



Qs AND As FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering will only work if you really want to do it. In the beginning you might not know exactly what kind of volunteering you want to do but you might have some ideas about why you would like to try it.

Is there an age limit on volunteering?

Some insurance companies place age restrictions on their insurance. Ultimately, this is for the protection of the volunteer. Generally age isn't a barrier to volunteering but depending on the type of role, the activity and the organisation there may be an age limit. This is largely a result of the type of risk that organisations face and what their insurance policy will cover.

I tried volunteering before and I really didn't like it. Why should I try again?

If you tried volunteering before, and didn't like it, then you have made a really important discovery in your journey. You've discovered a direction in the land of volunteering that wasn't the right one for you. It's important to remember that there are many different kinds of volunteering.

I've seen a volunteering role on the Kwinana Volunteering website that I'd like to do. What's my next step?

There are three ways you can find out about volunteering:

- Ring the Kwinana Volunteer Centre on (08) 92364314 to make an appointment

- Drop into the Centre on Level 1, Darius Wells Community Centre to make an appointment
- You can email your expression of interest: volunteering@kwinana.wa.gov.au

The Kwinana Volunteer Centre is open Monday to Wednesday 9am to 4pm.

I applied for a volunteering role and someone from the organisation wants to meet me. What do I need to do to prepare for the meeting?

It's important to remember that this meeting is a chance for you to find out more about what the organisation is like and what you would have to do in the volunteering role. People from the organisation will also use the meeting as a chance to get to know you better. Here are some important things to remember:

- If you're running late or can't make it to the meeting make sure you ring the person who asked you to the meeting so they know.
- If you're feeling nervous it can sometimes help to tell the person how you are feeling. Most people are even friendlier when you're honest about being nervous.
- You might also find it helpful to take a list of reasons why you think you can do the role.

I had a meeting but I haven't been told if they want me as a volunteer. Should I do anything?

If the person you met said that they would get back to you by a certain date then wait until that date before contacting them. Once that date is over it's fair enough to give the person a quick and friendly phone call.

- If the person says your application is successful then it's still your choice whether you want to go ahead with the volunteering role.
- If the person says your application was not successful then it's OK to ask why. They might be able to give you information that will help then next time you apply for a volunteering role.

Are volunteers covered by Worker's Compensation Legislation?

No. This is why it is important that you check that your organisation covers you for Volunteer Personal Accident insurance, which may cover a portion of your salary if you cannot attend your usual paid work as a result of an injury while volunteering.

Will I have out of pocket expenses reimbursed?

Even though Western Australia's Peak Volunteer body; Volunteering WA firmly believes that no volunteer should be out-of-pocket and that pre-approved expenses should be reimbursed, there is no set rule. It all depends on the funding available and this will vary from organisation to organisation. Before spending any personal money we urge you to check if your organisation has Policies and Procedures for reimbursement of pre-approved volunteer out-of-pocket expenses.

Do I need to get a National Police Clearance?

Every organisation has different rules and while it is not compulsory for volunteers to have a National Police Clearance, the recommendation is that organisations make sure they Police Check for volunteer roles that are high profile, deal with money or have contact with vulnerable people. If you

are asked to get a Police Clearance, ask the organisation if they will support you to obtain and pay for the police clearance.

Do I need to get a Working With Children Check? (WWCC)

Legislation is clear that if you volunteer with children you must obtain a WA Working with Children Check. The WWCC is a compulsory criminal record check that ensures a consistent and high standard of checking for certain people in child-related work in WA. It is important to note the WWCC is only valid in the state in which it is issued and is therefore not transferable between States. You will need the support of the Volunteer Involving Organisation to gain the WWCC. Make sure you check to see if they support you to obtain and pay for the WWCC. Volunteers under 18 years of age are exempt.

Rather than being the definitive check for volunteers, the WWCC is just a part of an organisations process to protect children.

I'm in Australia on a Visa. Can I do Volunteer Work?

Any volunteers who do not have permanent residency in Australia need to ensure they are keeping within the law and abiding by their Visa restrictions.

It is important that you make sure that you can legally undertake volunteer work on your particular visa. Generally if you have the right to work in Australia, you generally have the right to volunteer.

Does an organisation have the right to discipline volunteers?

Yes. Organisations are in existence to achieve their mission and volunteers need to support and not hinder the work they do. We ask all WA organisations to have a thorough set of volunteer Policies and Procedures to ensure that each situation is dealt with consistently and fairly. If a volunteer has a grievance about the way things are handled, please write to the organisation.

Can an organisation refuse a volunteer?

Yes. Organisations have the right to take only the most suitable people that will help them achieve their mission. Don't take it to heart if you've been refused. Often it's because they don't have room for any more volunteers. Explore other options.

Does an organisation have to be incorporated to involve volunteers?

No. Not for profit organisations that hold the appropriate insurances and volunteer support can involve volunteers.

How am I protected, by Law, as a volunteer?

The only specific pieces of legislation that cover Volunteers are: bullying, privacy, protection from liability and health and safety. As a volunteer, your ultimate right is to say "no" and to stop volunteering.

I'm being bullied. What can I do?

Amendments to the Fair Work Act 2009 have been in effect since early 2014 and it covers volunteers.

Bullying may involve, for example, any of the following types of behaviour:

- Aggressive or intimidating conduct
- Belittling or humiliating comments
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Teasing, practical jokes or 'initiation ceremonies'
- Exclusion from work-related events
- Unreasonable work expectations, including too much or too little work, or work below or beyond a worker's skill level
- Displaying offensive material
- Pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner.

In order for it to be considered to be bullying the behaviour must be repeated and unreasonable and must create a risk to health and safety.

It is your organisation's responsibility to ensure bullying is identified early and dealt with appropriately so make sure you let them know you feel you are being bullied, preferably in writing.

If you feel the organisation isn't taking action after you've made a complaint, you can put in a claim to the Fair Work Commission. There are forms and fees that need to be completed. Their website will also tell you about the process involved.

www.fwc.gov.au/content/rules-form/application-order-stop-bullying

I have a grievance. What should I do?

Grievances come in many forms and can include:

- Having a problem with or about a person or system
- Not feeling appreciated or treated very well
- Being unfairly dismissed
- Feeling discriminated against
- Feeling victimised or bullied
- Feeling no one is doing anything about a problem volunteer
- Plus other complaints.

Every organisation should have policies and procedures to handle grievances. Check your organisation's Grievance Policy and follow the procedure. If there is no procedure, put your grievance in writing to the most appropriate and senior person within the organisation.

As some volunteer managers only work part-time investigating these things can take longer. We suggest you write to the organisation and ask for an update. If there is a higher body / association you may wish to write to them as well.