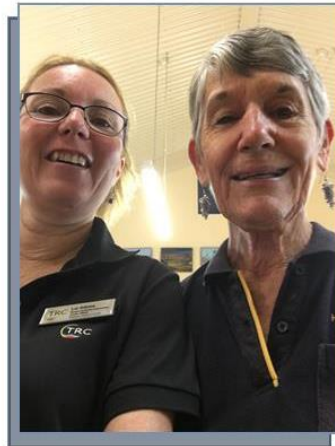


Tablelands Regional Council



Volunteer Handbook

Tablelands Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Tablelands region and recognises their continuing connection to country. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future.





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1. Introduction

Tablelands Regional Council acknowledges and values the significant contribution that volunteers make to the Tablelands community. Volunteers work across a wide variety of function areas within Council, without the contribution of volunteers Council could not deliver these services. Council is committed to making the volunteer experience a mutually rewarding, enjoyable and enriching one for all involved.

Tablelands Regional Council's Volunteer Handbook is for the use of volunteers and Council staff. It offers guidance on a range of issues and procedures to provide consistency across the organisation and ensure the volunteer program meets the needs of the volunteers and the community.

This handbook endeavours to be comprehensive, but situations not covered by this handbook will be handled by the specific location.

2. Tablelands Community Plan

The Community vision for the Tablelands region is identified in the Tablelands Community Plan 2021 in the vision statement: *"Valuing our natural and cultural heritage, the unique communities of the Tablelands work together to create a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive and prosperous region."*

Council acknowledges that volunteers are critical in achieving many of the goals within the Community Plan, most notably three of the identified performance measures:

- Economic Vitality
- Social Inclusion and Wellbeing
- Cultural Vibrancy

3. Council's Volunteer Policy

Tablelands Regional Council Volunteer Policy 2012-2015 has been adopted to ensure that the needs of the community and the volunteers are met and supported through an active and well managed volunteer program.

The Policy aims to enhance volunteering within Council for the benefit of the Tablelands community in five key areas:

1. Encourage high quality and consistent standards and approaches within Council to manage, resource and support volunteers.
2. Further develop volunteering opportunities within Council activities.
3. Recognise and value the contribution made by volunteers
4. Continue to work with and support volunteer organisations across the Tablelands
5. Support and encourage Council staff to themselves become volunteers within the community



4. Volunteer Programs

Volunteers make an important contribution within a number of areas across Council including Tourism, Museums, Libraries, the Arts, Community Support Services, Parks and Gardens, and Events. Additional information relating specifically to volunteering in these areas will be provided to volunteers separately.

Many volunteer roles exist within Council for people with a range of skills, experience and interests. Further information on volunteer opportunities within these different areas of Council is available on Council's website www.trc.qld.gov.au or by contacting Council's Customer Service line on 1300 362 242 and speaking to the appropriate staff member.

Applications from volunteers are welcome at any time throughout the year.

5. Why Volunteer?

People volunteer for a range of reasons and volunteers enhance the quality of life and community spirit in their regions. Some of the reasons to volunteer may include:

- Become involved in the local community
- Make new friends
- Learn new skills
- Help someone
- Gain work experience
- Make a difference
- Enhance job prospects
- Be valued
- Be part of a team
- Have fun

6. Definitions and Responsibilities

Formal volunteering (as defined by Volunteering Australia) 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;
- In designated volunteer positions only.

Principles of Volunteering:

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer;
- Volunteer work is unpaid;
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice;
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community;
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs;
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only;
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work;
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers;
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others; and
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality.



Council's Responsibilities to Volunteers

- Ensure that volunteers are covered by appropriate insurance.
- To treat each volunteer with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- To receive guidance and support from the staff within each work area.
- To provide volunteers with appropriate training, regular evaluation and recognition.
- To provide volunteers with a job description.
- To provide a safe work environment.
- To provide volunteers with adequate resources to carry out their duties.
- To provide volunteers with opportunities to be heard and encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes.
- Volunteers will not be expected to undertake work that they have not agreed to.
- Ensure that volunteers work under the direction of paid staff and/or appointed coordinators.
- Assess volunteer skills to match tasks with expectations, interests and time commitments.
- Provide access to all relevant Council Policies and Procedures including Council's Code of Conduct.
- Provide access to grievance procedures.
- Ensure the work of volunteer staff complements but does not replace the work of paid staff
- If required, ensure that volunteers comply with the Blue Card requirements of the Commission for Children and Young People.

Responsibilities of Volunteers


- Participate in induction and ongoing training.
- Operate in accordance with relevant Council Policies and Procedures including Council's Code of Conduct.
- To carry out conscientious work performance with punctuality and reliability.
- To treat visitors and members of the public with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- To treat fellow volunteers and staff members with courtesy, respect and consideration.
- To contribute positively to the organisation.
- Operate under the directive of Council personnel to achieve the required outcomes.
- Not to represent themselves as a paid staff member of Council.
- Report any unsafe work environment.
- Report any injury or damage to themselves or a third party.

Council acknowledges that people volunteer for a range of different reasons and will strive to meet volunteer expectations wherever possible.

7. Recruitment

7.1 Application

Volunteers may find out about volunteer opportunities within council in a number of ways, and enquiries are always welcome. From time to time, specific opportunities may be advertised in the local media, through libraries and other community centres, or on Council's website, otherwise applications are welcome at any time. Further information on the range of roles is provided on Council's website or by contacting Council's Customer Service line on 1300 362 242 and speaking to the appropriate staff member.



All new volunteers are required to complete Council's volunteer application form (*Appendix 1*). All volunteer applications will be treated as strictly confidential. All applications will be acknowledged and where no suitable opening is available, unsuccessful applicants formally advised.

Applicants will be required to attend an informal interview with the relevant Council supervisor or other designated person. Where necessary, a reference check, police check, blue card application or other information may be sought. Where applications are not suitable, the applicant will be advised.

7.2 Age Eligibility

Volunteers of all ages are welcome to apply depending on the suitability of the particular role. Persons under the age of 18 must have parental/guardian consent. Persons under the age of 15 must also be in the care of a responsible adult other than the Council's designated volunteer coordinator while participating in the volunteer program. Volunteers over the age of 80 may volunteer but will be advised of the specific insurance conditions that apply.

7.3 Volunteer Register

All successful volunteer applicants must be registered with the relevant section within Council and when a volunteer has been assessed as suitable for inclusion in the volunteer program, all documentation will be maintained by the appropriate section. Details will include:

- Contact details (including emergency contacts)
- Activities in which the volunteer is involved.
- Availability and roster arrangements
- Any special health issues, skills and interests
- Training undertaken


All records kept will be treated as confidential with access restricted to staff on a strict need-to-know basis.

7.4 Induction

All volunteers will be given an induction at the commencement of their role by the relevant supervisor. This will include a site-specific induction and orientation, completion of Council's Workplace Health and Safety induction checklist, and an introduction to members of the team. The induction will also include covering aspects of the Volunteer Handbook, Code of Conduct, and any specific requirements such as equipment and procedures. Volunteers will be asked to sign the Volunteer Agreement confirming their willingness to abide by Council's policies and commit to the requirements of the position including dress, training and reliability.

7.5 Trial Period

In most cases, a trial period (three months) will be required, during which time both the volunteer and their supervisor can assess the suitability of the role and any training needs. At the end of the period the supervisor will advise the volunteer of the successful completion or otherwise of this period.



Where the supervisor is concerned with any aspect of the volunteer's participation this will be addressed appropriately with the volunteer concerned and if necessary additional training or alternative roles discussed. If no suitable role can be found, and the services of the volunteer are no longer required, they will be advised promptly and courteously by the supervisor, who will ensure a proper dignified departure is provided. This will include formal acknowledgement and thanks.

For short term volunteer positions, a trial period will not be required.

7.6 Review Procedures

Reviews of volunteers' performance and involvement form an ongoing process and where possible and practicable will be undertaken on a regular basis by the supervisor. This may consider training requirements, volunteer satisfaction, and other opportunities to enhance their role and enjoyment. It should provide for volunteer feedback and input into the process. An assessment of volunteer overall satisfaction with the volunteer program is undertaken annually within each program area.

7.7 Badges and Identification

Volunteers will be issued with a badge clearly identifying them as a Tablelands Regional Council volunteer, this should be worn at all times when volunteering. Should their volunteer role with Council cease, they will be required to return the badge to their supervisor.

7.8 Uniforms

Depending on the particular role or location, volunteers may be provided with a uniform or personal protective equipment. In some cases, the uniform will not be provided until satisfactory completion of the trial period, in which case volunteers will be advised of appropriate dress. Where a uniform is provided, volunteers are expected to wear the uniform at all times when volunteering, and to return the uniform on cessation of their role with Council.


8. Volunteer/Staff Relations

A volunteer supports and enhances the work of paid staff, but does not replace it, and volunteers and paid staff work as a team to provide the best outcomes for the community, Council and the volunteer.

Volunteers should not expect that their involvement as a volunteer will provide them with an opportunity or preference regarding paid employment with Tablelands Regional Council.

The volunteer's supervisor will ensure that volunteers are not expected to undertake roles more properly carried out by paid staff. Volunteers will not be expected to:

- Participate in a program or service without direct access to, or support from, the designated supervisor.
- Provide advice on behalf of Tablelands Regional Council or commit to the provision of Tablelands Regional Council funds or services without direct approval of the supervisor
- Resolve complaints about a service or program.
- Undertake work where they do not feel competent to do so.
- Determine the safe method of work where a standard operating procedure does not exist.



All Council volunteers will be designated a supervisor who is directly responsible for their support and wellbeing, ensuring they have received adequate training to undertake their role and provide opportunities for regular reviews and feedback. It is the responsibility of Tablelands Regional Council to ensure volunteer supervisors have appropriate skills and are provided with ongoing training for the role.

Where appropriate, supervisors will involve volunteers in planning and decision-making activities relevant to that particular location or program. Regular communication between the volunteer and their supervisor also provides opportunity for a volunteer to offer feedback and raise issues.

9. Occupational Health and Safety

The responsibility for working safely is a dual responsibility between the Tablelands Regional Council and those who act on its behalf.

Tablelands Regional Council has a responsibility under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011* to provide a safe work environment and systems of work. Where hazards are identified, the risk they pose must be evaluated and appropriate control measures put in place to eliminate or minimise the risk.

Volunteers undertaking a task on behalf of Tablelands Regional Council have a responsibility to work in a safe manner to ensure that their health and that of all other persons is not put at risk.

It is a requirement that as part of their induction each volunteer is advised of the respective responsibilities of both the employer and employee and complete the Tableland Regional Council's Volunteer WH&S Induction checklist. It is equally important that volunteers are trained in safe work practices and advised of the local area procedures in emergencies. Where volunteers undertake the use of specialised equipment as part of their duties, additional and ongoing WH&S training will be required. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to maintain up to date records of all WH&S training undertaken by volunteers.

10. Code of Conduct

Volunteers are expected to comply with Tablelands Regional Council's Code of Conduct and will be provided with access to a copy of the Code during their induction and training.

Council's Code of Conduct applies to all individuals acting for or on behalf of Council, and applies equally to staff, volunteers, and contractors.

Tablelands Regional Council is an equal Opportunities employer and complies with the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and *Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Act 1992*.

11. Personal Presentation

In some program areas, volunteers may be required to wear a uniform or safety wear. At all times, volunteers are responsible for ensuring personal presentation and dress is appropriate to the role, including good personal hygiene and health and safety considerations. Volunteers should not cause offence to colleagues or members of the public through inappropriate dress or accessories.



12. Training and Development

Tablelands Regional Council is committed to providing the community with the best possible service delivery. To achieve this requires a high level of commitment, motivation and competence from all those who provide that service, including volunteers.

It is essential that volunteers participate in volunteer training and development activities where provided. Some training for volunteers will be provided directly on-the-job whilst other forms of training may include specifically designed programs run by Council staff, training courses run by outside organisations, or site visits.

Suggestions and feedback on training is always welcome.

13. Working with the Public

13.1 General Issues

The majority of services and programs that Tablelands Regional Council provides involve direct dealings with the community. The same applies to volunteers undertaking various activities within those services and programs.

Tablelands Regional Council has procedures in place to assist volunteers in providing these services to the public. These include:

- Volunteers will be provided with an identification badge that clearly designates them as a volunteer.
- Notices will advise the public on the role of volunteers and that any complaints about services or programs must be directed to Tablelands Regional Council's staff only.
- Volunteers will undergo regular training in customer service where this is applicable to the role.
- In difficult situations volunteers should withdraw and immediately advise the supervisor, or, in their absence, another member of staff.
- Volunteers have a responsibility to themselves, Tablelands Regional Council and the public not to engage in any activity, while in their capacity as a volunteer, that brings discredit on themselves, Council or the program in which they are operating.

13.2 Gifts and Donations

The seeking or acceptance of gifts for personal use is not permitted. Offers of gifts should immediately be referred to the supervisor. However, where the refusal of a small non-monetary gift, genuinely offered, would cause affront to the customer, acceptance is permitted but the supervisor must still be notified.



14. Records

14.1 Confidentiality

All personal information in regard to volunteers participating in the volunteer program with Tablelands Regional Council is treated in the strictest of confidence, and access to this information is restricted to staff involved in the volunteer program on a need-to-know basis. Information about volunteers such as contact details will not be given out without the permission of the volunteer. Where it is helpful to the management of that program to make available information such as phone numbers to other members of the program, prior agreement will be sought.

Volunteers are required to respect the confidentiality of Council's information.

14.2 Rosters and Attendance

All volunteers will be provided, where possible, with a planned roster in accordance with their preferred times of attendance within the scope of the particular service in which they are participating. Where the volunteer prefers to participate at the same time(s) and day(s) each week they will be rostered to do so where this is practical.

All supervisors will ensure that volunteers record the time and duration of each attendance. The attendance register is an important record in circumstances where insurance or liability claims are made, and also in reporting on the value of volunteer contributions to the organisation.

It is acknowledged that volunteers may be absent from time to time for a variety of reasons. When possible, volunteers should give adequate notice to their supervisor so alternative arrangements can be made.

15. Insurance

Tablelands Regional Council provides insurance cover for volunteers who suffer personal injury, loss or cause damage while engaged as a volunteer. Each claim will be assessed and determined on its own merits.


Council's insurance policies relevant to volunteers include Voluntary Workers Policy, Public Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance.

16. Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers should obtain verbal approval from their supervisor before incurring expenses for which they later seek to be reimbursed. Volunteers will be required to provide relevant tax invoices/receipts to their supervisor and need to be aware that reimbursement may not be possible on the spot.

17. Motor Vehicle Use

Volunteers are required to have an appropriate license to be permitted to drive or operate any Tablelands Regional Council vehicles, plant or equipment, or to use their own vehicle on behalf



of Council. Before permitting a volunteer to drive any vehicle their supervisor will establish that the volunteer has the appropriate license.

It is the volunteers' responsibility to ensure the roadworthiness, insurance and registration of any vehicle (other than a Tablelands Regional Council owned vehicle) that they propose to use as part of their involvement in the volunteer program.

Any fines incurred, or driving or other offences committed, are the sole responsibility of the driver of the vehicle, whether the volunteer is driving a privately owned or a Council vehicle.

Volunteers may be reimbursed for fuel when using their own vehicle at the supervisor's request. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed for travel between home and the volunteer location.

Volunteers are not covered by Tablelands Regional Council's vehicle insurance policy in the event of an accident whilst using their private vehicle for approved activities. It is therefore the volunteer's responsibility to ensure they have adequate insurance cover.

Where a volunteer who drives a motor vehicle as part of their involvement in the Tablelands Regional Council's Volunteer Program loses their license, they must notify their supervisor.

18. Use of Council Equipment

Where necessary, volunteers may be given use of Tablelands Regional Council's equipment such as a computer or telephone. Except in emergency situations, these are only for use in relation to the activity undertaken on behalf of Tablelands Regional Council and are not for private use.

19. Volunteer Grievance/Complaints Procedure


It is possible that at some time during their involvement as a volunteer, matters will arise that are of concern to them. Most of these will be easily resolved by talking informally to their supervisor. Where this is not possible, a formal procedure is in place.

Unless the issue relates to their supervisor, the volunteer should discuss the matter with their supervisor in the first instance. The supervisor will make brief notes about the issue and ask the volunteer their views on how the matter could be resolved. The volunteer may wish to put their concerns in writing, although this is not essential. The supervisor is required to treat the matter with the utmost confidentiality. If the supervisor feels it necessary, they may involve the Section Coordinator in the matter.

A volunteer may ask someone to accompany them to the meeting with their supervisor and/or Section Coordinator. This could be another volunteer, a friend, or, a representative from the Human Resources unit of Tablelands Regional Council to attend as an independent observer. Any agreed course of action as a result of this meeting should be put in place as quickly as possible to resolve any ongoing grievance.

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome from their meeting, they should address their concerns in writing to the Section Coordinator or Council's Human Resources department who will then investigate and act as necessary.

The volunteer will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation, except where personal or other sensitive information is concerned which requires confidentiality.



It should be understood that, as volunteers with Tablelands Regional Council (without limiting their personal rights), Council expects volunteers to respect its decisions even though they may have personal disagreement with them.

20. Recognition

Whilst it is acknowledged that volunteers give freely of their time, Tablelands Regional Council greatly appreciates the work of its volunteers. Formal and informal recognition of volunteers is made through a range of measures. These may include:

- Christmas functions,
- Morning and afternoon teas
- 5 Year interval service badges
- Volunteer Week celebrations
- Acknowledgement from tourism operators
- Feedback in the Visitors' Book and from customers
- Certificates of Recognition

21. Suggestions and Feedback

Council is continually looking to improve and refine the volunteer program and all suggestions with regard to this Handbook or the procedures contained within it should be directed to the appropriate staff member within Council.

Volunteer satisfaction with the Tablelands Regional Council volunteer program is surveyed annually and, where appropriate, action taken to better support and recognise the volunteers.

22. Ceasing to Volunteer

Volunteers may withdraw their involvement at any time. Where possible reasonable notice should be given to their supervisor to ensure alternative arrangements can be made to continue to provide the service.

Where the volunteer is no longer contributing positively to the program, they may be asked to leave by their supervisor. In the first instance, concerns will be raised verbally and if the matter continues, concerns will be raised in writing. The volunteer will be given reasonable opportunity to redress the issue.

In exceptional circumstances, such as theft or working under the influence of drugs or alcohol, volunteers may be asked to withdraw immediately.

On ceasing to volunteer with Tablelands Regional Council, volunteers will be required to return any Council equipment or documents, including uniforms and badges, within a reasonable length of time. Volunteers will be properly thanked, and their contribution acknowledged.

23. Contact us:

Tablelands Regional Council
PO Box 573, Atherton Qld 4883
Tel: 1300 362242
Email: info@trc.qld.gov.au
Web: www.trc.qld.gov.au

Volunteer Application Form

Privacy statement

Tablelands Regional Council is collecting your personal information for the purpose of maintaining volunteer programmes, rosters and teams. The collection of this information is authorised under the Local Government Act 2009. Your information will not be given to any other person or agency unless you have given us permission or we are required by law.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Applicant Details | | | |
| Name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| Postal address: | | Date of birth | |
| Phone number: | | Mobile number: | |
| Email address: | | | |
| Have you previously volunteered with TRC? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Are you volunteering as part of Centrelink's requirements? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you hold a current driver's licence? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | If required, do you agree to undergoing a police check? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you hold a current Blue Card? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | If yes, please provide card number and expiry date: | |
| Emergency contact details: | | | |
| <i>This form requires the personal information of an individual you have nominated as your emergency contact. Under Tablelands Regional Council's privacy obligations, you are required to obtain the consent of the nominated individual for the collection of their personal information in this form.</i> | | | |
| Name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| Contact Number(s): | | Relationship: | |
| Employment status: (tick more than one if applicable) | | | |
| Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> | Part time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Studying | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not working | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Retired | <input type="checkbox"/> | Volunteering | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteer areas: (indicate your preference - 1 for your first preference; 2 for second; 3-6 for other preferences) | | | |
| Art Gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> | Library | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Events | <input type="checkbox"/> | Visitor Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> | Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: | | | |
| Availability and Preferred Location: (please indicate when and where you are available) | | | |
| Day(s): | | | |

Volunteer Application Form

Time(s) eg. am, pm: _____

Location(s) eg. Atherton: _____

Why would you like to volunteer?


Health and fitness: (please provide details of any disabilities, allergies or other health issues we should be aware of)

Skills and abilities: (include information even if it may not seem relevant, you never know what might be useful)

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Formal qualifications | | Languages | | Business/ admin | |
| Computer skills | | First aid | | Cash handling | |
| Public speaking | | Hospitality | | Marketing | |
| Trades | | Teaching | | Research | |
| The arts | | Museums | | Tourism | |
| Events | | Libraries | | Gardening | |
| Other: | _____ | | | | |

Additional Comments:

Applicant signature:

| | | | |
|-----------|---|-------|-------|
| Signature |  | Date: | _____ |
|-----------|---|-------|-------|

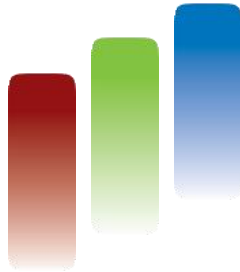
Office use only

Date received: _____ Contact date: _____

Interview date: _____ Induction date: _____ Start date: _____

Notes: _____

Signed:  _____



Live, discover and invest in a Tablelands community



Tablelands Regional Council

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PO Box 573, Atherton Qld 4883

1300 362 242

info@trc.qld.gov.au

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#athertontablelands