

**FILE NO:** PSC2029-00698

**TITLE:** VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION GUIDELINES

**OWNER:** COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTION MANAGER

## **1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 The Volunteer Recognition Guidelines (guidelines) are intended to identify mechanisms for the provision of recognition for Council's volunteers. Delivery of a consistent, organisation-wide approach to volunteer recognition is in line with staff recognition and will demonstrate Council's commitment to our volunteers.
- 1.2 The Volunteer Recognition Policy (policy) and guidelines are drawn from Council's Community Strategic Plan which supports volunteers to deliver appropriate community services, with the purpose of enriching the experience of Council's volunteers.
- 1.3 The purpose of the guidelines is to:
  - a) ensure Council volunteers have avenues through which to be recognised
  - b) ensure Council staff who manage volunteers are aware of these mechanisms and processes
  - c) provide equitable access and delivery of volunteer recognition opportunities across whole of Council
  - d) improve volunteer support and satisfaction.

## **2. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 Council currently has over 500 volunteers who are the lifeblood of our local area, as they donate their time and energy to a range of activities that benefit the whole community.
- 2.2 Council volunteers are people who help maintain our parks and reserves, manage our community halls, work in our libraries, Visitor Information Centre and the Ngioka Centre. There are also volunteers who participate in our Sports Councils and advisory groups.
- 2.3 These guidelines have been developed with input from staff across relevant sections of Council who manage Council volunteers. The guidelines should be read in conjunction with Council's Volunteer Recognition Policy.
- 2.4 The aim of volunteer reward and recognition is to
  - a) improve volunteer motivation and satisfaction
  - b) increase volunteer recruitment and retention
  - c) raise the profile of volunteers within Council

- d) promote the importance of volunteering to the wider community.

### **3. SCOPE:**

3.1 The following are mechanisms for volunteer recognition:

#### **Provision of Volunteer Recognition**

##### **Email and verbal recognition**

Volunteers will often say they do not want recognition however a quick spoken word or short email is a simple and powerful way to acknowledge the value of a volunteer's contribution, and will encourage them to continue to volunteering.

##### **Thank You Card**

Corporate Thank You cards for use by Council staff and/or committee coordinators to recognise a volunteer, committee or group for a 'job well done' or give thanks for their contribution. Cards are not linked to a voucher or monetary reward and do not have to be signed off by a Section Manager.

Council officers or staff should utilise Thank You cards as needed for their volunteers, and notify the Volunteer Program Officer when such recognition is given so it can be recorded in the Committees and Volunteers Register. Committee and group coordinators can contact the Volunteer Program Officer and request Thank You cards.

##### **Letters and Certificates of Recognition**

For use by Council staff who manage volunteers to recognise significant contributions made by a volunteer, committee or group, as well as projects or activities worthy of special mention. Volunteers, committees, groups or projects may be identified by staff, committees or other volunteers.

Letters are to be prepared by Council staff and sent to the General Manager's Office for Mayoral letterhead and signature. Staff are also responsible for preparing certificates in line with Council's style guide, however some certificate templates are available. Letters and certificates should be presented to recipients in an appropriate setting, with the Volunteer Program Officer notified so the recognition can be recorded in the Committees and Volunteers Register. Volunteers may use the Volunteer Recognition Nomination Form (nomination form) (**ATTACHMENT 1**) to request letters and certificates of recognition for others.

##### **Media Promotion**

Print and social media advertising and promotion of volunteers, committees, groups and their activities by staff. Media promotion is initiated by the relevant Council Section Manager and the financial costs being covered by their budget.

##### **Recognition of Years of Service**

Recognition of years of service is available for a volunteer who has been a registered and active Council volunteer continuously for at least 5 years and their

contribution demonstrates the benefits of long term partnerships between Council and volunteers.

Volunteers may receive a token gift from Council in recognition of their years of volunteering service and could include items such as a water bottle or coffee cup, engraved pen, lunch voucher, bunch of flowers, book or gift card. Gifts to volunteers are to be guided by the following categories and amounts:

- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • 5 Years Volunteering Service  | Thank you card, letter or certificate |
| • 10 Years Volunteering Service | \$50                                  |
| • 15 Years Volunteering Service | \$75                                  |
| • 20 Years Volunteering Service | \$150                                 |
| • 25 Years Volunteering Service | \$200                                 |

Council's Volunteer Program Officer will undertake a yearly review of the Committees and Volunteers Register to identify volunteers who have met the above years of service categories and will notify the relevant Council staff and/or committee coordinator.

Council staff who manage volunteers that reach 5 years of service are responsible for delivering the non-monetary card, letter or certificate to the volunteer. For volunteers who reach 10 years of service and above, a nomination form (**ATTACHMENT 1**) is to be completed by the appropriate Council officer, or committee coordinator, and sent to the Volunteer Program Officer for review.

The environment in which these awards should be presented includes those at which both staff and volunteers are present, such as the thank you function, a morning tea or meeting.

(Note: Council's Committees and Volunteers Register was established in 2011.)

## Recognition of Retirement

To recognise the achievements of a long term Council Volunteer (in excess of 5 years continuous service) who 'retires' from volunteering with Council, and who has made valuable, on-going contributions to Council and the community. 'Retirement' may include situations where a volunteer can no longer continue with their involvement with Council due to age, health, moving away or other factors.

Identification of a retiring volunteer worthy of special recognition is the responsibility of the relevant Council Section Manager and/or committee coordinator. A nomination form (**ATTACHMENT 1**) is to be completed and forwarded to the Volunteer Program Officer for review.

The volunteer should be presented with a token gift in line with the years of service recognition outlined above. The gift should be chosen by the Council Section Manager and presented to the volunteer at an appropriate setting and timeframe.

## **Condolences**

Council Section Managers have discretion to offer condolences to the family if a long term and engaged Council volunteer passes. The timing and method of condolence will depend on the situation.

## **National Volunteer Week (May)**

Avenues to promote and recognise Council volunteers should be investigated and delivered during National Volunteer Week.

## **Volunteer Thank You Event**

A high quality annual event for our volunteers, Councillors and staff. Generally held towards the end of November, this event is considered one of the most important on Port Stephens Council's calendar. As much as possible, it is important to consider volunteer needs and offer a variety of functions, held at different locations and time of day over the years.

## **Port Stephens Annual Awards**

The Port Stephens Annual Awards are presented on Australia Day each year and provide an opportunity for Council to formally recognise the efforts of exceptional people within our community. Council staff are to be encouraged to consider Council volunteers and the work they do in our community for suitability for this award program, and to write or seek others to write nominations. These awards are a separate, but compatible, to the volunteer recognition framework. For information on the Port Stephens Annual Awards visit:

[www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/live/community/community-awards](http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/live/community/community-awards)

## **Nomination and assessment process**

- a) Who can be nominated?
  - Nominees are limited to Port Stephens Council volunteers, committees and groups, as well as volunteer projects and activities delivered.
- b) Who can nominate?
  - Nominations can be submitted by volunteers, committees/groups, Councillors and Council staff.
- c) When and how to nominate?
  - Nominations can be made throughout the year.
  - Nominations are to be submitted to the Volunteer Program Officer.
- d) How will nominations be assessed?
  - A panel of relevant Council staff will meet to consider submissions received for the years of service (10 years and above) and retirement (10 years and above) categories.
  - The Port Stephens Annual Awards are a separate process and assessed under those guidelines.

## **Presentation of recognition and awards**

Nominees will be made aware of their nomination prior to prior to any public announcements being made by Council.

Council's Volunteer Program Officer and/or relevant Council Section Manager will work with the nominator to determine an appropriate method of recognition and event to deliver same.

Volunteer recognition nomination form (**ATTACHMENT 1**).

## **4. DEFINITIONS:**

4.1 An outline of the key definitions of terms included in the guideline.

Committee	A 355c Committee of Port Stephens Council consisting of the whole group of Executive, Advisory and General Members.
Council Registered Volunteer	A volunteer registered on Council's Volunteer Database (through application and approval) completing activities on behalf of Council without remuneration.
Responsible Volunteer Officer	The Council staff/officer nominated by the Director or other delegated person/s.
Committees & Volunteers Register	The database managed by Council for Council's committees and volunteers.

## **5. STATEMENT:**

5.1 The aim of the guideline is to support the policy by providing a clear and transparent volunteer recognition framework to ensure continued recognition for all volunteers. By ensuring a documented and consistent approach to the approval and recognition of volunteers across the Port Stephens LGA.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

6.1 Overall review and evaluation of these guidelines lie with the Community Services Section Manager.

6.2 Key areas for implementation are delegated to the following positions

- Volunteer Program Officer to organise and recognise nominated volunteers.
- Nominated responsible volunteer officers to seek nomination or recognition of groups or volunteers.

## **7. RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

7.1 Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).

7.2 Port Stephens Council Code of Conduct.

7.3 Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW).

7.4 Port Stephens Council Community Strategic Plan.

7.5 Port Stephens Council 355c Committee Terms of Reference.

## 7.6 National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

### CONTROLLED DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

This is a controlled document. Hardcopies of this document may not be the latest version. Before using this document, check it is the latest version; refer to Council's website: <a href="http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au">www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au</a> .			
<b>EDRMS container No.</b>	PSC2019-00698	<b>EDRMS record No.</b>	
<b>Audience</b>	Existing and potential volunteers, sports councils, Parks and Reserves, 355c Committees, Libraries and Koala Sanctuary Volunteers		
<b>Process owner</b>	Community Services Section Manager		
<b>Author</b>	Volunteers Coordinator		
<b>Review timeframe</b>	4 years or as required.	<b>Next review date</b>	July 2029
<b>Adoption date</b>	21 March 2019		

### VERSION HISTORY:

Version	Date	Author	Details
1	21/09/2019	Volunteers Coordinator	Creation of guidelines for the Volunteer Recognition Scheme.
2	8/12/2023	Volunteer Program Officer	Guidelines reviewed and updated with minor amendments.
3	4/7/2025	Volunteer Program Officer	Updated to new guideline template. Reviewed and updated with the Volunteer Recognition Policy.

# Volunteer Recognition Nomination Form

Nominations can be made at any time throughout the year.

**NOMINEE** (If a group nomination, please list key contact person for the group)

<b>Name</b>			
<b>Committee, Group or Council Service</b>			
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Email address</b>			
<b>Phone number</b>		<b>Mobile number</b>	

## NOMINATOR

I / We wish to nominate the above for Volunteer Recognition from Port Stephens Council.

<b>Name</b>			
<b>Committee, Group or Council Service</b>			
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Email address</b>			
<b>Phone number</b>		<b>Mobile number</b>	
<b>Signed</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

**Is the Nominee aware of this Nomination?**

☐ Yes

☐ No





## Supporting Information

The following questions can be used as a prompt for providing information about the nominee.

**In what part of Council does the nominee volunteer?**

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**How long have they been a Council volunteer?**

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**Why are you nominating this volunteer, committee/group and/or project?**

(eg describe outstanding service or contribution given; committee positions held; how Council and/or the community has benefited; significant project delivered; how they have gone above and beyond; excellent teamwork; high standards; personal qualities; and/or what they might feel is their greatest achievements....)

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**What mechanism of recognition do you feel the nominee would value?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Recognition           | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of Retirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Recognition      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of Years of Service |  |

**Any additional information**

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## YOUR PRIVACY

Port Stephens Council is committed to protecting your privacy. We take reasonable steps to comply with relevant legislation and Council policy.

**Purpose:** This information is collected to record recognition of our volunteers.

**Intended recipients:** This information will be reviewed by the Volunteer Program Officer and relevant responsible volunteer officer.

**Supply:** Voluntary.

**Consequence of Non Provision:** This information is used to record and recognise our volunteers, it enable us to review and assess applications in line with the policy/guidelines.

**Storage and security:** This document will be placed on the relevant file and/or saved in Council's records management system in accordance with Council policy and relevant legislation.

**Access:** Please contact Council on (02) 4988 0255 to enquire how you can access information.

### Return form to Volunteers Support Project Officer

Email [volunteers@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:volunteers@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)  
Phone 4988 0586