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Volunteer Program Policy

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# Introduction

Old Parliament House is a corporate Commonwealth entity operating under the name Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (MoAD).

The Museum’s volunteer program commenced in 1992, the year that Old Parliament House was reopened to the public by former Prime Ministers John Gorton and Gough Whitlam.   
  
Today it operates 364 days a year (closed Christmas Day) and provides visitors with engaging programs and activities that deliver a high quality, visitor-focused museum experience.

# Rationale

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House is a modern museum located inside a heritage-listed building that was once home to Australia’s national parliament.

Old Parliament House turns 100 in 2027 and MoAD’s vision approaching the centenary is to connect communities across the country with Canberra — the centre of Australia’s democratic story, providing a ‘people’s place’ where big ideas are explored.

Visitors and the broader Australian community are encouraged to engage with and participate in democracy through exhibitions, events, and education programs, as well as through online collections of stories, objects and resources.

Volunteers engaged to participate in the volunteer program have an important role in supporting the agency to achieve its strategic goals; they enhance its programs and projects by complementing the skills and resources of staff.

Additionally, through the engagement of volunteers, the museum can further its reach to the broader community, facilitating the two-way transfer of skills and knowledge.

# Purpose

The agency has developed this Volunteer Program Policy to assist volunteers perform their roles under the volunteer program in an effective manner and consistent with relevant legislation and government policies. This policy also provides a framework for the management and involvement of volunteers at the museum.

# Volunteer Program Role and Objectives

## 4.1 Role

The primary role of volunteers is to support the agency in achieving its strategic goals by working with the Museum Experience team, in creating enriching experiences for visitors; by engaging with its audiences; and through the delivery of approved museum programs and activities.

People with relevant skills and experience are also recruited to assist, in a volunteer capacity, with various other specific projects and activities across the agency, when the agency determines that it has a need.

## 4.2 Objectives

The program aims to provide a volunteer service that meets the changing needs of the museum and its audiences. To support this, the agency, through the program, will:

* recruit volunteers who have a strong interest and commitment to the museum, and who will honour their commitment in time and quality of service to perform agreed tasks
* facilitate effective use of volunteer services for the museum
* coordinate development to ensure volunteers have the appropriate skills for the tasks they are assigned
* foster productive interchanges between staff and volunteers
* treat volunteers in a professional manner
* recognise and acknowledge the valuable contribution of volunteers to the museum
* offer a rewarding, interesting and enjoyable experience for volunteers
* regularly review the strategic directions and procedures of the volunteer program.

# Definition of a volunteer

A volunteer:

* is an individual who for personal reasons freely contributes time, service and skill to assist the museum in accomplishing its vision
* performs duties in designated volunteer positions only
* does not receive financial payment for performing their duties
* is an invitee of the agency for the purposes of the museum volunteer program and is not an employee of the agency
* is distinct from other categories of non–paid work at the museum, such as work experience and internships.

# Acceptance of volunteers into the Volunteer Program

The agency accepts volunteers who are enthusiastic and committed to meeting its vision:

*MoAD celebrates the spirit of Australian democracy by:*

* *protecting, conserving and interpreting the national icon that is Old Parliament House to highlight the crucial role the building and its collections have played in shaping today’s Australia*
* *sharing the story of Australia’s democracy through exhibitions, programs, publications and digital content to increase understanding of the nation’s social and political history*
* *enabling audiences to actively explore how Australia’s democratic systems work and to be inspired and equipped to participate as engaged citizens in our democracy.*

Applications from prospective volunteers may be sought via the museum website, by direct contact, by other means deemed appropriate by the agency, or any combination of these methods.

Any recruitment programs will take a planned approach to attract volunteers with relevant interests, knowledge, skills, or attributes. Potential volunteers will be provided with information about the agency, the volunteer role and the recruitment and selection process.

Volunteers are selected consistent with anti-discrimination legislation.

## 6.1 Eligibility

All members of the public are eligible to apply.

Attributes considered when assessing suitable applicants will include:

* interest, knowledge, and skills relevant to the volunteer role they apply for
* commitment to supporting and promoting the museums strategic objectives
* professionalism whilst representing the museum
* availability and flexibility to deliver volunteer services when and as required by the agency.

## 

## 6.2 Conditions of acceptance

Initial acceptance into the volunteer program, and continuing participation in it, is subject to the following conditions:

### Probationary period

New volunteers are subject to a probationary period following their initial training. The length of the probationary period will vary, depending on the type of volunteer role and length of the volunteer agreement, and specified when the volunteer is accepted into the volunteer program.

During the probationary period an agency delegate will assess the suitability of the volunteer to the role against the performance expectations and provide them with feedback.

Volunteers who do not meet the probationary conditions and are deemed not to be suitable will be withdrawn from the program.

### Working with Vulnerable People registration

Volunteers in roles dealing with visitors are required to apply for, receive and maintain Working with Vulnerable People registration with the A.C.T. Government.

This is a personal qualification that belongs to the individual volunteer, and not the agency.

Working with Vulnerable People registration is free for volunteers; however, a fee applies to volunteers who also work in a regulated activity requiring Working with Vulnerable People registration. In this situation payment of fees is the responsibility of the individual or their employer, not the agency.

### Health clearance

Under *Work Health and Safety* legislation the agency has a duty of care to ensure all volunteers are fit for the duties required of them to perform. The agency delegate may at any time direct a volunteer to undertake a health clearance to assess fitness for duty against the duties of a volunteer as prescribed in the position description for their volunteer role. The cost of obtaining a health clearance at the direction of the agency will be met by the agency.

### APS Values and Code of Conduct

Volunteers are required to behave at all times in a way that upholds the APS Values aligned with the APS Code of Conduct, including as it is updated.

The agency may decline to accept the services of any potential volunteer, or withdraw from the program previously accepted volunteers, who do not meet the attributes and conditions outlined in the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

While volunteers are not employees under the Public Service Act 1999, you are nonetheless expected to comply with relevant provisions of the APS Values and APS Code of Conduct as set out by the Australian Public Service Commission. The APS Code of Conduct is listed in the document library on MyVolunteerPage.com.

Subject to the Grievance Procedure, any volunteer found to be in breach of any relevant provision of the Code of Conduct or APS Values will be withdrawn from the volunteer program and will not be allowed to continue working at the museum.

# Program Management

The agency recognises that resources are required to support volunteer involvement.

As a member of Volunteering and Contact A.C.T. the agency’s management of the volunteer program is guided by the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015) developed by the national peak body, Volunteering Australia.

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement provide a sound framework for supporting the volunteer sector in Australia. The National Standards are easy to follow and are adaptable to different organisation types and different forms of volunteering which reflect the diversity of this growing sector.

The Museum Experience team is responsible for the administration of the volunteer program. The program is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Coordinator and Supervisor Volunteer and Museum Experience; however, Section Heads will be responsible for the provision of training, instruction, supervision, feedback, and support for volunteers undertaking duties for their section.

Volunteers will:

* work cooperatively with agency staff to carry out the duties specified in their Position Description
* adhere to the conditions agreed on signing the Volunteer Agreement
* uphold the [APS Values](https://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-values-1) and [Code of Conduct](https://www.apsc.gov.au/code-conduct)
* have any confidential and personal information they supply to the agency dealt with in accordance with the principles of the [*Privacy Act 1988*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A03712)
* be protected from certain civil liability under the terms of the [*Commonwealth Volunteers Protection Act 2003*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A01087)
* be considered as ‘Workers’ for the purposes of the [*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2011A00137)*.*

The current National Standards will continue to be used until the refreshed National Standards are released in early 2024.

## Volunteer Handbook

The Volunteer Handbook (the handbook) is designed to be one means of communicating to volunteers what the agency expects of them, and what they can expect from the agency. The handbook is revised periodically and made available to volunteers online via the MoAD myimpactpage.com site, and in the volunteer’s lounge at Old Parliament House.

## Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Agreement form. This form must be signed by the volunteer to acknowledge their acceptance of the conditions of volunteering with the agency and returned to the agency delegate before they can commence or continue as a volunteer.

Volunteer Agreements are valid for a maximum of one year from the date of signing or for the length of the project the volunteer has been recruited for, whichever is the shorter. At the expiry of their volunteer agreement individuals may be invited to commit for another year or for the term of another project. Renewals or extensions are subject to volunteers having met their specified obligations under the previous agreement, and conditional on the agency having a suitable and meaningful role for the volunteer.

## Two way communication

Two way communication between volunteers and management is recognised as being important to the successful operation of the program. The agency addresses this by facilitating a consultative forum to provide a means to involve and inform volunteers in matters which relate to their role. The format of this consultative forum is determined by the agency. Information on the current format of this consultative forum can be obtained from the Coordinator, Volunteers and Museum Experience.

# Revision Schedule

This policy document will be reviewed in August 2025 or at such other times as the agency believes is appropriate or necessary. Any amendment to this policy as a result of a review will apply from the date it is approved by the Director.

# Supporting documentation

[Code of Conduct](https://www.apsc.gov.au/code-conduct)

[APS Values](http://www.apsc.gov.au/working-in-the-aps/your-rights-and-responsibilities-as-an-aps-employee/aps-values)

[Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House Strategic Framework, 2023-28](https://www.moadoph.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/moad-strategic-plan-2023-28.pdf)

[National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)](https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Standards-Document-FINAL_Web.pdf)

[Volunteer Handbook](https://moadophgov-my.sharepoint.com/personal/twinter-perry_moadoph_gov_au/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BFF080081-30CC-4FDA-B148-5DE760E695CE%7D&file=Volunteers%20Handbook%202023-2024.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&DefaultItemOpen=1)

[MOADOPH Work Health & Safety Policy](https://moadophgov.sharepoint.com/Lists/Staff%20Policies%20and%20Guidelines/DispForm.aspx?ID=22)