



Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) encourages the involvement of volunteers for the benefit of our community, appreciating the skills volunteers are able to offer, and the satisfaction that volunteers derive from the service they can provide. Volunteers within our organisation do not replace paid workers, nor do they constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.

Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that volunteers working at YPRL have work that is safe, significant, fulfilling, and appreciated.

Policy

All volunteers shall be treated with respect and gratitude for their contribution.

Volunteers shall be engaged at the discretion of the Management of YPRL.

Volunteers shall carry out duties assigned by the Management of YPRL.

All volunteers shall, as far as possible, be protected from harm and be relieved of liability for acts performed in the discharge of their volunteer functions.

Public liability insurance is provided by YPRL while the volunteer is engaged in carrying out activities as directed by the library. A volunteer is covered by TAC whilst in a vehicle and engaged in library duties.

Definition of Volunteering

YPRL commits to Volunteering Australia's formal definition of volunteering – that volunteering is an activity, which takes place through not for profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- for no financial payment
- in designated volunteer roles only.

Principles of Volunteering

YPRL commits to a set of beliefs or guidelines that are designed to protect the individual volunteer and also provide guidelines around volunteering. These principles define volunteering as:

- benefiting the community and the volunteer
- an activity that is unpaid

- always a matter of choice
- an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only
- a legally accepted way to get involved in the community
- not a replacement for paid work
- respecting the rights, dignity and culture of others
- promoting human rights and equality.

YPRL strives to maintain the highest standards possible for the protection and promotion of the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. YPRL commits to the following as the basic rights and responsibilities of a volunteer, as set out by Volunteering Australia and Volunteering Victoria:

Volunteers have the right to:

- have a role description and agreed volunteering hours
- to be treated in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation (eg: not discriminated on the basis of culture, religion, gender)
- have confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988
- be given orientation and information about the organisation
- be provided with sufficient training and support for you to do your volunteering
- be given a volunteer policy and other policies that affect your volunteering
- be supported and supervised in your volunteering role
- be adequately covered by insurance
- work in a healthy and safe environment
- have access to grievance procedure
- say “NO” if you feel you are being exploited
- not fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- not do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes

Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- be reliable
- respect confidentiality and privacy
- carry out the agreed volunteer role
- be accountable for the volunteer work that is done
- be committed to working for the organisation
- be willing to undertake training as required
- ask for help and support when needed
- be prepared to follow YPRL policies and procedures
- give adequate notice before leaving the organisation

- value and support other team members
- carry out the agreed work responsibly and ethically
- promote the rights of clients

Recruitment & Induction of Volunteers

YPRL is committed to a fair and clear way of recruiting volunteers. YPRL encourages people from the local community from diverse cultural, religious, age, gender, ability and socio-economic backgrounds to participate as volunteers.

YPRL attempts to involve volunteers in roles that meet their needs, interests and aspirations and the organisation is committed to developing the skills, knowledge, experience and confidence of volunteers by providing training where necessary.

Volunteers who are undertaking outreach and regional roles are to have orientation when they begin volunteering conducted by the Seniors & Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers will continue to be supported, trained and supervised by the Seniors & Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers who are undertaking branch work will be recruited by the Branch Manager. Volunteers at branches will continue to be supported, trained and supervised by the Branch Manager to ensure the volunteers are capable of fulfilling their functions adequately.

If volunteers are visiting borrowers in their own home, or visiting aged care facilities it is a pre requisite that they undergo a police check. The cost of the police check is borne by YPRL and will be updated on a 3 year basis. If working in a branch, a Working with Children check may be required.

A record of the volunteers' personal details will be maintained by Seniors & Volunteers Coordinator at Library Support Services. These details will be stored securely and will remain confidential.

Volunteers are not typically allocated a YPRL email address.

Volunteers may only work in branches while library premises are staffed.

There is no reimbursement for out of pocket expenses.

Volunteer Roles

YPRL involves community members in selected volunteer roles and recognises that volunteering supports and extends the work done by paid staff. Where possible, YPRL will develop new volunteer roles in response to the skills and experience of volunteers, in addressing the needs of the community.

Volunteer Satisfaction

YPRL values ongoing communication with volunteers and as much as possible is committed to making sure that volunteers have a satisfactory experience while volunteering with the organisation. This is achieved through providing volunteers with:

- Ongoing communication (eg: newsletters, meetings /updates)
- Ongoing support and supervision
- Involving volunteers in different roles that meet their interests, needs and aspirations
- Social events

Exit interviews are an opportunity for volunteers to provide feedback prior to leaving when appropriate.

Volunteer Insurance

Volunteers who are involved in an accident or who are injured while volunteering at YPRL should complete an Incident Report Form. YPRL Insurance does not cover volunteers' personal belongings. It is the owner's responsibility while volunteering at YPRL to ensure the security of their possessions.

Debriefing

YPRL is committed to providing volunteers with the opportunity to talk about any issues or experiences they have while volunteering. YPRL believes debriefing is important and under no circumstances will a person be judged or criticised for seeking assistance. If a volunteer has experienced a difficult situation and would like to discuss it further, opportunity is available to talk with a staff member who will discuss the situation and offer support.

Occupational Health & Safety

YPRL is committed to ensuring that all volunteers carry out their activities in a safe work environment. YPRL has a written policy on Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) which includes:

- Compliance with all relevant OH&S legislation and guidelines

Dispute Settlement (disciplinary & grievance procedures)

YPRL is committed to ongoing communication with volunteers to prevent disputes and grievances from arising. In the event of a dispute or grievance occurring, YPRL recognises the volunteer's right to have their grievance carefully considered, and staff will make every effort to resolve the dispute cooperatively, informally and confidentially as per the Volunteer Dispute Settlement Procedure.

All disputes will be recorded, including the process by which the grievance/dispute is resolved. All outcomes will also be recorded and retained by the Seniors and Volunteers Co-ordinator in a confidential file.

Related Documents

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Volunteer Dispute Settlement Procedure

Volunteer Role Description

YPRL Customer Service Manual - Volunteers (applicable section)

YPRL Equal Opportunity Policy

YPRL Occupational Health and Safety Policy

YPRL Privacy Policy