



## **Volunteers Guide**

**2005**

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## **Volunteers Code of Conduct**

### **Introduction**

Volunteers need to demonstrate standards of conduct and ethics that assist in maintaining public confidence in the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living. The Volunteers Code of Conduct establishes standards of behaviour expected of you and provides a guide to solving ethical issues which may arise in the course of your work. This code applies to every volunteer with MCSL.

You should carry out your duties with:

- honesty
- integrity
- loyalty to the public interest
- fairness
- conscientiousness
- compassion.

### **Accountability**

You are responsible for your own personal actions and accountable to the supervisor in charge of the particular program with which you are associated. Volunteers should ensure that they understand the duties of their positions and the results expected.

With regard to personal and professional behaviour you are expected to:

- be conscientious and carry out your duties in an impartial, efficient, effective and economical manner;
- treat members of the public and other staff with courtesy and sensitivity;
- ensure that you are not affected by alcohol or other drugs in the workplace;
- ensure your own and other's safety in the workplace;
- comply with all relevant legislative, industrial, or administrative requirements;
- provide all necessary and appropriate assistance to members of the public;
- not take or seek improper advantage from authority or information gained; and
- obey all reasonable requests given to you by a responsible officer.

When dealing with colleagues or members of the public, you must not harass or discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment, sexual preference, or religious or political conviction.

The standard of dress should be appropriate to the work being undertaken. Hats are to be worn when working outdoors.

### **Conflicts of interest**

You must not allow your private interests to interfere with the performance of your duties. Any actual or potential conflict between your private interests and those of MCSL are to be avoided. The onus is, therefore, on you to notify your supervisor or a senior manager if potential or actual conflict of interest arises.

### **Public comment**

Public comment includes public speaking, views expressed on radio, television and the Internet, in letters to newspapers, books, or any publications.

While volunteers are members of the community and have the right to make public comment and to enter into public debate on political and social issues, there are some circumstances in which public comment is inappropriate. This includes, for example, where the implication can be drawn that the public comment, although made in a private capacity, is in some way an official comment of MCSL.

Media inquiries should always be referred to the Project Manager in the first instance.

### **Use of MCSL information and resources**

Use of MCSL information:

You must protect the integrity and security of official documents and information for which you are responsible. This information can only be used in the legitimate exercise of the organisation's functions. You may only disclose official information when you have been given the proper authority.

Volunteers can give information connected with MCSL's facilities which is normally given to members of the public seeking that information.

Misuse of official information is specifically included in the definition of corrupt conduct in the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Act 1988.

Use of MCSL resources:

MCSL resources are to be used efficiently, economically and carefully. Resources include:

- material, equipment, vehicles and plants;
- documents, records, data and information; and
- time and staff.

You are expected to:

- be efficient and economical in the use and management of MCSL resources;
- be careful in the use of property, equipment and services and not permit misuse by others;
- obtain official permission before any use of MCSL facilities and equipment for private purposes; and
- ensure approval before incurring any expenditure.

### **Volunteer expectations of MCSL**

Volunteers may expect the following:

- placement in the type of volunteer work which suits their skills and/or interests.
- a position description which clearly outlines the volunteer's specific responsibilities.
- insurance which covers injury at MCSL and while travelling to and from MCSL your volunteer work.
- relevant orientation which includes an explanation of MCSL's mission.
- issue of a name badge which identifies you as a volunteer of MCSL.
- supervision of your operations and training when required.
- programs that are adequately resourced and situations avoided which result in out-of-pocket expenses or allowances being paid to volunteers.
- freedom from pressure to undertake activities you feel unable or ill-equipped to complete, or feel go beyond the original reason for their volunteering.
- feedback regarding performance.
- support, encouragement and appreciation for your efforts.

- sunscreen and other relevant protective equipment to be issued if you are working outdoors.

### **MCSL expectations of volunteers**

MCSL expects the following from volunteers:

- a commitment in terms of time and regular attendance to the program.
- a commitment to training programs.
- duties undertaken in a responsible, dependable, conscientious and courteous manner.
- co-operation with other volunteers and employees.
- respect for the confidentiality of MCSL and any client with whom they may be working.
- adherence to MCSL's EEO, OH&S, media and ethical practice policies and procedures.
- advice to MCSL as early as possible regarding their intention to leave the volunteer project, but one week as a minimum.
- Volunteers to be responsible for their own transport costs to and from MCSL.
- Volunteers to provide their own hat and appropriate attire if working outdoors.

### **Introductory period**

Volunteers should undertake an introductory period where appropriate. This should be a recognised settling in, and learning period for the volunteer. During this time, the volunteer should understand that his/her performance is being evaluated. It is the supervisor's responsibility to set the work standards and explain the performance criteria to the volunteer. It is also the supervisor's responsibility to let the volunteer know when performance falls below the agreed standards.

### **Financial remuneration**

Volunteers do **not** receive any financial remuneration.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure appropriate resourcing of the project and to avoid situations which may result in out-of-pocket expenses or allowances being paid to volunteers.

### **Uniforms**

Volunteers will be offered a uniform once the introductory period been satisfactorily completed. MCSL will provide additional equipment in certain situations:

- where the project requires the wearing of protective or identifying clothing
- sunscreen and other relevant protective equipment to be issued to all volunteers working outdoors.

### **Insurance**

Volunteers are covered by MCSL's Group Personal Accident Policy, Voluntary Workers Cover.

### **Recording hours worked**

An attendance book is kept for all volunteer programs and all volunteers are to record the time they arrive and the time they depart from duty at MCSL. Where appropriate other statistical information may be required to be recorded. Annual reviews will be completed by supervisors for all volunteer programs to provide data and statistics for a number of purposes including representation in the Annual Report.

### **Feedback mechanisms**

Meetings for volunteers should be held on a regular basis (once every three months at a minimum), to allow volunteers to raise any issues, concerns or for general information sharing.

Volunteers may also need to raise individual grievances or issues. In most cases the first person from whom they should seek help is their supervisor. If the supervisor is either unavailable or is, in the circumstances, inappropriate and the volunteer feels more comfortable talking to someone else, they can take their grievance to the Project Manager.

### **Resignations & Terminations**

Volunteers are asked to advise MCSL as early as possible regarding their intention to leave the project, but one week as a minimum. It is the supervisor's responsibility to let a volunteer know when performance falls below agreed standards. Supervisors should provide performance counselling and should be prepared to exercise their right to end the volunteer's involvement with the program if performance continues to remain unsatisfactory.

## **Safety**

### **Introduction**

It is the policy of MCSL to provide a safe and healthy environment on its lands and for its staff and volunteers. This policy applies to all those who use MCSL lands or are in the employment of the organisation, including members of the public as well as those engaged as staff members, consultants, contractors, or volunteer workers.

### **First Aid**

At least one member of staff is a trained first aid officer. In addition the ranger of Mount Annan Botanic Garden, who is on-call 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, has Senior First Aid qualifications.

### **Reporting of accidents, injuries or illness**

All accidents, injuries and illnesses as well as any incidents including visitor injuries, must be reported to your supervisor who will fill in the appropriate Register of Injuries form. Volunteers can complete the Register of Injuries form and then pass it on to their supervisor. It is essential that all sections of the form be completed. Volunteers must also report near misses to their supervisor so that safe work practices can be established.

Any pre-existing medical conditions, previous injuries or medications that may affect you working as a volunteer must be reported to the supervisor of the volunteer program. In some circumstances, with your consent, further information may be requested from your medical practitioner.

### **Confidentiality**

It is important for volunteers to have regard to the confidential nature of certain information contained within the work area. If you have any doubts whether certain information may be classified as confidential you should refer such matters to your supervisor.

### **Copyright, Authorship and Intellectual Property**

Any written material, photographs and activities developed as part of your work at MCSL is copyrighted and remains the property of MCSL.

## **Acknowledgment of Volunteer Service**

The staff and Board of Directors formally acknowledges volunteers annually (usually around the end of the year) with an annual event.

Other methods of acknowledging the service and commitment of volunteers may include:

- issuing volunteers with a *Certificate of Appreciation*
- acknowledgment of the services of a volunteer in the newsletter and other publications
- a listing in the Annual Report
- written thanks from the supervisor, Project Manager or Board of Directors
- invitation to events and community functions when available or appropriate
- smaller functions for particular volunteer groups.

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