

1 Leadership Standards



Photo by Solstice Photography



1.1 Introduction to volunteer management

Volunteers are the lifeblood of many organisations. In Australia, community sporting clubs are often managed by dedicated volunteers.

Managing volunteers can be very different to managing employees. If this is the first time you are managing volunteers, the *Volunteer Managers Manual* will provide valuable hints and tips to establish best practice volunteer management processes. You can use the manual as a template to develop your own volunteer managers handbook that is customised for your club.



This *Volunteer Managers Manual* is aligned with the **National Standards for Volunteer Involvement**¹ in Australia. The National Standards contain benchmarks specifically designed to help organisations attract, manage, recognise and retain volunteers, and to manage risk and safety with respect to volunteers.

We recommend you read through the *Volunteer Managers Manual* and pick and choose sections that are most relevant to your club. Identify your priorities based on your capacity, and the financial and human resources you have available. Don't think you need to do everything at once.

Developing best practice volunteer management is a journey, and a journey takes time! Just get started with your priorities, and by taking one step at a time, you will soon feel very comfortable managing your team of volunteers.

¹ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/national-standards-and-supporting-material/#/>

1.2 What is volunteering?



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

The term 'volunteering' covers a diverse range of activities in Australian society. It includes formal volunteering that takes place within organisations in a structured way, and informal volunteering that takes place outside the context of a formal organisation.

Volunteering should not be exploitative or be used to replace paid employment. While volunteering is not an activity done for financial gain or income, volunteers generally *do* have the right to receive reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.

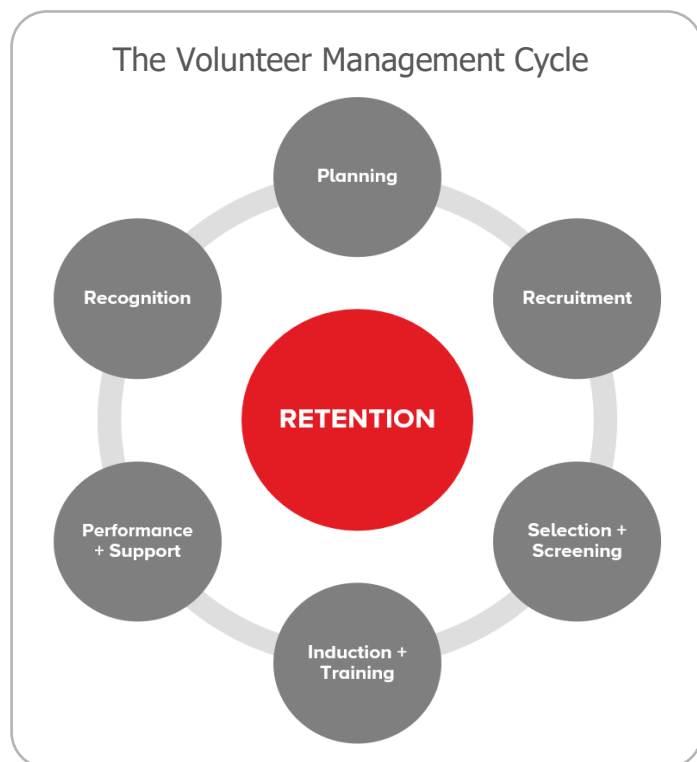
Volunteers dedicate their time willingly to your club for no financial reward; however, this does not mean you cannot reward them in other ways. There are many ways in which you can acknowledge and celebrate the contributions volunteers make to your club; these will be explained later in this manual.

The Volunteer Management Cycle

The Volunteer Management Cycle is a guide to the process of involving volunteers in your organisation. For volunteer managers, there are often defined processes at each stage of the Volunteer Management Cycle. By dividing it into stages, you can ensure that your club is aiming for best practice at every step along the way, which will help in retaining your volunteers.

The Volunteer Management Cycle can also be used to develop an action plan for your volunteer program.

The *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement* cover the stages of the Volunteer Management Cycle as well as other factors such as leadership and management, commitment to volunteer involvement, and continuous improvement.





A full overview of the National Standards can be found on the [Volunteering Australia²](#) website.

Best practice volunteer management

Best practice volunteer management is guided by legislation, organisational policies and procedures, risk assessments and, of course, the relationships you build with your volunteers!



A useful resource to read in conjunction with the *Volunteer Managers Manual* is the [National Volunteer Guide](#).³ This guide is produced by Justice Connect's not-for-profit law service, which provides guidance on the legislation that is relevant to engaging and managing volunteers.

Policies and procedures vary between organisations and can depend on several factors, such as the size of your organisation, and whether you have paid staff or an unpaid volunteer workforce. In your role as Volunteer Manager, you may be involved in developing policies and procedures relevant to volunteers. In the next section you can get some ideas about how to get started.

² https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Standards-Documents-FINAL_Web.pdf

³ https://www.nfplaw.org.au/sites/default/files/media/National_volunteer_guide_Parts_1_to_6.pdf

1.3 Policies and procedures – the basics

What is the difference between a policy and a procedure? A **policy** is generally a statement of intention that guides actions within your club or organisation and that supports decision-making. A policy is a high-level document that focuses on why things are done a certain way and that does not specify what actions need to be taken to carry out the intention of the policy.

A **procedure** is the supporting document to a policy that explains what steps or actions need to be taken to carry out the intention of the policy, and by whom.

It can be beneficial to have written policies and procedures in place, to guide decision-making and provide clarity on the rights and responsibilities of your volunteers and your club. However, policies and procedures only add real value to your club if they are written in easy-to-understand language, are accessible to everyone, and are useful to your club.

Writing lengthy policies and procedures that are filed away, never to be looked at again, does not add value to your club or volunteer management practices. Ensure you regularly review your policies and procedures and invite input from the people affected by them – including volunteers.



Hot tip:

Policies and procedures only add value to your club if they are written in language that is easy to understand, are accessible to everyone, and are useful to your club.

How... to develop policies and procedures

1	Identify the need	<input type="checkbox"/> This can be done at board or committee level, by volunteers, staff, or other key stakeholders of your club.
2	Do some research	<input type="checkbox"/> Look at policy templates or examples from other clubs and check that the intentions are consistent with your other club documentation and rules.
3	Discuss at board or committee level	<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on the content that is relevant for the policy.
4	Draft policy	<input type="checkbox"/> When developing a draft, also consider what procedures may need to accompany the policy.
5	Distribute draft and gather feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> Use feedback provided by those affected by the policy to make revisions if needed.
6	Adopt the policy and develop procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> The policy should be adopted formally by the club. This may need approval from the General Manager or Club Committee. Once adopted, the related procedures need to be developed.
7	Communicate and make accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> To ensure the policy becomes best practice, communicate about the policy to your club members and stakeholders and let them know where they can access the document(s), for example, on the website.
8	Review and revise	<input type="checkbox"/> You may want to set a date to review the policy, check how well it is being used, and whether all relevant people understand the policy and know where to access it. Identify if any revisions are needed. Is it still relevant?

1.4 Leadership and organisational infrastructure

Good volunteer management requires an understanding of the importance of volunteers at all levels of the club, especially at the board or committee and management levels. It is important that responsibilities for leading and managing volunteer involvement are defined and supported. A good place to start is to ensure that the topic of volunteer involvement is a regular topic on the board or committee agenda

Volunteering vision



Our volunteering vision

Volunteers are a vital part of our club. We welcome, support and value our volunteers for their contribution to our high-performing club.

Developing a clear Volunteering Vision helps you think about why volunteers are important to your club, and why a volunteer program based on best practice is of benefit to you and the club.

When developing a volunteering vision statement, think about where your club is currently at in terms of its volunteering program. What you are doing well? What

challenges are you grappling with? What you would like your Club's volunteering program to look like in the future?

It's okay to think big and take time to work towards a future idea or vision. A vision statement will help you get there. It can guide you along the way in your volunteer program development journey!

How to... develop a volunteering vision

1	Recognise the need	<input type="checkbox"/> Why do you think a volunteering vision will be beneficial to your club? How will it focus your thinking about volunteers? Will it make volunteers feel more valued? Will it improve community, sponsor and government perceptions of your club? Will it highlight an already strong focus and commitment to volunteers?
2	Brainstorm ideas at the board or committee level and invite key volunteers to provide input to the volunteering vision	<input type="checkbox"/> What would you like the club volunteering program of the future to look like? What are you already doing well? What would you like to improve? A strong vision is a statement of what you would like your volunteering program to be in the future (5 years). It gives purpose to the reason you have volunteers. It should be short and specific but have aspiration and ambition.
3	Draft the first volunteering vision statement	<input type="checkbox"/> Share this with your committee or working group for consideration. Let it rest for a week or two.
4	Revisit the volunteering vision statement and have a second brainstorm	<input type="checkbox"/> With the committee or group involved, reassess whether the draft volunteering vision resonates with people. Is it something people can believe in and work with?
5	Decide on the final vision statement	<input type="checkbox"/> Make any final changes, if needed,
6	Communicate your volunteering vision so that each person in your club understands and commits to the vision	<input type="checkbox"/> Publish your new vision on your website; include it in the volunteer induction kit; and remind your team regularly of your vision, to keep it front of mind.

Build a volunteer support structure

Before you start recruiting volunteers, you should have a clear idea of what the needs are in your club. What infrastructure do you need to have in place to recruit, induct, support and maintain your volunteers?

You could start by identifying if a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator is required for the club (this can be a volunteer role), or whether there is a person on the Club Committee that is a natural fit, and has the capacity, to take on this role.

- What plans do you need to have in place in case of sickness or leave?
- Where will the volunteers conduct their volunteer roles?
- What infrastructure or tools do they need to support them with this?

For best practice volunteer management, it is important you have systems in place to manage and keep track of your volunteers. This could simply be an excel spreadsheet that functions as your volunteer database, or you could invest in dedicated volunteer management software, such as **Volunteer Records Information Administrator**⁴ (VIRA)⁵. This will help you keep track of volunteer contact details, interests, availability, screening information (for example, police checks), emergency contact details and relevant medical information.



Hot tip: Invest in a volunteer management system.

There are many online systems available. It's worth investing in such a system to simplify and streamline every facet of volunteer management, from recruitment and administration, to mobilisation and reporting.

Conduct a volunteer audit and risk assessment

Do you have a clear idea of how many people in your club community are already volunteering for the club? At this stage, it is smart to conduct an audit of your club's activities to understand your existing volunteer team. This will help you determine what types of volunteers are needed, how many, and when.

While conducting this audit and getting a clear picture of what your club's needs are, it is also recommended you conduct a risk assessment. Risk management is not only about avoiding penalties or legal actions; it is about undertaking your activities with care and doing the right thing to avoid harm or injury in your team.

⁴ <https://www.vol.org.au/>

⁵ Disclosure: VIRA is a purpose-designed volunteer management system developed by Volunteering Western Australia (VWA), a sister organisation of Volunteering Tasmania (VT). When registering for a VIRA account via VT, VT receives 25% of the annual fee that VWA charge for use of the online platform.

How to... do a volunteer risk assessment

<p>1</p>	<p>Recognise the need</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Why do a risk assessment? Think about the safety of the volunteers, your insurance requirements, the legal issues if someone from the club were to be injured, and the potential reputational damage if there were an incident.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Get a small committee or group together</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> It's better to do a risk assessment with multiple people than trying to do it all on your own.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Assess each volunteer role</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential risks before volunteers are engaged in the activity. Think about possible risks to volunteers, to other members of the club (including children), to the broader community, as well as financial, legal, safety, and reputational risks.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Ask questions to help you identify the potential risks</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Will the volunteer be working supervised or unsupervised?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Where will the volunteer be undertaking their role? Are their risks associated to this specific location?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Will the volunteer need any special tools or equipment, such as a uniform, personal protective equipment, sunscreen, suitable clothing or shoes?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the volunteer need a safety briefing?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the volunteer know who to contact in case of an issue or emergency?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is any specific training required to conduct the volunteer role safely?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Will the volunteer be working with children, confidential information, or money? Are any special screening checks required for the volunteer role?</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Identify the steps your club can take to mitigate the risks</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Document this in associated policies, procedures, and a risk register (this can be an excel spreadsheet).</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Communicate the reasonable steps you will take to protect volunteers from risks</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> What expectations do you have from volunteers to help mitigate risks? Include this information in the volunteer position description and induction manual, and communicate this personally when inducting and orienting the volunteer.</p>