



VOLUNTEER POLICY

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1. Purpose

This policy guides the engagement, management and support of volunteers who contribute to, and support Pass the Snacks Geelong (PTS). It sets out our commitment to volunteer wellbeing, safety, diversity, equity and inclusion, flexibility, and empowerment.

We strive for volunteering experiences where people feel seen, supported and empowered to make a difference in ways that work for them.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all current and prospective volunteers
- staff with responsibility for volunteer management, coordination or supervision
- any activities, programs or events delivered by or on behalf of PTS

3. Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who freely gives their time, skills and energy to support PTS without expectation of financial payment. Volunteers are not employees, and this policy does not create an employment relationship. However, volunteers are entitled to a safe environment, respect, and recognition of their contribution.

4. Statement

Our work is only possible because of the generosity and care of volunteers and the community who choose to give their time. We are committed to providing and enabling volunteering experiences that are inclusive, flexible, safe and rewarding, and designed to work with the demands of life, while delivering meaningful impact for the community.

Our priority is volunteer fit: matching people's skills, interests, capacity, ways of work, and lived experience with meaningful work that creates impact, personal joy and reward.

5. Guiding Principles

These principles guide everything we do with and for volunteers:

We are people first	We see the whole person, not just the role. Volunteers' lives, wellbeing and needs are prioritised and we flex to help them achieve fulfilment.
We are inclusive	We actively remove barriers to volunteering and seek diversity. Everyone belongs and we believe differences make us agile.
We are flexible	We offer genuine flexibility in when, where and how volunteers contribute and with no pressure to give more than volunteers'

	capabilities or capacity.
We recognise	We see and value what our volunteers bring. Recognition is genuine and consistent.
We support growth	Volunteering with us should leave volunteers better off. We invest in building skills, confidence, and connection for everyone who gives their time.
We keep people safe	Physical and psychological safety are non-negotiable. We maintain safe systems, clear processes, and a culture where people can speak up without fear.

6. National Standards Alignment and our Guiding Principles

We adopt Volunteering Australia’s National Standards for Volunteer Involvement, as best practice for to guide volunteer involvement.

The eight National Standards include:

- Volunteering is embedded in leadership, governance and culture
- Volunteer participation is championed and modelled
- Volunteer roles are meaningful and tailored
- Recruitment is equitable and diversity is valued
- Volunteers are supported and developed
- Volunteer safety and wellbeing is protected
- Volunteers are recognized
- Policies and practices are continuously improved

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective volunteer management is a shared responsibility:

Role	Responsibility
Board	Approve and review this policy; ensure adequate resourcing and insurance for volunteers; receive regular reporting on volunteer program health.

CEO/President	Implement and uphold this policy; ensure insurance and legal protections for volunteers are in place and communicated; appoint a Volunteer Coordinator and report to the Board on program effectiveness.
Volunteer Coordinator	Lead day-to-day volunteer management; coordinate recruitment, onboarding, support and recognition; act as the primary contact for volunteers; monitor and evaluate the volunteer experience.
Supervisors / Team Leads	Provide day-to-day guidance and check-ins; ensure volunteers are not asked to perform unsafe or unsuitable tasks; escalate concerns promptly.
Volunteers	Act in line with PTS values and this policy; follow safety instructions; communicate openly about their needs, capacity and any concerns.

8. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

We are committed to creating an inclusive volunteering environment where everyone is genuinely welcome. We actively work to remove barriers that prevent people from contributing.

We welcome volunteers of all:

- ages and life stages
- cultural backgrounds
- genders and sexual orientations
- abilities and neurodiversity
- education levels and work experience
- caring responsibilities and availability patterns

In practice, this means:

- No one is excluded because of how they communicate, learn or apply
- We focus on strengths, not deficits
- We design roles that can flex in time, place and format
- We ask what people need rather than assuming

Discrimination, harassment, or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

9. Legal Protections

Although volunteers are unpaid, they are entitled to important protections under law:

- Protection from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation under
- *The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- A safe working environment and safe systems of work under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)* and *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)* and other health and safety laws.

10. Volunteer Roles and Advertising

Volunteer roles may be advertised through social media, community networks, schools, universities, workplaces, and word of mouth.

All role descriptions will:

- be written in plain, jargon-free language
- clearly describe the tasks and their purpose
- focus on purpose and impact
- list essential requirements only
- state clearly the flexibility, time commitment and support available
- highlight opportunities for skill building, connection and growth

11. Expression of Interest and Application

People can express their interest or apply for a volunteer role in whatever way works for them.

We will always offer options. This might include:

- an online written form
- email or phone call
- a short video or voice note
- a conversation over coffee

No single format will be preferred over another. We strive to make it easy for the right people to volunteer.

12. Recruitment and Selection

Our recruitment process is supportive and strengths-based and will vary in approach depending on the individual applicant's preferences.

Interviews and Conversations

Interviews will be informal and may be:

- in person, online or by phone
- conducted as part of a broader activity (for example, a trial exercise or demonstration).

We will work with individual applications to choose an approach that suits them.

Screening

Depending on the role, screening may include:

- Reference checks
- Working With Children Check
- Police check

We will always explain why any screening is required before requesting it. Checks will only be required where genuinely necessary for the safety of the people we serve. Where checks are legally required (e.g. roles involving children or vulnerable persons), they must be completed before the volunteer commences.

13. Volunteer Agreement

Before commencing, all volunteers will be asked to read and agree to the PTS Volunteer Agreement. This document outlines:

- the nature of the volunteering relationship (not an employment contract)
- the volunteer's role, responsibilities and expected time commitment
- PTS's responsibilities to the volunteer
- our shared values and conduct expectations
- confidentiality and privacy obligations
- the process for raising concerns or exiting the volunteer relationship

14. Onboarding and Induction

Our onboarding will always include:

- a personal welcome conversation
- an introduction to PTS's mission, values and the impact of volunteer work
- clear explanation of the volunteer's role, tasks and points of contact
- work health and safety information and emergency procedures
- information on insurance coverage
- privacy and confidentiality expectations
- how to raise a concern or ask for help

We will tailor how induction is delivered to suit the individual's communication needs.

15. Privacy and Confidentiality

PTS collects personal information from volunteers for legitimate purposes connected to their involvement, such as emergency contacts, screening checks, and communication. We handle all personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and our Privacy Policy.

Volunteers are asked to respect the confidentiality of:

- the people PTS serves and any personal information they share
- PTS's operations, partners and organisational matters
- fellow volunteers and staff

Confidentiality obligations continue after the volunteer relationship ends.

16. Flexible Volunteering

We strive to ensure volunteering is flexible by design.

Flexibility may include:

- Micro-volunteering
- Project-based work
- Remote or hybrid roles
- Shared roles
- Seasonal or ad hoc support

We encourage open conversations about volunteer capacity and constraints to encourage a positive volunteering experience.

17. Ongoing Support and Management

Support and Communication

Every volunteer will have a named contact person who is available and responsive. We will provide:

- A named contact person

- Regular check-ins and connection points
- Opportunities to give and receive feedback

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

We are committed to providing a safe environment.

This includes:

- Safe systems of work
- Clear instructions and training
- Incident reporting processes
- Psychological safety

All volunteers must:

- Follow safety instructions
- Report all hazards, incidents or near misses
- Take reasonable care of themselves and others

Expense Reimbursement

Volunteers should not be out of pocket for contributing to PTS. Pre-approved, reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of volunteering will be reimbursed. Speak with the Volunteer Coordinator before incurring expenses to confirm eligibility and process.

18. Learning, Development and Recognition

We believe volunteering with PTS should leave our volunteers better off than when they started. We are committed to offering:

- skills development relevant to their role and interests
- leadership and mentoring pathways for those who want them
- peer learning and community connection
- references or written recognition of contribution upon request

Recognition will be genuine and consistent. We will ask volunteers what feels meaningful to them.

19. Changes to Roles or Capacity

We recognise that people's lives and circumstances change. Volunteers can speak with their contact person at any time to:

- adjust their role, tasks or responsibilities
- increase or reduce the time they give
- take a break and return when ready

We will always seek to find a solution that works for our volunteers.

20. Raising Concerns & Grievances

We want every volunteer to feel safe raising concerns. Speaking up is always preferable and volunteers will never be disadvantaged for doing so.

Concerns can be raised with:

- the direct supervisor or team lead

- the Volunteer Coordinator
- the CEO or a Board member, for more serious matters

When issues arise, we will:

- listen respectfully and without judgement
- assume good intent while taking all concerns seriously
- respond promptly and keep the person informed
- focus on resolution and learning, not blame

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, a formal process will be initiated, and volunteers will be supported throughout. Serious concerns (including child safety or criminal matters) will be escalated as required by law.

21. Exiting Volunteering

Volunteer-initiated exit

Volunteers can step back from their role at any time. We simply ask for as much notice as is reasonably possible so we can plan accordingly. We are grateful for every contribution, whatever its length.

Organisation-initiated exit

In rare circumstances, PTS may need to end a volunteer relationship, for example, in cases of serious misconduct, a health and safety risk, or a significant change in our program needs.

Where possible, we will provide notice and an opportunity to discuss the matter. In cases involving immediate safety risk or serious misconduct, we reserve the right to end the relationship immediately without notice.

Exit process

For all exits, we will:

- offer an informal conversation or short feedback survey
- arrange the return of any PTS property or access credentials
- provide a reference or written acknowledgement of contribution on request

22. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains inclusive and aligned with best practice in volunteer management.