



# Volunteer Policy and Procedures

## Our Policies

The Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre (HBWC) is a not-for-profit organisation and charity that relies on volunteers to operate. These volunteers bring a range of skills, expertise, and knowledge that contribute significantly to the organisation's reputation and worth.

The principles for volunteer involvement at the HBWC are outlined in this policy document. It applies to anyone involved in activities related to recruiting, supporting, managing, and promoting volunteer participation as well as to volunteers themselves. This policy complies with Australia's National Guidelines for Volunteer Involvement (2015).

## Our Mission

At the heart of our policy is the mission to connect people with nature through recreation, education, conservation, and research. We aim to achieve this by providing volunteers with work that is not only meaningful but also safe, fulfilling, and appreciated.

We believe that volunteers play a crucial role in helping us achieve our goals and we are committed to ensuring that they have a positive experience working with us. Together, we can make a significant contribution to our community by preserving a healthy environment and promoting awareness about the importance of conservation.

## Definition

Volunteers are motivated by a desire to contribute to HBWC and make a positive impact on the environment and the community without financial gain. They may bring a range of skills, knowledge, and experience to their roles. Their dedication and commitment are highly valued by HBWC.

## Scope

The principles and procedures in this Policy apply to all those who work with HBWC, including:

Committee and Sub-Committee members

1. Volunteer Supervisors
2. Volunteers
3. Paid staff (when funding available)
4. Contractors and consultants

|                                  |             |                                      |          |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc. |             | Incorporation Certificate: A0103821G |          |
|                                  |             | ABN: 50813083752                     |          |
| Doc Code: PR-001                 | Rev No: 001 | Rev Date: 31/10/2023                 | 1   Page |



# Volunteer Policy and Procedures

## Principles

The following principles underpin HBWC's management of volunteers.

### 1. Volunteers have the right to:

- work in a healthy and safe environment
- be treated with respect and gratitude for their contribution
- be adequately covered by insurance
- be given accurate and truthful information about HBWC
- be treated in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- have a job description and agreed working hours
- be provided with sufficient training to perform the designated task
- have confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988
- have access to a grievance procedure
- not to do the work of paid staff if and when HBWC employs staff

### 2. Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- respect other volunteers and their rights
- follow HBWC rules and regulations, including all Workplace Health and Safety guidelines
- uphold HBWC values in working towards the HBWC vision
- undertake a commitment to work with others in a friendly, helpful and courteous manner
- undertake tasks with commitment
- display courtesy to their supervisor and colleagues
- work with all other volunteers as a team
- meet the HBWC appropriate clothing requirement as detailed in the handbook
- not publicly criticise HBWC
- undergo security checks as required

### 3. HBWC has the right to:

- look for certain skills and qualities in prospective volunteers
- select only volunteers who are suitable for the work
- draw up a position description and volunteer agreement
- ask for tasks to be done in a particular way
- ask for commitment
- ask for reliability
- deal with disciplinary and grievance matters
- ask the volunteers to cease working for the organisation if their involvement hinders the organisation achieving its goals

### 4. HBWC has the responsibility to:

- provide competent leadership to the volunteers

|                                  |             |  |          |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--|----------|
| Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc. |             | Incorporation Certificate: A0103821G<br>ABN: 50813083752 |          |
| Doc Code: PR-001                 | Rev No: 001 | Rev Date: 31/10/2023                                     | 2   Page |



# Volunteer Policy and Procedures

- respect the value of volunteer rights and responsibilities in balance with the organisation's rights and responsibilities
- provide opportunities for training as required
- recognise the important contributions made by our volunteers
- provide a safe working environment through orientation and training
- provide clear communication to the volunteers in both written and verbal forms about the organisation and its rules and regulations
- welcome the opportunity for feedback from the volunteers.

## Recruitment

At the HBWC we are committed to recruiting and engaging volunteers in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner.

Information about volunteer work is made widely available and includes details about the various volunteer projects we offer, the skills required for each project, and the time commitment involved.

Potential volunteers are required to complete a registration form. Role allocation and further relevant information will be provided by a Volunteer Supervisor.

Recruitment for some roles that involve working with children and/or vulnerable adults may be subject to a Working with Children Check.

## Induction

We want to ensure that every volunteer feels welcomed, supported, and prepared for their role so we have established an induction process that is managed by the volunteer supervisor and is tailored to each volunteer's role.

In addition to their role description, volunteers will also be familiarized with HBWC's policies and procedures. This is essential to ensure that volunteers are aware of the rules and regulations that govern our organization and can perform their roles safely and effectively.

## Health and Safety

At Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre, we are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our volunteers. As part of our duty of care, we will take all reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of our volunteers while they are engaged in HBWC activities.

All volunteers are required to follow our health and safety policy and procedures as detailed in this document. This training will provide volunteers with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and manage potential risks, as well as the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.

We also require that any accidents or near misses involving volunteers be reported and recorded through an Incident Report (see attachment). This allows us to monitor and review incidents to identify any areas of improvement in our health and safety procedures.

|                                  |             |  |          |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--|----------|
| Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc. |             | Incorporation Certificate: A0103821G<br>ABN: 50813083752 |          |
| Doc Code: PR-001                 | Rev No: 001 | Rev Date: 31/10/2023                                     | 3   Page |



# Volunteer Policy and Procedures

We will continue to prioritise health and safety in all of our activities and to provide the necessary training, resources, and support to our volunteers to ensure that they can carry out their work safely and with confidence.

## Child Safety Policy

HBWC has a Child Safety Policy, which will be made available to volunteers who undertake activities involving children. HBWC community activities are provided for all ages, however, children are to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Where activities are specially designed for children, accompanying adults are not mandated. Volunteers assisting at these events must hold a current Working With Children Check and acknowledge that they have read the HBWC Child Safety Policy.

## Insurance

All volunteers who are actively engaged in HBWC are protected by our liability insurance. This insurance provides coverage to approved and authorized HBWC volunteers through AON for legal liability and personal injury. As a charity organisation dedicated to conservation, we understand the importance of protecting our volunteers and promoting sustainable practices.

Any volunteer wishing to seek further advice about HBWC's insurance may contact a Committee member via [hbwcgroup@gmail.com](mailto:hbwcgroup@gmail.com)

## Grievance Procedures

**Step 1:** The aggrieved volunteer is encouraged to explore the problem or situation directly with the person(s) involved, clearly outlining what he/she/they feel/s should be done to alleviate and remedy the situation.

**Step 2:** If this is not a viable action, discuss the matter directly with the relevant Volunteer Supervisor or, if not available, a Committee member.

**Step 3:** The parties involved will be asked to comply with the best solution that has been identified by all involved. Information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

## Complaints Procedure

We encourage volunteers to bring any concerns or complaints to the attention of HBWC in an informal manner, with the aim of resolving the issue as soon as possible. If this is not possible, we have a formal complaints procedure in place to ensure fair and consistent treatment of volunteers when their conduct or performance does not comply with the organisation's aims, policies, or procedures.

The complaints procedure involves making a written complaint to the relevant HBWC Volunteer Supervisor, who will acknowledge the complaint and investigate the matter within a reasonable timeframe.

|                                  |             |                                      |          |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc. |             | Incorporation Certificate: A0103821G |          |
|                                  |             | ABN: 50813083752                     |          |
| Doc Code: PR-001                 | Rev No: 001 | Rev Date: 31/10/2023                 | 4   Page |



# Volunteer Policy and Procedures

The volunteer making the complaint will be provided with regular updates on the progress of the investigation. If the complaint cannot be resolved internally, it may be escalated to the HBWC Committee.

HBWC is committed to ensuring that all complaints are treated seriously and addressed fairly and respectfully. Volunteers can be assured that they will not be subjected to any form of retaliation or victimisation for making a complaint in good faith.

## Ending the volunteer relationship

Should it seem likely that a volunteer is no longer appropriate for a role in the organisation, HBWC commits to engage in due process with the individual to ensure that all aspects of the issue are understood by all parties and that a solution is mutually agreed on, if possible. If the volunteer's participation is no longer required, then the separation from the organisation will be done with respect and fairness.

## Incident Reports

Volunteers have a duty to report any potential risk, hazard, incident, or near miss immediately to the activity supervisor. The incident must be documented through the completion of an HBWC Incident and Hazard report. Completed forms must be sent to [hbwcgroup@gmail.com](mailto:hbwcgroup@gmail.com) within 24 hours of the incident or as soon as reasonably practicable.

HBWC is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment, and volunteers are expected to cooperate with the organization in achieving this objective. Failure to report an incident or hazard may result in disciplinary action, and HBWC takes any breach of the WHS policy very seriously.

## Harassment Statement

HBWC is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all volunteers and staff. Any form of harassment or bullying in the workplace or at any HBWC program location is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Any volunteer found to have engaged in such behaviour may be required to undergo counselling or have their volunteer role terminated.

Additionally, it is a legal obligation under the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986 to prevent and address any form of bullying or harassment, which can result in criminal and disciplinary proceedings. Therefore, all employees and volunteers must take action to prevent and address any bullying or harassment behaviour towards other employees, members of the public, or volunteers.

## Expenses

At this time, HBWC is unable to provide reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers. Reimbursement for participation hours or travel expenses is generally not provided to volunteers, except where pre-approved. If volunteers consider it likely that they may incur incidental expenses in the course of their duties for HBWC, they are encouraged to discuss these with the HBWC Treasurer before incurring any costs.

|                                  |             |                                      |          |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc. |             | Incorporation Certificate: A0103821G |          |
|                                  |             | ABN: 50813083752                     |          |
| Doc Code: PR-001                 | Rev No: 001 | Rev Date: 31/10/2023                 | 5   Page |



# Volunteer Policy and Procedures

## Personal Information and Confidentiality

Personal information collected from volunteers will be handled with utmost care and confidentiality. We strictly comply with data protection legislation, including the Personal Information Protection Act (2004) and the Privacy Act (1988), to ensure that volunteer personal information is kept secure and only used for the purpose of volunteer activity management.

Volunteers are expected to use any information gained through their work only for the purpose for which it was gathered and comply with applicable directions and guidelines on the use of information. The privacy of individuals must be respected, and personal information should only be released in accordance with privacy requirements.

## Social Media

We encourage our volunteers to engage with and promote HBWC on social media platforms. However, it is crucial to obtain relevant photo permissions and be respectful of the organisation and volunteers when posting comments or photos. We expect all social media posts to align with HBWC values and acknowledge the significant role of our volunteers.

## Copyright

All volunteers are expected to donate to HBWC any original copyrighted works they create regarding HBWC projects and activities associated with their volunteering roles.

|                                  |             |                                      |          |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Hobsons Bay Wetlands Centre Inc. |             | Incorporation Certificate: A0103821G |          |
|                                  |             | ABN: 50813083752                     |          |
| Doc Code: PR-001                 | Rev No: 001 | Rev Date: 31/10/2023                 | 6   Page |