



CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 15

VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

October 2022

1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage and facilitate volunteer activities which contribute to nature conservation, recreation, land and marine management objectives.
- Build community awareness, understanding and commitment to these objectives.
- Ensure appropriate opportunities for voluntary participation are provided for individuals, interest groups, organisations, and communities.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Parks and Wildlife Service, Biodiversity and Conservation Science Division and the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA).

Participants of community-based offender programs under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Justice are not registered as volunteers. Management of prisoner and community-based offender programs should be in accordance with the relevant MOU and People Services Branch protocol.

When students are carrying out activities that contribute towards formal qualifications, they are not considered to be volunteers for the purposes of this policy.

3. CONTEXT

Community involvement is an integral part of the department's operations. The department has support from volunteers in groups or as individuals, that either work directly with the department on activities or through sanctioned independent activities, such as friends groups or volunteer groups that are Incorporated Associations or associated volunteer groups connected to site or place.

Volunteering is defined as 'Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain' (Volunteering Australia, 2015). Volunteers are valuable to the department because they build communication links and understanding between the department and the community, as well as expanding the department's work capabilities, knowledge, and skills base.

The department acknowledges that:

- volunteering is not a substitute for paid work;
- effective volunteer involvement requires organisational leadership and a structure that supports and values the role of volunteers;
- volunteers have similar rights and privileges to paid employees, including the right to work in a safe environment;

- volunteering is a two-way relationship, to achieve shared goals for the department's outcomes and visions;
- volunteers should be acknowledged and recognised for their contribution; and
- volunteers should be reimbursed for approved out-of-pocket expenses.

The Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU) coordinates the Parks and Wildlife Service, and Biodiversity and Conservation Science Division's volunteer programs. There is a wide range of volunteer roles and projects across Western Australia, for example, campground hosting, track, trail and park maintenance, curation of scientific specimens and assisting with surveys and research programs.

The BGPA Volunteer Coordinator has a broad overview of the volunteer groups in both Kings Park and Bold Park, and is the first contact point for these volunteers. There are a number of self-sufficient volunteer organisations that operate within Kings Park with guidance from BGPA on a range of activities such as revegetation and weeding, organising events, and providing guided tours.

4. LEGISLATION

There are no legislative requirements for the department to facilitate volunteer programs under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006*, or the *Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority Act 1998*. However, the department is committed to building respectful and supportive relationships with volunteers, partners, neighbours, organisations and communities that do business with the department.

The department and volunteer organisations must adhere to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act).

5. STANDARDS

The department is guided by Volunteering Australia's National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Parks and Wildlife Service *Volunteer Management Manual*, *Parks and Wildlife Service Volunteer Handbook*, and the *BGPA Volunteer Handbook*. These documents also provide further information on occupational safety and health, anti-discrimination and bullying and harassment legislation as they apply to volunteers and organisations.

6. POLICY

The department will aim to ensure its work is supported by volunteers to meet its objectives for nature conservation, recreation, land and marine management. In doing so, the department will:

Volunteer opportunities

- 6.1 Provide a broad range of opportunities for volunteers to assist the department in building capacity and complementing its core business.

Volunteer engagement

- 6.2 Seek and recruit interested members of the community and community groups to be volunteers and take a coordinated approach to promoting and managing volunteer opportunities.

Equity and diversity

- 6.3 Seek to be inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse groups and implement strategies to achieve effective engagement with these groups.

Training, capabilities and management

- 6.4 Provide training and support for volunteers to ensure they have a safe and enjoyable experience while volunteering for the department.
- 6.5 Provide training for departmental staff in the management of voluntary activities, including administration and departmental safety and health responsibilities.
- 6.6 Administer and manage voluntary activities in accordance with codes of work practices including safety, industrial relations, insurance cover, equity and conduct of activities to be undertaken.

Acknowledgement and reward

- 6.7 Acknowledge, support, encourage and reward volunteers for contributions.

Continual improvement

- 6.8 Assess and continually improve all aspects of the department's volunteer program.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In order to implement this policy effectively, the department will adopt the following strategies.

Volunteer opportunities

- 7.1 Recruit and assign volunteers to participate in projects, or to volunteer organisations or groups, that complement the department's work and suit volunteer capabilities, knowledge or interests.
- 7.2 Clearly define, document and communicate volunteer roles, including skill and knowledge requirements.
- 7.3 Develop volunteer projects within the guidelines and agreements that the department has with unions and industrial officers.
- 7.4 Liaise with the private sector to determine and leverage funding opportunities and support.

Volunteer engagement

- 7.5 Implement an innovative volunteer communication plan that makes use of social media, discussion forums, publications and other communication channels.

Equity and diversity

- 7.6 Identify and provide volunteering opportunities through liaison with staff, individuals, community groups, traditional owner groups, local government agencies, not-for-profits and stakeholders.

Training, capabilities and management

- 7.7 Volunteers will be provided with the necessary training, equipment, safety guidance, mentoring, supervision and other resources to ensure they are able to undertake their roles safely and effectively. This includes a volunteer handbook,

Code of Conduct, Health and Safety information, and other documents that outline information relevant to their role.

- 7.8 The department will provide advice and/or assistance to volunteers and volunteer groups to achieve effective outcomes.
- 7.9 The department will support groups that arrange educational, recreational, and conservation activities.
- 7.10 The department will provide information, guidance, training and resources to staff for volunteer management to ensure appropriate supervision, support and inclusion.
- 7.11 The department may pay groups that engage volunteers a fee to cover the cost of work done in accordance with an MOU, Service Level Agreement or similar instrument.

Acknowledgement and reward

- 7.12 Central Volunteer Coordinators are encouraged to arrange an annual volunteer award ceremony or other appropriate recognition events for volunteers.
- 7.13 Regional staff are encouraged to arrange local events, or other forms of recognition, for volunteers that work in their areas.
- 7.14 Volunteers will be included in appropriate reward programs in acknowledgement of their contributions to the department.

Continual improvement

- 7.15 The Volunteer Coordinators will coordinate surveys in line with human research ethical guidelines and standards to determine volunteer expectations, motivations and level of satisfaction.
- 7.16 Central volunteer coordinators will collate and distribute information on volunteer program successes and challenges, and champions continual improvements to the volunteer programs.
- 7.17 Volunteer contributions will be monitored to assess and determine if the programs continue to meet the department's objectives.

8. CUSTODIAN

Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services Division.

9. PUBLICATION

This policy will be made available on the department's website and intranet.

10. KEY WORDS

Volunteers; volunteering; partnerships; students; prisoners; community-based offenders.

11. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no later than 2027.

12. APPROVAL

Approved by

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'mew', is positioned below the 'Approved by' text.

Mark Webb
DIRECTOR GENERAL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Date: 6 October 2022