

# VOLUNTEER GUIDE



**CLUB SUPPORT HANDBOOK**



**FOOTBALL  
NSW**

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## PURPOSE

**Volunteers are the lifeblood of Football in NSW.**

**Thanks to their commitment, more than 325,000 participants enjoy their football in NSW.**

**Football NSW recognizes that each season clubs struggle to recruit and retain volunteers.**

**This Guide has been created to assist clubs in building a strong foundation for volunteers to join, stay and encourage others to help.**

# THREE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



1

## UNDERSTAND VOLUNTEERS

Identify why people volunteer and how your club can create opportunities for them to assist

2

## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The person who coordinates the work being done by the volunteers at your club. They assist with recruitment, retention, and rewarding volunteers as well as providing support to those volunteers.

3

## THE FOUR R'S

Recruitment, Retention, Recognition and Review are the key facets of a club's volunteer team, coordinated by the volunteer coordinator.

# FACTORS IMPACTING VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

## BARRIERS

**Personal:** Time poor or other commitments; overload; interpersonal issues; not knowing what opportunities exist/match skills.

**Organisational:** Bureaucratic procedures; poor communication and/or guidance; club politics; increasing expectations (players, members, parents, etc).

**Social:** Community size (small-medium communities tend to have higher participation rates); gender (men are more likely to volunteer, or volunteer in certain roles); socio-economic status; having a disability; self-reported health problems.

## MOTIVATORS

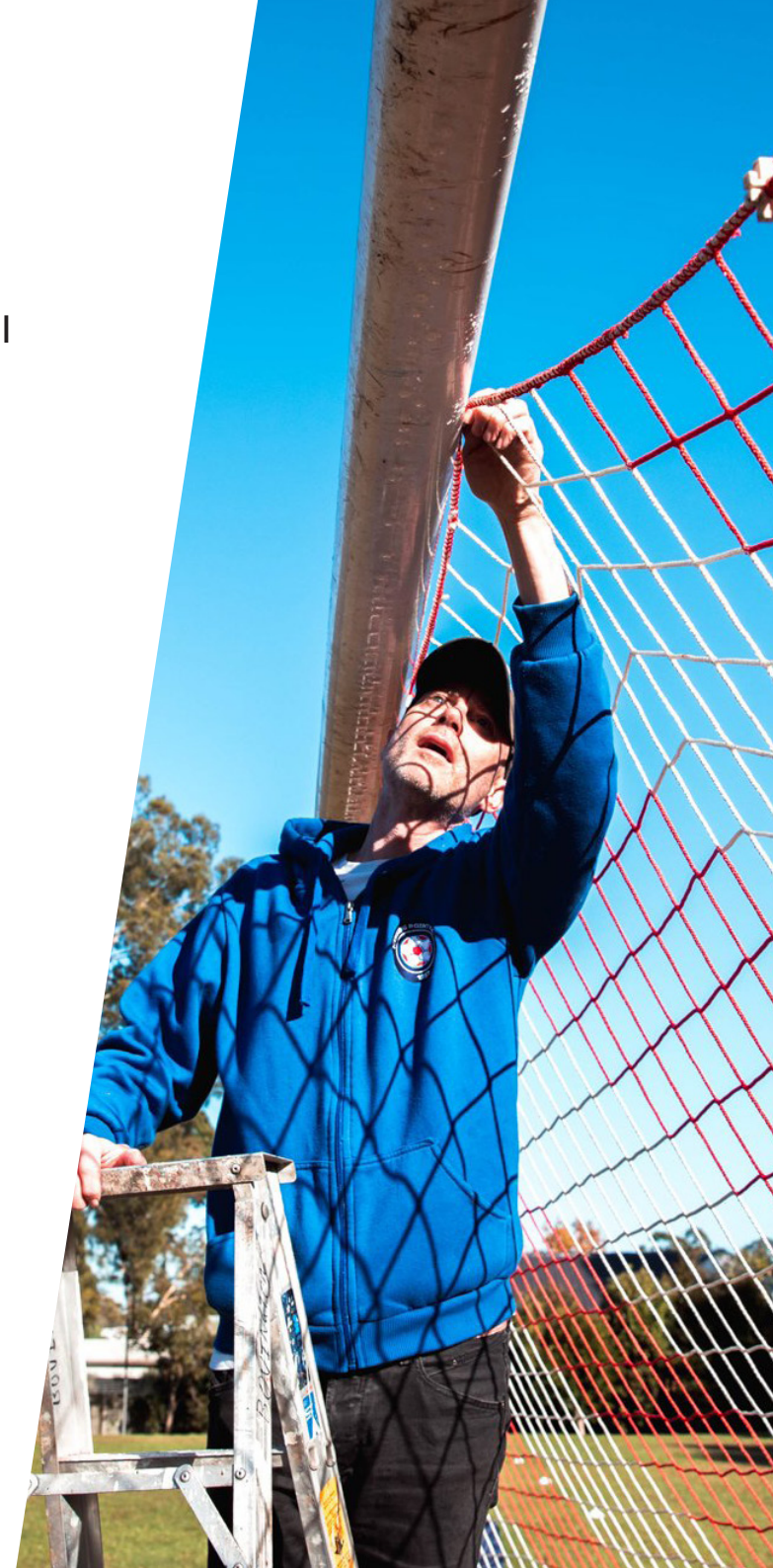
**Personal:** Connecting with community; developing skills; enhancing career prospects; self-esteem; participating in the sport.

**Organisational:** Clear communication of expectations and guidelines; recognition; training and mentoring opportunities; positive community/club culture.

**Social:** Strengthening social relationships; contributing to community; 'making a difference'.

# WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

- To **GAIN SKILLS** – job skills, communication skills, personal and professional development.
- To **GAIN EXPERIENCE** – especially to be able to add to their CV or to gain a written/verbal reference.
- To **HAVE FUN**.
- To **MEET NEW PEOPLE**.
- To **PASS ON SKILLS** to others.
- To **EXPERIENCE** new challenges.
- To **CONTRIBUTE** to the local community.
- To **GAIN SATISFACTION** from making a positive contribution.
- To **SUPPORT** family members in a sport.



# AN IMPORTANT ROLE - VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR



Every club should have someone who coordinates the work being done by volunteers. A Volunteer Coordinator's duties may include:

- Selection and direction of volunteers
- Development of induction materials such as a Welcome Pack.
- Understanding the professional and personal needs of each volunteer.
- Evaluation and feedback.
- Inclusion of volunteers in the social activities of the club.
- Provision of necessary training materials and courses.
- Recognition and reward for volunteer effort.
- Provision of adequate workshops.
- Provision of training for any paid staff so they can work effectively with volunteers.

## VOLUNTEER CATEGORIES

Typically, volunteer roles fall into three categories: formal committee positions, supporting roles and those who develop and extend your club's vision and goal.

Your club Volunteer Coordinator should prepare a clear plan for these three main categories which includes:

- Creating clear job descriptions that sound interesting, roles and responsibilities and benefits for volunteers
- Enabling volunteers to split roles into smaller pieces and enable them to be flexible with the timing of involvement.
- Preparing a Volunteer Welcome Pack can include everything they need to know about their role
- Considering the motivations and benefits of volunteering for each age group and demographic (older people, younger people, students, parents).
- Offering small honorariums or waive fees in return for volunteering.

# KEY PILLARS TO SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS



## The Four R's

Volunteers bring energy as well as new skills and perspectives. Their assistance is critical to allowing Football Clubs to function and is crucial for the future of our sport.



## FACE TO FACE RECRUITMENT

- Face-to-face recruitment is the most effective method particularly for recruiting those who come to your club regularly.
- Relatively few volunteers are recruited through advertising or publicity.
- Personal contact with potential volunteers, whether through friends, family or individuals already involved in a club is the most common way that people become involved in voluntary work.
- To be successful in recruiting volunteers, the club needs to ask people to volunteer!

# RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES



- Utilise your committee members and existing volunteers to each approach five people to join them. This approach gets people on the ground faster than anything else.
- Use your events or weekly matches to recruit from the people attending. If people enjoy the event, they may want to become more involved.
- Registration days are a great early opportunity to recruit. Have a volunteer table and volunteer form for people to fill in and be contacted by the volunteer coordinator.
- Promote any gatherings involving volunteers to highlight that volunteering is fun, not just work.
- When you ask people to get involved, let them know the opportunities available and the size and nature of the task.
- Emphasize the benefits for volunteers rather than the needs of the club and try to be flexible with the day/hours of when the jobs are required.

# MARKETING CAMPAIGN

## THE MESSAGING

- Use the benefits of volunteering to target various members within your local community.
- Ask existing members why they don't volunteer and use the feedback to remove any barriers that may exist.
- Keep the roles separate and target key volunteer positions with information to gauge people's interest e.g., if the role is setting up the field before matches, let people know what that involves, and the time required.
- Make it easy for people to say yes. Create a call to action e.g., 'click here to volunteer', which takes them to a basic form to provide their details.

## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Create a range of engaging graphics that puts a face to volunteering e.g. your volunteer coordinator in action or someone arranging uniforms, a person putting up a net.

Promote your opportunities in relevant locations which may include:

- Social media channels and website or Local councils and school newsletters.
- Contact your local newspaper with a good news story.
- Posters on community bulletin boards at libraries, shops, community centres, sports clubs.
- Stall at the local shops or at community events/festivals.
- With your local sponsors and local businesses on their channels.

# WELCOME PACK

Once you have someone volunteering at your club, it is worth spending time trying to retain them.

In most cases, a volunteer usually stays at a club if their son, daughter or family member is involved. Having a good onboarding system in place will greatly assist in retention.

A Welcome Pack for volunteers with information on each role, as well as the following:

- Club structure and policies
- Contact details of key people
- A welcome and introduction
- How to claim expenses
- Mentoring arrangements
- A calendar of yearly events





# CLUB CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION



Retention of volunteers is vital; the following should also be in place:

- Opportunities for committee members and volunteers to come together and network in a fun environment. This will help build stronger connections between the volunteering group and allow others to learn about their reasons for volunteering, interests and expectations from the club.
- A clear and efficient method of communication. Regular communication is key. Often people are unable to read and respond to emails on urgent matters and Facebook chat groups can become overwhelming. Work through options with your volunteers to determine what will work best.
- Regular volunteer briefing meetings. These are key before any major club events to understand roles and responsibilities. They also provide an opportunity for volunteers to provide feedback and for the volunteer coordinator to give positive feedback in person.
- Provide opportunities for roles to be rotated around the volunteer groups. Variety and challenge is important to some volunteers.
- Investigate a mentoring program for volunteers. Create opportunities for existing volunteers to provide support and help improve other volunteers.
- Ongoing feedback from volunteers can help to improve volunteer experiences and retain volunteers. Asking for feedback lets volunteers know that you value them, care about them and are interested in their opinions and ideas.

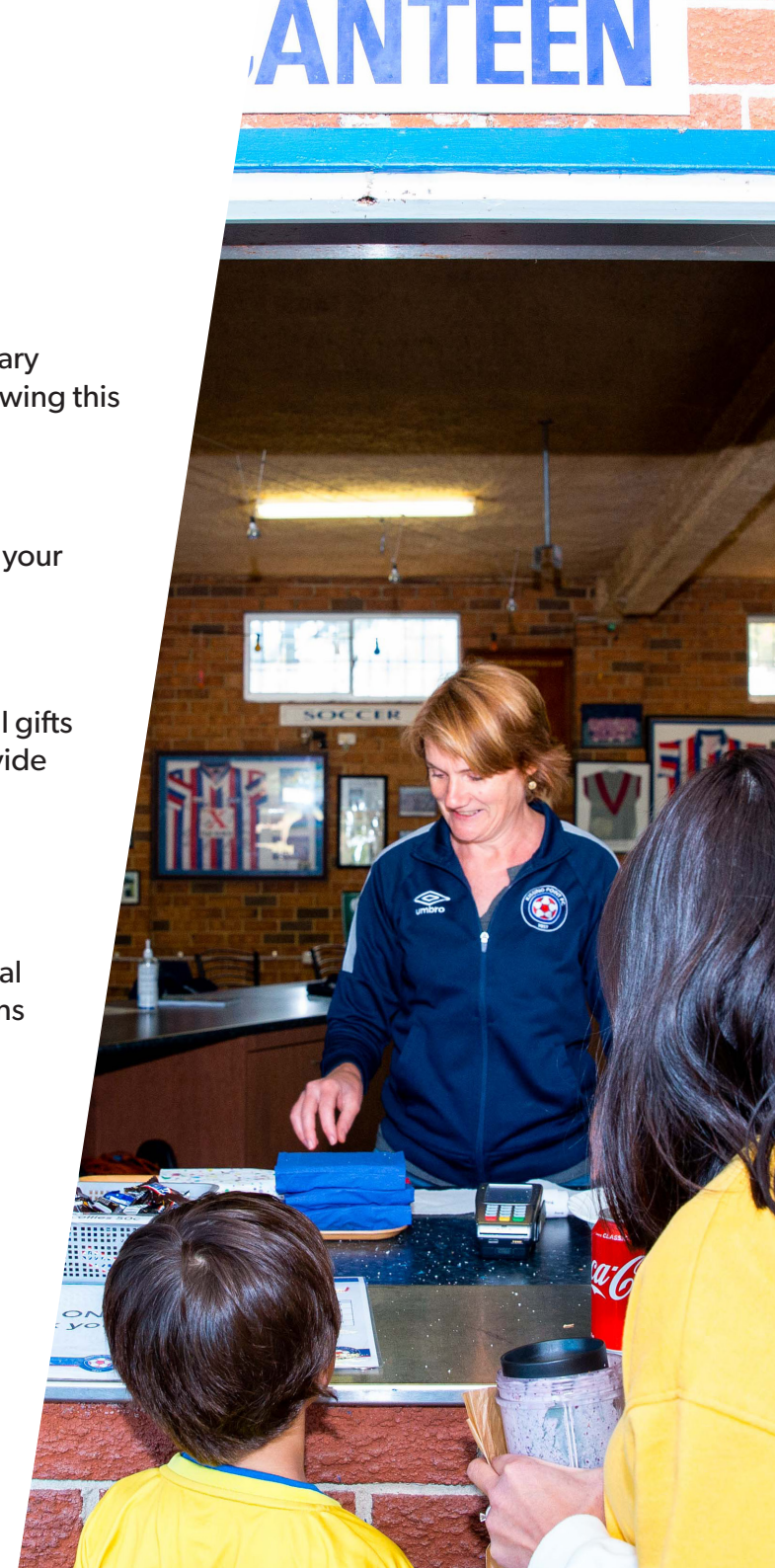
It is important to retain volunteers for the right reasons. Sometimes it is the right time for someone to move on or undertake a less intensive role at the club. This should be planned for as part of the club's volunteer review plan.

# REWARD AND RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

Clubs should reward volunteers appropriately which does not necessarily mean providing monetary incentives or end of season gifts. For most volunteers, completing an important club role and knowing this is being recognised is enough.

Here are a few suggestions for providing volunteers with tangible rewards:

- Plan to recognise ALL volunteers at the club's end of year celebration. Create annual awards for your volunteers e.g. 'Club Person of the Year'.
- Provide volunteers with a certificate of recognition. A digital version should be provided for volunteers to add to their CV or business profiles.
- Work towards attracting a sponsor for your volunteers. This sponsor could provide or fund small gifts as part of a Volunteer Management Program. General club sponsors may also be willing to provide free tickets to events, money off subscriptions or a discount code.
- Provide volunteers with free entry to club events and the first opportunity to purchase tickets to local events if offered to the club.
- Include volunteers in team photos.
- Nominate your volunteers for volunteer awards through external organisations such as your local Council, Association and Football NSW. Opportunities for recognition within these organisations is typically found on their websites or social media channels.



# CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS



It is crucial for clubs to continually evaluate all volunteers and to plan for the future.

The Volunteer Coordinator should:

- **REVIEW** the role, goal and objectives
- **IDENTIFY** results achieved
- Gain **FEEDBACK** from current volunteers
- **ASSESS** the performance of volunteers and if required, conduct exit meetings for departing volunteers
- **SURVEY** your volunteers.

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Supporting with volunteers who are under-performing or exhibit inappropriate behavior can be awkward for clubs.

This is often to do with the nature of voluntary work and the need to retain as many volunteers as possible.

## FIVE GENERAL TIPS

- 1** Sometimes constructive disagreement between volunteers, when managed carefully and respectfully can lead to growth for the club.
- 2** You can't ignore a volunteer who is behaving inappropriately, as this will make the situation worse.
- 3** Take a behavioral focus for volunteers who are problematic, and don't make it personal.
- 4** Support volunteers and enable them to make their own decisions about whether positions are a good fit.
- 5** Firing a volunteer should be the last option, ensure you document their behavior throughout the process and any attempts you make to correct behavior.