, including members of Banyule's Population and Advisory Committees, with clear information about their rights and responsibilities when engaged in volunteer programs.
- Specify Council's guiding principles and whole of Council approach to strengthen volunteering practices and accountability in accordance with The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (Volunteering Australia, 2015).
- Outline Council's Volunteer Management Structure that strives to provide uniformity and compliance across all of Council's programs that utilise volunteers.
- Outline rights and responsibilities of both Council volunteers and Council Officers.
- Outlines Council's role and relationship with Friend of Groups, groups/services engaging volunteers, and volunteer led community groups, operating on Council land or in Council properties.
- Affirm Banyule City Council's ongoing commitment to volunteering, support and engagement with local volunteer-involving services and community groups.

1.2 Scope

This policy outlines Council's approach to managing and supporting Council volunteers, which includes the policy context, guiding principles, volunteer rights and responsibilities, and Council's responsibilities.

The policy also outlines Council frameworks/structures underpinning the relationship with the Banyule Friends of Groups, volunteer led community groups and services/groups engaging volunteers, who operate on Council land or in Council properties.

The Banyule Volunteer Policy applies to:

- All internal Council managed volunteer programs.
- Council volunteers and officers who are responsible for supervising them.
- Population and advisory committees appointed by Council.
- Banyule Friends of Groups, volunteer led community groups and services/groups engaging volunteers, who operate on Council land or in Council properties.
- Council's role in supporting and engaging local not for profit volunteer-involving community services and groups.

This policy does not apply to persons who may be applying for, or are doing the following forms of unpaid engagement:

- Volunteers involved in Council-funded programs and services managed by external community organisations or groups, not operating on Council land or facility.
- Other forms of unpaid work such as student placements, internships, or work experience.
- Council employees doing voluntary work for Council or another organisation.

2. Policy Statement

Banyule City Council acknowledges the importance of volunteering and the significant contribution volunteers make to Council and the local community. Council recognises volunteering has multiple outcomes for individual well-being and connections to the community, and that volunteers play an essential role in enhancing the provision of Council, local community services, community groups and other community support activities.

As a multidisciplinary organisation Council provides a varied range of volunteer opportunities. Council will be clear about the types of volunteer opportunities available and will make reasonable adjustments so that our volunteers' programs are inclusive, accessible and equitable. Council is committed to ensuring that officers working with volunteers are supported by enhancing the management of their volunteer programs.

3. Principles

This Policy is guided by the following Principles:

- *Community Participation:* Opportunities are provided for members of the community to participate as volunteers in meaningful and relevant roles, to enhance Council activities and priorities, and assist Council with advocacy, partnership, and strategic advice through participation on Council's Advisory and Population Committees.
- *Valuing Diversity:* Council recognises and values diversity and the individual strengths and abilities our community members offer. Irrespective of a person's identity or background Council will take all reasonable steps to accommodate the differing needs of volunteers and actively reduce barriers to participation in Council volunteer programs and activities.
- *Mutual Benefit:* Volunteering remains a mutually beneficial activity for the individual volunteer, the program, the community, and Council. All volunteer expectations, interests, availability, skills, aspirations, and knowledge will be considered when being matched to a volunteer position. For people 55+ years on payment benefits, mutual obligation arrangements will be considered.
- *Good Governance:* Volunteer engagement and management will be guided by a robust Volunteer Management Structure, to ensure a positive experience and outcome for Council volunteers, the community, and Council.
- *Community Sector Support:* Banyule Friends of Groups, volunteer led community groups and services/groups operating on Council land or in Council properties, and volunteer-involving local not-for-profit services and community groups, will continue to be supported, engaged and guided through Council networking opportunities, partnerships, information dissemination and where appropriate through clear guidelines/procedures.

4. Policy

4.1 Volunteers Internal to Council

Volunteer rights, and responsibilities outlined in this policy are for volunteers recruited, engaged, and supported by Council officers to deliver tasks that enhance Council activities and services.

4.2.1 Rights of Banyule Council Volunteers

Table 2 Volunteer Rights

Volunteer Safety and Good Governance includes:

- Engagement in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation and provided with a Position Description outlining roles and responsibilities.
- Access to a safe and inclusive workplace.
- Insurance coverage relevant to the role.
- Confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.
- Awareness of the process to raise concerns related to tasks believed to be unsuitable and only accept tasks that they are comfortable with and able to carry out.
- Awareness of Council's complaints procedure.
- Access to the Induction and Safety Handbook, and other relevant documents.
- Ability to be reimbursed for any authorised and reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- Ability to resign from their volunteering role at any time.

Access to Volunteer Supports includes:

- Be treated fairly and respectfully and valued as an important member of the team.
- Access to an adequate induction and training.
- Access to appropriate supervision, support, advice, feedback, and recognition.
- Ability to provide feedback and make a complaint where appropriate.
- Access to the Employee Assistance Program.
- Ability to be able to request reasonable adjustments to their role if required.

4.2.2 Responsibilities of Banyule Council Volunteers

Council Volunteers have responsibilities to the organisation as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 Volunteer Responsibilities

Health and safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and ensure their acts or omissions don't impact the health and safety of other persons. • Working within Council's Occupation Health and Safety policy and procedures including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complying with instructions, policies and procedures relating to health and safety. ○ Notifying appropriate Council Officers of any accidents, unsafe working conditions, or their inability to perform required tasks. ○ Notifying any potentially dangerous situation they may experience or that of a third party.

- Reporting any injury/damage they experience or that of a third party.
- No use of a private vehicle unless there is a prior agreement with their Volunteer Program Supervisor.

Volunteer Conduct

- Respect and value the diversity of the community.
- Adhere to Council's Staff Code of Conduct that aligns to their role as a volunteer.
- Follow all instructions and deliver tasks outlined in their volunteer position description.
- Act in a professional manner and adhere to Council policies and procedures.
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy of Council and customer/client information and respecting the rights of Council customers/clients.
- Wear a uniform if required for their role and be mindful that when wearing the uniform, they are representing Council.

Volunteer Training and Compliance

- Participate in the induction and any mandatory training required for the volunteer position.
- Understand and acknowledge requirements of any relevant legislation, Council policies, and guidelines.
- Operating under the direction and supervision of Council personnel to achieve the objectives required.
- Make and maintain a realistic time commitment in terms of involvement and reliability.
- Adhere to child safety standards in accordance with the Child Safe Policy and Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.
- Undertake background screening checks as requested and/or indicated in their Position Description.

4.2.3 Banyule City Council's Advisory and Population Committees

Council's Advisory and Population Committees are made up of Councillors and community members. They have terms of reference and meet to discuss issues to advise Council. Committees provide Council an opportunity to seek support from people with lived experience and expertise for policy and program development. Community Members appointed on Advisory and Population Committees do this on voluntary basis.

Council responsibilities of community members appointed to Advisory and Population Committees is documented in the Committees Terms of Reference. This is outlined in the table 4.

Table 4 Advisory and Population Committee Members Responsibilities

Committee Members Responsibilities

- Act with integrity to impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the local community.
- Not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage.
- Declare any conflict of interest.
- Avoid conflicts between their committee role and their personal and/ or professional interests and obligations.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct in line with their Terms of Reference:
 - Act honestly and treat others with respect.
 - Exercise due diligence and reasonable care.
 - Not make improper use of their position or make improper use of information acquired because of their position.
 - Support colleagues to raise issues or problems and have them dealt with in an honest and respectful manner.
 - Have equal opportunity to participate in the committee discussions.

- Provide constructive feedback or complaints to the Committee via the Executive Support Officer prior to raising it at a committee meeting.
- Take an active role in providing advice to Council on matters impacting community.
- Not speak on behalf of Council, commit Council to any arrangement or direct Council officers in the performance of their duties.
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020.

4.2.4 Council's Responsibilities to Internal Volunteers

Council is responsible for ensuring that all internal volunteers, including Advisory and Population Committee members, are appropriately recruited, inducted, and supported whilst volunteering at Banyule City Council. The Banyule City Council Volunteer Management Structure seeks to guide Council in meeting these obligations. The Structure is made up of the following documents:

- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Management Accountability Structure
- Volunteer Management Guidelines - The Volunteer Management Guidelines (VMG) outline Council's responsibility in the engagement and ongoing management of Volunteers.
- Volunteer Induction and Safety Handbook.

The Banyule City Council Volunteer Management Structure applies to current volunteer programs, establishment of any new Programs and Banyule Populations and Advisory Committees.

The implementation of the Volunteer Management Guidelines ensures that Council fulfills its key responsibilities and commitments their volunteers, as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 Council's Responsibilities

Council's Commitments

- Everyone represents differently and has unique needs. Irrespective of a person's identity or background, reasonable steps will be taken to make sure volunteering opportunities are inclusive and suitable for the volunteers needs and barriers to participation will actively be reduced.
- Volunteers will not be used to fill a position previously held by a paid worker or do the work of paid staff.
- Provide a volunteer position description outlining duties, responsibilities, prohibited actions and working environment.
- Volunteer interviews will be conducted in accordance with the volunteer's skills, experience, ability, and interests.
- Ensure volunteers are cleared of any security/safety compliance matters related to their role.
- Induction, training, relevant documentation, and resources are provided to volunteers so they can conduct their role in a safe and effective manner.
- Support, supervision, and direction is provided by Council volunteer program supervisors.
- The volunteer program supervisor will follow the Volunteer Management Guidelines which provides information and resources to manage volunteers in line with best practice and relevant legislation.
- Assure there is secure record keeping of all volunteer information.
- Provide volunteers with relevant policies and procedures including this Policy and the complaint, code of conduct and termination procedure.
- Recognise volunteers and ensure their contribution is acknowledged and celebrated.

Health, Safety, and Insurance

- All Volunteers are entitled to perform their duties in an environment that is safe. Council has a zero-tolerance to sexual harassment and provides provisions for domestic and family violence supports.

- In line with relevant legislation and Council's Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) guidelines and processes, Council will maintain as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy workplace for Council volunteers. This includes providing appropriate equipment to ensure safe and effective work, and a safe work environment by adhering to the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.
- Volunteer Program Supervisors are responsible for providing volunteers with any relevant OHS guidelines, and other personal protective equipment as required, relevant safe work procedures where applicable. They are also responsible for conducting regular risk assessments to identify potential risks to the health and safety of volunteers and take steps to remove these risks.
- All Council appointed volunteers are covered by the following insurance policies:
 - Voluntary Workers (Personal Accident)
 - Council's Public Liability Insurance policy for third party personal injury or damage to property caused by an occurrence in connection with the business of the Council.
 - Council's Voluntary Workers policy provides limited coverage for those aged 75 and over. Volunteers over this age will be informed on request what they have coverage for and whether additional coverage is required.
- In line with relevant human rights legislation and Council's equal opportunity processes, Council will maintain as far as is reasonably practicable a workplace that is free of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and bullying. All volunteers will be treated fairly and with respect.

Access to Resources and Relevant Information

- Council will provide updated resources, guidelines, and toolkits relevant to the Volunteering Sector which will be accessible through Council's internal website and where applicable will be uploaded onto Council's webpage. These resources will be in accordance with standards provided by Government Legislation and Volunteering Australia.
- As required, Council will provide translations, easy English versions and/or simplified visual version of the policy.

Workplace Adjustments

- Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) Council is obligated to make workplace adjustments to accommodate an individual's disability. Council is committed to ensuring all volunteer programs are inclusive of people with disability. Where applicable and appropriate, reasonable adjustments should be considered, to enable volunteers to fulfil the essential requirements of the role.

Child Safe Organisation

- Banyule City Council has zero tolerance for child abuse. Council is a committed Child Safe organisation and requires volunteers to understand and activate their role in preventing, detecting, responding, and reporting any suspicions of child abuse to the relevant authorities, and to maintain a child safe culture. All Council appointed Volunteers are to adhere to child safety standards in accordance with:
 - Banyule's Child Safe Policy
 - Banyule's Child Safe Framework
 - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Volunteer Supervisors are responsible for providing volunteers with the relevant policies and practices and to ensure that volunteers understand and comply with these policies and practices.
- The VMS provides Council guidelines when engaging Volunteers under 18 years of age.

Gender Equity

- To ensure this Policy doesn't unintentionally reinforce inequalities, Gender Equality was considered in its development, in line with the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020.
- Banyule is committed to the use of equitable practices to achieve gender equality, as historical and social disadvantage means that women, gender diverse and non-binary individuals are not operating on a level

playing field with men. In many circumstances, women and gender diverse and non-binary individuals may not have the same access to decision-making processes, resources, economic or social opportunities.

- The principles, rights and obligations outlined in this Policy aim to create better and fairer outcomes to ensure all people have equal access to opportunities, resources and satisfaction when volunteering in Banyule.

4.3 Volunteers External to Council

There are a range of volunteer activities that are not managed by Council that operate within a Council facility or on Council land. As separate entities to Council they are responsible for the independent management of their volunteers. These volunteer activities and arrangements are not included in Banyule's Volunteer Management Structure (VMS) which provides a centralised process to monitor and ensure consistent engagement and management of Council appointed volunteers. Table 2 outlines Council's relationship to these external volunteer groups and services operating in Council facilities and on Council land.

Table 2 Council's Relationship with external volunteer involving groups/services operating on Council land or in Council Facilities

Type of Volunteer-involving group/service operating in Council facilities or on Council land	Council's Relationship	Council's Guiding Document/Framework
Environmental Friends of Groups that are volunteer managed and administered. They are incorporated and have public liability insurance.	These Groups operate independently on Council land.	<i>Memorandum of Understanding (in development)</i>
Environmental Friends of Groups that are Independent volunteer groups. These groups are not incorporated and don't have public liability insurance.	These Groups work in partnership with Council to complete volunteer work and Council supported activities on Council land.	<i>Memorandum of Understanding (in development)</i>
Sport and Recreation clubs/Groups	These Groups operate independently or in partnership either in Council facilities or on Council land.	Licence Lease User Guide
Volunteer based Community Groups that have sole use of a Council facilities or part of	Operate independently in Council facilities.	Hall Hire procedure (yearly bookings only) Licence Lease
Not for Profit services	Operate independently or in partnership with Council.	Funding Agreement Lease Licence
Community Garden Groups	These groups operate independently on Council land.	Lease Memorandum of Understanding

4.4 Engagement of local Volunteer-Involving not-for-profit community groups and services

Banyule City Council will build the capacity of the local community sector through connecting volunteers with volunteering opportunities within the municipality. Council will facilitate the promotion, engagement and support of volunteer opportunities within the community through:

- Identifying and engaging relevant community organisations and community groups.
- Developing a partnership engagement process i.e., Memorandums Of Understanding, where applicable.
- Working with internal stakeholders to connect and/or promote organisations and community groups.
- Provide opportunities for training and networking.

5 Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or in accordance with significant changes to legislation or aspects included in this policy that could affect the health and safety of volunteers and workers.