



Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue Inc.

Policies and Procedures

Volunteer Policy and Procedure

www.seabirdrescue.org.au

Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue inc. (ASTR) aims to reduce the human impact on the environment

This policy applies to staff and volunteers of Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue inc.

Summary:

This document details Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue Inc.'s policy and procedures on volunteers and their management.

AUSTRALIAN SEABIRD & TURTLE RESCUE INC.

Volunteer Policy and Procedure

Title: Volunteer Policy and Procedure

Replacing existing policy plan or procedure Yes

Type of document: *Policy and Procedure*

Related Legislation or other Documents:

Volunteering Australia, 2015
National Standards For Involving Volunteers in Not For Profit Organisations,
Age Discrimination Act 2004
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Racial Discrimination Act 1975
Sex Discrimination Act 1984
New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

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Applicable to: Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue Inc. and Collaborative Partners

Distribution to: all staff and members
Distribution by: Orientation Kit, Manual, General Register, Members Portal (pending).

Approved by:
Australian Seabird & Turtle
Rescue Inc. Committee

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Index	Page
1 Title	3
2 Background	3
3 Purpose	3
4 Policy	3
4.1 General Policy	3
4.1.1 Principles of Volunteer Involvement	3
4.1.2 Objectives for Involving Volunteers	3
4.1.3 Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers	4
4.2 Volunteer Management	4
4.2.1 Recruitment	4
4.2.2 Selection	5
4.2.3 Job Description	5
4.2.4 Orientation	5
4.2.5 Support and Development	5
4.2.6 Documentation	5
4.2.7 Uniform	5
4.2.8 Critical Incident Debriefing	5
4.2.9 Volunteer Recognition	6
4.3 Social and Community Responsibilities	6
4.4 Volunteer Management Review Process	6
4.5 Service Review	6
4.6 Operating Procedures	7
4.7 Volunteers Working with Other Organisations	7
4.8 Rights and Responsibilities	7
4.8.1 Rights of Volunteers	7
4.8.2 Volunteers' responsibilities	8
4.8.3 ASTR Code of Practice	9

1 Title: Volunteer Policy

2 Background

To ensure good governance and transparency, an organisation involving volunteers should clarify its underlying philosophy and have a procedural framework that provides structure and direction to the way volunteers are managed.

Formal volunteering with ASTR can be defined as an activity that is undertaken:

- To be of benefit to the community and the volunteer.
- Of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion.
- For no financial payment.
- In designated positions only.

3 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure that ASTR's practices are consistent with the Australian National Standards for involving volunteers. ASTR has a commitment to maintaining a system of practice that defines the objectives, rights, accountability and quality system for the management of volunteers.

4 Policy

It is the policy of ASTR that volunteers are managed in a structured and consistent manner which meets the Australian National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not For Profit Organisations (ANS).

4.1 General Policy

4.1.1 Principles of Volunteer Involvement

ASTR adopts the Definition of Volunteering as adopted by the ANS (2005):

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

4.1.2 Objectives for Involving Volunteers

ASTR involves volunteers focusing on obtaining tangible health improvement outcomes for marine birds and marine reptiles ASTR believes that involving volunteers will:

- Build the capacity of individuals, organisations and communities through sharing skills, diversity, age, cultural background and knowledge.
- Foster partnerships between organisations and communities in Australia.
- Raise awareness of seabird and marine reptile issues.
- Extend the capacity of ASTR to provide a rescue, rehabilitation service for sick and injured seabirds and marine reptiles.

4.1.3 Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

ASTR supports the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and adheres to an agreed Code of Practice, see Appendix 1 and 2.

4.2 Volunteer Management

ASTR has a defined system for the management of volunteers which ensures that there is a consistent and systematic approach to recruitment, retention and role management. Each volunteer has a coordinator to whom they report and are immediately responsible. Coordinators are involved in all operational decisions involving the volunteers under their management. See Appendix 3 Organisational Chart.

There is an elected branch coordinator whose duties include:

- Recruitment and selection process, including Working With Children Declarations where appropriate;
- Job description.
- Orientation.
- Identification of volunteer's support and development needs.
- Documentation.
- HR matters.
- Volunteer Recognition.

4.2.1 Recruitment

Volunteers are recruited through the ASTR website, at workshops or events and are required to:

- Join the organisation.
- Undergo specialised training for roles involving clinical and/or rescue work;
- In some circumstances, where volunteers would have direct and unsupervised contact with vulnerable members of the public, a Working With Children Declaration may be required.

Recruitment for specific positions or projects will detail the essential and desirable criteria that the applicant must address in their application. All applications are assessed in accordance to anti-discrimination principles.

4.2.2 Selection

Applications are received by the volunteer coordinators in each area. Specific projects or office holding volunteer positions are recruited by expression of interest and go through a similar selection process.

4.2.3 Job description

Each volunteer is given an appropriate job description which is developed by their coordinator according to the role they will be carrying out. The job description will include key areas of responsibility, essential and desirable skills, supervisory arrangements and the lines of accountability. These job descriptions are regularly reviewed with both the volunteer and the volunteer coordinator and amended as necessary.

4.2.4 Orientation

Once a volunteer's application is successful, they are oriented to the ASTR policies and procedures. Access to the full range of ASTR policies will be made available for volunteers. Further appropriate orientation to specific projects is carried out for relevant volunteers. Orientation will be carried out by a nominated ASTR member

4.2.5 Support and Development

Volunteers (including committee members) will be provided with supervision and support to enable them to carry out their roles and responsibilities. In the event of there needing to be any changes to their role (including ceasing of that role) this will be carried out in a fair manner in collaboration with the branch coordinator and the General Manager. It is recognised that volunteers are well placed to detect weaknesses in the organisational systems and need to have the opportunity to suggest improvements.

4.2.6 Documentation

ASTR will keep attendance records for any site-based projects.
The Membership Officer will keep membership records pertaining to volunteers.

4.2.7 Uniform

ASTR have uniform shirts available for purchase, that volunteers may wear when carrying out duties associated with ASTR. Volunteers must adhere to the highest standards of conduct when wearing the brand.

4.2.8 Critical Incident Debriefing

ASTR will direct or provide volunteers to debriefing services for any staff member who requires psychological assistance for issues arising from their volunteer position.

4.2.9 Volunteer Recognition

ASTR recognises the diversity of skills of its volunteers. The objectives of the organisation can only be reached by the efforts of volunteers. ASTR will involve volunteers in policy development and strategic direction. The organisation will show its appreciation of the volunteers by positive feedback and being receptive to ideas for improvement. ASTR will organise social events that will promote team building (where possible). ASTR formally recognises National Volunteer Week (in May) and International Volunteer Day (in Dec).

4.3 Social and Community Responsibilities

The social and community responsibilities of ASTR volunteer management are reflected in the *Code of Practice, Volunteers Rights and Responsibilities* which the volunteers agree to. These responsibilities include:

- **Conservation of the Environment** ASTR affirms that the work of rescue and rehabilitation of sick or injured marine wildlife compasses the link between the health of the animals and the total environment.
- **Ethical Practices** ASTR ensures the implementation of ethical and non-discriminatory volunteer management practices in recruitment and human resources policies in accordance to anti- discrimination legislation.
- **Expenditure Accountability** Volunteers with ASTR are managed to ensure accountability and transparency for the expenditure of sponsor or public monies through annual account audits which are conducted in accordance with the *Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth)* and the *ASTR Constitution*.
- **Public Health & Safety** ASTR complies with Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) legislation and ensures that all volunteers are aware of all OH&S responsibilities to staff, clients and visitors.

4.4 Volunteer Management Review Process

ASTR ensures that the volunteer management processes are effective and meeting their objectives by regular review. Elements of this review process are volunteer role reviews policy reviews, audits, quality improvement and planning processes. The management system is updated in relation to changes in strategic direction, resource allocation decisions and improvements made from a quality improvement and/or risk management approach. Any changes are ratified by the General Manager and the Executive Committee and disseminated to the volunteers. Records are kept of policy or procedural changes.

4.5 Service Review

ASTR will formally review any services that are directly provided by volunteers, evaluating:

- The extent to which the service met the community's needs.
- The specified standards, procedures and processes to determine continuing suitability and effectiveness.
- Any information or development needs of the volunteers.
- Volunteers will be involved in any service review and any changes will be planned, approved, implemented, recorded and evaluated.
- Any service that is directly provided by ASTR to customers will be assessed through customer satisfaction surveys.

4.6 Operating Procedures

ASTR maintains a wide range of operating policies and procedures relevant to volunteers. ASTR will make all policies available to volunteers during orientation and through a central register. Volunteers will be given an opportunity to participate and comment on operational and management system policy reviews.

4.7 Volunteers Working in Other Organisations

ASTR maintains the function of recruitment and referral of trained ASTR members to other organisations. Once the ASTR member starts work with that organisation they become a volunteer with that organisation as well as with ASTR and bound by the policies of that organisation. During emergency response staff and member are employed by the response agency and are bound by their policies and procedures.

4.8 Rights and responsibilities

4.8.1 Rights of Volunteers

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by workplace agreements or award conditions. Volunteers, however, do have rights, some of which are enshrined in legislation and some of which are the moral obligations of an organization involving volunteers.

The volunteer has a right to:

- Work in a healthy and safe environment according to individual state Occupational and Safety Acts.
- To be interviewed and employed in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.
- To be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which the person will be working.
- To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.
- To be given a copy of any of the organisation's policies that affects their work.
- Not to fill a position previously held by paid staff and not to do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes.
- To have a job description and agreed working hours.
- To have access to a grievance procedure.
- To have confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principle of the Privacy Act 1988.
- To be covered by appropriate insurance.
- To be provided with debriefing and counselling services for any work related issues.
- To be given appropriate orientation and instruction to perform the role.
- To receive recognition for volunteer services.

4.8.2 Volunteer responsibilities:

- To adhere to ASTR code of conduct, policies and procedures.
- To be reliable and punctual for volunteer duties and to inform the coordinator if unable to attend for volunteer work.
- To carry out the duties as detailed in the position description.
- To report and discuss any issues with the Branch Coordinator.

- To treat all staff with respect in a non-discriminatory way, free from sexual harassment or bullying.
- To deal with members of the public in a professional and non-judgmental manner.
- Members are encouraged to wear the ASTR uniform when performing official duties.
- To obtain permission from the General Manager or deputy (when they are on duty - North Coast Branch) before taking any bird or marine reptile to the veterinary surgeon.
- Record all rescues (successful or unsuccessful).
- Not to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when performing ASTR duties.
- Not to undertake any recreational activities (fishing etc) when operating an ASTR boat.

4.8.3 Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue inc. Code of Practice

In order to enhance the volunteers' experience and comply with legislation and duty of care Australian Seabird & Turtle Rescue inc. as an entity, will:

- Interview and employ volunteer staff in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation.
- Provide volunteer staff with orientation and appropriate training.
- Provide volunteer staff with a healthy and safe workplace.
- Provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage for all volunteer staff.
- Not place volunteer staff in roles that have been identified as paid jobs.
- Define volunteer roles and provide clear job descriptions.
- Provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteer staff.
- Provide volunteers copies of policies pertaining to volunteer staff.
- Provide all staff with copies of grievance and OH&S policies and procedures.
- Acknowledge the rights of volunteer staff.

- Reimburse volunteer staff for agreed out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.
- Treat volunteer staff as valuable team members and advise them of the opportunities to participate in organisational decisions.
- Acknowledge the contributions of volunteer staff.
- Treat volunteer staff with respect.