



YARRA VALLEY FM

Volunteering policy

Purpose

This document sets out our policy on the responsible management of our volunteer program.

The policy's purpose is to provide a clear statement about the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and our station.

We are a community radio station that relies largely on the efforts of our volunteers to maintain operations. Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and volunteer for different reasons, including:

- to contribute something to the community
- to develop professional skills
- to maintain existing skills
- to enjoy the social nature of the organisation
- to facilitate personal growth.

We aim to treat all of our volunteers equally, with respect and trust, and to provide a workplace that is safe, enjoyable and fulfilling. We will endeavour to provide a working environment that is flexible in order to allow our volunteers to gain the benefits they wish from volunteering.

Conversely, we expect our volunteers to act professionally and in good faith towards our station at all times. We expect that they hold the interests of our station and its community in equal regard to their own to ensure positive outcomes for themselves, our station and the community we serve.

Principles of volunteering

Volunteering:

- benefits the community and the volunteer
- is always a matter of choice
- is an activity that is unpaid and not undertaken for the receipt of salary, pension, government allowance or honorarium
- is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community
- is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- does not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to their job security
- respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- serves to promote human rights and equality

The rights of volunteers

Our volunteers have the right to:

- be treated as a co-worker
- suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, abilities, education, training and employment
- know as much about the organisation as possible, its policies, people and programs
- expect clear and open communication from management and staff at all times
- be given appropriate orientation, introduction and provision of information about new developments
- receive sound guidance and direction in the workplace
- advance notice (where possible) of changes which may affect their work, such as programming changes
- undertake volunteer activity without undue interruption or interference from management, staff or other volunteers
- be heard, to feel free to make suggestions and to be given respect for their honest and constructive opinion
- appropriate insurance cover such as volunteer and public liability insurance
- appropriate grievance procedures in the event of a dispute and, if necessary, mediation or arbitration to assist with resolving the dispute
- receive written notification and reasons for suspension or release of services
- have services appropriately assessed and effectively recognised
- have training provided that will enable participation at the station at a variety of levels
- a place of work complying with statutory requirements in regard to equal employment, anti-discrimination legislation and occupational health and safety standards.

The responsibilities of volunteers

Our volunteers have the responsibility to:

- have a professional attitude towards their voluntary work
- be prompt, reliable and productive with regard to commitments and agreements made
- notify the Station Manager if unable to meet commitments
- accept and abide by station rules
- understand and adhere to the Codes of Conduct and maintain familiarity with broadcast laws such as defamation law and the Broadcasting Services Act 1992
- not represent us publicly or commercially unless prior arrangement has been made
- not bring into disrepute our operations, management, staff or other volunteers
- treat technical equipment with due care and respect and to notify technical staff of faults and problems
- undertake to complete a minimum of the basic level of training offered at the station if intending to work in any area of programming
- only use station resources and equipment in carrying out the work of the station and not for personal or private purposes
- ensure that the station is provided with current contact and emergency contact details
- respect the racial and religious backgrounds and the sexual preferences of co-volunteer workers and work to ensure that our station is a safe work place for everyone
- contribute to the achievement of a safe, tolerant and equitable working environment by avoiding, and assisting in preventing, behaviour which is discriminatory

The rights of the station towards volunteers

The station has the right to:

- expect cooperation in working to uphold and maintain the station's mission statement, the station charter and program policies
- expect volunteers to be familiar with the laws relating to broadcasting, station policies and procedures
- expect volunteers to be prompt, reliable and productive with regard to commitments and agreements made
- have confidential information respected
- make a consultative decision as to where each volunteer's services and skills would best be utilised
- make decisions which may affect the volunteer's work
- make programming decisions in accordance with programming policies and procedures
- develop, implement and enforce rules, policies and procedures for all aspects of station operation
- develop and maintain all property and facilities of the station
- provide volunteers with feedback to enhance their programming and broadcasting development
- expect clear and open communication from volunteers at all times
- suspend or dismiss a volunteer in accordance with station policies and procedures due to contravention of station rules

The responsibilities of the station towards volunteers

The station has the responsibility to:

- provide volunteers with a work environment which embraces the principles of access and equity
- provide a place of work complying with statutory requirements in regard to equal employment, anti-discrimination legislation and occupational health and safety standards
- value the importance of each volunteer's role within the organisation
- place the volunteer in an appropriate, suitable position and environment
- give the volunteer appropriate tasks in accordance with their strengths, abilities, training and experience
- provide the volunteer with training to expand their expertise and abilities
- acknowledge the volunteer's contribution to the station, providing appropriate recognition and/or rewards
- ensure staff have the appropriate skills required to work with volunteers
- provide adequate opportunities for formal and informal constructive feedback
- provide the volunteer with information regarding any activities or changes at the station which may affect their work
- consult (where possible and practicable) on issues that may affect their work,
- ensure that all station democratic processes are adhered to and that volunteers are consulted in major decision-making processes
- ensure that volunteers are aware of station democratic processes and are encouraged to participate in them

Procedure for disciplinary action or dismissal of volunteers

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to the station and our primary aim is to encourage and support their contribution to our station. However, it is also recognised that there may be times when a volunteer needs to be counselled, disciplined and perhaps dismissed.

We undertake to handle such situations in a professional manner, ensuring communication between our station and the volunteer is clear, fair, objective and remains within the policy outlined below.

Throughout the process our Committee of Management will reflect on its own operations as well as those of the station and will consider the circumstances, actions and behaviour leading to the situation. The following questions will guide this process:

- Have the roles, values and expectations of the organisation been clearly communicated to the volunteer and subsequently reinforced during prior conversations regarding the volunteer's performance?
- Are there any other factors that may be contributing to the volunteer's poor performance e.g. learning difficulties or language barriers?
- Has the volunteer been reminded of expected codes of conduct and consequences for breaches?
- Has the volunteer received training, mentoring and/or coaching to improve performance?
- Has a verbal and written warning been given to the volunteer explaining that any further non-compliance will result in suspension or termination of the volunteering opportunity?
- Did the volunteer have the opportunity to respond to prior verbal and written warnings?

This document outlines the policy and procedure for disciplinary measures and dismissal. It aims to provide a clear and fair structure that is understandable to both management and volunteers. It does not include the procedure for expulsion of a member from the association, which is laid out in the constitution of the station.

The policy includes an appeals mechanism to ensure a right of reply to a volunteer who has been disciplined. This is further complemented by the station's Internal Conflict Policy and procedure, which may be used in a situation where a volunteer believes they have not been fairly heard or that this Procedure has not been adequately followed.

The procedure for disciplinary action is a three-step process which includes:

- First formal notice in writing
- Second formal notice in writing
- Notice to the volunteer of dismissal from duties.

For issues that are considered minor, a conversation with the volunteer may be appropriate, however this will not be considered part of the formal disciplinary action, although it may be referred to in later action. Written notice will include details of the issue and, where feasible, evidence. In a case where the disciplinary measure has been instigated by a complaint, it may be appropriate to include a copy with identification removed or extract of the complaint.

Further disciplinary actions, such as a suspension of volunteer duties for a period of time, may also be appropriate. In such cases these actions will be included with the formal notice in writing.

Every effort will be taken to ensure that notice of a disciplinary measure, whether formal or informal, will be given at an appropriate time, e.g. not immediately prior to, or during a broadcast. Notice of a disciplinary measure will be given by the Station Manager or Chair of the Committee of Management

Volunteers will be provided an appeal against the action. This may take the form of a meeting with the Station Manager or Chair of the Committee of Management, or a representation in person and/or in writing to the Committee of Management. The volunteer may bring a representative to any such meeting. Should an appeal result in a change of the disciplinary action, or removal of it, this will be confirmed in writing to the volunteer.

Conduct which may lead to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:

- Poor timekeeping and unreliability
- Not following pre-existing station rules and policies, including programming policies and program briefs
- Engaging in acts or broadcasts which may breach the Codes
- Engaging in broadcasts which may breach other related legislation such as the Broadcasting Services Act 1992, copyright or defamation laws
- Inappropriate handling or use of station equipment or other property
- Rudeness or hostility towards other volunteers or staff members
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances during working hours
- Publicly bringing the station into disrepute

Some conduct may be tantamount to gross misconduct. In this instance a volunteer may be dismissed without prior warning. Conduct which may be classed as gross misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteer, employee, member or guest of the station, particularly in respect of race, sex or religion
- Wilful damage to or theft of property belonging to the station or other volunteer, employee, member or guest of the station
- Falsifications of any of the organisation records for personal gain
- Commercial misrepresentation of the station.

In a case of a volunteer being dismissed without prior warnings the volunteer will be provided an appeal as outlined above.

Other relevant policies

Refer also to our **Workplace Conduct Policy**, which defines committee, staff and volunteer rights and responsibilities in regard to health and safety, merit, anti-discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, victimisation, gossip, and the procedure for resolving such issues and **Internal Conflict Policy**, which sets out a procedure for identifying and resolving conflict.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other station policies.

More information

If you have a query about this policy or need more information please contact the Station Manager or Chair of Committee of Management.