



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries

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Clubs' guide to volunteer management



Volunteers are one of the most important resources in your club so managing them effectively should be a priority. This resource will help you keep those you currently have and attract new ones to your club as well.

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

Why manage volunteers?

Volunteers are the backbone of sport and recreation in Western Australia and we're fortunate that our volunteer numbers have remained steady over the past ten years. But times are changing and with today's busy lifestyles people prefer to volunteer for shorter periods on single or limited projects, and they want both a fulfilling experience and for someone to thank them for their efforts.

Organisations must have a volunteer management program that is innovative and flexible if they are to better meet the needs and expectations of the modern volunteer.

Our Volunteers are amazing and here's proof!

- Sport and recreation volunteers represent 37 per cent of all volunteers in Australia
- In 2010, the sport and physical recreation sector attracted the largest number of volunteers (14% of the adult population or 2.3 million people)
- People who volunteered for sport and physical recreation organisations had higher rates of participation in physical activity for exercise or recreation (90%), compared to other volunteers (80%) and non-volunteers (65%)
- In 2006, formal volunteering (excluding travel) was worth \$19.4 billion to the Australian economy. In 2010, formal volunteering (excluding travel) was worth \$25.4 billion to the Australian economy.

Trends of the modern volunteer

The things that motivate and attract volunteers have changed over the years. These days they are looking for different experiences than the volunteers of 10 or 20 years ago. Your organisation will need to recognise and respond to these to better recruit and retain volunteers.

Trend	Response
Busy lifestyles, changing family structures and changing work patterns affect people's ability to volunteer.	Shorter volunteers commitments, job sharing and flexible hours are more appealing. Let your volunteers know exactly how long you will need them by setting start and end dates.
Sense of community has diminished, as has the concept of giving back. People will no longer volunteer for the sake of volunteering.	Find creative ways to recruit volunteers. Promote volunteering for your club like you are selling a fantastic product.
Baby Boomers are approaching retirement and will be looking for ways to put back into the community. They are a huge source of potential volunteers that so far has been untapped.	Baby Boomers have great skills to offer, as they are often retired professionals, but do not want to waste their time! Offer them a position that interests them and lets them use the skills they have gained over their professional career.

Trend	Response
There has been a steady decrease in the number of young people volunteering. This can be attributed to them not understanding the benefits of volunteering, or being considered too young by the club and not approached.	Look at the strengths of young people and the skills they can bring to your organisation. Identify special positions they can fill. For example, most young people are good with technology so why not recruit them to develop a club website or membership database? Promote the benefits of having volunteer roles on their resume.

The volunteer coordinator

Most sport and recreation clubs appoint people to key positions such as president, treasurer, or secretary to provide direction to the club and to manage its finances and administration. Only a few have considered the way they manage one of their most important resources – volunteers.

Why not appoint someone within your club with responsibility for volunteers?

The volunteer coordinator would drive the club's volunteer management program and provide ongoing support and become a point of contact for volunteers.

The role of the volunteer coordinator

The volunteer coordinator duties can include the following:

- Work out how many volunteers are needed and for what roles
- Develop position descriptions for each role
- Plan how and where to recruit volunteers
- Help volunteers feel welcome and supported
- Organise selection and screening procedures
- Put together orientation kits and programs
- Develop policies and procedures for volunteers
- Arrange training and education opportunities
- Look after the volunteer database and record
- Develop ways to recognise and reward volunteer effort
- Plan for volunteer retention and replacement.

Skills and attributes of the volunteer coordinator

When looking for the right volunteer coordinator, try to find someone who has these skills and attributes:

- Positive and enthusiastic
- Excellent communication skills
- Good at dealing with difficult people and conflicts
- Plan and set goals
- Organising volunteers
- Time management

- Negotiation skills
- They know how to delegate
- Understand the nature of volunteering and what motivates people to volunteer.

Position within committee structure

How the volunteer coordinator fits within your club's committee structure will differ depending on the size of your club, the number of volunteers and the importance that is placed on managing volunteers.

The committee must first decide if the volunteer coordinator will be a separate role or an addition to the committee structure.

Making it part of the committee structure will ensure there is an ongoing commitment to volunteer management. Keep in mind that the club's rules will need to be altered to reflect this change.

Depending on the amount of time the role will need, the volunteer coordinator could also be incorporated into an existing position (e.g. vice president/volunteer coordinator).

Volunteer management

Volunteer management involves bringing volunteers into the club, looking after them while they fulfill their duties and then planning for when they leave.

Figure 1 below gives an overview of the process of volunteer management.

Although these stages are numbered (1 to 6), volunteer management does not have a start and end point. It is a cyclical and ongoing process.

This resource describes each of the six stages of volunteer management.

1. Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of attracting new volunteers to your club. When you approach a potential volunteer, it is important to promote your club as an exciting and positive club to be involved with!

Here are some places to source volunteers and how to recruit them:

- Produce volunteer information kits including position descriptions for volunteer roles
- Check past and present membership lists for potential volunteers
- Ask members for their occupation on your membership form to identify skills that may be suitable to a volunteer position (e.g. if a member has indicated that his/her occupation is a registrar, you may be able to approach them as a potential secretary or treasurer)
- Provide new members with information about ways they can get involved with your club as a volunteer (include in membership information)
- Use the local community newspaper – classified advertisements, letters to the editor, or feature articles
- Produce posters, pamphlets or flyers that promote the club and the types of things volunteers can do and distribute them where potential volunteers may visit
- Organise community notices on the radio
- Use social media to promote your club, volunteer opportunities and benefits
- Thank your volunteers, it's a great way to attract other volunteers!
- Develop partnership with TAFES, universities, schools, service groups and like-minded

organisations to attract and engage new people to volunteer within the sport

- Ask private companies to include volunteering in pre-retirement training sessions
- Promote your organisation's volunteering opportunities to schools, TAFEs and universities
- Advertise volunteering opportunities through corporations, businesses and sponsors
- Offer young members the opportunity to take on the role of apprentice volunteers and use existing and experienced volunteers as mentors
- Promote your organisation and volunteer roles at local retirement villages and organisations.
- Advertise for volunteers on your organisation's website
- Contact Volunteering WA – utilise their volunteer referral service: www.volunteeringwa.org.au
- Advertise for volunteers on the Go Volunteer website: www.govolunteer.com.au
- Offer volunteers the opportunity to job share their volunteer role with a friend or partner
- Try the personal approach - simply ask!

2. Selection and screening

For many sport and recreation clubs, it is rare to have more volunteers than positions. So, they may have little experience in having to choose the right person for a volunteer position. But you still need to have screening processes in place to ensure that volunteers are suitable for the positions they fulfill.

There are many ways to select and screen potential volunteers. You might like to consider a combination of the following:

- Position descriptions
- Application forms
- Interviews
- Referee checks
- Working With Children Card checks
- National Police Clearance or National Police Check
- Declaration forms
- Code of Conduct forms
- Observe coaching sessions.

3. Orientation

The best way to help someone feel part of the team is to show them around the club. Providing an orientation program for new volunteers will help them to settle in a little faster. The more effort you put in at the start to ensure your volunteer workforce feels well-informed and valued, the less work it will be in the long run.

Orientation can take place in a number of ways. You may like to try one or more of the following:

- Information or orientation kits
- Video and PowerPoint presentations
- Youtube video

- Group or individual orientations
- Hand-over with the previous volunteer.

During the orientation, make sure you cover the following:

- Any rules and procedures.
- Volunteer policies and procedures.
- Financial procedures.
- Occupational health and safety issues.
- Position description for the volunteer role.
- Facilities (e.g. parking, kitchen, toilet).
- Introduce them to other volunteers and committee members in your club.
- Anything else that will help the volunteers to feel comfortable starting in their role.

4. Learning and development

Learning and development is a vital part of a good volunteer management program.

Volunteers who are offered some form of training (formal or informal) are more confident, comfortable, and efficient in their role, and everyone benefits. It is also good risk management.

There are several different ways you can educate your volunteers:

Pre-placement training

This should cover the skills needed to commence the volunteer duties. For example, a sports trainer shouldn't begin duties until he/she has completed a first aid or sports trainer's course.

On the job

This refers to teaching or supervision of volunteers while they are performing their duties. This can be a hand-over with the previous volunteer, someone who has experience with performing that role or the volunteer coordinator. You may also consider bringing in an external person, for example someone from another club.

Learning and development courses and seminars

A list of training opportunities for volunteers is available from the Sport and Recreation (WA), a division of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

5. Recognition

Volunteers do not expect lots of thanks and big hugs, but they really appreciate it when their contribution is valued and recognised.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Smile, say hello and thank your volunteers regularly
- Send welcome letters (emails and/or texts) when volunteers are first recruited
- Include volunteers in organisational charts
- Write letters and postcards of thanks to volunteers

- Write letters of reference and include details of service
- Provide identification pins, badges, shirts, or caps
- Provide discounted memberships to volunteers
- Acknowledge and profile volunteers in newsletters and on websites and social media
- Present volunteer awards at annual general meetings or awards ceremonies
- Feature your volunteers at special events throughout the year (e.g. state championships, national league games, family days)
- Provide complimentary tickets to volunteers for special events and functions
- Send get well, birthday and Christmas cards to your volunteers
- Arrange discounts at local sport stores or restaurants for your volunteers
- Have a Volunteer of the Month award
- Name events or facilities after long-serving volunteers
- Award life memberships for long serving volunteers.
- Reimburse out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers
- Acknowledge the efforts of volunteers during committee meetings
- Hold special thank you or social functions in honour of volunteers
- Present volunteers with a special memento recognising their service to the organisation
- Farewell volunteers when they move away from the area or leave the organisation (perhaps offer to write to their new club to recommend them for a volunteering role)
- Arrange for free or discounted use of facilities
- Present special awards for 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 and more years of service.

6. Retention and replacement

Maintaining a stable group of long-term volunteers is the goal of all sport and recreation clubs. A stable volunteering base:

- reduces recruiting time and costs
- reduces training and education costs
- provides an important sense of continuity within the club.

However, it is inevitable that you will have to replace volunteers. How you manage this replacement process is important to:

- improve how you manage remaining volunteers
- improve your volunteer management program
- make the transition of volunteers have as little impact as possible on the running of the club
- make the departing volunteer feel that they can come back to the club if their current situation changes.

When a volunteer leaves your club, this is an ideal time to gather information about the volunteer's experience. Evaluating the reasons why volunteers leave a club can be invaluable for improving your volunteer management practices.

One way to collect this information is by getting feedback from volunteers who are leaving your club – or exit interviews. These can be formal or informal, and conducted in person, over the phone or in the form of a feedback sheet that the person sent via email or a few questions via text.

Volunteer management checklist

When planning for volunteer management, you need to consider the following:

- Appoint a volunteer coordinator or allocate the volunteers portfolio to a committee member
- Include a Volunteer Management Plan in your business or strategic plan (if appropriate)
- Review all volunteer positions and skills required – can any positions be broken down to provide short-term volunteering options?
- Develop position descriptions or duty statements for each of these roles
- Identify skills already in the club and match these skills to positions
- Identify recruitment strategies to fill the gaps
- Check insurance coverage is adequate
- Establish policy and procedures for screening of volunteers where required
- Undertake all legal checks where required (e.g. Working with Children check)
- Develop an orientation process for new volunteers
- Outline and communicate roles and responsibilities of volunteers and the club
- Identify training needs of the volunteers and find training opportunities (local government, state sporting associations)
- Identify other ongoing support that will need to be provided
- Allocate a budget for your volunteers (out of pocket expenses, recognition)
- Keep an up-to-date database of your volunteers
- Put in place ongoing recognition strategies.

Volunteer management action plan

When implementing volunteer management strategies, it is a good idea to develop an action plan. This will help your club adopt volunteer management strategies.

When developing an action plan for your club, try to incorporate each of the stages of the Volunteer Management Model (see figure 1). For each component, state what you want to achieve, when you want to achieve it and who will be responsible for doing it (see example below).

Your volunteer management action plan should be reviewed and updated regularly.

Example action plan

Stage	Response		
Recruitment	Develop position descriptions for each of the volunteer roles	Before start of season	Volunteer coordinator, in conjunction with relevant committee
Selection and screening	Develop policies and procedures for selecting and screening all volunteers	Before start of season	Volunteer coordinator and president
Orientation	Develop an orientation session and information kit for all volunteers	By end of season	Volunteer coordinator
Training and development	Ensure all coaches have a level one coaching qualification	Before coach starts	Volunteer coordinator (treasurer to administer budget)
Recognition	Send birthday cards to all volunteers	Ongoing	Volunteer coordinator (secretary to maintain database)
Replacement	Conduct exit interviews with all departing volunteers	Ongoing	President or volunteer coordinator

Other resources

This resource is part of a series which provides assistance to Western Australian sport and recreation clubs and organisations to become better managed, more sustainable and to provide good quality services to members and participants.

Other resources in the series include:

1. Starting a new club
2. Planning for your club – the future is in your hands
3. Taking the lead! A guide for club presidents
4. The club secretary – the key to efficiency
5. Show me the money – a guide for the club treasurer
6. Effective club meetings – a guide for the chairperson
7. Making meetings effective – a short guide
8. Delegation – help for the overworked committee member
9. Problem solving – a guide for clubs
10. Promoting your club
11. Seeking and servicing a sponsor
12. Establishing your club rules
13. Risky business – a club guide to risk management
14. Clubs' guide to volunteer management
15. Member protection for clubs
16. How to be an inclusive club
17. Passport into schools – linking sports with schools
18. Youth sport – junior sport policy
19. Long-term involvement – junior sport policy
20. Physical growth and maturation – junior sport policy
21. Sport pathways – junior sport policy
22. Forming links – junior sport policy
23. People making it happen – junior sport policy
24. Quality coaching – junior sport policy
25. Making sport safe – junior sport policy
26. The law and sport – junior sport policy
27. Top 20 tips for officials
28. Top 20 tips for successful coaching

You will find the full series of the booklets on Sport and Recreation (WA)'s website:

www.dsr.wa.gov.au/clubs