



VOLUNTEERS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory (MCNT)

Updated October 2010

OUR ORGANISATION

The Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory (MCNT) is the peak body dedicated to advocacy and representing the interests, concerns and aspirations of people of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds in the Northern Territory.

The MCNT was established in 1977 as the Ethnic Communities Council of the Northern Territory. In 2000 the MCNT changed its name to Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory (MCNT) in order to better reflect the inclusive nature of the MCNT (inclusive of all cultures) and to forge greater linkages with the wider community.

OUR VISION

'Working to Connect Communities'

OUR MISSION

- To promote multiculturalism as a policy for all Australians.
- To enhance the quality of life of Australians from CALD backgrounds through providing culturally appropriate programs.
- To advocate for services that empower people of immigrant and refugee backgrounds to fully participate in the social, cultural, economic, political and civic life of our nation.
- To oppose racism and discrimination.

OUR CLIENTS

The clients of the MCNT include:

Ethnic, multicultural groups, immigrants and refugees, whose members need:

- Assistance and advice to access essential information and service support.
- Access to venues and meeting places.
- Support and advice on how to establish, form and operate ethnic or multicultural groups and associations.
- Access to informed advice for individuals and communities on their rights and entitlements.
- Support to involve themselves in advocacy on policy issues.
- Access to service networks and acceptance in the wider Northern Territory community.

Community organisations, businesses and government agencies who require:

- Information and advice in relation to people and communities from CALD backgrounds and meeting their particular needs.
- Advice and expertise on the provision of culturally relevant service needs and on specific policies.

WE VALUE:

- Engagement and Cultural Competence
- Integrity and Credibility
- Creativity and Innovation
- Building Partnerships with Communities
- Informed Decision Making
- Organisational Responsiveness to Community Diversity and Cultural Heritage
- A Value-based Civic Culture that Promotes Fairness and Quality of Life

THE MCNTS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The MCNT is a community-based non-profit organisation managed by a board of volunteers known as the Management Committee. The Management Committee is elected by the Accredited Delegates of Organisational Members and Individual Members at the Annual General Meeting scheduled in late September each year.

The composition of the 8 member Management Committee is broad and diverse, comprising members with a range of experience and expertise in community development and advocacy. In terms of structure, there are 4 office bearers - president, vice president, secretary and treasurer - and 4 ordinary committee members. The public officer is elected from within the Management Committee.

There are two appointed full-time operational staff positions at the MCNT as well as other full-time and part-time project officers in the work team appointed according to the need and circumstance of the organisation.

THE DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER

A 'volunteer' is defined as an individual who for personal, humanitarian, or charitable reasons, freely and without expectation of financial gain contributes time, service and skills to assist the MCNT in accomplishing its vision and mission.

THE MCNT'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The MCNT provides a wide range of services for a diverse clientele of migrants and refugees. Volunteers are an integral part of the MCNT's activities in its funded projects and provide valuable services for the organisation. The MCNT's Management Committee, staff members and volunteer workers form an integrated team where each member's contribution supports the organisation's mission and goals.

The MCNT sees its Volunteer Program as a link between the organisation and its constituency. The MCNT's volunteers are drawn from across the multicultural community of Darwin and include the members of the MCNT's Management Committee. The MCNT's volunteers share the desire to contribute to making a real difference to people's lives and their contribution and commitment to the organisation is valued.

The MCNT's Volunteer Program is based on community development, empowerment and social inclusion principles and the respect for social justice and human rights. The MCNT's volunteer assisted activities identify and provide support for individuals, families and communities at risk of social isolation because of language and cultural reasons. The MCNT's Volunteer Program aims to equip volunteers with the skills to address the needs of the MCNT's clients and meet both the clients' and volunteers' aspirations.

The MCNT recognises that volunteers and volunteer assisted activities need to be administered with risk management in mind. The MCNT's volunteers are working under the authority of the organisation with the MCNT's clients and need to be protected against physical or financial risk. In addition, the MCNT's vulnerable clients need to be protected against harm from well-intending volunteers who have not received the necessary training.

In terms of project management and legal considerations, the MCNT's volunteers are considered as unpaid staff members. The MCNT's volunteers are required to observe the MCNT's practices and code of behaviour expected of the organisation. The MCNT values its volunteer workers and has developed the *Volunteer Policy and Procedures*, outlining the respective roles and responsibilities of volunteer workers and the organisation.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR INVOLVING AND MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering Australia is the nation's peak body for volunteering and has developed the *National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations* which promotes a model of best practice in the involvement and management of volunteers. These *National Standards were developed from an extensive national consultation process with volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers.*

The *National Standards* have the aims of protecting volunteers, organisations that involve volunteers and the clients of these organisations. The standards aim to help organisations ensure that the rights of volunteers are protected, their role is explicit and they work in safe and healthy environments. The MCNT complies with, implements and endorses the *National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations.*

Standard 1: Policies and Procedures

“An organisation that involves volunteers shall define and document its policies and procedures for volunteer involvement and ensure that these are understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organisation where volunteers are involved.”

Standard 2: Management Responsibilities

“An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers are managed within a defined system and by capable personnel with the authority and resources to achieve the organisation’s policy goals.”

Standard 3: Recruitment

“An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and have clearly documented volunteer recruitment, selection, and orientation policies and procedures that are consistent with non-discriminatory practices and guidelines.”

Standard 4: Work and the Workplace

“An organisation that involves volunteers shall clearly specify and control the work of volunteers and ensure that their place of work is conducive to preserving their health, safety and general well-being.”

Standard 5: Training and Development

“An organization that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers obtain the knowledge, skills, feedback on work, and the recognition needed to effectively carry out their responsibilities.”

Standard 6: Service Delivery

“An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are established and followed for the effective planning, control, and review of all activities relating to the delivery of services by volunteers.”

Standard 7: Documentation and Records:

“An organization that involves volunteers shall establish a system and have defined procedures to control all documentation and personnel records that relate to the management of volunteers.”

Standard 8: Continuous Improvement

“An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and continually review its volunteer management system to ensure that opportunities to improve the quality of the system are identified and actively pursued.”

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANISATION

The MCNT will:

- Ensure that each volunteer is recruited within the guidelines of the organisation's mission, goals and objectives, and policy and procedures and signs an agreement which includes confidentiality and privacy clauses;
- Ensure that each volunteer is inducted using the *Volunteer Policy and Procedures*;
- Provide and maintain a working environment where, as far as practicable, volunteers are not exposed to hazards that cause injury or harm to health and will provide adequate protection through appropriate insurance;
- Ensure that each volunteer is provided adequate recognition and given an appraisal of his/her work and a reference if required, when exiting the program;
- Ensure that the volunteer always acts in the interests of the clients;
- Provide the volunteer with opportunities for widening and maintaining personal skills, either for personal fulfilment or with a view to future paid employment;
- Reimburse the volunteer for out-of-pocket expenses, within agreed specified limits, incurred in work s/he has been directed to undertake;
- Train, supervise, support and provide feedback related to tasks undertaken by the volunteer;
- Clearly define the tasks in a job description which match the volunteer's expectations, interests, time commitments and skills;
- Inform the volunteer about changes within the work environment;
- Keep appropriate records, documenting the extent of the contribution made by volunteers to the organisation;
- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of different staff members are clarified for the volunteer;
- Give due notice to a volunteer of not less than two weeks, should there be no further requirement for their services; and
- Reserve the right to terminate a volunteer's service immediately at the discretion of the organisation, but will give the notice in writing and explain the reason.

THE RIGHTS OF VOLUNTEERS

Every volunteer has the *RIGHT*:

- To be satisfied with their volunteer role with due consideration given to preferences, experience, personality, employment and education background;
- To be treated as a co-worker and have support and respect from co-workers (paid workers and volunteers), to share appropriate responsibilities with them;
- To receive adequate space, equipment and information and a clear role description and as far as practicable have the workplace adjusted to personal requirements;
- To have their skills, life experience, expertise, ideas and opinions respected and be advised of the opportunity to contribute to decision making and continuous improvement in the organisation;
- To be heard by their supervisor if they need to voice any concerns, queries or complaints and have such issues dealt with sensitively and expeditiously;
- To experience a variety of tasks with the right to feel comfortable enough with your supervisor to be able to discuss your options and ask for a new role when the volunteer feel ready to move on to new tasks;
- To know why - if seen by the supervisor to be seen as unsuitable for a task;
- To be provided information on grievance and disciplinary procedures; and
- To say "NO" to tasks for which they feel uncomfortable and unsuitable and to say "NO" if they feel that they are being exploited.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers working at the MCNT are required to:

- Understand that they will be recruited through a formal process and make a realistic commitment to the organisation in terms of both time and areas of involvement;
- Participate in the induction program and undertake subsequent training;
- Understand that the MCNT will initiate a police check, and will request proof of driver's licence and vehicle insurance;
- Accept direction and supervision by a designated officer and advise their supervisor if they are unable to perform any of the tasks in their job description;
- Advise their supervisor if they are unable to work on a day when they are rostered;
- Maintain communication with their supervisor at all times, in particular about matters that may affect (or have the potential to affect) their work at the MCNT, and any issues or problems that may arise in relation to clients;
- Act in the best interests of the MCNT and in a professional manner and fulfil the requirements of a volunteer worker at the MCNT;
- Report unsafe or unsatisfactory working conditions and any accidents during work for the MCNT;
- Attend regular meetings and training organised by the supervisor, write reports as requested by the supervisor and provide feedback on progress to their supervisor;
- To maintain client confidentiality and respect the rights and at all times work in the interests of clients;
- To remain non-judgemental, respect both the uniqueness of individuals and the cultural diversity of groups and refrain from imposing their views on others;
- To respect the religious, political and moral commitments of clients, and not attempt to use their position to influence those commitments;
- To not take advantage of their relationship with the client family in terms of influencing their choices and, or receiving cash or gifts; and
- Provide appropriate notice of their unavailability to maintain a commitment or their intention to exit from the program.

VOLUNTEER INSURANCE

Volunteers are not covered by Workers Compensation. However, the MCNT does have the following insurance policies:

Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Insurance

The MCNT has a personal accident insurance policy which covers volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses related to an injury sustained while undertaking volunteer duties that they have been directed to carry out on behalf of the MCNT. Volunteers are not entitled to health cover reimbursements or motor vehicle accident or theft reimbursement.

For entitlements outside the insurance cover, volunteers will need to claim with Medicare, private health cover, personal insurance, compulsory third party insurance etc, as appropriate.

Public Liability insurance

The MCNT has a public liability insurance policy which covers the organisation against injury claims by a member of the public whilst on the premises. This policy protects volunteers against damage or loss caused to a third party, unless the damage is caused through serious misconduct. Volunteers must be aware that they are not covered for any damage due to an accident they may have caused while on a client's property.

RISK MANAGEMENT, VOLUNTEERS AND THE MCNT'S PROJECTS

The effective management of project risks is an integral part of best practice project management. All proposed projects at the MCNT should undergo a risk assessment process prior to approval and high risk factors should be appropriately identified and analysed. However it is also acknowledged that projects can also be exposed to undefined risks that are beyond the Project Officer or the organisation to resolve.

Once a project is approved, a risk management plan should be developed for all risk factors that were not eliminated during the project proposal process. This should include a description of the risk, the impact of the risk on the project, what actions can be taken to assist in reducing the risk and, if necessary, a contingency plan.

The MCNT Project Officer (Supervisor) and MCNT Director must seek the assistance of the funding body, project partners and stakeholders in the proactive reduction of risk. Ultimately the reduction of risk in projects undertaken by the MCNT is a 'win-win' situation with all interested parties gaining from the increased possibility of the project's success and the enhancement of the MCNT's capacity to maintain a professional image.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

The following procedures for recruitment, induction, training and supervision of volunteers apply at the Migrant Resource Centre.

- People who would like to assist the MCNT as volunteers are required to fill out a volunteer application form and a police check;
- The designated Project Officer (Supervisor) recruits the volunteer through a formal recruitment process in line with the organisation's Policy and Procedures, including the *Volunteer Policy and Procedures*;
- The designated Project Officer (Supervisor) ensures that a written agreement by the volunteer to a commitment of service for at least ten (10) weeks;
- The recommendation for the recruitment of the volunteer is made to the MCNT Director who signs the volunteering agreement;
- The designated Project Officer (Supervisor) is responsible for inducting and introducing the volunteer to the organisation's staff, facilities and procedures;
- The designated Project Officer (Supervisor) keep a record of volunteer details, their commencement and exit dates and other relevant information about their service at the MCNT;
- The designated Project Officer (Supervisor) is responsible for overseeing the volunteer throughout his/her term of service, and within the guidelines of the organisation's *Volunteer Policy and Procedures*; and
- The designated Project Officer (Supervisor) takes responsibility for the process of an exit meeting if initiated by the volunteer, or for determining the termination of a volunteer's services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The MCNT acknowledges the assistance of the Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia (*Volunteer Policies and Procedures Handbook*) in the compilation of this document.

THE MCNT'S VOLUNTEER FORMS

The forms on the following pages are currently used by the MCNT to recruit and appoint volunteers to activities on its funded projects. These forms are currently being reviewed.



Multicultural Council of the Northern Territory Inc

Shop 15, Malak Centre, Malak Place, NT 0812.

PO Box 299, Karama, NT 0813.

Telephone: (08) 8945 9122

Facsimile: (08) 8945 9155

Email: admin@mcnt.org.au

Website: www.mcnt.org.au

MCNT Volunteer Application Form

The information collected in this form will help us become familiar with you and your interests.
The information is kept on file for our records only.

Family names: _____

Given names: _____ Female / Male

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Email address: _____

Age group (please circle): under 18 19-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

Date of birth: _____ Country of birth: _____

Languages spoken: _____

Are you currently (please circle): In paid employment? full time part time
retired student unemployed home duties other

Do you have your own car and a current driver's license? Yes / No

Are you willing to transport others? Yes / No

Availability: once a month once a fortnight once a week irregularly
school holidays weekends evenings daytime

What days of the week are you available: Monday Tuesday Wednesday
Thursday Friday Weekends

Experience and skills: _____

Hobbies and interests: _____

Reason for seeking volunteer work with the MCNT: _____

Do you have any disability/medical condition that might affect your ability to do certain types of work?

Yes/No _____

If you are on Work Cover please detail. _____

Is there any reason why you would be unsuited to some areas of volunteer work? _____

How did you find out about MCNT volunteer programs? _____

Do you agree to undergo a criminal history check? Yes / No

Signed: _____

Date: _____



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30 September 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

This letter is to certify that the holder
is performing unpaid volunteer duties with MCNT and other not for profit
organisations, and requires a police check.

MCNT is a not for profit organisation that relies on volunteers to carry out some
of its work. This person will, on occasion, be working with vulnerable, frail, and
young people. A police check is required to enable this person to commence
volunteer duties.

This letter certifies that the holder (as above) has agreed that the completed
check is to be released to MCNT at the address on our letterhead.

Please issue this police check at the reduced rate that applies to volunteer
involving organisations.

Yours sincerely,

Ron Mitchell
Policy and Project Director