

AFL NSW/ACT CLUB GUIDE TO **VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT**



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1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteers are the backbone of AFL community clubs. The success and sustainability of AFL community clubs is strongly linked to the successful recruiting, management and retention of volunteers. AFL NSW/ACT has developed a guide to help recruit and retain club volunteers.



2. VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

AFL NSW/ACT recommends clubs appoint a Volunteer Coordinator who is responsible for the recruitment, management and retention of volunteers including:

- Attracting and recruiting new volunteers to the club
- Developing clear job descriptions for all required tasks
- Ensuring the right person is found for each job
- Identifying ways of training volunteers if they do not have the required skills for the role
- Supervising volunteers or allocate other members to supervise
- Identifying methods of recognising volunteers
- Revising volunteer duties as needed
- Communicating and liaise with committee members on a regular basis

3. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Volunteer recruitment can be a daunting task for any club. We have broken it down to simple tasks to get your club started.



4. VOLUNTEER INDUCTION

Although usually informal, volunteer inductions are very important as it will help your volunteers feel welcome and comfortable. An induction can take place over several sessions and it doesn't all have to be completed on the first day. Clubs should also consider a buddy system for new or less experienced volunteers.

YOUR VOLUNTEER INDUCTION SHOULD COVER:

- Club policies and procedures
- Information about the club and its activities
- A job description outlining what the volunteer will be doing
- Contact details for the volunteer coordinator and other club members that the volunteer may need to contact
- Tour of the ground/facilities
- Introduction to people they will work with

AFTER THE INDUCTION, CHECK THAT THE VOLUNTEER:

- Has understood their role
- Knows where to find all the equipment or resources that they need
- Knows who to turn to if they have a problem

5. VOLUNTEER ROSTERING

Rostering is an important element of the volunteer management process.

A roster will help volunteers know when they are required and for how long. This will ensure each role is filled and all duties will be suitably covered.

A roster can be built using an excel spreadsheet or free online tools. Consider using social media to pass messages and reminders around about rostering.



6. SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning is a critical element of any well-run club. Most clubs have the same people in key roles for years but once they leave, the next person can struggle to fill their shoes due to lack of information sharing and documentation.

A good succession plan includes your club's business plan, position descriptions and policies. While the initial set up may be time consuming, the long-term effect will ensure sustainability.

6.1. BUSINESS PLANS

A business plan gives the Club direction, defines the Club's objectives, maps out strategies and helps manage possible bumps in the road. A basic business plan outlining the club's goals and priorities is all that is needed to begin and can be added to as your club grows. A business plan is referred to regularly by committee members and can help a club remember the bigger picture.

6.2. POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND WORK INSTRUCTIONS

Job position descriptions and task work instructions are essential for succession planning and is a way of "leaving behind a legacy" when a volunteer leaves. It is also critical to plan for the more routine weekly and monthly roles so that if someone leaves the club in a hurry, the next person can transition into the role smoothly.

A key reason volunteers leave their role is due to poor club management. Work instructions can help someone who is "filling in" do their role with minimal stress.

6.3. CLUB POLICIES

A healthy club is clear about what is expected of their members, volunteer and football community. Policies summarise the appropriate processes when dealing with a range of situations.

Below are some examples of national, state/territory and club policies which can be found on the AFL Community website.

- Member Protection Policy (National Policy)
- Expense reimbursement
- Disputes, grievances and complaints
- Anti-discrimination (National Policy)
- Sexual harassment (National Policy)
- Social Media
- Selection of coaches and players policies
- Code of Conduct (Included in League By-laws)



7. COMMUNICATION

Communication is key. While you should not spam your volunteers with constant communication, it is important to check in on your volunteers and share information about their roles and the club. Remember to keep your communication clear and purposeful.

KEY TYPES OF COMMUNICATION FORMS INCLUDE:

- Meetings
- Social Media
- E-Newsletters
- Emails
- Face-to-face conversation

Depending on the number of volunteers and the type of roles they fill, consider developing tailored communication plan for volunteers.

8. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Most volunteers don't volunteer for the recognition, however, never underestimate the power of a "thank you". Recognising the efforts of volunteers plays an important part in volunteer retention and can be done in various ways including:

- Club newsletter volunteer profiles
- Publications on social media, club website or local newspaper
- Thank you email
- Personalised letters from the club president
- Awards nights
- Social outings and gatherings
- Participate in the AFL NSW/ACT Volunteer of the Year program
- Nominate volunteer for local awards
- Providing identification badges, shirts, hats etc



9. VOLUNTEER DISMISSAL

While it can be hard to find volunteers, it is important to evaluate volunteer performance and manage underperformance.

A bad volunteer could be creating a cancerous culture for the club and deter others from volunteering. However, volunteers do have the same rights as employees which need to be considered when dealing with volunteer performance management and dismissal.

Volunteering Australia has developed The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement which provides a best practise in volunteer management and will help manage the risk and safety of volunteers. Please visit the Volunteering Australia at www.volunteeringaustralia.org for more information.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

AFL NSW/ACT are available to run volunteer management workshops within your club and league. Please contact the Community Football Support Manager for more information. Other online resources include:

- www.sportandrecreation.nsw.gov.au
- www.isport.edu.au
- www.volunteeringaustralia.org
- www.ausport.gov.au
- www.aflcommunityclub.com.au

