

Everyone benefits from volunteering. In the Department for Families and Communities and our funded agencies, we rely on our volunteers to help us in our work. Our volunteers are unpaid but choose to give their time, energy, skills and experience to assist others. We want our volunteers to get community involvement and personal satisfaction from volunteering.

The work of our volunteers is extensive and supports all our services to the community. Volunteers bring with them expertise, life skills and knowledge. Their diverse cultural backgrounds, ages and people with disabilities reflect the community we serve.

We recognise the contribution made by Aboriginal volunteers to the health and well being of their communities. We are committed to reconciliation and our volunteer programs will contribute to improving equity and inclusiveness for Aboriginal South Australians.

## **Our commitment**

A mutual obligation exists between us and our volunteers. We will listen to volunteers to learn how we can best support them in their work with us. We have an obligation to recognise and reward volunteering effort.

Volunteers do not replace paid staff. Like our employees, volunteers can expect us to provide safe, meaningful work and well managed workplaces with clearly stated rules, rights, and responsibilities. The necessary legal safeguards are in place to protect volunteers while carrying out their duties. We trust the sensitivity and discretion of volunteers and their regard for confidentiality requirements.

Volunteers should not be out of pocket as a result of working with us and we will ensure that they are adequately and promptly

reimbursed where expenses are incurred in the course of their volunteer work.

We are committed to applying the Volunteering Australia National Standards. Our volunteering policy and our Mutual Obligation Charter applies to all our funded agencies.

## **Operational guidelines**

Operational guidelines apply in all parts of our department and guide our work with volunteers. Our guidelines incorporate a commitment to relevant, appropriate and necessary training and support to give volunteers the skills and knowledge required to do what is asked of them. This includes making sure legal requirements are well understood.

## **Volunteers are good for South Australia**

Volunteers are helping us achieve the South Australian Government's objectives:

- South Australia's Strategic Plan target 5.6: volunteer participation to be increased from 38% to 50% of the adult population by 2010);
- the aims of *Advancing the Community Together: A Partnership between the Volunteer Sector and the SA Government* (2004);
- our Minister's strategic agenda for the department, *Connecting to the Future*, objectives 3, 4 and 5; and
- *Keeping them Safe*: encouraging a child focused child safe culture across government and promoting our shared responsibility as a community for children and families, and other vulnerable people at risk.

Volunteers assist us achieving our vision of service excellence for the people of South Australia. We value the rich diversity of volunteering activity and recognise its importance to the South Australian community.