

Volunteer Management Framework



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Swimming WA acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. Swimming WA recognises and values the achievements and contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made and continue to make within our community. Swimming WA also acknowledges Whadjuk Noongar people, the traditional custodians of the boodja where we are based, connect and work.



INTRODUCTION

The word 'volunteer' is derived from the word 'voluntarius' of Latin origin and means 'willing, or of one's own choice'. Volunteers are an integral part of swimming and without them our sport would cease to run smoothly, our participation numbers would drop, and we'd never see our children reach their full potential.



What Are The Reasons People Volunteer?

- Give back to the community.
- Feel like you are making a difference.
- Be a role model for the younger members.
- Keeps the brain active.
- Gain experience and knowledge in different areas.
- Creates strong social bonds.
- Feel like you're a 'part of something' and sense of belonging.
- Learn new skills.
- Increase confidence & self-worth.

What Stops People Volunteering?

- Burnout & tiredness.
- Out-of-pocket expenses.
- Perception of giving up all their time/lack of flexibility.
- Assuming swimming knowledge is required.
- Having a disability.
- Low confidence & shyness.
- Being constantly criticised.
- Feeling excluded.
- Losing interest.
- Not being recognised.

**"Your greatness is not what you have.
It's what you give."
Alice Hocker**

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



Purpose Of The Volunteer Management Framework

- To provide an organised and more professional framework to encourage volunteers to continue volunteering with the swimming community.
- Attracting new volunteers to your club and sport.
- Simplify the policies and responsibilities of volunteers.
- Provide support to our swimming clubs.
- Reduce the burden on volunteers.
- Enrich the volunteering experience.
- Improve the knowledge of volunteers.
- Allow the opportunity for success rather than failure for our volunteers.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of volunteers to the greater swimming community.

STEP I - PREPARATION

Preparation is a key aspect of this continuous framework. Preparing will help organise your volunteers and provide them a matrix to work to but also allows for succession planning for when volunteers move on, the club gets bigger or when dealing with unexpected issues.

Why is it Important to be Prepared?

- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- Everyone can be held accountable.
- Club goals can be achieved in a realistic timeframe.
- Allows time to be used efficiently and not wasted.

Elect a Volunteer Co-Ordinator

Most clubs will appoint a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Registrar etc, but very few appoint a Volunteer Co-Ordinator. Having a dedicated Volunteer Co-ordinator to implement the Volunteer Management Framework is a critical step in ensuring our sport's greatest resources are supported and looked after.

Role of the Volunteer Co-Ordinator

- Identifying new volunteers for the club.
- Assisting current club volunteers in their roles.
- Offering or sourcing additional development for their volunteers.

There will be a small time commitment for this role, however it should not create a huge burden on the individual. The Volunteer Co-Ordinator should be someone who is very personable and approachable, doesn't create barriers to opportunities and can get people excited about helping out around their club. If a short, positive conversation with a parent results in gaining a new volunteer to the club, then the Volunteer Co-Ordinator should be willing and able to do this networking.

Things to Consider

You may need to have a think about the following around your club:

- What volunteer roles need to be filled?
- Who is already doing these roles?
- How long has that person been in the role?
- Is there someone who can fill that role if there was a sudden departure?
- Who could possibly do the role in the future?

Volunteer Terms

There can be up to 3 main terms of volunteering:

- Ongoing placements.
- Set-term placements.
- One-off placements.

Ongoing placements are predominantly based upon the volunteer's decision to continue in the role and their capabilities to perform that role to a high standard. These roles are generally continuous and extend throughout the whole year. Examples of these roles include the President, Vice President, Volunteer Co-Ordinators, Statisticians etc.

Set-term placements are for a stated time only before the role needs to be filled again. Typically, the volunteer already in the role will get a chance to reapply but sometimes "new blood" may be required. Examples of these roles include General Committee Members, Coaches, Canteen Managers etc.

One-off placements are those roles that happen casually and aren't a major commitment but a chance to get involved and help your club. Examples of these roles include setting up the BBQ for a fundraiser, cooking sausages, buying raffle tickets, MC-ing a club night etc.



STEP 1 - PREPARATION

Position Descriptions

Having a list and description of what the responsibilities of each volunteer role are do help people to understand what may be required of them within that role. For example volunteer role descriptions, see the Swimming WA Club Toolkit resource on the website.

Annual Review

A review is necessary to check what is required for the upcoming new season and to ensure the needs of your club are being met. Other things to consider in a volunteer review include:

- The position descriptions are relevant to your club and reflect any recent policy, legislation or association changes.
- Identify upcoming important renewal dates.
- Allocation of volunteer roles.
- Identify development opportunities for volunteers (e.g. upcoming TO courses).
- Set any volunteer-based goals.
- Updates on required documents (e.g. WWCC, accreditations etc).
- Guidelines for out-of-pocket expense claims.
- Updates to insurance.

Inclusion

Swimming is a sport for all and we want to encourage anyone and everyone to volunteer their time if they are willing. If we are celebrating the diversity of our athletes, then the same should apply to our volunteers and anyone regardless of age, gender, ability or cultural background should feel welcome and be given a role. Discrimination of any form should not be tolerated.

For more information on inclusion strategies and further resources see the Swimming WA Club Toolkit resource on the website.

STEP 2 - RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of volunteers whether new or already existing for a new season can be quite tricky sometimes. You will always get some people ready and raring to give anything a go and some that are a bit hesitant or in some cases simply unwilling to help. There are many reasons people spend their time volunteering, focusing on these can have a much better result for your club.

A reminder of the reasons why people volunteer are:

- Give back to the community.
- Feel like you are making a difference.
- Be a role model for the younger members.
- Keeps the brain active.
- Gain experience and knowledge in different areas.
- Creates strong social bonds.
- Learn new skills.
- Increase confidence & self-worth.

Having a volunteer recruitment strategy for your club can help align the processes required and set out a structure of recruitment that everyone can follow. For ongoing roles such as a President or Registrar, a recruiting strategy should be similar to that of hiring a full-time employee as the skills and requisites are specific and without the knowledge and skillset that person may be unsuccessful in the role.

Attracting New Volunteers

As mentioned in the previous section there are 3 main terms of volunteering: ongoing, set-term and one-off placements. When attracting new volunteers it is important to give them clear information about what commitment they are making, even if it is a role-share position. By giving the volunteer information there is less chance of there being a kickback regarding time commitments because “they didn’t know.” If someone is completely new to the swimming environment, outlining how jobs operate and connecting them to other volunteers will help keep them around your club a little longer.

Some ways to attract new volunteers to your swimming club are:

- Internal advertising through club email/communication, newsletters etc.
- External advertising (e.g. seek.com, school newsletters etc.)
- Social media posts engaging the local community.
- Putting flyers around the local schools or shopping centres outlining requirements.
- Hosting short information nights/workshops during training times to familiarise volunteers with club personnel and to help create social bonds.
- Club-based volunteer rosters to help with training, equipment pack-up, timekeeping etc.



STEP 2 - RECRUITMENT

Extra Tips to Help Encourage New Volunteers:

- Have clear volunteer role descriptions/be able to clearly explain what is required.
- Be specific in what you require.
- Allow them a trial run first, you will not retain the volunteer if they despise the role.
- Be flexible, allow role sharing if it is possible.
- Offer support and training if the role requires it (e.g. timekeeping).
- Highlight their contributions and why it is so valued at your club.

Attracting Existing Volunteers

For volunteers that have been at your club 12months or 12years, it is crucial to remind them how valued they are and how important their contributions are. If existing volunteers are feeling undervalued, excluded or not recognised for their work it can quite easily lead to them losing interest and not wanting to volunteer anymore. Another reason people stop volunteering is through burnout, tiredness and a generalised feeling that they are giving up all their time – by alleviating these concerns it will help your existing volunteers to keep going.

Some tips to help keep your existing volunteers include:

- Breaking some roles into role sharing positions (e.g. timekeeping or setting up the dolphin timing equipment) to help reduce time commitment if it's an issue.
- Communication is key, make sure everyone knows their role.
- Doing a social media shout-out to one volunteer every week over the season.
- Ensure having fun is a key aspect of the role!

How To Get Parents In The Stands Helping Your Swimming Club?

A simple question in the club's new member information pack, in an email or in a gentle conversation such as "what skills are you strong in?" or "what do you like to do?" and providing a checklist of activities for when parents sign up or renew their kids memberships can identify new volunteers in roles you may never have thought of. For example, a new parent might say they work in creative design or know their way around Canva and might be able to help out with creating some flyers for a competition. You might never have known this person was willing to help out if you hadn't asked that generalised skills-based question.

A simple, polite question that is directed at their hobbies or interests rather than demanding that they help out is more likely to get a positive response. At the end of the day you can't force someone to volunteer, but by making it interesting and valuable to them it goes a long way to getting them to say yes.



STEP 2 - RECRUITMENT

Screening Volunteers

Depending on the level of role, there may be some requirements that need to be met before the volunteer commences their role. These might include:

- Club committee induction
- Working With Children Check (WWCC)
- National Police Clearance (NPC)

Just because a volunteer ticks all the screening checks doesn't necessarily make them a great candidate for your club. You must ensure that a representative from the club meets with them to establish suitability, especially when the volunteering role revolves around children.

Selecting Volunteers

With committee level roles a vote may be required to elect a volunteer to a position, whereas asking parents to help with time-keeping at a time trial event doesn't require a vote because you simply need "an extra pair of hands". It is important to match up a volunteer's skills and abilities as close as you can to a role so that they have an opportunity to do well and avoid feelings of confusion, disappointment and failure. Again, making the experience as fun and positive as possible goes a long way in the volunteer sticking around and helping your club!

Refusing A Volunteer

- The NPC or WWCC is denied by the State.
- There is a risk to the health and safety of children at your swimming club.
- There is a risk to the health and safety to the volunteer when performing a role (e.g. a Technical Official with a severe knee injury standing on pool deck for 5+ hours without breaks).
- The volunteer doesn't comply with reasonable requests from the swimming club.

As a reminder, Swimming WA's policies state that you cannot be a member of 2 clubs at the same time; this means you can't be a Committee Member at one club and be a Coach or Technical Official at another club.

It is unfair and discriminatory to refuse a volunteer at your club based on a disability, cultural background, age or gender. Safety still remains the highest priority, however rather than turning someone away you will need to find a role they can fulfill. A committee member role might not be appropriate for someone with an intellectual disability, however handing out certificates at a club night, or helping with a fundraiser might be better suited and they are still being included. It might not be safe for a 95year old to be pacing up and down pool deck, however an MC role or helping hand out medals might be more suitable.

Inventive Ways To Attract Volunteers

- Refer a friend promotion: do you have a friend or family member that might be thinking of volunteering somewhere?
- Virtual volunteers: due to geographical barriers, is there someone that can volunteer in an administrative capacity from home?
- Connect with corporate volunteers: is there a local corporate business you can reach out to for assistance as part of their social responsibility initiatives?
- Advertise at universities or local schools: giving back or community service might be requisites for units or courses.
- Advertise on local noticeboards: assists in targeting an older age group who might not be on social media.
- Duke4Sport: engaging with participants and/or schools participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award to complete their voluntary service segment with your swimming club.

STEP 3 - ORIENTATION

An orientation should be conducted when a new volunteer begins at the club.

The main reasons an orientation should be completed is:

- To make the volunteer feel welcome and included.
- To help them feel safe within the swimming club environment.
- To provide an opportunity to meet other new volunteers at the swimming club.

Volunteers should receive a welcome letter which thanks them for agreeing to volunteer as well as outlining any codes of conduct they must adhere to by representing the swimming club. An orientation for a new committee member should be thorough and done as soon as possible; whereas an orientation might not be necessary for a volunteer performing a one-off role, however ensuring they understand the requirements of what they are doing is highly important.

An orientation checklist can be helpful to follow, see below for some points to consider:

- Is the volunteer aware of the swimming club's strategic plan, vision and goals?
- Has the volunteer been given a role description and understand it?
- Is it clear who the volunteer reports to?
- Has the volunteer been shown around the facility and club rooms?
- Has the volunteer received important club documents (e.g. constitution, policies etc)?
- Does the volunteer understand all health, safety and risk management issues?
- Has the volunteer been welcomed to the swimming club?
- Has the volunteer been introduced to other volunteers, coaches and officials at the swimming club?
- Has the volunteer been informed of any uniform or PPE requirements?

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

Coretta Scott King



STEP 4 - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There may be some training required for volunteer roles and so as part of the orientation and annual review, the Volunteer Co-Ordinator and/or President should help to identify any further training required for the swimming club's volunteers. A good place to start is:

- Understand the current skills and abilities of the volunteers.
- Discuss with volunteers if they are interested in further training (e.g. TO's upskilling their accreditation).
- Providing volunteers details of upcoming training opportunities.

It is important that volunteers have access to training opportunities as this helps enhance their skillset and has a positive impact on volunteer retention.

Working with the volunteer to make these training opportunities happen may require flexibility and in some cases financial assistance. Training expenses can be seen as a barrier, however providing opportunity to our volunteers and investing in their growth is recommended because without our volunteers we could not run our sport.

Why is Professional Development Important?

- Ensures minimum level of knowledge is up-to-date.
- Helps you to gain or grow your current skillset.
- Provides necessary experience to improve performance.
- Helps challenge and develop critical thinking skills.
- Helps avoid feelings of staleness or complacency.
- Offers opportunities for personal growth.

Opportunities For Training

- Swimming WA: host numerous coach/teacher, TO and athlete development opportunities across the year across the state, so keep up to date by visiting the Swimming WA website for further information on these events.

- Swimming WA: host a series of educational webinars developed by internal staff as well as outsourcing for topics such as strategic planning, insurance, complaint management and mental health.
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries: DLGSC provide face-to-face and online resources for topics which includes: club governance, financial management, managing people and goal setting.
- Play By The Rules: an online portal with training opportunities across child protection, harassment and discrimination, inclusive coaching and member protection issues.

Evaluation & Feedback

It is important to value your volunteers by checking in on them from a personal and professional point of view. This includes the volunteer being able to provide feedback to the swimming club as well as the swimming club providing feedback to the volunteer. Majority of the time the volunteer's evaluation will be positive, however in addressing any conflict or issues try to make it constructive rather than negative.

Feedback Sandwich

The Feedback Sandwich is an established technique to provide feedback in such a way that any negative feedback is softened by positive feedback before and after:

- Bread: first positive comment.
- Meat/Salad: constructive feedback.
- Bread: reiteration of positive comment.

This technique works if you are still clear with the volunteer and don't end up discouraging the positive comments. Remember you are pinpointing ways to improve performance not picking apart their personality; be cognisant of the way the feedback is delivered as well as the volume and tone of your voice.

STEP 5 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praising our sport's volunteers is crucial in making them all feel valued and valuable, which leads to increased personal satisfaction and higher volunteer retention rates. Acknowledgement can be formal or informal and there are many avenues to achieve this and there may be different ways to acknowledge volunteers depending on the role they are undertaking for the swimming club.

Examples of types of acknowledgements include:

- Simply saying 'thank you' at the end of a meeting or event.
- Writing a small piece about the volunteer in a club newsletter.
- Adding a list of active volunteers to a club noticeboard.
- Adding recognition to volunteers in any speeches presented by the swimming club.
- Sending a letter outlining 1-2 great things the volunteer has done and thanking them for the contribution.
- Social media and website shout-out to volunteers.
- Sending acknowledgements to local councils to put in community newspapers.
- Send a birthday card.
- Free invitation to any swimming club social events.
- Free pool entry if the swimming club is hosting an event at a facility that charges entry.
- Providing a name badge, iron-on patch or lanyard to wear when representing the swimming club.
- Adding a list of volunteers to be acknowledged in the Annual Report.
- Provide a character reference if the volunteer is applying for work.
- Presenting the volunteer with an appreciation certificate.
- Presenting a long-term volunteer with Life Membership to the swimming club.

- Nomination to a supervisory role if available.
- Financial assistance towards training and development opportunities (e.g. club conference, clinics etc).
- Acknowledgement or lap of honour on pool deck at an event.
- Praising all swimming club volunteer's during National Volunteer Week (usually in May).
- Nominating your superstar volunteers into the Swimming WA Volunteer of the Month program which acknowledges the volunteer's efforts to the wider swimming community.
- Nominating your superstar volunteers into the Swimming WA Volunteer of the Year award which is awarded at the annual Awards of Excellence.



STEP 6 - SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession Planning

Succession Planning is a vital step in the Volunteer Management Framework as it helps to set up the future of your swimming club. As much as we'd love volunteers to be helping out for 75 years it isn't realistic, and so planning for your club's future is important and this is why this framework is continuous. As part of the annual review, committee meetings and AGM, succession planning should be a recurring agenda item as this process is ongoing.

What would happen if majority of your volunteers reduced their commitments or stepped away from volunteering altogether?

Barriers To Succession Planning

- Having only one person holding all the information for the swimming club.
- Thinking that volunteers will never leave, move cities, get sick or stop wanting to help.
- Poor delegation which leads to resentment and complaints.
- Dreading change and believing that things will never need to change.

Where To Begin With Succession Planning?

It's in the name, make a plan. A good place to start is to review Step 1 especially making sure you've noted things to consider, you have position descriptions and have identified potential, future needs of your swimming club (e.g. your President has his 70th birthday in 12 months time and will retire, your club will need to replace him).

Next, identify any potential contenders to be in a junior position at the swimming club and could build their way up and learn from other volunteers. Developing a rapport with this person and communicating clearly your intentions and that you see them as a strong person to step into a great position with your swimming club is very important.

You might get someone that is flattered to be asked but has no interest, or someone that is flattered and prepared to learn and develop into a superstar volunteer. A mentoring system is also a good thing to consider. 'Buddying' up a junior volunteer with a senior volunteer means they can shadow them across the season and learn as they go, it means they can see real-time concerns and how to manage them, receive on-the-job training, support and guidance. If appropriate, attending committee meetings helps develop an understanding of the running of the club from a governance perspective.

Other Considerations

- Business or strategic plan: is available to be viewed by junior volunteers so they can feel confident the club is on a good path.
- Procedures manual: document containing important information regarding system or equipment use (e.g. dolphin timing equipment, meet manager etc).
- Reporting documents: ensuring there is follow up process from documents from previous years (e.g. financial reports, annual reports etc).

Volunteer Handover

If possible, when a volunteer ceases their role a handover to the next volunteer taking over the role should be encouraged. This allows opportunity for a smooth changeover, knowledge and experience to be shared as well as keeping communication lines open in case there are any questions or concerns in the near future. Handover notes are always a great way to help the new volunteer become acquainted to the role and provides a resource for them to use as much as they like rather than feeling bad if they're constantly calling or messaging to ask questions. It is also an opportunity to get some final feedback from the volunteer if they are leaving the swimming club altogether and could prove invaluable to improving the succession planning.



Swimming WA
thanks all
our amazing
volunteers!

