

# Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

## Volunteers

[publicsector.sa.gov.au](http://publicsector.sa.gov.au)



**Government  
of South Australia**

Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Sector Employment

# Contents

- Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment .....1**
- Guideline: Volunteers .....4**
  - Who is covered by this guideline? .....4
  - Intent.....5
  - Commencement and application .....5
  - Interpretation.....5
  - Context .....5
  - Scope .....5
  - Agency level policies.....6
  - Regulation of volunteering.....6
    - Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) (WHS Act) .....6
    - Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) (EO Act) .....7
    - Volunteer Protection Act 2001 (SA) .....7
  - Responsibilities of volunteers .....7
  - Responsibilities of chief executives, agency heads or delegates.....8
  - Engagement .....8
  - Screening and suitability .....8
  - Activities.....9
  - Training.....9
  - Confidentiality .....9
  - Principles of volunteer conduct .....9
  - Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses and honorariums.....10
  - Recognition.....10
  - Insurance cover for South Australian Government volunteers.....11
  - Dispute resolution and grievances .....11
- Attachment A: Regulation of Volunteers in the South Australian Public Sector .....12**
  - Other relevant legislation .....13
    - Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021 .....13
    - Civil Liability (Institutional Child Abuse Liability) Amendment Act 2021 .....13
    - Return to Work Act 2014 (SA) (RTW Act)  
(replacing the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986).....13
    - Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 and Volunteers Protection Act 2001.....13
    - Aged care providers funded by the Australian Government under the *Aged Care Act 1997*.....13
    - Health Care Act 2008 .....14

Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012 .....	14
The Office for Public Integrity (OPI) .....	14
Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 .....	14
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 .....	14
Related resources .....	15
Volunteering Strategy for South Australia (2021-2027) .....	15
National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, 2015 Volunteering Australia Inc. ....	15
Implementing the Commissioner’s Guideline – Volunteers .....	15
Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network .....	15
State Disability Inclusion Plan .....	15
<b>Attachment B: Expected behaviours, responsibilities and rights of South Australian public sector volunteers .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Principles of conduct .....	17
Democracy .....	17
Impartiality .....	17
Accountability .....	17
Diversity .....	17
Values .....	17
Volunteer conduct standards .....	18
General compliance .....	18
Professional and courteous behaviour .....	18
Public comment .....	18
Handling official information .....	18
Use of government/public resources .....	18
Conflicts of interest .....	18
Acceptance of gifts and benefits .....	18
Criminal offences .....	18
Reporting unethical behaviour .....	18
Volunteer rights .....	19
Volunteer responsibilities .....	20
Further information .....	20

# Guideline: Volunteers

**Date of Operation:** 25 July 2022  
**Review Date:** 25 July 2024

## **WHO IS COVERED BY THIS GUIDELINE?**

---

This guideline is intended as a government policy for all public sector agencies as defined by the *Public Sector Act 2009 (SA)* and may be adopted and applied by individual agencies. For further information, see this guideline's [Scope](#).

## **INTENT**

---

The intent of this guideline is to assist in ensuring persons acting as volunteers in public sector agencies are managed and otherwise treated in a fair and equitable manner.

## **COMMENCEMENT AND APPLICATION**

---

This guideline will come into effect on 25 July 2022.

It applies to public sector agencies as defined in section 3(1) of the *Public Sector Act 2009*.

## **INTERPRETATION**

---

In this guideline:

- 'Agency' means a public sector agency that falls within the [Scope](#) section.
- 'Volunteer' means a person who performs functions in a public sector agency on a voluntary basis without financial gain.
- 'Volunteer manager or coordinator' are public sector employees with primary responsibility for managing the relationship with, and services provided by, persons acting as volunteers, regardless of the actual title of the relevant role, duties or position.
- A reference to any legislation, regulation or statutory instrument in this guideline shall be deemed to include any amendment, repeal or substitution.
- A 'permission or licence to act as a volunteer' means the volunteer is assessed to meet the requirements of an organisation/agency's volunteer position and is approved to occupy the position by an appropriate chief executive, agency head or delegate.

## **CONTEXT**

---

South Australian public sector agencies work in partnership with thousands of persons who act as volunteers to deliver various services to the South Australian community.

Public sector agencies have an obligation to take a consistent approach to the management and support of volunteers, with an emphasis on maximising the effective use of their skills and experience, and appropriate recognition of the contribution they make.

## **SCOPE**

---

This guideline is limited to persons who become volunteers through direct liaison with a chief executive, agency head or their delegate and who perform volunteering functions in respect of public sector programs and service delivery within or by public sector agencies.

This guideline does not apply to people contributing to an agency as part of work experience, student placement or work placement.

It applies to all public sector agencies and is intended to cover all volunteers who assist the State or Crown, who:

- provide services as a volunteer of their own free will and for the common good to both the volunteer, public sector and community
- perform as a volunteer without financial gain
- provide an important role in the delivery of government services to the community.

## **AGENCY LEVEL POLICIES**

---

The guideline's provisions are deliberately broad in scope and are intended to accommodate the many diverse relationships between public sector agencies and volunteers.

To help reduce any risks associated with using volunteers, agencies should develop appropriate volunteering policies specific to their needs and update them regularly. Any agency specific policy must be complementary to this guideline.

## **REGULATION OF VOLUNTEERING**

---

Persons who perform volunteer duties for a public sector agency are provided with a permission or licence to act as a volunteer by a chief executive, agency head or delegate. That permission or licence is subject to conditions and may be revoked due to a breach of these conditions by the volunteer, subject to the volunteer being afforded procedural fairness. A formal process is not required where there is a legislative requirement for registration or licensing.

Volunteers are not public sector employees or otherwise engaged pursuant to any form of employment contract. Consequently, governing legislation, such as the *Public Sector Act 2009*, and industrial instruments such as awards and enterprise agreements, do not apply to them. Workplace policies, procedures and guidelines applicable to employees do not apply to volunteers. However, it is expected that volunteers will be required to act in an appropriate manner consistent with workplace policies as a condition of the license or permission granted to them to act as a volunteer.

Legislation that applies to all volunteers:

### **Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) (WHS Act)**

For the purposes of the WHS Act, volunteers are to be treated as workers. Section 7 of the WHS Act defines a person as a worker "if the person carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking work as a volunteer".

This means that public sector agencies must ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the physical and mental health and safety of all workers, including volunteers by performing risk assessment that considers the tasks, environment and the volunteer's capability and capacity. Just like any other workers, volunteers are to be consulted with respect to work health and safety matters and provided with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), information, training and supervision.

Agencies must consider new or changed risks arising from COVID-19 and minimise the risk of a volunteer being exposed. This will include an appropriate induction into safe working practices including physical distancing, hand sanitising and use of PPE. Agencies must follow public health directions and check whether the specific tasks or activities their volunteers perform are allowed under these directions. For example, it would be inappropriate for a volunteer who falls into a high-risk group because of their age or health status to escort visitors in a hospital.

Volunteers must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and ensure their actions do not adversely affect others. They must comply with any reasonable instructions, public health directions and policies and procedures including adopting all PPE requirements.

Further information about work health and safety is available from [SafeWork SA](#).

## **Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) (EO Act)**

For the purposes of the EO Act, an unpaid worker is treated as an employee. This means volunteers not only have the right to lodge a complaint of unlawful discrimination or harassment, but they also have the same legal obligations as a paid employee – they must not discriminate against employees, other volunteers or people using government goods or services on unlawful grounds.

The Equal Opportunity Commission has the capacity to investigate and conciliate complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment, including those made by volunteers.

## **Volunteer Protection Act 2001 (SA)**

The primary purpose of this Act is to protect volunteers in the community from personal liability for events that happen when volunteering.

Other legislation that applies to specific volunteers is listed in [Attachment A](#).

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS**

---

Although the *Public Sector Act 2009* does not apply, volunteers are accountable for their actions and are expected to observe similar ethical, policy and legislative requirements as employees.

Volunteers have a responsibility to perform their role and act in a manner consistent with the conditions of the permission or licence provided to them. Conditions that should always apply to the permission or licence to act as a volunteer include:

- treating agency, personal, and confidential information in accordance with relevant privacy instructions
- engaging in induction, orientation and other training activities as required
- providing accurate and honest information to public sector employees and officers of the Crown, other volunteers, customers and members of the public
- complying with the Principles of Conduct for South Australian Public Sector Volunteers which outline the values and standards of professional conduct expected of public sector volunteers ([Attachment B](#)).

Volunteers should also make a realistic commitment in terms of their time and area of involvement when seeking a licence or permission to act as a volunteer. They should also acknowledge the agency's expectations on how these commitments will be fulfilled.

The responsibilities of volunteers must be made clear to them when granted the permission or licence to act as a volunteer, and be provided with the information, training and resources necessary to enable them to meet these responsibilities.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHIEF EXECUTIVES, AGENCY HEADS OR DELEGATES**

When engaging volunteers, agencies should:

- establish the role of prospective volunteer activities guided by agency guidelines and procedures
- weigh up the costs and benefits involved in engaging volunteers
- identify the relevant skills and knowledge volunteers can provide
- provide recognition and acknowledgement of the role of volunteers
- ensure volunteers have the mental and physical capacity to perform the specific tasks required
- ensure volunteers have an agency contact person for any of their issues or concerns
- consult appropriately with employees, unions and existing volunteers (where matters affect volunteers directly)
- ensure volunteer involvement is adequately resourced
- maintain accurate and up to date records of volunteers
- make sure volunteer policies are regularly reviewed and updated
- consider the potential liability or risk exposure to the agency in using volunteers
- ensure volunteers are not used to perform functions that should be provided by employees.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

The South Australian public sector is committed to reflecting the diverse community it serves, while creating an inclusive workplace for all.

Agencies that engage volunteers should aim to foster the inclusion and engagement of a diverse range of persons as volunteers.

Creating a variety of volunteering opportunities that are flexible in availability, ability and interests is important in both recruiting and retaining volunteers.

There may be instances where a person wishing to be engaged as a volunteer with an agency has identified that they have accepted a Voluntary Separation Package/Targeted Voluntary Separation Package from the South Australian public sector. Agencies are encouraged to check the terms of the person's acceptance as to their eligibility for undertaking volunteering activities in public sector agencies.

## **SCREENING AND SUITABILITY**

The main aim of screening and selection processes is to identify persons whose backgrounds may indicate they are unsuitable or prohibited to act as a volunteer. In addition, these processes assist in matching the expectations, interests, availability, ability, commitment, and skills of prospective volunteers with activities to be undertaken.

A range of screening and selection processes are available for agencies to use when identifying and engaging prospective volunteers including:

- expressions of interest
- aptitude check
- interviews
- reference or character checks
- screening assessments and police checks.

Induction and training relevant to the specific volunteering role are also required.



Volunteers who will be working with children (under 18), people with disability, or the elderly will be required to undergo specific assessments in line with the relevant legislation.

## **ACTIVITIES**

---

Agencies need to ensure that volunteer activities positively support the achievement of program and organisational objectives. The volunteer activity should be meaningful, both to the volunteer and in contributing to the work of the agency.

Agencies must make sure that volunteers are provided with a clear understanding of their duties, responsibilities and accountabilities that is documented.

Volunteers must not perform tasks or jobs that might otherwise be done by paid employees.

## **TRAINING**

---

Volunteers may require specialised skills or knowledge to perform volunteer activities. In these instances, volunteers should be provided with the necessary training, either informally through mentoring or on the job training, or formally through accredited training.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

---

The responsibilities of volunteers to maintain confidentiality must be made clear to them in the permission or licence granted to them to act as a volunteer. They should be provided with the information, training and resources necessary to enable them to meet these responsibilities.

## **PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

---

Managers and employees working with volunteers are bound by the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector (the Code). A condition attached to the permission or licence granted to a person to act as a volunteer in a public sector agency should have a requirement for volunteers to act in a manner consistent with the Code.

The Principles of Conduct for South Australian Public Sector Volunteers ([Attachment B](#)) which are based on the Code, outline the values and standards of professional conduct expected of public sector volunteers. A requirement to act in a manner consistent with these principles may be attached to the permission or licence granting the volunteer the ability to volunteer in a public sector agency.

Other relevant legislation, or government guidelines that is applicable to the agency should appear in the permission or licence granted to the volunteer.

Public sector agencies may choose to issue agency specific conduct standards. Such additional standards must be consistent with the Code and any other relevant legislation or government guideline. Such standards must not be labelled as a 'code'.

As noted previously in this guideline, if a volunteer breaches the conditions attached to their permission or licence, it may be withdrawn.

## **REIMBURSEMENT OF OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES AND HONORARIUMS**

---

Agencies should provide all equipment and resources needed for a volunteer to undertake their role safely and effectively. Where this is not possible, volunteers should be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred as part of the performance of that role.

These may include but not limited to:

- parking expenses
- motor vehicle mileage or fuel allowance when volunteers use private cars
- relevant administrative costs associated with volunteer representative groups
- training costs
- uniform costs
- phone calls, as appropriate
- other incidental out-of-pocket expenses of individual volunteers.

Current rates for reimbursed expenses should be provided as a guide in agencies where this applicable and should be consistent across individual volunteer programs.

Volunteers are expected to seek permission for reimbursement of expenses before any costs are incurred and are expected to provide receipts or other evidence to receive the reimbursement.

Any reimbursement of expenses incurred while acting as a volunteer is not payment. [*Volunteers Protection Regulations 2019 (SA) 4(1)(a)*].

A monetary gift given in recognition of a volunteer's work (an honorarium) is also not payment, but the gift must be a true honorarium. For example, it must not be expected by the volunteer or relied upon as a source of income [Regulation 4(2)]. Agency authorisation must be consistent with any requirements set out in the Treasurer's Instructions.

Honorarium payments should not be comparable to wages or a salary. This may point to an employment relationship. The following are examples where a payment or pattern of payments may be deemed to be a wage or payment for services:

- If a payment is calculated with reference to time with the agency or hours worked
- If an allowance far exceeds the expense actually incurred or is paid on a regular basis
- A lump sum payment is in exchange for services provided.

## **RECOGNITION**

---

Volunteers should be recognised and acknowledged for their contribution, commitment and the valued roles they undertake within public sector agencies. This should be done on an ongoing and regular basis with a balance between formal and informal recognition and acknowledgement strategies.

For many volunteers, the provision of an environment in which their time, skills and experience are utilised in such a way that they receive the satisfaction of a 'job well done' may be sufficient recognition. However, volunteers may also enjoy coming together as a team for an occasional combined acknowledgement. Some will value public appreciation while others may prefer a more low-key acknowledgement.

## **INSURANCE COVER FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT VOLUNTEERS**

Uniform cover is provided to volunteers on the basis detailed below. The provision of this cover represents government policy but there is no contractual agreement entered into by government.

All registered volunteers associated with public sector agencies are covered by the insurance division of the South Australian Government Financing Authority (SAFA), for bodily injury and death under certain criteria:

- The amount payable will reflect and be equivalent to the benefits that would have been payable to the volunteer under the *Return to Work Act 2014 (SA)* (the RTW Act).
- Weekly income is paid where a loss of income can be demonstrated and then only up to the RTW Act ceiling.
- For long-term incapacities, benefit reductions in line with the RTW Act rules apply.
- Lump sums for death and for serious disability are paid on the same basis as the RTW Act schedule.
- In the event of injury, non-Medicare medical expenses incurred will be payable as set out in section 18 – Definitions of this agreement of the SAFA Agency Agreement.
- The amount of any benefit payable will take account of benefits available to the volunteer under any private health insurance fund and will be less amounts recovered from that fund.
- No benefit is payable in respect of the Medicare gap between payments made by Medicare and charges incurred. Volunteers are covered in respect of civil liability as set out in the *Volunteers Protection Act 2001 (SA)*.
- As the agency deductible no longer applies to volunteer personal accident claims, any claims or incidents should be reported to SAFA within 30 days.
- SAFA makes no distinction between volunteers performing functions on private or public land.

The agency agreement between SAFA and agencies does not provide cover for a volunteer's vehicle and other personal property. If a volunteer's vehicle or other asset is damaged while volunteering or involved in State Government business, the volunteer needs to make a claim through their own insurance company.

Any claim which has the potential to exceed an agency's excess agreement will be forwarded by the agency to SAFA with sufficient information to support the claim. Specific insurance related questions by a volunteer or prospective volunteer should be directed to the agency's volunteer manager. For insurance purposes, SAFA requires the details and numbers of all volunteers associated with public agency programs to be declared annually by each agency. Agencies are required to keep a register of all their volunteer groups and to report the number of volunteers within the SAFA Agency Agreement.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCES**

Public sector agencies should have established dispute resolution or grievance policies and procedures to resolve workplace disputes.

Volunteers must be made aware of an agency's internal dispute resolution or grievance policies and procedures and who they can talk to about workplace issues and concerns.

If workplace issues arise, agencies are to follow their internal grievance procedures to ensure these are handled in a fair and transparent manner.

## **Attachment A:**

# Regulation of Volunteers in the South Australian Public Sector

## **OTHER RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

---

### **Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021**

[The Statutes Amendment \(Child Sexual Abuse\) Act 2021](#) came into operation on 1 June 2022. The Act introduces important reforms arising from recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

These reforms are designed to require adults (this includes volunteers) in institutions to take responsibility for reporting and preventing child sexual abuse in institutional contexts.

### **Civil Liability (Institutional Child Abuse Liability) Amendment Act 2021**

Under the [Civil Liability \(Institutional Child Abuse Liability\) Amendment Act 2021](#) there is a legislative duty on institutions to take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of a child linked to the institution. The institution has the onus of proof to demonstrate the steps taken to prevent abuse. This emphasises the importance of thorough record keeping and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities set out in these guidelines.

### **Return to Work Act 2014 (SA) (RTW Act) (replacing the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986)**

By virtue of Schedule 1 of the RTW Act, certain prescribed volunteers performing a prescribed class of work are deemed to be employees of the Crown. The class of volunteer and the class of work is set out in regulation 69(1) of the *Return to Work Regulations 2014*. This class includes volunteer fire fighters, volunteer SA State Emergency Services members and marine rescue volunteers. The provision imposes on the Crown the liabilities of a self-insured employer in relation to such people. The Crown is presumed to be their employer and they are entitled to claim workers' compensation if they are killed or injured in the course of their duties.

### **Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 and Volunteers Protection Act 2001**

Limit the extent to which volunteers may be liable for negligence. Any liability is moved to the organisation or the Crown.

### **Aged care providers funded by the Australian Government under the Aged Care Act 1997**

The *Aged Care Act 1997* is the overarching legislation that outlines the obligations and responsibilities that aged care providers must follow to receive subsidies from the Australian Government. Further information on these obligations and responsibilities is available from the [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission](#). Further information on [NDIS worker/volunteer screening requirements](#) is available on the Department of Health website.

### **Disability Inclusion Act 2018**

The requirement for workers of South Australian government-funded providers to have a disability services employment screening (disability screening) ceased on 31 January 2021.

[Workers \(including volunteers\) who undertake NDIS work](#) are required to undergo a NDIS worker check through the Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit.

## **Health Care Act 2008**

An Act to provide for the administration of hospitals and other health services and to establish systems to support the provision of high quality health outcomes, to provide licensing systems for ambulance services and private hospitals, to assist with the provision of laboratory services and facilities associated with veterinary science and for other purposes.

## **Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012**

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was established on 7 October 2021. The ICAC can investigate the conduct of public officers working with or for South Australian state government agencies and authorities, local government and South Australia Police, if the conduct has been assessed as raising a potential issue of corruption as defined in the ICAC Act.

## **The Office for Public Integrity (OPI)**

OPI became an independent stand-alone body on 7 October 2021. The OPI:

- handles complaints about public administration from members of the public
- handles reports about corruption, misconduct and maladministration in public administration from public officers and authorities
- refers complaints and reports to inquiry agencies, public authorities or public officers for further investigation or action when needed, such as the Ombudsman SA, the ICAC, the Judicial Conduct Commissioner
- oversees the assessment and investigation of complaints and reports about the conduct of SA Police officers.

## **Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017**

The *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* outlines the legislative obligations of organisations and individuals to safeguard children and young people in South Australia. The legislation defines what constitutes harm and risk of harm towards children and young people and helps to identify if a child or young person might be at risk. The Act also identifies individuals (including volunteers) known as mandatory notifiers who are required to report suspicions of harm or risk of harm to children and young people by law.

The *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* imposes an obligation on certain organisations to be safe, which means undertaking screening checks.

## **Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016**

The Act governs screening checks and prohibits those who pose an unacceptable risk to children from working or volunteering with children.

## **RELATED RESOURCES**

---

### **Volunteering Strategy for South Australia (2021-2027)**

The strategy was developed through a partnership between Volunteering SA&NT, the Government of South Australia, the Local Government Association and Business SA. It is a collaborative blueprint for action that sets in place the vision for volunteering in South Australia until 2027.

### **National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, 2015 Volunteering Australia Inc.**

These standards for best practice volunteer management developed by Volunteering Australia contain an overview of key areas with accompanying checklists.

### **Implementing the Commissioner's Guideline – Volunteers**

An online learning module [Implementing the Commissioner's Guideline - Volunteers](#) is available to assist those who are responsible for public sector volunteer programs or who provide advice about managing volunteers.

### **Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network**

The Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network (PSVPN) was established in 2017 by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment in response to the release of these guidelines.

The network is a resource for volunteer policy makers and managers of volunteer programs within public sector agencies. The Secretariat for the PSVPN can be contacted at [ofv@sa.gov.au](mailto:ofv@sa.gov.au).

### **State Disability Inclusion Plan**

South Australia's State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019-2023 brings State Government agencies and local councils together to reduce the barriers faced by people living with disability. The plan aims to create a more accessible and inclusive South Australia.

## **Attachment B:**

Expected behaviours, responsibilities  
and rights of South Australian public  
sector volunteers



## **PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT**

---

Public sector agencies should ensure that prospective volunteers familiarise themselves with the content of these principles, as a requirement of the licence or permission granted. They should know that they are required to always conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values and standards of professional conduct when volunteering. They should also be informed of possible consequences of any failure to act with the principles of conduct, which could include the revoking of their licence or permission to volunteer.

## **DEMOCRACY**

---

Public sector volunteers support the Government of South Australia in achieving the common good, primarily in the provision of community services. South Australia's democracy seeks a high-level of collaboration between the public sector and the community, to design and deliver services with the people whose lives are affected by these services.

## **IMPARTIALITY**

---

Public sector volunteers must be detached from influence either of a political nature or of partisan interests within the community. Instead, public sector volunteers must rely on evidence to provide objective advice to government and implement directions promptly and thoroughly.

Public sector volunteers must not publicly criticise the government, staff or other volunteers in any forum, including on social media sites.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

---

Within a broad system of accountability under which ministers are accountable to parliament, public sector volunteers are accountable for exercising their delegated authority and for performing their role within the values and standards of conduct outlined in these principles.

## **DIVERSITY**

---

Public sector volunteers should be as diverse as the community it serves. The views and experiences of all people should be respected, regardless of nationality, gender, cultural or social background, sexuality, religion, age or physical or intellectual ability.

## **VALUES**

---

The South Australian public sector is continuously evolving. Its values have been partly defined on the traditional tenets of public service. Yet, these values also reflect the evolution of the sector and the modern world in which it operates. All public sector volunteers should endeavour to uphold the values in their volunteering efforts by embodying:

- **Service:** proudly serve the community and Government of South Australia.
- **Professionalism:** strive for excellence.
- **Trust:** have confidence in the ability of others.
- **Respect:** value every individual.
- **Collaboration and Engagement:** create solutions together.
- **Honesty and Integrity:** act truthfully, consistently and fairly.
- **Courage and Tenacity:** never give up.
- **Sustainability:** work to get the best results for current and future generations of South Australians.

## **VOLUNTEER CONDUCT STANDARDS**

---

### **General compliance**

Public sector volunteers will act in a manner consistent with all legislation, policies and procedures and lawful and reasonable directions relevant to their role.

### **Professional and courteous behaviour**

Public sector volunteers must always display professional behaviour and treat others with respect and courtesy. Volunteers are seen as representing the public sector agency in which they work and must act in a manner which does not discredit the government.

### **Public comment**

Public sector volunteers will only make public comment in relation to their functions, the public sector or government policies and programs where specifically authorised to do so and will restrict such comment to factual information and professional advice. Public sector volunteers have the right to contribute to public discussions on community and social issues in a private capacity.

### **Handling official information**

Public sector volunteers who have access to official information will ensure it is only used for official purposes and will be handled in line with relevant legislation, policies and procedures. Volunteers will only disclose official information acquired through the course of their volunteering when required to do so by law or where appropriately authorised in the agency concerned.

### **Use of government/public resources**

Public sector volunteers shall use government or public resources responsibly and only for the appropriate purposes as authorised. Resources can include physical, financial, technological and intellectual property.

### **Conflicts of interest**

Public sector volunteers must guard against a conflict of interest by ensuring that personal interest does not improperly influence the way in which they carry out their duties. Volunteers must declare any known conflict of interest and not participate in any decision-making process where they have a conflict of interest.

### **Acceptance of gifts and benefits**

Public sector volunteers will not seek or accept gifts or benefits that could be reasonably perceived to influence themselves or others. Volunteers must comply with any policies of their public sector agency in relation to accepting, declaring, or recording the receipt of gifts or benefits.

### **Criminal offences**

Public sector volunteers will advise their manager or coordinator if they are charged with a criminal offence, acknowledging they could be brought into disrepute as well as the agency, the public sector or the government once the offence is public, admitted to, or proven.

### **Reporting unethical behaviour**

Public sector volunteers will report to the appropriate authority workplace behaviour that violates any law, is a danger to the environment or represents corrupt conduct and maladministration. The *Public*

*Interest Disclosure Act 2018* informs volunteers of their rights and responsibilities when it is applicable to particular circumstances.

## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS**

---

The South Australian public sector is committed to applying the Volunteering Australia National Standards to processes and practices involving volunteers and their basic rights.

Volunteers have the right to:

- perform their duties in a safe working environment
- be engaged in a manner that does not offend equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- be adequately covered by insurance in connection with their volunteering functions
- be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which they are volunteering
- be reimbursed for pre-approved out-of-pocket expenses upon the production of proof of expenditure
- be given a copy of the relevant agency's volunteer guideline
- have the right to refuse to do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
- be provided with a description of their functions and agree to the hours they will perform as a volunteer
- be provided with relevant induction and orientations to the organisation
- have their confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Information Privacy Principles
- be provided with the appropriate training, assistance and information to meet the responsibilities of their volunteering role and functions
- receive support and feedback in relation to the performance by them of their volunteering role and functions
- be acknowledged and appreciated for their contribution to the agency, public sector and community.

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

---

Prospective volunteers must be aware of their responsibility to provide current personal details for agencies to select and register volunteers and administer their duty of care responsibilities (including undertaking a screening assessment).

Volunteers must:

- be familiar with this guideline and comply with its contents and any relevant agency-level policy
- be reliable and accountable for their actions as a volunteer
- respect the privacy of others
- carry out volunteering functions according to the role description
- work in a safe manner and take reasonable care for their own health and safety, ensuring their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- be committed to the public sector agency, the public sector and its volunteer philosophy
- undertake training as required
- value and support others
- let the agency know if they are unable to continue volunteering in the agency.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

---

Legislation and regulations possibly relevant include:

[Civil Liability \(Institutional Child Abuse Liability\) Amendment Act 2021](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

[Disability Inclusion Act](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)

[Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005](#)

[Freedom of Information Act 1991](#)

[Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012](#)

[Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018](#)

[Return to Work Act 2014](#)

[State Records Act 1997](#)

[Statutes Amendment \(Child Sexual Abuse\) Act 2021](#)

[Volunteers Protection Act 2001](#)

[Work Health and Safety Act 2012](#)

**Other relevant information:**

[Independent Commission Against Corruption](#)

[Information Privacy Principles](#)

[Office for Public Integrity](#)

**Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Sector Employment**

**Street Address**

Ground Floor, State  
Administration Centre,  
200 Victoria Square  
(Tarndanyangga),  
Adelaide SA 5000

**Mailing address**

GPO Box 464,  
Adelaide SA 5001

**E** [publicsector@sa.gov.au](mailto:publicsector@sa.gov.au)

**T** 1800 317 333

**W** [publicsector.sa.gov.au](http://publicsector.sa.gov.au)



**Government  
of South Australia**

Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Sector Employment