



**fishcare
victoria**

Volunteer Handbook

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Volunteering with Fishcare	4
1.2 Fishcare Program Outline	5
2. Recruitment and selection of volunteers	6
2.1 Who can become a volunteer?.....	6
2.2 Volunteer appointment conditions and criteria	6
2.3 Working with Children Checks	7
2.4. Working with Children Checks Policy	7
2.5 Recreational Fishing Licence.....	9
2.6 Inactive Volunteers.....	9
2.7 Safety information.....	9
3. Rights and responsibilities.....	10
3.1 Fishcare Victoria Inc. Volunteer Position Description.....	10
3.2 Position Profile.....	11
3.3 Volunteer Rights.....	12
3.4 Volunteer Responsibilities.....	13
3.5 Duty of Care	13
4. Training	14
4.1 Induction Training.....	14
4.2 Ongoing Training.....	14
5. Supervision of Volunteers	14
5.1 Events and Activities	14
6. Liability Coverage of Volunteers.....	15
6.1 Insurance.....	15
7. Dealing with the public	16
7.1 Confidentially	16
7.2 Identification	16
8. Grievance Procedures.....	17
8.1 Grievance Procedures	17



8.2 Disciplinary Procedures	17
9. Sexual Harassment and Equal Opportunity.....	18
9.1 Sexual Harassment.....	18
9.2 Equal Opportunity.....	18
10. Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S).	18
10.1 Volunteer OH&S rights & responsibilities	18
10.2 Accidents/Incidents.....	19
11. Additional Information.....	19
11.1 Out of Pocket Expenses	19
11.2 Volunteers Use of Private Vehicles.....	19
11.3 Volunteers Use of Private Boats.	20
11.4 Volunteers Towing Trailers.....	20
11.5 Fishcare Contact List.....	22



1. Introduction

1.1 Volunteering with Fishcare

Volunteering allows people to participate actively in all facets of society in a way that contributes to the spirit or democratic involvement. In living their lives to the full, many people have the desire to voluntarily give their time.

These guidelines are designed to provide clear direction and guidance for the Fishcare Victoria Volunteer Program and for volunteers who join the program. They are specifically provided so that the role of a Fishcare volunteer is clear and is not misinterpreted, but at the same time ensure that the program provides a fair and supportive volunteering environment.

This manual supports volunteer's involvement in Fishcare and sets out to provide easy to understand guidelines for the recruitment, placement, support and acknowledgement of volunteers, while providing information to volunteers on their role, rights and responsibilities with the Victorian Fishcare Program.

The manual outlines the policies, procedures and protocols involved in the program. It provides all staff and volunteers information so that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the program. If there are any further queries or questions regarding the handbook, it is encouraged that you contact a committee member or the relevant Fishcare staff.

The rules of Fishcare Victoria Incorporated and associated groups, of which you are a member, are to be considered as a companion to this handbook.

The term "volunteer" may have a different meaning for different people. To ensure that there is no misunderstanding about what a volunteer is, it can be defined by the role of a volunteer within a government agency.

"Volunteering involves people undertaking defined activities that is of benefit to the community and the volunteer."

These activities are:

- undertaken of the volunteers' own free will and without coercion;
- not undertaken for any form of remuneration;
- not in a position designated as paid, and;
- is underpinned by Volunteering Australia's 'Principles of Volunteering'.

1.2 Fishcare Program Outline

The program is one of community education and participation, using activities to promote and encourage responsible attitudes, sustainable fishing and the care of our fishing environments.

It is operated by volunteers' members of regional incorporated associations in Ballarat and Victoria coastal areas. It offers a range of opportunities for involvement in the schools' education program, children's fishing clinics, conferences and seminars as well as product development.

Our mission:

Shaping the sustainable future of recreational fishing in Victoria through education, hands-on experiences, communication and community participation.

Objectives:

- *encourage recreational fishers to adopt sustainable behaviours and attitudes that conserve and protect fish stocks and increase community stewardship;*
- *inform the community about threats affecting the sustainability of Victorians fish stocks, integrity of fish habitats and aquatic ecosystems;*
- *participate in activities that support sustainable recreational fishing practices and opportunities, improved environmental outcomes and collection of research data;*
- *promote sustainable recreational fishing as a socially beneficial and inclusive activity;*
- *collaborate with partner organisations that support Fishcare Victoria's mission and objectives;*
- *operate as a not for profit organisation and to provide volunteering opportunities for its members; and*
- *maintain a public fund to be called Fishcare Victoria Public Fund for the specific purpose of supporting the environmental objectives/purposes of Fishcare Victoria.*

2. Recruitment and selection of volunteers

2.1 Who can become a volunteer?

Fishcare welcomes everyone over 18 years and under 81. Only those volunteers considered suitable to take on the work available at the time will be placed. Consideration of particular skills, interests and capabilities are all considered when recruiting volunteers. Fishcare Victoria Inc. through the duly elected committee, reserves the right of refusal.

All prospective volunteers need to complete and return or lodge the following documentation:

- Volunteer Contact Details & Code of Conduct Form - Return to Secretary or State Coordinator
- Working with Children Check– form obtained and lodged at any Australia Post Office.

2.2 Volunteer appointment conditions and criteria

All volunteers agree to work within the policies, procedures and rules of Fishcare Victoria and the relevant regional Fishcare group.

In addition, volunteers agree that:

- *While working as a Fishcare Volunteer, you will only promote the interests of Fishcare Victoria. The program is not a platform for political, religious or self-interest activities.*
- *Fishcare volunteers have no authorisation to perform duties as fisheries officers, Fishcare volunteers cannot insist on viewing fish catches or measuring or seizing fish, directing any person to return fish to the water, nor apprehend or interview any person found to be fishing illegally.*



Fishcare volunteers will have a trial period of 3 months before being admitted to the program based on satisfactory attendance and performance. The volunteer will then be issued with a Fishcare uniform. Fishcare uniforms are required to be worn and clearly visible when carrying out Fishcare activities.

Uniforms and name badges remain the property of Fishcare and must be returned when required, or when a volunteer ceases to be actively involved in the Fishcare Volunteer Program. They should then be returned to the secretary.

Uniforms and ID badges cannot be lent to any other person. The secretary or Fishcare Victoria should be notified immediately of the loss of any uniform items or identification badges.

Fishcare volunteers are not to work individually unless prior approval is received from the relevant Facilitator and local committee.

Fishcare volunteers are required to attend an average of one day per month (4 hours) within structured programs or meetings.

Fishcare volunteers are not paid or otherwise remunerated for their activities, however, pre-approved out of pocket expenses related to duties can be reimbursed by the local committee.

2.3 Working with Children Checks

For the purposes of the Working with Children Check requirements, volunteers include anyone who will have direct contact with young people. These checks are free for volunteers and Fishcare will reimburse expenses for passport photos.

2.4. Working with Children Checks Policy

1. All new and existing members of Fishcare groups in Victoria are required to

produce a current satisfactory *Working with Children* card to join or maintain their membership with Fishcare. This requirement is based on the need to screen volunteers for relevant criminal matters to enhance the safety of children and other vulnerable groups with whom Fishcare volunteers work, and in line with existing State Legislation.

2. Volunteers who are unhappy with the outcome of their *Working with Children Check* will be referred to the Grievance Procedures in this handbook.
3. The Fishcare *Working with Children Check* Register will be managed by and kept in a secure and locked location by the Fishcare Facilitator or nominated Fishcare Group Committee member. This register is only to contain a list of volunteer names alongside details of the *satisfactory Working with Children Checks*, and the date on the certificate.
4. At no times is a *Working with Children Check* to be copied, scanned, filed, distributed or viewed in public by any person.
5. *Working with Children Checks* for members of Fishcare groups in Victoria are to be resubmitted as requested by stakeholders or as required by state legislation.
6. Members of the public who are not Fishcare members, but who assist with delivery of Fishcare programs will be required to show a current *Working with Children Check* to their local Fishcare group committee member prior to participation in Fishcare activities.
7. *The Working with Children Check* is not a guarantee that a person is 'suitable' or 'safe' for involvement in Fishcare activities. It is the responsibility of Fishcare Facilitators and Fishcare group committees to assess each volunteer and applicant to determine their suitability for membership – which may include character assessments, referee checks, and monitoring behavior.
8. *Working with Children Checks* for members of Fishcare groups in Victoria are to be resubmitted as requested by stakeholders or as required by state legislation.

2.5 Recreational Fishing License

All Volunteers are expected to have a Victorian Recreational Fishing License while running fishing clinics or excursions. Fishcare Victoria takes no responsibility for unlicensed volunteers and withhold the right to refuse unlicensed volunteers to attend Fishcare fishing events.

2.6 Inactive Volunteers

It is unavoidable that some volunteers will experience a change in circumstances after becoming a Fishcare Volunteer. It may be a change in work, school or family circumstances or an increasing level of commitment elsewhere. It is also possible that volunteers lose interest in the program, or become involved in other organisations.

The Fishcare Volunteer Program becomes less productive with inactive volunteers; therefore, it may become necessary to decide whether you wish to remain in or leave the program.

If you decide to leave the program, you are required to give one month's notice to the secretary advising that you wish to resign from the program and the association.

2.7 Safety information

Volunteers need to be alert to potential hazards.

Volunteers should always refer any unusual circumstances or difficulties incurred during volunteer duties to your facilitator or a committee member, in order that they may be investigated. See appendix for accident reporting form, and a sample of the risk assessment sheets to be completed prior to all activities.

3. Rights and responsibilities

3.1 Fishcare Victoria Inc. Volunteer Position Description

The role of a Fishcare volunteer is primarily an educational one that could involve any or all the following:

- Advising and educating the public of the rules and regulations associated with recreational fishing in Victorian waters. This can be by way of providing static displays, attending expos or the distribution of written material.
- The running of fishing clinics for all age groups and abilities.
- Assisting with the delivery of the Fishcare school education program.
- Helping to protect the environment and aquatic life by informing the public of the need to conserve fisheries resources for present and future generations.
- Providing a link between Fisheries Victoria and the recreational fishing communities of Victoria.
- Assisting Fisheries Victoria in collecting data and information from the recreational fishing community, e.g., creel surveys.
- Ongoing training.
- Wearing a uniform and photo ID whilst 'on duty'.
- Adhering to the rules of the Incorporated Association and the Department of Primary Industries.

Please do not lend out Fishcare uniforms or Identification



It is important to note that the volunteer role does not involve:

- Enforcement duties of any kind.
- The promotion of personal views. For example, political views or involvement in debates.
- Recreational fisheries versus commercial fisheries.
- Promotions for personal financial gain. This includes promoting or the endorsing of private business products.

3.2 Position Profile

Skills, Experience and Personal Characteristics Required

- Excellent oral communications are essential with good English an essential skill.
- Ability to work with children and adults with disabilities.
- Undergo a compulsory Police/Working with Children check.
- Previous experience in fishing, diving or other marine activities is an advantage.
- Ability to deal calmly and rationally with community members to avoid controversial matters.

Position Availability

Week Days and/or Weekends working outdoors during daylight hours only.

Out of Pocket

Reimbursement

Fees are reimbursed for City and East Link tolls, parking, venue entry and public transport fares to and from approved (by committee) expos and shows.

Carpooling is encouraged whenever possible. Also see section 4.1 and 11.1

Training

This is done by mentoring “on the job” when working with an experienced volunteer or staff member. Experience is also gained through attending training workshops, seminars and/or conferences where appropriate (see also 4.1)

Other Details

- Required to work in a team.
- Ideal for tertiary students seeking careers with DPI, Parks Vic or DSE.
- Suitable for others with an interest in the aquatic environment.
- A reasonable level of fitness is desirable as events can involve long periods of standing or walking to and from event/activity sites.

3.3 Volunteer Rights

Before you, as a volunteer, can understand what your rights and responsibilities are, you need to be clear about their definition.

Rights: Can be defined as what is fair and just treatment or something to which they are entitled.

Responsibilities: Are actions for which one is liable to be accountable, either legally or morally.

Fishcare Volunteers have the right to;

- Work in a healthy and safe environment according to relevant Occupational, Health and Safety Acts and be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.
- Have a clearly written job description or role (See 3.1)
- Be adequately covered by insurance.
- Be recognised as a valued team member.
- Be given a copy of the association's rules and any other policy that affects your work.
- Not fill a position previously held by a paid worker or do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes

- Say 'No' if you feel you are being exploited.
- Be provided with orientation to the Fishcare program.
- Have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 2001
- Be provided with sufficient training to do the job.

3.4 Volunteer Responsibilities

Fishcare Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Be sure you have the time and the inclination. Don't over-commit yourself;
- Ensure that the objectives of Fishcare matches your own values and beliefs;
- Abide by the rules of the Inc Association and to pay membership fees when due;
- Ensure that you are satisfied that the funds of the association are expended in accordance with its mission;
- Have a clear and specific understanding of your role and undertake training as requested;
- Be dependable, do what you agree to do;
- Value and support other volunteers and paid staff;
- Provide feedback on the work being done;
- Be considerate - don't pressure others into accepting your views/standards. Respect the view of others;
- Give notice before you leave the program.

Any Fishcare volunteer becoming involved in fisheries compliance activities, or found acting outside of the defined roles of the Fishcare Volunteer Program without permission from Fishcare, may result in the volunteer being dismissed from the program.

3.5 Duty of Care

Fishcare Victoria is conscious of the duty of care that it has to its volunteers. Duty of care is the obligation the organisation has to its staff and volunteers to provide a safe working environment and ensure they are aware of their responsibilities where safety is concerned. Part of this obligation is to provide volunteers with insurance in the case of injury.

4. Training

4.1 Induction Training

The Fishcare program is committed to providing appropriate induction training to volunteers. Induction is an important process so volunteers feel part of the program and know to whom they report and what is expected of them. During induction, volunteers will work with an experienced volunteer who will provide advice and guidance during the first 3 months after which a uniform will be issued to you provided your progress is satisfactory and you have attended at least three Fishcare activities.

4.2 Ongoing Training

At times an opportunity to gain new skills or information may be made available, volunteers are encouraged to participate as appropriate. Such instances may include:

- Fishcare State Conference and workshops
- Public information sessions.
- Seminars run by various organisations.
- Short courses.

5. Supervision of Volunteers

5.1 Events and Activities

Before you undertake any field or activity work, you must notify a committee member or Fishcare regional Facilitator or group leader in accordance with local arrangements. Information should include your name, other volunteers' names, the date, time and location of the activity. This system protects volunteers with insurance cover and allows Fishcare Facilitators to manage problems associated with large groups and avoid overlaps.

An important aspect of Fishcare Volunteer duties is maintaining accurate records of all your Fishcare activities. The keeping of records allows Fishcare Victoria and regional groups to determine the amount of work undertaken by volunteers, which in turn will assist with funding applications.

Records required may vary over time, but include details such as number of persons spoken to, amount of material distributed, actual hours worked, and general observations, e.g., species of fish being caught, average weights and sizes and any pest species being taken, demographics of participants, numbers and general feedback of experiences. These records are reported where required by the use of the approved data sheet and a returned through your local secretary.

All activities must be undertaken with a minimum of two volunteers at any one time and outdoor activities must be done in daylight hours only. This 'buddy' system ensures volunteer safety. Any activity planned should also be notified to the Fishcare group leader or facilitator.

6. Liability Coverage of Volunteers

6.1 Insurance.

All Fishcare Volunteers are covered by insurance while undertaking Fishcare duties if the Facilitator/group leader is advised that the volunteer duties have commenced. As a volunteer, you are covered for all personal accidents (some exceptions occur), including accidental death. This includes major and minor injury, loss of income and medical expenses. Coverage includes travelling between places of residence and place of volunteer activity. For the purpose of providing adequate insurance coverage for Fishcare Volunteers, it has been determined that Fishcare Victoria will recognise hours of duty as being:

When operating for a single day

From the time the volunteer leaves their home until the time the volunteer returns home, provided a direct route is taken between the residence and area of duty.

When a volunteer does not proceed directly between residence and area of

duty, the hours of duty will be recognised as the time at which the volunteer reached or departed the area of duty. For example, if a volunteer proceeds to a friend's house after their activity has finished, the recognised time shall be from the time the volunteer departed the work area.

When operating overnight and away from home

When operating overnight and away from their normal residence, hours of duty will only be recognised for actual hours worked, and for the travel time between residence and location of duty. In other words, Fishcare Victoria and Fishcare groups will only recognise actual hours of service for insurance purposes. This has implications whenever volunteers camp overnight, or attend social functions between actual work. Insurance claims by volunteers can only be accepted if the volunteer has advised the Fishcare Facilitator that they have commenced duties. Failure to register may invalidate any insurance claim. See also 11.2 for private vehicle use.

7. Dealing with the public

7.1 Confidentially

In the course of participating in the Fishcare Volunteer program, you may be exposed to confidential information. It is important that all information be treated as confidential and not released or discussed with third parties unless approval is obtained beforehand. The importance of security cannot be over-emphasised.

7.2 Identification

Identification of volunteers is important for clients' safety. Therefore, a name badge carrying the Fishcare logo and which clearly states the volunteers given name (ideally with a photograph) should be worn at all times in conjunction with the approved uniform.

8. Grievance Procedures

8.1 Grievance Procedures

The Fishcare Incorporated Association has within its constitution, rules for handling disputes through mediation. As a member of that association, volunteers have a process that has been established in order for them to voice any grievance they may have with another member or the association. In addition, as a volunteer with the Fishcare you may convey your grievance to the State Steering Committee. This can be done verbally and the Committee will determine the appropriate action.

If the grievance involves another person, i.e., volunteer or DPI staff member, the volunteer is encouraged to deal directly with the person involved. The volunteer may request the presence of the facilitator or a third party (committee member) in this process. If the grievance involves the Fishcare Facilitator, the volunteer may speak with a committee member or seek the advice of another staff member.

8.2 Disciplinary Procedures

All Fishcare Volunteer groups are Incorporated Associations, and as such have within their constitution rules governing the action to be taken if action is required and under what circumstances. The committee, by resolution, has several options available to them and these are detailed in the Associations Rules.

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of Fishcare Victoria, or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer activities, may be subject to additional disciplinary action by Fishcare Victoria.

Unless the matter is extremely serious, dismissal of volunteers is a 'last resort', and would ordinarily be applied only after other appropriate approaches had been attempted and failed.

Any formal warning to a volunteer must be in writing. It may be identified as a warning with details including: the performance or action under question; the standards expected; the consequences of failure to meet the standards; and the time allowed to meet the standards.

Remembering, if the offence or action is severe enough or a repeat of previous matters, a volunteer may be subject to instant removal from the program.

9. Sexual Harassment and Equal Opportunity.

9.1 Sexual Harassment

Fishcare Victoria Inc. is committed to ensuring that the working environment is free from sexual harassment for all staff and volunteers.

A volunteer with a complaint should convey this to their Fishcare Facilitator. This can be done verbally or in writing and the facilitator will determine appropriate action. If the complaint involves the facilitator, the volunteer may speak with the relevant State committee.

9.2 Equal Opportunity

Managers, volunteers and staff of Fishcare will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person whether an employee or member of the public who comes into contact with the organisation on the basis of sex, marital status, parental status, race, lawful religious or political belief or activity, pregnancy, physical features, industrial activity or personal association with a person with any of the above attributes.

10. Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S).

10.1 Volunteer OH&S rights & responsibilities

Volunteers have the right to:

- Work in a safe and hazard free environment.
- Be trained in the use of equipment they may be required to use.
- Be informed of requirements in relation to risk management before being allocated to a particular task.
- Know where to go and whom to contact if more information or advice is required.

Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that there is prior approval by the facilitator before undertaking Fishcare Volunteer duties.
- Adhere to standard practices and operate in a safe manner at all times.

- Consult the facilitator if there are queries regarding OH&S issues or concerns.
- Everyone has a responsibility in avoiding taking unnecessary risks, and to bring to notice any matters of concern to a committee member or appropriate Fishcare staff member.

10.2 Accidents/Incidents

All accidents and incidents involving Fishcare Volunteers must be reported to the local committee and/or the Regional Fishcare Facilitator. Any kind of accident, injury or incident involving a volunteer must be reported. Volunteers should record details including witnesses present, the date, time, persons involved, location, conditions and what happened.

11. Additional Information

11.1 Out of Pocket Expenses

Occasionally, there will be circumstances where volunteers may incur miscellaneous expenses. Instances may include entrance or parking fees at events or displays.

The committee will have guidelines in place to account for these eventualities but pre- approval should be obtained if it is known in advance that out of pocket costs as described will be known to be incurred. Retain any receipts for these expenses so that on presentation of the receipt to the treasurer, the expenses can be reimbursed.

11.2 Volunteers Use of Private Vehicles.

Generally, volunteers will need to use their own private vehicle for transport to, during and from Fishcare Volunteer Activities. Car-pooling is encouraged between volunteers to assist in this regard. It is important for volunteers to note that whilst Fishcare covers volunteers with personal accident insurance in the case of injury, it does not cover damage to personal equipment and property (including vehicles, boats and associated contents).

As a minimum, it is essential that volunteers using their own vehicle while undertaking Fishcare Volunteer activities have Third Party Property Insurance on their vehicle.

Fishcare will not be liable for any claims that may occur as a result of motor vehicle accidents. Vehicles must be in a roadworthy condition when used for Fishcare duties at all times.

11.3 Volunteers Use of Private Boats.

In some circumstances, volunteers may use boats to undertake fisheries research or other Fishcare activities. The option and feasibility of using boats is at the discretion of the Fishcare Facilitator.

Volunteers using a boat must hold appropriate licences in accordance with the Marine Safety Victoria requirements at that time. All vessels used must be in a seaworthy condition and carry appropriate safety equipment. There is no insurance for people involved in water or boating accidents such as provided by the TAC for vehicles.

If a volunteer does use his/her boat, it is essential that the boat should be covered by a boat and trailer insurance with a third-party liability extension. The facilitator must sight evidence of the insurance policy. Unlike vehicles, boats are not covered by statutory insurance for personal injury to third parties and unless insurance is taken out on that boat, there is potentially a great cost to a volunteer if they are involved in, or were the cause of an accident whilst on duty.

11.4 Volunteers Towing Trailers

Volunteers can tow the Fishcare trailer with their own vehicle provided the vehicle is suitable to tow the type of trailer and is appropriately insured that is

covered by any third-party property damage that may result from towing the trailer.

The following guidelines apply to towing Fishcare trailers;

- Vehicles must be roadworthy and properly equipped for the trailer to be towed.
- Manufacturers usually indicate in owner's manuals and other documents, the maximum mass and other features of trailers they consider to be appropriate for the safe operation, performance and durability of their vehicles.
- The total mass of a trailer and its load must not be more than the Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) as determined by its manufacturer, or the load rating of the coupling on the towbar of the towing vehicle, or the sum of the load ratings of all of its tyres.
- The total mass of the trailer and its load may be up to 1.5 times the unladen mass of the towing vehicle provided the combination has effective brakes and is properly set up. However, if this exceeds the maximum trailer mass recommended by the towing vehicle manufacturer it could invalidate warranty and insurance cover.
- Towing vehicles and trailers must be roadworthy at all times whilst towing.

11.5 Fishcare Contact List

State Coordinator

Sarah Van Stokrom

svanstokrom@fishcare.org.au

0437 672 242

Melbourne Facilitator

Jacinta Early

jeary@fishcarevictoria.org.au

0423 588 345 (Mon, Tues, Wed)

East Gippsland Facilitator

Jenny Allitt

jennifer.allitt@ecodev.vic.gov.au

5152 0456 (Mon, Tues, Wed)

Other Important Contacts:

Reporting of Illegal Fishing 13 FISH 133 474

