



**Title:** Community Information Volunteer Policy

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**Category:** Operational – Service Delivery

**Key words:** Volunteers

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**Policy owner:** Director Corporate Services (Community Services)

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Minor Modifications – August 2006

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**Related legislation:** None

**Related policies:** Customer Services Policy  
Equal Employment Opportunity  
Occupational Health & Safety Policy  
Social Plan

**Related procedures:**

**Related forms:** Community Information Volunteer Position Description  
Personal Details Form

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the management of the Community Information Volunteer Program.

### Background

The Community Information Volunteer Program is designed to extend and enhance the existing Community Information Service. By recruiting volunteers to work with the Community Information Officer, the local community will be able to participate in a service that improves the quality of life of those who work and live in the City of Canterbury.

A number of issues are reflected in our current Social Plan, as identified in the 2003 Social Planning Consultations, which this program will help to address.

- Information and services need to be more accessible to migrant women. (Women's Plan)
- Need to promote and support programs that assist women to build their social network and reduce social isolation, and encourage women from different backgrounds to mix together. (Women's Plan)
- Need for more opportunities for job training for migrant women. (Women's Plan)
- Improving information delivery essential to families, particularly those of CALD background (Children's Social Plan Executive Summary)
- Increase the accessibility of information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Community Information Social Plan Executive Summary)

In addition, this Program will also meet the Policy Aims of the Community Information Social Plan, in particular, to encourage residents' involvement in government and community organisations.

The key outcomes of this program will be to:

- improve and extend the information service to community members; and
- increase the range of volunteer opportunities in the City of Canterbury.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of this program are to:

- engage volunteers from the community of the City of Canterbury;
- meet the specific community information needs of priority target groups (by engaging bilingual volunteers where possible);
- help improve the employment prospects of volunteers, based on the experience of working as a Community Information Volunteer; and
- work with the Skills, Training And Resource Service (STARS).

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to members of the public who are interested in becoming Community Information Volunteers, current Volunteers, organisations we work with in sourcing volunteers, and members of staff who are involved in this program.

## 4. Definitions

Community Information Volunteer     A person engaged by Council to volunteer with the Community Information Service, usually on a once per week basis.

## 5. Principles

Council will engage Volunteers to deliver:

- free and easily accessible information on various local community services, activities and programs to the public at town centres, Council events and other specified sites within the Canterbury Local Government Area; and
- a positive image of Council to the public.

Council will preferably seek Volunteers who meet the following criteria.

- Are local residents.
- Have the ability to speak a language other than English. Volunteers who can speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Arabic and Korean are particularly needed.
- Have the ability to work independently after initial training.
- Have some knowledge of community information and/or services that are available to Canterbury residents.
- Are physically fit to be able to carry information resources, tables and chairs to set up Community Information Stalls.

### Code of Conduct

All those engaged as Volunteers in the program are expected to provide quality community information assistance to residents and, as representatives of Council's services, will be required to adhere to the following code of conduct.

- Volunteers must exercise courtesy, consideration, and sensitivity to community members and Council staff.
- No verbal innuendo or unsolicited comments can be made regarding other people's (including other Volunteers, Council staff, and community members) characteristics, e.g. gender, race, religion, age, disability, affiliations or any other attribute.
- Volunteers must not engage in arguments with community members but display courtesy and respect at all times.
- Volunteers must follow reasonable instructions of the Community Information Officer or Corporate Services management.

## 6. Responsibilities

The Community Information Officer is responsible for the following activities:

- sourcing appropriate Volunteers with Skills, Training and Resource Service;
- conducting the orientation of Volunteers when they commence;
- arranging appropriate times at which Volunteers work;
- supervising Volunteer duties and other general matters; and
- resolving matters of complaint with Volunteers, in the first instance.

The Team Leader – Community Development is responsible for the following activities:

- ensuring the Community Information Volunteer Program is well-run and maintained; and
- resolving matters of complaint, in the second instance.

## 7. Procedures

### Recruitment Process

- Volunteers will apply through the Skills, Training And Resource Service (STARS), who will then refer appropriate volunteers to the Community Information Officer for recruitment.
- Council's Community Services section is responsible for ensuring that all Volunteers possess the necessary attitudes and skills to fulfill duties expected.
- All Volunteers have to be registered as Council's volunteer prior to the commencement of their work.

### Orientation and Training

- All Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Community Information Volunteer Policy, which includes their Position Description, a copy of Council's Customer Services Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and a review of the Occupational Health and Safety requirements for their position.
- Volunteer's rights and responsibilities will be explained clearly as part of the orientation.
- Information on Council services, cultural awareness, occupational health and safety, as well as local community services will be provided for Volunteers prior to the commencement of their work.

### Support

- The Community Information Officer will be present at every Community Information Stall to directly support Volunteers.
- Program Review meetings will be organised once every six months to give Volunteers a chance to discuss issues regarding the program, and provide feedback on how the program can be improved.
- Council's Community Information Officer will respond to issues raised by the Volunteers in accordance with Council policy.

### Occupational Health and Safety

- Council's Corporate Services Division will provide a working environment that is safe and healthy for all Volunteers, same as for paid staff.
- Volunteers are required to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others at work.
- Equipment provided to Volunteers must be used correctly.
- Volunteers must follow the instructions agreed to and/or given by Council to ensure their safety while working in the streets.
- Volunteers must report any accident or injury that occurred during their work.
- Volunteers must withdraw from volunteering if they suspect or know that their own and others' health and safety may be compromised by carrying out their duties.
- Smoking is not allowed while working as a Community Information Volunteer.

- Council will ensure the health and safety of the Volunteers by:
  - providing badges to Volunteers that clearly identify them as such;
  - providing instructions to use the equipment correctly;
  - providing contact numbers of the Community Information Officer, Council staff, and the local police station in case of emergency;
  - encouraging Volunteers to take their mobile phones with them;
  - reminding Volunteers to bring drinking water with them;
  - informing Volunteers of the closest toilet facilities; and
  - informing Volunteers of safety and exit options for emergencies.

### **Ongoing Review**

Individual performance appraisals will be conducted by the Community Information Officer at the end of the first three months of volunteering. From that time on, performance appraisals will be conducted once every 6 months. Issues raised by Volunteers, including their training needs, will be recorded and responded to in accordance with policy and budget limits.

This Policy will be reviewed at least once a year, in consultation with the Volunteers. The Program as a whole will be reviewed using the above-mentioned indicators, annually.

### **Complaints**

- If the Volunteers are not satisfied with the Community Information Officer's response to any issues, they can first approach the Team Leader – Community Development, and then the Manager Community and Recreation, to resolve the issues.

### **Termination of volunteering**

- Three warnings must be given in writing to any Volunteers before the termination of their volunteering with Council.
- The following conduct may incur warnings for termination:
  - conduct that may cause any reasonable person offence;
  - harassment of other Volunteers, Council staff, or community members, including comments about physical traits, gender, race, religion or any other personal attribute;
  - conduct that places Council in a negative light in the community; or
  - behaviour that compromises their own and others' health and safety.

We reserve the right to immediately suspend a Volunteer for conduct unbecoming to a representative of our organisation or any other serious breach of these guidelines.

### **Insurance**

- Volunteers will be covered by Council's Voluntary Workers Policy when they are carrying out duties as per the Position Description, and as requested by the Community Information Officer.
- Council's Corporate Services Division will provide Public Liability insurance cover for all the Volunteers.
- Volunteers are not covered by insurance while travelling to and from the place of Volunteer work.

### **Confidentiality**

- Council will respect the confidentiality of the Volunteers. The records of Volunteers will only be accessible by Volunteers themselves, the Community Information Officer and appropriate Council staff.
- Volunteers will maintain confidentiality of client requests and details.

### **Reimbursement**

- Volunteers cannot claim reimbursement for travelling to and from home to the place of Volunteer work.
- Volunteers are entitled to claim reimbursement for mileage (\$0.48 per kilometre) and public transport (receipt must be presented) costs if such costs are incurred while carrying out Volunteer duties on behalf of Council.
- All requests for travel assistance must be approved by the Community Information Officer prior to incurring the expense.
- Claims for reimbursement must be received no later than one month after the cost has been incurred.

### **Recognition**

- Council will acknowledge the contribution of Volunteers through the media during Volunteers Week in May.
- A Certificate of Appreciation will be given to Volunteers after two months of volunteering.
- A Statement of Volunteering, but not reference letters on Council letterhead, can be given to Volunteers upon request.
- On-going acknowledgment will be given by the Community Information Officer.
- The contribution that Volunteers made to the community and Council will be recorded on Council's file.

## Attachment 1

### Position Description: Community Information Volunteer

**Location:** Near train stations, the town centres and community events as required by the Community Information Service

**Reports to:** Community Information Officer

#### ***Key Duties:***

1. To deliver information on various local community services, activities and programs to the public at town centres and/or near train stations within the Canterbury Local Government Area.
2. To work with the Community Information Officer to set up, man and pack up the Community Information Stalls.

#### ***Skills Required:***

- Ability to speak a language other than English. Volunteers who can speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Arabic and Korean are particularly needed.
- Ability to work independently after initial training.
- Some knowledge of community information and/or services that are available to Canterbury residents.
- Physical fitness to be able to carry information resources, tables and chairs to set up Community Information Stalls.

#### ***Key Outcomes and Performance Standard Expected:***

<b>Key Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Standard</b>
Provide service to community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courtesy, consideration, and sensitivity are exercised at all times.</li> <li>• Information provided to the public is accurate to the best of your knowledge.</li> <li>• Collect statistics as requested.</li> </ul>
Work with other team members (Team members consist of all Community Information Volunteers and the Community Information Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duties are undertaken in a manner that promotes cooperation and good relationships within the team.</li> <li>• Work information is shared with others in the team.</li> </ul>
Communicate in the team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in team meetings.</li> <li>• Instructions and actions agreed at team meetings are understood and followed.</li> </ul>
Follow prescribed Health & Safety Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report accidents, incidents, as well as potential health and safety dangers to the Community Information Officer immediately.</li> <li>• Assist in reviewing the Procedures.</li> </ul>

#### ***Terms:***

Volunteers will be required for 2 hours per week, either on Wednesday or Thursday.

