



Volunteer conduct policy

Classification	Policy
Strategic reference	Goal 4 : Governance & organisational culture
Relevant legislation	Local Government Act 1999 Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act (SA) 2012
Relevant documents	Complaints Handling Policy Complaints Handling Procedure
Responsible officer	Chief Executive Officer
Date adopted	January 2022
Next review date	January 2025

Purpose

The Volunteer conduct policy clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of council volunteers in the performance of their duties and in carrying out their functions as volunteers of Council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a high level of integrity in the conduct and behaviour of volunteers and to ensure they make a positive contribution to the community and Council.

It is the personal responsibility of council volunteers to ensure that they are familiar with, and comply with, the standards in this policy at all times.

Principles

The policy identifies principles that are fundamental to integrity in public administration and the good functioning of local government. Appropriate conduct and behaviours are derived from these principles:

- Integrity, impartiality and good decision making
- Promotion of the aims and objectives of local government
- Accountability and transparency
- Commitment to the system of local government

The alignment of these principles contributes to good organisational culture.

Integrity, impartiality and good decision making

The principle of integrity, impartiality and good decision making underpins confidence in the dealings of local government, and assists the council in meeting its legislative obligations to the community, staff, volunteers and council members. In keeping with this principle, all volunteers must:

Act honestly, ethically, impartially, and with integrity, in the performance of their duties -

- by ensuring decision making processes are (and are seen to be) fair and transparent;
- providing advice that is objective, impartial, justifiable and lawful;
- not influencing in an improper manner the making of decisions by others;
- accepting or receiving gifts or benefits only in compliance with the Act, and as may be supplemented by any relevant policy of council.

Address conflicts of interest in accordance with the Act, as may be supplemented by any relevant policy of council, and whether actual, material, perceived or potential:

- by identifying, declaring and managing those conflicts of interest so that conflicts (including perceived conflicts) do not interfere with the proper performance of duty;
- reporting any concerns around conflict of interest management to their primary Council contact person.

Demonstrate a high standard of personal conduct and behaviours when dealing with other volunteers, staff, councilors and the community by: showing respect and demonstrating appropriate behaviours toward all people, including volunteers, staff, council members, and the public;

- providing fair and balanced representation of the policies or direction of council;
- demonstrating behaviours that support and promote the reputation of the council and do not reflect adversely on the reputation of the council;
- ensuring conduct whilst volunteering is free from harassment (being persistent unreasonable disturbance of a person or group where that behavior could reasonably be expected to trouble or stress the person(s)), including any form of sexual harassment;
- ensuring conduct whilst volunteering is free from bullying (being repeated unreasonable behavior towards a person or group in circumstances where the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety);
- ensuring compliance with anti-discrimination legislation and the policies of council designed to achieve a safe and healthy workplace;
- ensuring responsible use of social media in accordance with any policies of council relating to social media;

- comply with obligations to report suspected conduct in breach of this policy in accordance with the mechanisms council has established for bringing of such reports or complaints;
- comply with legislative obligations to report suspected maladministration in public office to the Office of Public Integrity, the Independent Commissioner against Corruption, and/or the SA Ombudsman.

Promotion of aims and objective of local government

The principle supporting the promotion of the aims and objectives of local government ensures programs, services and resources are delivered to the community as intended by council. All volunteers must:

- ensure confidential information which is marked, or reasonably known to be confidential, is kept in the strictest of confidence;
- not disclose confidential or sensitive information to gain a direct or indirect advantage for any other person, or cause detriment to council;
- adhere to standards of professionalism and customer service that provide excellent community and customer outcomes by engaging responsively with the community and communicating with the community in an accurate and timely manner;
- remain accountable and responsible for the use and collection of any public funds;
- use their best endeavors to provide accurate information at all times;
- base decisions or actions on information that is factually correct, and after obtaining and considering all relevant information;
- comply with all lawful and reasonable directions;
- only make public comment when specifically authorised to do so, and restrict such comment to factual information and professional advice;
- take responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and others when carrying out their duties and activities, which includes general wellbeing and physical injury;
- maintain adequate documentation to support important decisions and actions;
- use council resources responsibly and for legitimate and authorised purposes only, and in a manner that does not cause harm to the community or environment.

Accountability and transparency

The principle supporting accountability and transparency contributes to community trust and confidence and ensures a high level of integrity in the conduct of business of or for council.

Council volunteers will:

deal with information (other than that lawfully in the public domain) received whilst volunteering in a responsible manner (including after ceasing volunteering with council) by:

- using it for the purpose for which it was collected;
- storing and allowing access to it in accordance with the law;
- not using information improperly for gain, or to the detriment of council;

act with reasonable care and diligence in the performance of duty by:

- complying with contractual obligations, instructions, policies and procedures of council and the expectations of the role as reasonably made known to volunteers;
- respecting, complying with and carrying out the lawful policies, resolutions and decisions of council;

ensure proper and responsible use of resources of council including:

- public property and facilities;
- intellectual property, corporate knowledge, confidential and sensitive information;

commit to the continuous improvement of council's capacity and performance, its planning, processes and service delivery.

Reporting an alleged breach

All volunteers must comply with the policy or report any alleged breaches:

- to their direct supervisor or principal Council contact person. In the event that any factor prevents a report being made to their direct supervisor or principal Council contact person, all reports are to be made to the Coordinator Organisational Development;
- as may be required by the Act;
- as may be required pursuant to the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act (SA) 2012.

A volunteer who is found to have breached the policy will be subject to counseling and/or other disciplinary action (including termination) in accordance with the law.

Policy review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed every three years or as necessary.

Further information

This document is available on Council's website www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au and at the principal office of the Southern Mallee District Council at Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304.

A copy of this document may be purchased from Council.