



Bushcare Volunteer Management

Manual

Version 2 - Revision 3

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FORWARD*	1
1 INTRODUCTION*	2
1.1 Purpose of this Manual*	2
1.2 Volunteer Management*	2
1.3 Types of Council Volunteers*	3
1.4 Principles of Volunteering*	4
1.5 Definitions*	4
2 APPOINTMENTS, MEMBERSHIP & DISSOLUTION OF COMMITTEES AND GROUPS*	6
2.1 Bushcare in Wingecarribee	6
2.2 Appointment / Formation of a new Bushcare Group.....	9
2.3 Appointment of a Bushcare Group Convenor.....	10
2.4 Bushcare Group membership	10
2.5 One-off Bushcare Volunteers.....	10
2.6 Deregistration of a Bushcare Volunteer.....	10
2.7 Dissolution of a Bushcare Group	11
2.8 The Wingecarribee Landcare Bushcare Network	11
3 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*	12
3.1 Council’s Statutory WHS Obligations to Volunteers*	12
3.2 Volunteer Responsibilities*	12
3.3 Bushcare Convenor	14
3.4 Dispute Resolution*	14
3.5 Legal Matters*	15
3.6 Child Protection*	16
3.7 Anti-discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity*	16
3.8 Guidelines for Computer Use / Communication Channels*	16
3.9 Aboriginal and Cultural Heritage*	17
3.10 Environment*	17
4 WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY*	18
4.1 Introduction*	18
4.2 Work Health and Safety Policies*	18
4.3 Work Health and Safety Procedures*	18

4.4	Incident / Accidents or ‘Near Miss’*	20
4.5	Work Health and Safety Hazard and Risk Management Process*	21
5	RISK MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE*	25
5.1	Introduction to Risk Management*	25
5.2	The Risk Management Process*	25
5.3	When is a Risk Assessment Required?*	26
5.4	Insurance*	27
6	INSTRUCTION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION*	31
6.1	Introduction*	31
6.2	Corporate Induction*	31
6.3	Other Training*	31
6.4	Training Matrix*	32
7	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT*	34
7.1	Community Assistance Applications [#]	34
7.2	Other Grant Applications [#]	34
7.3	Reimbursement of Out of Pocket Expenses*	34
8	SPONSORSHIPS, GRANTS, FUNDRAISING*	35
8.1	Grants for Bushcare.....	35
8.2	Obligations*	35
8.3	Reporting and Acquittals*	35
9	APPENDICES INDEX*	36

* Denotes sections shared between all volunteer manuals.

Denotes sections shared between more than one manual (but not all)



FORWARD*



Welcome to all of Wingecarribee Shire Council's Volunteers.

Council's Volunteer Manual has been developed to support new volunteers and those volunteers whose contribution to our community over the years has proven invaluable.

Upon Council's formal approval of a Committee / Group, its members are required to adopt and adhere to the conditions set out in this Manual.

As with many other organisations, Wingecarribee Shire Council relies on volunteers to assist with the provision of services and facilities for the community. Citizens are involved on a formal and informal basis in working with Council in a wide variety of activities to improve the amenity of local areas.

For many years, our Volunteers have devotedly undertaken numerous tasks associated with the management and improvement of Council's facilities and assets and, in the case of our Advisory Committees, provided Council with recommendations relating to the development of policy and the provision of facilities and resources for the community.

In recent years, a considerable number of legislative changes have affected the operation and responsibilities of our volunteer committees / groups. These changes, particularly in the areas of work health and safety and risk management have imposed a significantly increased workload on Council's Staff and Volunteers.

To reflect these changes and to ensure that all the responsibilities and duties of our Volunteers are fully explained, Council has revised its Volunteer Manual. The Manual contains a wide range of information and forms to assist Volunteers in carrying out their duties.

The Manual also aims to support the efforts of our volunteers by suggesting ways for Committees / Groups to work effectively together and explaining common procedures which will facilitate better co-ordination between Council staff and its Volunteers.

Although it has been designed to address broad areas of operation, there will undoubtedly be times when answers cannot be found. Council staff are always available to assist the Committees / Groups and/or individual Volunteers. Please do not hesitate to contact Council if in any doubt.

Thank you for volunteering to assist Council and the community. We wish you well in all your endeavours.

Ann Prendergast

General Manager

1 INTRODUCTION*

1.1 Purpose of this Manual*

Wingecarribee Shire Council is committed to encouraging equitable access to services and facilities that meet the needs of the community and to recognise that volunteers contribute to the political, social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the community by:

- Expanding the ability of the community to respond to the needs of the public by providing a broad range of community services and activities
- Engaging the community in protecting local resources, improving the physical environment and support for environmental issues
- Strengthening community cohesion, social wellbeing and trust.

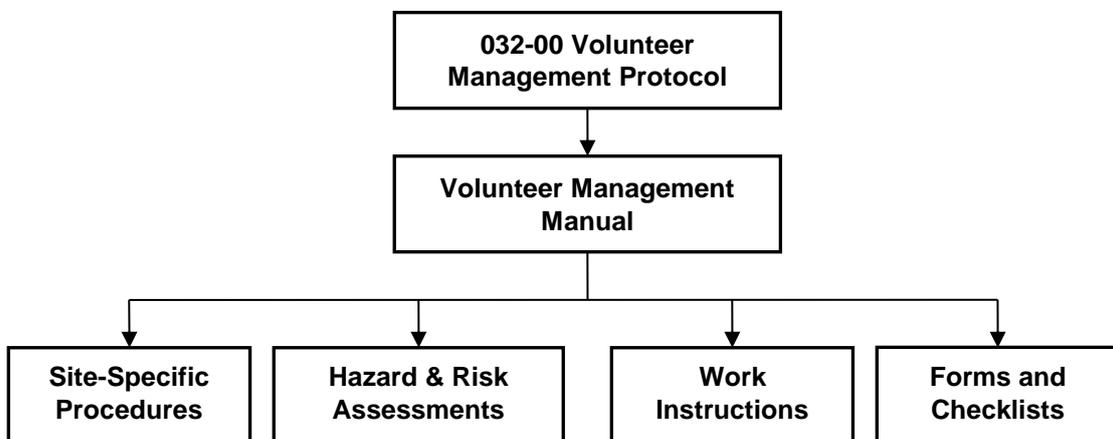
Wingecarribee Shire Council recognises that volunteers from the community make a valuable contribution to a range of Council activities. They may be involved in improving community-owned assets, caring for the environment or public contact roles. Through their commitment and energy, volunteers enrich the fabric of the local community.

This **Volunteer Management Manual** (to be referred to as “the Manual” in this document) has been developed to outline the information, training and induction that volunteers will be provided once they have registered with the Wingecarribee Shire Council. This will include:

- Duties and responsibilities
- Work health and safety
- Risk management and insurance
- Financial management
- Sponsorship, grants, fund raising, loans and donations
- Other specific volunteer information (depending on the type of volunteer)

1.2 Volunteer Management*

Council has prepared a protocol **032-00 Volunteer Management** to address the need to formalise roles and responsibilities for all involved in the volunteering process and support volunteering opportunities in our community. This document also provides the framework for Council employees and volunteers to work co-operatively and safely at all times.



1.3 Types of Council Volunteers*

There are 3 different types of Council Volunteers, and there is a separate volunteer manual for each.

1.3.1 355 Management Committees*

Section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993 sets out how a Council is permitted to exercise its functions. One option is through the delegation of a range of powers and responsibilities to a Committee.

Council has delegated authority to a number of 355 Management Committees who are then responsible for the day to day management of the facility they are appointed to manage. The committees operate in accordance with their Constitution and Instrument of Delegation which is adopted by Council and the policies and procedures developed by Council in line with current legislation.

Council will ensure that its volunteer programs are properly supported and managed and that appropriate structures and procedures are in place for their smooth operation.

This Manual is intended for use as a resource and is therefore designed to provide guidance in dealing with issues that Committees may encounter.

1.3.2 Council Committees / Advisory Committees*

Committees of Council / Advisory Committees advise and formulate recommendations relating to the development of policy and the provision of resources relating to the objectives and/or terms of reference of each individual committee.

Council aims to appoint members to a committee who are representative of the local community or interest groups and have a level of expertise relating to the role of the committee.

1.3.3 Bushcare*

Bush regeneration is the practice of restoring bushland by focusing on reinstating and reinforcing the system's ongoing natural regeneration processes. The Wingecarribee Shire Council Bushcare Program is designed to integrate the community with the management of natural areas.

Volunteers play a vital role in Council's management of its natural areas. Each volunteer group aims to maintain and restore native biodiversity and rehabilitate a degraded plant community to a healthy community composed of locally occurring native plants and habitat for native animals. Bush regeneration requires the development of a variety of skills, concepts and techniques. These cannot be obtained overnight; they are developed through a combination of learning, research and observation.

There are several benefits to the community that stem from the Bushcare Program. These include the reversal of bushland degradation, the development of community spirit, a sense of pride and achievement, the conservation of biodiversity, raising community awareness, education and the improvement of aesthetic values related to natural bushland.

The Bushcare Program is integrated with the work of Council staff, contractors and other community groups that all contribute to Council management of natural areas.

1.4 Principles of Volunteering*

- Volunteering is a **shared relationship** between Council and volunteers
- Volunteers will be provided with clear **guidelines and descriptions** for any activity or task they undertake
- Both Council staff and volunteers have a **responsibility** to follow guidelines and protocols
- Volunteers will be provided opportunities for **input** into processes and guidelines that relate to their activities.
- Participation should allow volunteers to have a **sense of achievement** and satisfaction
- The contribution of our volunteers will be **acknowledged and valued**
- Volunteers will be provided **inductions** and ongoing **training** as required
- Volunteers will have access to designated staff who can provide **information and feedback** relevant to the volunteer's involvement
- The rights and culture of others will be **respected**
- Volunteering is a matter of **choice**
- Members of Council's Committees / Groups are volunteers and therefore **do not receive payment for services**
- Volunteers **may be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses** incurred when carrying out their role.

1.5 Definitions*

Booking Officers (355 Committees)

The role of the Booking Officer is to take enquiries and record bookings for every hire of a Council facility and to ensure that all user agreements and documentation (includes copies of all relevant insurances and a completed risk assessment relating to the hire) has been provided by the hirer prior to the use of the Council facility.

Chairperson

The elected representative of the committee whose main duties are to call and preside over meetings and to act as spokesperson for the Committee.

Convenor (Bushcare)

A position appointed by a Bushcare Group to facilitate the operation of the group and to act as the primary contact between Council and the group.

Deputy Chairperson

To assist the Chairperson and during her / his absence, assume the role of Chairperson.

Event Co-ordinator

A Committee member who coordinates an event being organised by the Committee and is responsible for ensuring that the event is managed in accordance with **Council's Planning Public Events Manual**.

Program Coordinator/s

A paid employee of Council who is responsible for coordinating the volunteer program(s)

Responsible Officer (Hirer) for 355 Committees

A nominated person aged 18 years or more who is responsible for the booking and present for the duration of the activities

Secretary

The elected officer responsible for the recording and maintenance of minutes, agendas and official correspondence of the committee / group.

Treasurer

The elected officer responsible for managing and maintaining the financial record of the committee / group in accordance with Council policy and procedures.

Volunteer

A volunteer means a person who does community work on a voluntary basis rather than working for payment or reward. A person is also a “worker” see definition below. A volunteer may be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses and the expenditure must be approved by the committee/group.

Worker

Under NSW Workplace Health and Safety Legislation, “worker” is a person who carries out work in any capacity for a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) or organisation. This includes employees, contractors and all volunteers.

2 APPOINTMENTS, MEMBERSHIP & DISSOLUTION OF COMMITTEES AND GROUPS*

2.1 Bushcare in Wingecarribee

Wingecarribee Shire is fortunate in having an exceptionally diverse range of flora, fauna, and geographical variances within two (2) catchments. Wingecarribee Shire Council is responsible for the care and management of more than 40 significant remnant bushland reserves of approximately 4,000 hectares, including a number of Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs).

These bushland areas contribute a range of values and services to the Shire, including:

- Habitat and wildlife corridors for native Australian flora and fauna
- Open space – providing a visual amenity to residents and visitors to the Southern Highlands
- Educational and scientific study for scientists, schools, TAFE and universities
- Combating global warming through reduction in greenhouse gases and air pollution
- Retention of threatened plant and animal species
- Cultural significance – bushland may contain archaeological relics of past Aboriginal occupation, such as stone carvings, art work and shell middens
- Recreational and tourism attraction – bushland may be used for bush walking, picnicking, mountain bike riding and in some cases more active pursuits such as rock climbing and abseiling

Our bushland areas are under constant pressure from a number of threatening processes, including extreme weather events, weed invasion, animal pest invasion, fragmentation, inappropriate fire regimes, altered water tables and stream flows, excessive nutrient inputs, continual disturbance, dieback, and loss of keystone species.

Our bushland is a valuable resource which should be conserved and restored for future generations. This can be a difficult concept for some people as they may view bushland as unattractive or as vacant or unused. This perception can lead to the exploitation of bushland through the collection of bush rock and fire wood, the dumping of garden waste and rubbish, the extension of private property boundaries into bushland through inappropriate boundary fencing or mowing, wild flower collection and off-road vehicle use.

2.1.1 Bush regeneration and Bushcare

Bush regeneration is the practice of restoring bushland by focusing on reinstating and reinforcing the system's natural regeneration processes and resilience. Bushcare volunteer groups aim to rehabilitate bushland from a weed infested or otherwise degraded plant community to a healthy community composed of locally occurring native plants.

Bush regeneration programs are long term commitments that require the development of a variety of skills, concepts and techniques. Bush regeneration is not just weed removal; it is an integrated approach that encourages the bush to 'bounce back' through natural processes. This approach focuses on many aspects of the environment such as habitat, drainage, weed sources and native seed banks / seed dispersal to support the regeneration of native communities.

2.1.2 The community benefits of Bushcare

Aside from its environmental and conservation benefits, the Bushcare program has a range of community benefits that include:

- The improvement of aesthetic values related to natural bushland
- Raising community awareness and education
- Development of community spirit, volunteer ethic, a sense of pride and achievement

2.1.3 Bushcare site assessment and planning

Council will carry out site assessments, which will contain relevant information about each Bushcare site which will be used to develop a Management Plan. All works carried out on Council managed bushland must comply with the relevant Bushland Management Plans, best practice guidelines, policies and procedures, and relevant state legislation.

Volunteers are encouraged to have input into the development and review of these Management Plans and to monitor their site by the use of fixed place photography, diary of works, fauna observed, general observations and monitoring of plant growth. Council aims for continuous improvement in its management of Bushland reserves and values the contribution of its Bushcare volunteers.

2.1.4 Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs)

There are a number of Threatened Ecological Communities in Wingecarribee Shire which have high conservation value, and which Council is obliged under State and Commonwealth legislation to protect and appropriately manage. Bushcare volunteers working in any of these TECs are required to take extra care to ensure their care and protection.

These include:

- Robertson Basalt Tall Open-forest in the Sydney Basin and South Eastern Highlands Bioregions (critically endangered)
- Robertson Rainforest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion
- Southern Highlands Shale Forest and Woodland of the Sydney Basin Bioregion
- Shale/Sandstone Transitional Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion
- Tableland Basalt Forest in the Sydney Basin and South Eastern Highlands Bioregions
- Tablelands Snow Gum, Black Sallee, Candlebark and Ribbon Gum Grassy Woodland in the South Eastern Highlands and Sydney Basin Bioregions
- Montane Peatlands and Swamps of the Sydney Basin Bioregion.

Species lists for the TECs mentioned above and information about mapping can be obtained from Council.

In dealing with TECs there are requirements under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* which impose obligations on landowners and Council. Council cannot approve the removal of any trees or other vegetation from a TEC without assessing whether their removal will have a significant effect on the survival of the TEC. Landowners have a responsibility to assist Council with this

assessment by providing the necessary report/s prepared by suitably qualified professionals.

An ecological community is defined by the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* as “an assemblage of species occupying a particular area.” Ecological communities include both plants and animals. With respect to plants they include canopy trees (where present), understorey, ground cover and below ground biomass (roots, bulbs and the seed bank).

Council is required to manage bushland responsibly and professionally ensuring that best current conservation practices are being implemented in all bushland reserves under Council’s care, control and management.

2.1.5 Relevant legislation

Wingecarribee Shire Council has statutory obligations that staff and volunteers must conform to. The following is a brief outline of environmental legislation that is relevant to Bushcare activities.

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

The purpose of this Act is to maintain a healthy, productive and resilient environment for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Some of the purposes of this Act include:

- To conserve biodiversity at bioregional and State scales
- To maintain the diversity and quality of ecosystems and enhance their capacity to adapt to change and provide for the needs of future generations
- To improve, share and use knowledge, including local and traditional Aboriginal ecological knowledge, about biodiversity conservation
- To support biodiversity conservation in the context of a changing climate
- To support collating and sharing data, and monitoring and reporting on the status of biodiversity and the effectiveness of conservation actions
- To assess the extinction risk of species and ecological communities, and identify key threatening processes, through an independent and rigorous scientific process.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The objectives of the Act are:

- To encourage the proper management, development and conservation of natural and man-made resources, including agricultural land, natural areas, forests, minerals, water, cities, towns and villages for the purpose of promoting the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment.
- To encourage the protection of the environment
- Implement State Environmental Planning Policies.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The EPBC Act is the Australian Government’s central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important

flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places — defined in the EPBC Act as matters of national environmental significance.

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The objects of this Act are to be achieved by applying the principles of ecologically sustainable development

The objectives of the Act are:

- The conservation of nature
- The conservation of objects, places or features (including biological diversity) of cultural value within the landscape
- Fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature and cultural heritage and their conservation
- Providing for the management of land reserved under this Act in accordance with the management principles applicable for each type of reservation.

Pesticides Act 1999

The objectives of the Act are:

- To promote the protection of human health, the environment, property and trade in relation to the use of pesticides, having regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development within the meaning of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*
- To minimise risks to human health, the environment, property and trade
- To promote collaborative and integrated policies in relation to the use of pesticides
- To establish a legislative framework to regulate the use of pesticides

2.2 Appointment / Formation of a new Bushcare Group

A new Bushcare group may be formed if the proposed new site meets the criteria of the Bushcare program and where its formation is supported and endorsed by Council.

List of criteria:

- The site is modelled as “Core” or “Support for Core” under the Bushcare Site Assessment and Prioritisation GIS Model.
- There is significant environmental value in conserving the area and the site will contribute to Council’s Biodiversity Conservation or River Health & Wetlands strategies
- The site does not contain significant work, health or safety issues such as difficult or risky access and is not beyond the capacity of volunteer resources, experience and physical ability
- Council can meet service level agreement arrangements for the site
- Community commitment is demonstrated at that particular site
- Bushcare volunteers are prepared to complete formal registration and undertake on-site training and additional training as specified by Council.

2.3 Appointment of a Bushcare Group Convenor

A registered volunteer of a Bushcare group, who has the confidence of its members and the capacity to carry out the relevant duties, may seek appointment as the group convenor. Bushcare groups may elect to have two convenors if, for example, they have two teams operating on different days of the month or teams operating at different project sites.

2.4 Bushcare Group membership

The Bushcare Program is open to all residents and visitors to the Wingecarribee Shire who:

- a) Apply as a volunteer and complete all formal registration requirements
- b) Agree to work in accordance with Council direction and guidelines
- c) Are able to carry out the required duties in a safe and responsible manner

2.5 One-off Bushcare Volunteers

There is an opportunity for visitors or residents of the Wingecarribee Shire to participate in Bushcare activities on a one-off basis without formal registration with Council. This will require the following:

- a) Completing a site induction about safe working practices and hazards on site i.e. (site risk assessment) and risk management measures
- b) Wearing the appropriate clothing for the task
- c) Satisfying the age requirements for insurance
- d) Recording their name, address and signature on the Bushcare Sign-in / Sign-out sheet.

2.6 Deregistration of a Bushcare Volunteer

By becoming a Bushcare volunteer a person is expected to act in an appropriate manner at all times. In instances of breaches of the Model Code of Conduct or Work, Health and Safety legislation the relevant Council Manager has the right to deregister the volunteer. This includes:

- Theft of property or funds
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances whilst volunteering
- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, members of the community or Council employees
- Disclosure of confidential information regarding the Council and or clients
- Malicious damage to Council or community property
- Not working in a safe manner under guidelines of the Work Health & Safety Act 2011 and the Work Health & Safety Regulation 2011, willfully putting themselves and others at risk
- Non-compliance to relevant Government legislation and regulations associated with Bushcare and the environment
- Not abiding with Council staff direction, Bushcare Plans and/or Plans of Management (if applicable) associated with the reserve/s

The following procedure shall apply with respect to counselling and termination of voluntary participation:

On the first occasion, the volunteer shall be notified verbally of the problem, and a note be made on the volunteer database. If the problem continues, the matter will be discussed again with the volunteer. The volunteer will be advised in writing of the need to rectify the issue and that a further period of review has been set. If the problem continues, the volunteer will be interviewed by a WSC staff member or manager and a final written warning will be given. In the event of a problem recurring after a final warning, then the volunteer may be asked to cease volunteering for the Wingecarribee Shire Council and they will be deregistered.

If a volunteer behaves in a manner that is dangerous, harmful, or contrary to the Wingecarribee Shire Council Model Code of Conduct or other policies and procedures, the decision to deregister the volunteer may be enforced immediately without the above process. This includes if a volunteer is found to be using (or admits using) powered or mechanical equipment without prior approval (in writing) from Council.

2.7 Dissolution of a Bushcare Group

Where a Bushcare group decides to disband, the group's convenor must advise the Environment Officer – Bushcare and Citizen Science of their decision and their reasons for disbanding. The group convenor will be responsible for returning all group records, including volunteer log sheets, First Aid kit and any Council-issued tools and equipment to Council.

2.8 The Wingecarribee Landcare Bushcare Network

The Wingecarribee Landcare Bushcare Network (the network) was established to facilitate interaction between Council and the Bushcare volunteers, to promote the role of Bushcare groups and to encourage better communication and networking between the various Bushcare groups.

The network has the following functions:

- To represent all Bushcare and Landcare groups and act on their behalf on certain issues, such as grant funding or proposing new groups. The network facilitates communication between the groups and Council and other authorities
- Is independent of Council and promotes good bushland management practices in Wingecarribee Shire
- May assist Council to organise key environmental events such as the Schools Environment Day and National Tree Day
- Holds quarterly meetings. Grant applications and projects on a regional basis are discussed at network meetings
- Council staff required to attend the network meetings are to be given a minimum of two weeks prior notice of the meeting and an agenda
- Elects office bearers annually

3 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*

3.1 Council's Statutory WHS Obligations to Volunteers*

A volunteer is a 'worker' under work health and safety (WHS) legislation.

Council has a primary duty of care to all workers under the WHS Act. This duty includes but is not limited to ensuring as far as reasonably practicable while the workers are at work, the health and safety of:

- Workers engaged or caused to be engaged by Council
- Workers whose activities in carrying out work are as directed or influenced by Council

Council will ensure that volunteers are provided the highest level of protection against harm to their health, welfare and safety at work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

A risk assessment of the volunteer activity will be undertaken using the hierarchy of risk control, to determine if:

- The activity is suitable for the volunteer(s)
- The activity does not place the volunteer(s) at risk to their health and safety
- The volunteer has the physical capacity to undertake the activity
- The volunteer has the knowledge and skills required to undertake the activity in a safe manner

3.2 Volunteer Responsibilities*

A volunteer also has a duty under the WHS Act to take reasonable care for their own health and safety. Taking reasonable care means doing what a reasonable person would do in the circumstances having regards to things like:

- Your knowledge
- Your role
- Your skills and the resources available to you
- Your qualifications
- The information that you have
- The consequences to health and safety of a failure to act in the circumstances.

Volunteers are required to:

- Complete an application form for assessment by the relevant Council officer. **Refer to Appendices Index pg. 36 – Volunteer Application Form.**
- Adhere to Council policy, procedures and guidelines
- Ensure a safe working environment for other volunteers, paid workers and members of the public by taking care for the health and safety of themselves and others
- Provide truthful and accurate information to Branch Managers and Coordinators
- Attend induction and other training as requested
- Treat all Council information as confidential
- Be aware of and follow the approved risk management procedures for the activity
- Follow the directions of the person in charge of the activity

- Be aware of their work health and safety responsibilities
- Not to undertake activities under the influence of alcohol or any other drug that will prevent them from performing duties in a safe manner.
- Use plant, equipment and substances in accordance with the correct procedures and instruction.
- Bring to the attention of the appropriate person any matter which could affect the safe undertaking of the activity
- Report to the appropriate person as soon as practical any incident, accident, illness, or 'near miss' that relates to the health and safety of the voluntary activity.

Code of Conduct

All Committee members are required to abide by Council's Code of Conduct and to carry out the business of the Committee in accordance with all statutory requirements, the Committee's Constitution and Council's policies and procedures. **Refer to Appendices Index pg. 36 – The Code of Conduct for Wingecarribee Shire Council.**

3.2.1 Volunteer Sign On / Sign Off Registration[#]

Committee members, Bushcare volunteers and volunteers (e.g. who may be assisting with an event) must complete the **Volunteer Sign On / Sign Off Registration Form (Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36))** each time they undertake volunteer activities on behalf of Council. Committee office bearers and Bushcare Convenors are to ensure that this registration is completed to record the hour's a volunteer works and to ensure insurance cover in the event of an accident or injury while carrying out activities on behalf of or at the direction of Council.

The Volunteer Sign-on / Sign-off Registration form is to be forwarded to Council's Committee Co-ordinator or Program Co-ordinator at the **end of March, June, September and December each year.**

If the Committee or Bushcare group is conducting a public event / committee function, it will need to follow the **Planning a Public Event Procedure Manual** which includes a **Volunteer Sign On / Sign Off Registration Form** for that specific event. This must be returned to Council as part of the Planning a Public Event documentation at the completion of the event.

If the 355 Committee is conducting a working bee or a bushcare group is undertaking an activity outside of normal for the group a risk assessment and approval to undertake the activity Form must be approved by Council before the activity can be undertaken and a Volunteer Sign-on / Sign-off Registration Form must be completed for that specific activity and returned to Council on completion of the activity.

3.2.2 Correspondence*

The Committee / Group are not permitted to forward official correspondence relating to any business of the Committee or Council to government officials or government departments (including the Governor General and government ministers). All official correspondence must be signed by the General Manager.

3.2.3 Media*

Committee / Group members are not permitted to speak to the media on any Council matters in their capacity as a Committee member. All such requests received must be referred to the General Manager.

3.2.4 No Authority to Engage Staff*

The Committee / Group cannot employ any staff without the authority of Council and / or the General Manager.

Committee members / volunteers have no authority to direct a Council staff member to undertake or complete any task. **Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36) – The Code of Conduct for Wingecarribee Shire Council..**

3.2.5 Key Register

The Key Register for gates into bushland reserves or fire trial gates is maintained by Council's Bushland Project Officer who will issue and receipt keys as required.

3.3 Bushcare Convenor

The role of a convenor is to:

- Act as the group's primary contact for Council;
- Notify the Program Coordinator of any potential safety hazards, changes in working bee schedules and equipment requirements, or other issues / concerns raised by the volunteers;
- Maintain the Bushcare group's risk assessments and sign in sheets, ensuring all Volunteers sign on and sign off at the work site during every group working bee;
- Provide Council with copies of their group's meeting minutes, sign on sign off registration sheets and any resignations from the group on a monthly or quarterly basis;
- Ensure the group's first aid kit is always available and notify Council when items require replacing;
- Assist with the recruitment and induction of new Bushcare volunteers into the group.
- Ensure incidents / accidents on a Bushcare site are promptly notified to Council via the standard procedure.
- The group convenor can resign from the role at any time by advising the group and the Program Coordinator.

3.4 Dispute Resolution*

3.4.1 Internal Disputes*

Disputes between members of a Committee / Group are to be resolved within the Committee / group, where possible. Council staff can assist Committees / Groups in attempting to resolve internal disputes but Committee / Groups are encouraged to resolve disputes and/or conflict situations within the Committee / Group.

355 Committees: Where a dispute occurs within a Committee / Group, a resolution of the majority of the Committee will determine the outcome. Where this is not possible, the Chairperson will have the casting vote.

3.4.2 External Disputes[#]

Where individual citizens or groups of citizens disagree with a resolution of the Committee / Group, these parties may refer their grievances to Council in writing for consideration.

Council will then request a report on the issue from the Committee / Group. Upon receipt of the report, Council officers will endeavour to liaise and mediate the matter with the relevant parties. If there is no resolution, the matter will be referred to Council for resolution.

The details of Council's resolution will be advised to the Committee / Group and the individual citizen or groups of citizens who referred the matter to Council.

3.4.3 Dispute Grievance Resolution Procedure*

If a volunteer has a grievance about any aspect of their tasks, other volunteers or Council staff, the following procedure should be followed:

Step 1	If the volunteer feels comfortable to approach the person directly to discuss the issue, they can do so.
Step 2	The volunteer can approach the Committee Co-ordinator, Bushcare Convenor, Committee Chairperson for a discussion and advice on how to best resolve the issue. This discussion should be treated as strictly confidential.
Step 3	If Step 2 does not help resolve the problem, then the issue should be notified to the Committee Co-ordinator / Program Coordinator in writing.
Step 4	If the matter remains unresolved, the volunteer may request the matter be referred to the Manager / Deputy General Manager of the division or other authorised officer for discussion. A further meeting between all parties should be held as soon as practicable.
Step 5	If the matter remains unresolved, the General Manager will provide the volunteer with a written response. The response will include the reasons for not implementing any proposed remedy.

3.5 Legal Matters*

Volunteers should be aware that, when acting in their role as a volunteer or delegate of Council, they are required to act in **good faith**. This means that you must only do things that are expressly authorised by Council when acting on Council's behalf.

The moment a volunteer or delegate steps outside of these boundaries, any protection they may have enjoyed under legislation is in jeopardy. Any act that is motivated by personal interest can therefore result in personal liability.

If a volunteer or delegate becomes aware of a matter of legal significance or an issue that could create a legal liability for Council or the volunteer/delegate, that person has an obligation to report the matter immediately to your Program Coordinator.

Any further questions regarding legal issues should be raised with your program coordinator, who will then refer any unresolved questions to Council's Legal Officer.

3.6 Child Protection*

A working with Children Check is reserved for people whose work is focussed on children and whose work requires ongoing role-orientated contact with children. Any volunteers who are required to have a working with children check must apply to the NSW Office of Childrens Guardian. Employers must verify a child related worker or volunteers clearance number. The working with children check is free for volunteers.

Volunteers must immediately report any allegations involving abuse of a child or young person to the Program Co-ordinator.

3.7 Anti-discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity*

Council is committed to providing a workplace free from discrimination and harassment of any nature. To enable a respectful, safe, enjoyable and equitable workplace, Council has policies relating to Equal Employment Opportunity, Non-Harassment and Code of Conduct which define the expected standards of behaviour required by all staff and volunteers.

Any harassment, whether verbal, physical, sexual or bullying will not be tolerated. Any conduct that offends, embarrasses, demeans, denigrates, intimidates or demonstrates hostility is strictly prohibited.

Anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity laws can apply to the way the Committee / Group carries out its everyday functions.

Volunteers working for Council have a responsibility to work towards creating and maintaining a workplace which is free from harassment and discrimination. All volunteers have a duty to stop harassment before it starts and to take appropriate action to ensure harassment stops if it is occurring.

Refer also to Council policies and guidelines including *"Workplace Behaviour – Guidelines for all staff"* and procedure number *WHS 026-00 Workplace Violence*. **Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36) for copies of these documents.**

Any instances of discrimination or harassment should be reported promptly to the relevant Program Coordinator either verbally or using Council's incident reporting process. **Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36) – Council's Incident / Accident Reporting Form.**

3.8 Guidelines for Computer Use / Communication Channels*

Council's computers and communication channels (includes telephones supplied by Council Committees / Groups) must be used in a responsible, ethical and legal manner at all times.

Unacceptable use of the internet, e-mail facility on Council's computers and communication channels includes:

- Violating the privacy or rights of other users
- Breaching copyright law or other intellectual or industrial rights
- Using these services for any illegal activity or gambling

- Deliberately accessing material that is sexually explicit, racist, obscene, hateful or other material generally considered to be objectionable
- Accessing and / or displaying sexually offensive or degrading / insulting material
- Using these services to harass staff or volunteers. This includes, among other things, threats or insults, displaying of sexually offensive or degrading / insulting material
- Deliberate introduction of any damaging computer codes or virus
- Revealing or publishing any confidential Council information
- Aiding and abetting others in carrying out any unacceptable act
- Attempting to gain access to systems that you do not have permission to access

Users of electronic mail must be aware that electronic mail is subject to the full range of laws applying to other communications, including copyright, breach of confidence, defamation, privacy, contempt of court, harassment and criminal laws. There is no guarantee of privacy in the use of electronic mail.

Electronic mail both incoming and outgoing will be stored on Council's electronic data management system.

3.9 Aboriginal and Cultural Heritage*

There is a vast and rich array of Aboriginal cultural sites across NSW which includes stone arrangements, flakes, scarred and tattooed trees, axe heads, middens, hearths, campsites, fish traps, grooved rocks and stone quarries. Protection of these places and landscapes is related to the long-term survival of cultural stories and traditions in Aboriginal culture.

There is legislation that deals with the protection of Aboriginal culture and heritage sites and objects. If you become aware of any Aboriginal site or object that may be at risk of damage or interference you should avoid disturbing it and must bring this information to the attention of the Program Coordinator.

Be aware that you may also come across relics that have European cultural heritage value, for example, old cobblestones or other items from early colonial days, which should be protected from damage. If in doubt advise your Program Coordinator.

3.10 Environment*

Council and its employees, contractors and volunteers, are bound by state legislation designed to protect the environment.

To demonstrate commitment to the environment, Council has also developed and adopted a comprehensive Environment Policy. A copy of this policy is available from the Council website.

Council staff (including volunteers) have obligations to protect the environment from harm. Environmental harm includes the pollution of waterways, the contamination of soil, air pollution, the release of pest species, and activities that threaten the integrity of Endangered Ecological Communities or the survival of threatened species.

Where an activity has the potential to impact the environment, a risk assessment must be conducted before the activity is undertaken. Please contact your relevant Program Coordinator for additional information or assistance.

4 WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY*

4.1 Introduction*

Council recognises that volunteers make a valuable contribution to a range of Council activities. Council is committed to protecting all workers and other persons against harm to their health and preventing work injuries and illness. Council has established health and safety policies and processes to provide the highest possible level of protection based upon the hierarchy of control. These policies and procedures are also conditions of being registered as a volunteer for Council.

4.2 Work Health and Safety Policies*

The purpose of **Council's Work Health and Safety Policies** are to demonstrate Council's commitment to provide a safe workplace for our workers and others and to meet the requirements under work health and safety legislation. A worker is defined as *'a person who carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking'* and this includes volunteers. These policies will form part of the WHS Corporate induction. A copy can be obtained from your relevant Program Coordinator.

4.3 Work Health and Safety Procedures*

4.3.1 First Aid and First Aid Kits*

For a serious injury '000' should be called immediately. First aid officers are to provide services they are trained and competent to provide and/or arrange transport to medical treatment (doctor or hospital) or where required to contact emergency services. Contact details and First aid kits are supplied by Council where identified from the risk assessment process and to ensure prompt and adequate first aid is available.

If determined that First Aid kits need to be supplied they will be supplied and serviced by Council.

Where an injury has occurred and / or first aid has been administered it must be reported using Council's Incident / Accident reporting process.

Some volunteers may have medical conditions that could impact on first aid treatment such as epilepsy, diabetes, allergies (dust, bees, and wasps), and heart disease. Council's volunteer application process is used to indicate if a volunteer has a condition that could impact on the tasks to be undertaken and volunteers also have a responsibility to report any health issues that may impact on their own or others safety at work to their direct supervisor.

4.3.2 Emergency Procedures*

All volunteers will ensure they are familiar with the emergency and evacuation procedures for their areas as outlined during the site induction session. Access and egress routes and assembly areas at work sites must be clearly maintained and communicated. In buildings, designated EXIT doors must be kept clear at ALL times.

If there is a fire, call emergency services immediately by **dialing 000**. Do not put yourself at any risk if you attempt to control the fire. You are not to use a fire extinguisher unless you have been trained in the use of one.

4.3.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*

Council will assess and identify the need to provide registered volunteers PPE relevant to the activities or tasks they will undertake. The use of personal protective equipment is to be considered as the last resort measure. Before adopting the use or providing PPE, Council will ensure all other control measures have been considered which, either singly or in combination are unable to establish an acceptable level of protection for the volunteer.

The Program Coordinator is to ensure that all measures (including procedures and equipment) that are adopted to eliminate or control risks are properly used and maintained.

4.3.4 Working environment – Hot and Cold Weather*

Volunteers will be provided information on the risks from exposure to ultra violet radiation (UVR) and measures they can take to protect themselves. Work procedures will include regular breaks, providing drinking water, job rotation and working in the shade wherever possible.

Working in the heat can also result in illness such as heat stress, heat cramps and skin rashes. Signs and symptoms of heat illness include nausea, dizziness, weakness, collapse and convulsions. Volunteers with these signs or symptoms should report to their supervisor and seek immediate first aid and / or medical treatment.

Sun protection consists of:

- Sunscreen
- Broad brimmed hats – not caps
- Long sleeve shirts and trousers
- Sunglasses

In cold weather wear suitable warm clothing and drink hot drinks.

4.3.5 Smoke-Free Workplace*

Council supports a smoke-free work environment in the interests of everyone's health and safety. Smoking is prohibited within all Council workplaces including Council vehicles, plant and buildings. Smoking is not allowed while working near other persons, doorways, vents or open windows, flammable liquids or dangerous goods or where any potential exists for fire or explosion. Smoking is not allowed within 10 metres of a Council facility.

4.3.6 Drugs, Alcohol and medication*

Volunteers shall not possess, consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs while at work, and must notify their direct supervisor if they are aware that their work performance or conduct could be adversely affected. No one is permitted to drive or operate vehicles if there is a risk to the safety of themselves or other persons as a result of alcohol or a prescribed or non-prescribed drug.

Volunteers who observe behaviour or have information that indicates another volunteer may be affected by alcohol or drugs must immediately refer the matter to the Program Coordinator for investigation and further action as necessary.

4.3.7 Working alone*

Volunteers may be required to work from home.

Volunteers will only be allowed to work on their own if:

- They have been provided all requirements of instruction, training and information and communication processes and contacts necessary for their ongoing safety; and
- They work in accordance with **Council's working alone policies and procedures** (see **Appendices Index (pg. 36)**).

4.3.8 Substances hazardous to health*



In a work situation you may come across many substances, which, if not properly handled, may injure your health. These may include fuel, oils, greases, creosote, tar, paints and cement / concrete. Information on the hazards should be sought before use of them. All hazardous substances kept on Council premises or used in the workplace will be labeled and named in a register. Safety data sheets (SDS) and labels identify the ingredients of the product, its health effect, safe use and handling procedures and first aid instruction. Cement dust, wet concrete and mortars are particularly hazardous. With sensitive skins, burning will take place very quickly and all users should be fully aware of the hazard and of the precautions necessary. A particular danger is trapping of dust or splashes such as around the top of boots, where damage is accelerated by abrasion and rubbing.

Council encourages each Committee / Group to purchase the same products to eliminate the need for continuously updating the Hazardous Substances Register.

4.3.9 Pesticides and herbicides*



Only suitably qualified and instructed persons shall be permitted to use, handle or spray pesticides and must observe relevant safe work procedures. Wingecarribee Shire Council will only authorise the use of Glyphosate-based herbicides by Bushcare volunteers. Herbicide use is restricted to Bushcare volunteers who have undertaken a compulsory herbicide training workshop or training by a Council Bushcare Officer and can only be applied using hand held equipment in an approved situation.

4.4 Incident / Accidents or 'Near Miss'*

An incident is any unplanned event that results in, or has the potential for injury, illness, damage or loss, including the environment. A '*near miss*' is an incident that is narrowly avoided or averted.

All incidents, accidents and '*near misses*' are to be reported to your supervisor or Program Coordinator who will complete Council's Incident / Accident reporting process. These reports provide Council the best opportunity to identify corrective and preventative actions so these incidents do not occur again.

4.5 Work Health and Safety Hazard and Risk Management Process*

A hazard is defined as anything with the potential to cause harm to a person or Council property. Hazards can be from the work premises or location, work systems, plant and equipment, hazardous substances, manual tasks, physical environment, workplace violence and biological organisms or environmental. Hazards must be reported.

If you see any unsafe condition, behaviour or method of working, report it immediately to your supervisor and ensure no one is in immediate danger. Council's WHS hazard identification, risk assessment and control process consists of:

- Step 1** Hazard identification
- Step 2** Risk assessment
- Step 3** Risk elimination or control; and
- Step 4** Review assessment and control measures

A risk assessment is a statement that:

- Identifies the work tasks and hazards or potential incidents that could occur when undertaking the task
- Assigns a level of risk to the task
- Describes the control measures or safe work procedures that should be used to undertake the work tasks
- Describes what equipment is to be used and if PPE is required
- Identifies any instruction, training required to do the work

Information and instructions for work include site-specific work procedures, standard operating procedures (SOP's) or safe work method statements (SWMS).

The risk assessment and control measures are reviewed when:

- There is evidence that the risk assessment is no longer valid or effective
- A volunteer is harmed from exposure to a hazard identified in the assessment
- A significant change is proposed to the work method or environment to which the assessment relates.

Refer to your Program Coordinator for Council's templates for developing risk assessments, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS). Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36) for Council's templates.

4.5.1 Manual Tasks*

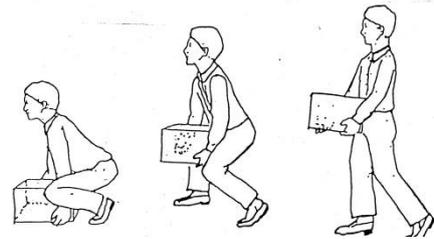


Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the work procedures carried out by volunteers involving manual tasks are assessed and designed to be without risks to health and safety.

When lifting a load always:

- Warm up before lifting
- Use mechanical assistance if it is available

- Assess the weight to be lifted, get help if the load is too heavy or awkward in shape
- Check for splinters, projecting nails, wire or sharp edges
- Wear gloves when handling materials
- Stop work immediately if you feel a strain to carry on might result in a serious injury



The most common causes of injury are from lifting a heavy load from ground level, lowering a heavy load to the ground or when entering / exiting plant or vehicles.

4.5.2 Discarded sharps (Needle-stick injury) *



DO NOT HANDLE SHARPS, NEEDLES & SYRINGES UNLESS TRAINED TO DO SO.

If you see a discarded sharp, immediately notify your supervisor or Program coordinator. If the discarded needle poses a potential threat to other volunteers or public, the area should be made safe using a temporary barrier to restrict access to the location until a designated / trained person can dispose of the needle.

Do not reach blindly behind or over objects – The rule is to *see what you are handling*. The use of gloves may not prevent a needle stick injury. Garbage bags should not be carried against the body in case a needle is inside.

4.5.3 Ladders*



Council will review work practices to eliminate or minimise the need for volunteers to use ladders. Step ladders and other ladders must be used correctly and as means of access only and not a place of work for volunteers. It is important to realise that there are limits to the safe use of a ladder. Most accidents involving ladders occur because these limits are exceeded. Portable ladders supplied by Council will comply with the requirements of the relevant Australian Standard and have approved rubber feet. Extension ladders must be secured at the top as well as the bottom and the area around the base of the ladder barricaded or controlled under supervision to prevent access by others.

It is recommended that you should always have three (3) limbs on the ladder at all times i.e. both feet and one hand when ascending, descending or working on the ladder. Carry tools in a tool belt or pouch not in your hands and do not throw or drop tools from the ladder.

Only use step ladders in the fully open position and on a level, stable surface. All ladders must be adequately supported at the base and should extend out from the vertical surface at the base by about 250mm for every metre in height. This will minimise the ladder falling backward or the bottom of the ladder sliding away from the wall.

4.5.4 Hand tools*



Always use the correct tool for the job and keep a safe distance from other people. Volunteers are only to use tools provided as identified in the work procedures and / or recommended by the Program Coordinator. Tools provided to volunteers will be listed on a Register. If the tool is damaged it is not to be used and must be returned to the Program Coordinator for replacement. All tools remain the property of Council and are to be returned to the Program Coordinator if the volunteer group ceases operation or a volunteer leaves the volunteer program.

The use of power tools or mechanical equipment by volunteers is **NOT** permitted. Exceptions may be made where the person has relevant qualifications/tickets. Approval for the use of this equipment will only be given in writing after viewing the relevant qualifications/tickets and an induction has been completed and signed off by the Program Coordinator.

4.5.5 Protection of hands and skin*



If you experience any skin irritation, stop working and consult your supervisor or Program Coordinator. Wash your hands at break times, after work and whenever they may be contaminated. Use soap and water and dry them thoroughly. If a mild cleansing agent is necessary use a brand designed for that purpose, then wash thoroughly with soap and water and rinse well. Use gloves or barrier creams where required.

4.5.6 Electrical*



Do not try to repair or adjust electrical equipment. All electrical power leads and power boards must be checked before use. All electrical leads and portable electrical equipment must be tested and tagged. Report any equipment not tagged or faulty to your Program Coordinator.

4.5.7 Health and Hygiene*

Keep all kitchens, bench tops and facilities clean. Place all rubbish particularly food scraps in the bins provided. Volunteers should:

- Wash hands thoroughly after using toilets
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling or eating food

4.5.8 Housekeeping*

Volunteers are responsible for good housekeeping practices at all times. Clutter and obstructions around the workplace are a common cause of slips, trips and falls. Keep all work areas clean and tidy. Do not leave tools or equipment lying on the floor or ground. For buildings, keep aisles, walkways, emergency exits, stairs, stairwells and access to fire equipment clear at all times. Neatly pack furniture and equipment in designated storage areas for ease of access.

4.5.9 Vehicles*

Volunteers are not normally authorised to use Council vehicles. If you need to use a Council vehicle as part of your role as a volunteer you must obtain prior approval from Council before using any vehicle. Please contact your relevant Program Coordinator for further information. During the approval process your Program Coordinator will view and copy your drivers licence and supply necessary details to Council's Plant Superintendent.

Prior to using a Council vehicle you should receive training and induction as to your roles and responsibilities when using a Council vehicle. This could also include specific training on the vehicle you are using.

The details of your approval will also be recorded in Council's Volunteer Database.

Any vehicle must be driven at a safe speed, taking into account the work environment, site rules, any mandated speed limit and / or road rules. It is the volunteer's responsibility to immediately notify their direct supervisor or Program Coordinator if their licence becomes suspended or cancelled or if damage or accident occurs.

4.5.10 Workplace violence and aggression*

Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that volunteers and potential volunteers are treated fairly and equitably and are entitled to:

- A workplace free of harassment, discrimination and violence
- Complaints being taken seriously and investigated promptly
- Job related skills being valued
- Respect for cultural and social diversity

Volunteers are responsible and accountable for following harassment and anti-discrimination principles and to report any complaints to the Program Coordinator promptly.

4.5.11 Non-Compliance*

Issues of non-compliance with policies, procedures or not cooperating with reasonable instruction of the person in charge of the activity by volunteers may result in termination or disciplinary action being taken by the Branch Manager or Program Coordinator.

Whilst it is not desirable to take the "big stick approach", non-compliance must be dealt with and issues raised to ensure the activity is conducted in as safe a manner as possible, with volunteer(s) not placing themselves or other persons at risk while undertaking activities on behalf of Council.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE*

5.1 Introduction to Risk Management*

Risk management involves striving for balance between realising opportunities for gains while minimising losses. It is an integral part of good management practice and an essential element of good corporate governance.

To be most effective, risk management should become part of the culture. It should be embedded into the business processes and practices rather than viewed as a separate additional activity. When this is achieved, everyone in the organisation becomes involved in the management of risk.

Although the concept of risk is often interpreted in terms of hazards or negative impacts, the current Risk Standard ISO 31000:2009 is concerned with risk as exposure to the consequences of uncertainty, or potential deviations from what is planned or expected and the impact this may have on an organisations objectives.

Volunteers conducting activities on behalf of Council are required to comply with Council's risk management procedures. It is Council's duty to ensure all volunteers and members of the public are safe at all times while on Council property.

5.2 The Risk Management Process*

There are seven basic steps in the risk management process:

Communication and Consultation

Determine who needs to be involved in the decision-making process (e.g. The Committee, Council officers, community groups, other authorities) and include them.

Establish the Context

Set parameters for what you are considering and clearly define the activity (e.g. what is the activity? What is its purpose? What is it trying to achieve?).

Identify the Risk

What could happen or go wrong? What is the facility / asset being used for? Is the facility / asset suitable for that purpose? When doing the risk assessment look up, down, left, right, back and front to identify the risks.

Analyse the Risk

What is the likelihood of the risk occurring and the consequences if it does. How bad could it be?

Evaluate the Risk

Is it low, medium or high? Use the Risk Rating Matrix to calculate the risk. The rating will determine the course of action to be taken to "treat" or "control" the risk. For example, a

"high" rating will require immediate action to eliminate or reduce the risk. **Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36) for Council's risk assessment templates.**

Treat the Risk

The "Hierarchy of Controls" must be considered when determining appropriate risk treatments for identified hazards. The Hierarchy of Controls is as follows:

Eliminate the hazard altogether. For example – Replace the dangerous machine

Substitute the hazard with a safer alternative. For example – Replace the machine with a safer one

Isolate the hazard from anyone who could be harmed. For example – Keep the machine in a closed room and operate it remotely

Use **Engineering** controls to reduce the risk. For example – Attach guards to the machine to protect users

Use **Administrative** controls to reduce the risk. For example – Train workers how to use the machine safely

Use **Personal Protective Equipment** (PPE). For example – Wear gloves and goggles when using the machine

Consider the treatment options and choose the most appropriate (or a combination) to be implemented. Rate the risk again to see if the selected treatments have reduced the severity of the risk. If not, are there any other treatments that could be considered?

Monitor and review

Make sure the treatment works. Ensure that the treatment itself has not created another risk. Can it be improved?

5.3 When is a Risk Assessment Required?*

5.3.1 Planning a Public Event*

When planning a public event (e.g. Fundraiser, country dance or village fair) contact the relevant Program Co-ordinator to obtain a copy of Council's **Planning a Public Event Manual**. This document contains all the risk management information and paperwork required. Please contact the Program Coordinator if you require additional information or assistance.

5.3.2 Planning a Not-For-Profit Activity such as a Working Bee*

When planning a not-for-profit activity (e.g. working bee at a Council facility) the Committee must notify the relevant Program Coordinator and conduct a risk assessment of the proposed activities as part of the planning process.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR 355 COMMITTEES

Before carrying out any work on a Council facility, the Committee / Group must also complete the **Project Approval for work on Council Property** form (**Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36)**) and have it approved by Council's Built Assets Coordinator.

5.3.3 Bushcare Work

A documented risk assessment (**Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36)**) must be completed and approved prior to the start of any work. Please refer to Section 5.5 -Work Health and Safety, for additional information.

5.4 Insurance*

5.4.1 Insurance held by Council*

Council holds several insurance policies to cover its liability as a consequence of its business activities. Policies that relate to volunteers and their activities include:

- Public Liability Insurance
- Personal Accident Insurance
- Property Insurance
- Casual Hirers Insurance
- Uninsured Stallholders and Entertainers Insurance

For further information on all insurance matters please contact your relevant Program Coordinator.

5.4.1.1 Public Liability Insurance*

Council's Public Liability Insurance covers damage or injury to a third party as a result of an act or omission by Council. In this instance "Council" means: employees, Councillors and volunteers.

Public liability claims can end up in court and as a result it is most important that accurate details are taken down immediately after an incident / accident has occurred. This information is vital as it may be relied upon in court. In some cases a volunteer involved in an incident / accident could be called upon as a witness in a court case.

IMPORTANT NOTE

If an incident or accident occurs a volunteer **MUST** never admit liability. It is also important that the volunteer does not indicate that they were aware of a problem prior to the incident / accident occurring.

5.4.1.2 Personal Accident Insurance*

Council's Personal Accident Insurance covers Council employees, Councillors and volunteers for bodily injury incurred while carrying out activities on behalf of Council that result in death or disablement.

All 355 Committee and Bushcare volunteers must sign the Sign On / Sign Off Registration Form **each time they undertake volunteer activities**. This is necessary in order to record the hours the volunteer works to ensure insurance cover in the event of an accident or injury occurring while carrying out duties on behalf of Council. **Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36) - Volunteer Sign On / Sign Off Registration Form.**

5.4.1.3 Property Insurance*

It is Council's responsibility to ensure that all its property and assets are adequately insured. This includes all relevant building and contents values. Property Insurance covers damage resulting from such occurrences as water leaks, storms, fires, vandalism, theft and earthquake. All insurance is subject to the terms, conditions and exclusions outlined in the Policy Wording document provided by Council's Insurer.

Burglary and malicious damage incidents **MUST** be reported to the Police immediately upon discovery with a Police Event Number and the name of the Police Officer recorded for future reference.

All incidents (regardless of value) must be reported immediately to the relevant Council Program Coordinator who will liaise with Council's Risk Management Coordinator to complete required **Property Claim Forms**. The Completion of these forms does not necessarily mean that an insurance claim will be made by Council.

355 Committees: Volunteers managing Council facilities must notify Council of the estimated overall replacement value of the facility's contents (not fixed items but including curtains and blinds) on 1 February each year.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Personal items of volunteers are not covered under Council's insurance policies whilst the volunteer is undertaking volunteer activities. As a result please ensure your personal items are kept in a secure area.

5.4.1.4 Stallholders and Entertainers Insurance*

Council has taken out a separate **Stallholders and Entertainers insurance policy**. This policy is for stallholders and entertainers that do not have any public liability insurance.

If you would like to use this insurance as part of your Council event please contact your relevant Council Program Coordinator who will liaise with Council's Risk Management Coordinator. A small fee (based on risk) is charged to add the required people to Council's policy.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Council's Stallholders and Entertainers Policy can only be used for Council events.

5.4.2 Insurance requirements for Fundraising and Community Events[#]

From time to time the Committee / Group may wish to conduct fundraising activities and hold community events.

If the Committee / Group is organising the event (eg. Event Coordinator is a Committee member) you **MUST** implement the following:

- Complete required documentation outlined in Council's **Planning Public Events Manual**
- Obtain approval from Council to hold the event
- Develop a risk assessment for the event using Council's risk assessment process
- Send the risk assessment and associated documents to the relevant Program Coordinator who will liaise with Council's Risk Management Coordinator
- Receive advice from Council that Council's insurer has noted and allowed cover for the event

If the event involves other community groups (e.g. a fete where other groups have stalls to sell goods) then the Event Coordinator is responsible for checking that each individual group has the required Insurances.

If some groups as part of your event do not have the required public liability insurance a possible solution is for them to be added to Council's Stallholders and Entertainers policy. **NOTE:** This is only applicable if the event is a Council event. Another alternative is for them to contact Local Community Insurance Services who can organise special insurance for the event. Please contact your relevant Council Program Coordinator for additional information.

Please note that many fundraising activities require licensing from the NSW Government. Council approval does not constitute NSW Government approval and it is the responsibility of the Committee / Group to ensure they have all necessary licenses and approvals are in place.

5.4.3 Use of Private Motor Vehicles *

Please note that Council does not have any insurance that covers volunteers using their own private motor vehicles while undertaking volunteer work. As a result it is suggested that each volunteer has comprehensive motor vehicle insurance for their own private motor vehicle.

5.4.4 Volunteers Engaging Contractors*

Due to recent changes outlined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Council has carefully considered the implications of volunteers directly engaging contractors to perform work. As a result of these changes, **Council has decided that volunteers will no longer directly engage contractors to undertake work on Council facilities / assets / sites.**

If it has been identified that a contractor is required to undertake necessary works, the Committee member / volunteer **MUST** contact the relevant Council Program Coordinator who will organise for the works to be undertaken by Council.

5.4.5 Notification of an Incident, Near Miss or Potential Claim *

Any matter or incident that may give rise to a claim against Council must be reported to Council as soon as possible. This will ensure that investigations and remedial actions can be undertaken to prevent further occurrences and protect Council's and the volunteer interests.

Each volunteer has an individual responsibility to report an incident, near-miss or potential claim as soon as possible (ideally within 24 hours) by completing the incident notification form and forwarding to the secretary of a committee / bushcare convenor or, if not available, directly to the Council Program Co-ordinator.

Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36) – Council's Incident / Accident Reporting Form.

5.4.6 Volunteer Sign on / Sign off Registration Form*

All volunteers must complete the Volunteer Sign On / Sign off Registration Form (**Refer to Appendices Index (pg. 36)**) each time they undertake volunteer activities on behalf of Council. Committee office bearers and Convenors are to ensure that all volunteers sign the Volunteer Register. This is necessary in order to record the volunteer hours and ensure insurance cover in the event of an accident or injury while carrying out work on behalf of or at the direction of Council.

The Volunteer Register is to be forwarded to Council's Program Coordinator at the end of **March, June, September and December of each year.**

If the Committee is conducting a public event, they will need to follow the Planning a Public Event Procedure Manual which includes a Volunteer Register for that specific event. This must be returned to Council on completion of the event.

If the Committee is conducting a small function or a working bee a Volunteer Register must be completed for that specific activity and returned to Council on completion of the activity.

5.4.7 Age of Volunteers*

As determined by Council's insurer, the age of volunteers is between 10 and 90 years. It must be noted however that this age is dependant on the physical capabilities of the volunteer and the nature of work being undertaken. If a volunteer (of any age) is not capable of undertaking the work, Council has the right to refuse that person doing the work or being a volunteer.

6 INSTRUCTION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION*

6.1 Introduction*

Council is committed to providing appropriate training for all staff, including volunteers. To comply with the *WHS Act 2011* Council must provide guidance to staff, including volunteers to ensure a safe and healthy workplace and community is maintained.

Council will provide instruction, training and information to volunteers. This includes:

- Corporate Induction
- Other Training
- Site Specific Induction and training

6.2 Corporate Induction*

Corporate Induction is a very important training session that all volunteers are required to complete. Council will periodically provide volunteers (once registered with Council) with a specially abridged and customised Corporate induction. The frequency of these inductions will be determined on an as-needs basis.

All Council volunteers will be required to attend and/or participate in a Corporate Induction program which includes the following induction / training:

- Code of Conduct
- Corporate WHS and Risk Management induction

6.2.1 Code of Conduct*

Council's Code of Conduct training will be provided to all volunteers.

All volunteers must comply with Council's Code of Conduct in carrying out their functions in their capacity as a Council volunteer. Failure to adhere to Council's code of conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

6.2.2 Corporate WHS and Risk Management Induction*

All volunteers will receive a customised induction linked to Council's Corporate WHS and Risk Management Induction package. This will include:

- WHS responsibilities
- Management of work health and safety
- Risk management
- Council process for reporting of hazards, incidents and '*near misses*'

6.3 Other Training*

Other training needs will be identified following your registration as a volunteer. This may include job or task specific training and the Program Coordinator will consult with volunteers and record training.

6.3.1 Site Specific WHS Induction and Training*

The workplace includes all sites and environments that a volunteer visits during the course of their work, i.e. workers *'take the workplace with them.'* A volunteer registered for a volunteer group or activity will be required to attend an induction when they start a new activity, as ongoing / refresher training and on transfer to a new group or activity. After the initial meeting, most inductions then continue over a period of weeks or months and are followed up with ongoing site and job instruction and information..

6.3.2 Bushcare Site Specific Training

Bushcare volunteers must be registered before undertaking any activities on a site, and all Bushcare volunteers must undertake a site induction before commencing as a volunteer on a specific site. Each time activities are undertaken at a site, the Supervisor or Convenor will go through a brief site induction which will include a hazard identification process involving all participants prior to commencement. Sign-on / Sign-off Registration sheets will also be completed covering all tasks and activities volunteered for.

The Site Supervisor or Convenor will have available a Site Folder containing:

- Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control statements
- Safe Work Method Statements for any tasks that are identified as a “high risk”
- Standard Operating Procedures covering all other tasks undertaken
- A site-specific Emergency Response Plan
- Safety Data Sheets for any chemicals used
- List of Registered Volunteers authorised to undertake activities
- Documentation to cover One-off volunteers
- Site sign-on / sign-off registration sheets
- Site Management Documentation
- Bushcare practice and procedure notes
- Equipment Checklist

6.4 Training Matrix*

A training matrix has been developed to identify what training / induction is to be undertaken by each volunteer committee / group.

COMMITTEE / GROUP	TRAINING / INDUCTION SESSION					
	Specially Customised Corporate Induction	Code of Conduct	Corporate WHS & Risk Mgmt Induction	Other Training	Site Specific Induction	Specific training in work procedures
355 Management Committees	Yes	Yes	Yes	As identified during Risk Assessment process for activities undertaken	Yes	Yes Based on SSOW docs (eg. SWMS, SOPs)

TRAINING / INDUCTION SESSION						
COMMITTEE / GROUP	Specially Customised Corporate Induction	Code of Conduct	Corporate WHS & Risk Mgmt Induction	Other Training	Site Specific Induction	Specific training in work procedures
Bushcare Groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	As identified during Risk Assessment process for activities undertaken	Yes	Yes Based on SSOW docs (eg. SWMS, SOPs)
Committees of Council	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

7 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT*

7.1 Community Assistance Applications[#]

Council allocates approximately \$100,000 towards community organisations in the shire and 355 Committees and Bushcare groups are entitled to make application for this funding, however conditions apply. Please ensure that your application meets the requirements of the current guidelines. Grant applications generally open during March each year. Further information is available at: <http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/wingecarribee-community-assistance-scheme>

Note: 355 Committees can no longer apply for maintenance, permanent fixtures or upgrades in a Council facility under this category.

7.2 Other Grant Applications[#]

If the Committee / Group are applying for a grant they must advise the Committee Co-ordinator or relevant Council Officer before the Committee decides to apply for funding. Council needs to be aware of any commitment the Committee is entering into as the grant application may require endorsement or matching funding (\$ for \$) by Council and all grant applications must be approved by Council's Chief Financial Officer and Executive before applying. Please discuss your proposed grant application early with your program co-ordinator before proceeding.

Source funds can be obtained from other government agencies or trusts such as, NSW Environment Trust, Department of Sport & Recreation, Department of Primary Industries (Crown Land), Local Club Funding, Veolia Mulwarree Trust and other applicable fund sources.

7.3 Reimbursement of Out of Pocket Expenses*

A Volunteer cannot be paid for any work that they undertake for or on behalf of Council. A volunteer is entitled, if authorised by the Committee or program co-ordinator, to be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses (eg. telephone calls, stationery, postage) they incur in carrying out their duties on behalf of the committee. They will need to provide the treasurer / convenor with a copy of all tax invoices and or receipts for expenses incurred before being reimbursed. These are to be presented to the Program Co-ordinator for approval and processing.

8 SPONSORSHIPS, GRANTS, FUNDRAISING*

8.1 Grants for Bushcare

The Bushcare Program will provide Bushcare Groups with the opportunity to apply for external grants for works on Council owned or managed lands. Council will act as the grant sponsor and funds manager on behalf of Bushcare Groups which are registered as part of Wingecarribee Shire Council Bushcare Program. In general, Council's Program Coordinator will assist with a maximum of two grant applications per Bushcare Group per financial year.

Bushcare Groups are required to discuss their grant proposal with the Program Coordinator in the first instance to ensure that the proposal meets both Council and legislative requirements. Council will not allow grant-funded projects to take place unless the relevant sections of Council have been consulted and have approved the grant project.

Council will administer all Bushcare project funds and grants, as financial trustees. As part of its responsibilities, Council will enter into contracts, issue and receive invoices, monitor expenditure, carry out project management, reporting and grant acquittal functions; and ensure that grant conditions are met, including provisions relating to insurance, risk management, publicity and promotion, monitoring and evaluation.

Council's Program Coordinator will liaise with the relevant Bushcare Convenor/s in relation to grant-funded projects to ensure the Bushcare volunteers are engaged with the project and have the opportunity to input wherever practical.

Where Bushcare groups are applicants to grant-funded projects with Council as the sponsors, they must undertake to abide by the grant conditions set by the funding agencies and by the parameters set out in the project plan.

8.2 Obligations*

Any internal or externally funded projects that involve works undertaken by contractors or consultants on Council owned or managed land or assets will be the responsibility of Council.

This includes the following:

- Preparing tenders and briefs
- Preparing scope of works
- Site meetings (in consultation with the Committee / Group)
- Awarding contracts
- Monitoring contractors progress and reporting
- Receiving and paying invoices

8.3 Reporting and Acquittals*

Volunteer Committees / Groups must comply with all reporting arrangements and acquittals for the projects as set out by the funding body and in conjunction with the relevant Program Coordinator

9 APPENDICES INDEX*

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Always check Council's website or your program co-ordinator for the latest versions of Forms / Templates and Policies / Manuals.

Shared Appendices*

Appendix 1*	<u>Wingecarribee Shire Council Code of Conduct</u> <u>Wingecarribee Shire Council Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct</u>
Appendix 2*	<u>Workplace Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy</u> <u>Workplace Bullying and Harassment Prevention Procedure</u>
Appendix 3*	Working Alone Policy (2007)
Appendix 4*	<u>Draft Gifts and Benefits Policy (2018)</u> Gifts and Benefits Procedure (Available soon) Gifts and Benefits Disclosure Form (Attached to Procedure – Available soon) Contact your volunteer coordinator if you require a copy.

Bushcare Appendices

Appendix BC-1	<u>Volunteer Application Form – Bushcare and Rivercare</u>
Appendix BC-2	<u>Volunteer Sign On / Sign Off Registration Form</u>
Appendix BC-3	<u>Community Incident Notification Form</u>
Appendix BC-4	<u>HIRAC-ENV-003 Bushcare Volunteers Undertaking Environmental Restoration Activities</u>