

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Revision date: 23rd October 2023

Date of next review: November 2024

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the standards to which Sydney Festival will adhere in offering volunteer opportunities. It is intended to ensure that:

- **All volunteer opportunities are offered in an accessible, open and inclusive way.**
- **Sydney Festival offers volunteer opportunities that are mutually beneficial to both Sydney Festival and to volunteers.**
- **Volunteer roles extend and support, but are not the same as, staff roles.**
- **Sydney Festival volunteer opportunities follow best practice standards, as outlined in the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement**

A copy of this policy will be made available to all volunteers when they commence with Sydney Festival. A copy will be made available online.

All volunteers and staff must agree that they have read, understood and will adhere to the principles set out in this policy. The Volunteer Coordinator/s agree to adhere to all related procedures for the recruitment and management of volunteers.

Sydney Festival will monitor and review this policy regularly and will particularly focus on whether the policy is successful in supporting Sydney Festival to meet its wider diversity and inclusion objectives.

BACKGROUND

Volunteering, as defined by Volunteering Australia, is “**time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.**” Volunteering is an excellent way for people to contribute existing skills, gain new skills and experience, and connect people to contemporary art.

This policy applies only to volunteer opportunities offered by Sydney Festival and is not intended to apply to work experience, internships or professional placements.

Outlined in this policy:

1. Administrative procedures
2. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
3. Volunteer Training & Development, Support and Recognition
4. Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

1. Administrative procedures

1.1. Role of Volunteer management within Programming Department

The successful involvement of volunteers requires a planned and organised effort. Sydney Festival will appoint dedicated Volunteer staff member/s within the Programming department to provide a central coordinating point for effective communication and administration of volunteer engagement.

The department is responsible for maintaining liaison with other volunteer programs in the community and assisting with community-wide efforts to recognise and promote volunteering; effective planning and involvement of volunteers; reviewing policies and procedures in-line with current best practice; reviewing and identifying creative and mutually beneficial volunteer opportunities, through consultation and feedback; implementing and ensuring accessible and inclusive recruitment processes; and tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers to Sydney Festival.

1.2 Maintenance of Volunteer records

Volunteer personnel records will be treated with the same confidentiality as staff personnel records and stored securely with Sydney Festival databases, Be Collective. Data stored will include Volunteer's name, contact details, information relating to access requirements, volunteer roles undertaken, and total hours volunteered.

Sydney Festival is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment for all volunteers. As such, Sydney Festival will also collect and review diversity monitoring information on applicants for voluntary roles. Protected characteristics of volunteers will be collected anonymously and confidentially and stored securely, separate to applications and not associated to individuals.

1.3 Insurance

All volunteers will be covered under Sydney Festival Personal Accident Insurance for Voluntary Workers. To ensure volunteers are covered by this insurance, they must be between the age of 18 and 75. Sydney Festival does not insure volunteer's personal belongings while carrying out their role.

We aim to ensure that volunteers can carry out their roles without risk of harm at all times. We carry out risk assessments for all our volunteer roles, and individual assessments for anyone with particular requirements.

This data will be monitored by Volunteer staff member/s only after shortlisting and will only be used for reporting purposes, and to improve diversity within the volunteer program.

1.4 Representing Sydney Festival

Volunteers are representatives of Sydney Festival within the scope of their role descriptions. Without prior consultation and approval from appropriate staff, Volunteers must not take any action which might significantly affect or obligate Sydney Festival. This includes making public statements to the press, coalition or

lobbying efforts with other organisations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations.

1.5 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they may encounter while volunteering with Sydney Festival. This includes information involving staff, other volunteers, artist project details and overall Sydney Festival business. If confidentiality is not maintained, the volunteer may be asked to leave.

1.6 Social Media

It is important to remember that volunteers, as well as staff, represent Sydney Festival at all times, including on Social Media channels. As such, it is suggested that reasonable consideration is taken when engaging in social media for personal use. Please use the following points as a reference.

- Be aware that a Facebook post, tweet or Instagram image can be visible to the entire world.
- Include a disclaimer if the content of your post or comment can in any way be linked to Sydney Festival.
- Avoid negativity and maintain a professional approach.
- Be sensitive about Sydney Festival's confidential information. For example, posting images online during the installation period.
- Be open, truthful and accountable.

A private Facebook group has been set up, with the primary purpose of social communications between volunteers, and between staff and volunteers. Volunteers will only be accepted into this group once they have been accepted as a volunteer. Volunteers are encouraged to use this platform to get to know each other and see updates from the Volunteer staff member/s about the Volunteer Program.

Communication through any platform that is disrespectful to others will not be tolerated.

1.7 Reimbursement of expenses

To help limit barriers to volunteering, Sydney Festival will reimburse volunteers with reasonable, pre-approved, out-of-pocket expenses during the season, related to volunteering with Sydney Festival. Prior approval from the dedicated Volunteer Staff member/s must be sought for all expenditures, and expenses paid will be at the discretion of the Finance and Administration Department.

1.8 Dress Code

Volunteers will be provided with a uniform (normally a t-shirt) to wear during the season, to be easily identified by visitors. As a representative of Sydney Festival, volunteers are responsible for dressing appropriately for the venue conditions and role that they are carrying out. Volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes while undertaking any activities with Sydney Festival.

1.9 Access to Sydney Festival property and materials

As appropriate, Volunteers will have access to Sydney Festival property and materials necessary to fulfil their voluntary role. Volunteers will be responsible for only carrying out activities that they believe are within their personal capacity and will advise their supervisor should they feel uncomfortable with any tasks set or requested of them. Property and materials will be utilised only when directly required for Sydney Festival purposes.

1.10 Be Collective Volunteer Software

To assist with managing and rostering volunteers, Sydney Festival uses a Cloud-based Database system called Be Collective. Once accepted as a volunteer, individuals are responsible for maintaining and updating their personal records to ensure that these are current. Volunteers are responsible for signing up to and attending the minimum number of shift requirements as outlined in role descriptions, notifying the Volunteer staff team if unavailable to attend a shift, signing up to and attending required training sessions and ensuring the time clock has been completed for each shift attended.

2. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

2.1 Scope of Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers may be involved in selected events of Sydney Festival, so long as the involvement is mutually beneficial and enjoyable. Volunteer roles extend and support, but are not the same as, staff roles and volunteers will not, under any circumstance, be used to displace paid employees from their positions.

2.2 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are a valuable support to Sydney Festival and its staff. Volunteers will be provided with meaningful opportunities, supportive and effective supervision, the right to be treated with dignity and respect, the right to full involvement and participation, and regular thanks and recognition for the donation of their time. In return, the volunteers will agree to the value and responsibilities as outlined in the **Volunteer Agreement**. Sydney Festival will consult with volunteers about matters that may have a major impact on how they are able to carry out their role.

2.3 Volunteer Role Descriptions

Volunteers will receive a role description within their volunteer manual, outlining the general responsibilities of volunteers.

Prior to volunteer recruitment, role descriptions will be reviewed and developed for each volunteer position. Volunteers will receive specific role descriptions, relevant to their specific role/shift. All volunteer role descriptions will outline the purpose and responsibilities of said role, and the training and development opportunities offered by Sydney Festival to support the volunteer.

Role descriptions will be provided to volunteers after they have been assigned to a shift and will be referred to through ongoing volunteer management and evaluation.

2.4 Distinction between staff and volunteers

Requests to continue volunteering if an existing volunteer becomes a Sydney Festival employee, or, conversely, for a current Sydney Festival employee to commence a volunteer role, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests will be approved so long as the roles are considered to be distinctly different (i.e., Visitor-facing and Office-based tasks), or if continuing to volunteer or taking on a volunteer role would not conflict with the individual's ability to carry out their paid role at Sydney Festival effectively.

2.5 Staff Requests for Volunteers

Requests for Volunteer support will be submitted in writing to the Volunteer staff member/s with advance notice by the interested department, along with a short description of the role and a requested time commitment. All staff understand that the recruitment and involvement of volunteers is enhanced by creative, interesting and mutually beneficial roles.

The Volunteer staff member/s reserves the right to refuse to recruit or involve volunteers if the role is not distinct from a staff role or considered to be a worthwhile and valuable opportunity for the volunteer, as well as Sydney Festival.

2.6 Volunteer Recruitment

Sydney Festival values volunteering as a way to encourage and broaden participation in the arts and to involve communities, and therefore actively recruits volunteers through consultation with community networks. As a registered not-for-profit organisation it is right that Sydney Festival involves volunteers to help us achieve our aims and make the best use of our resources.

Sydney Festival is committed to diversity and inclusion, and involving volunteers is one way that we encourage people from a range of backgrounds to get involved with the season. Volunteers are a link between the public and the events, and it is important that they represent the diversity of the Sydney community. Sydney Festival gains immensely from volunteers' input insights, and volunteers themselves benefit from their involvement with Sydney Festival. Benefits include but are not limited to; meeting others, being part of a team, learning about art or sharing a love of contemporary art, gaining or contributing skills, supporting others or being supported. Sydney Festival recognises that people volunteer for a variety of reasons, and in recruiting volunteers we take into account what volunteers may gain from specific roles.

All volunteer applications will be considered on an equal opportunities basis without regard to age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion or belief, sex, gender identity or gender expression, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic.

The only requirements for volunteer recruitment are that the volunteer is between the age of 18 and 75 and is able to undertake volunteering responsibilities on behalf of Sydney Festival.

2.7 Application process

All volunteers, regardless of whether they have been involved with Sydney Festival as a volunteer previously, are required to complete an online application form outlining their motivations to volunteer. Volunteer staff member/s will read all applications prior to accepting volunteers. For returning volunteers, historic feedback regarding said volunteer's performance and engagement with the program will be considered prior to a volunteer being accepted. Sydney Festival will make reasonable adjustments to the application process (including large-print or Easy Read versions, over-the-phone applications, and make hard-copy versions available) to ensure that our opportunities are accessible to all.

2.8 Volunteer Acceptance

Following a sufficient application, successful volunteers will receive written acceptance confirmation. No volunteer will commence volunteering until they have been officially accepted for a specific role, read and understood the volunteer agreement and have completed all necessary paperwork and training relevant to that role.

2.9 Professional Services

Volunteers will not perform professional services on behalf of Sydney festival for which certification or licensing is required, even if currently certified or licensed to do so.

2.10 Length of Service

All volunteers are required to undertake a minimum of four shifts, three of which must be within their allocated group. One of the volunteer's four shifts can be undertaken within the open category or within their selected group. Volunteers are welcome to do more within reason, at the discretion of the Volunteer staff member/s. The overall duration of volunteering will be no longer than the season. All volunteer roles will end at the conclusion of the season, without expectation or requirement of reallocation of that volunteer.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to accept further involvement with volunteering at the end of the season, although are welcomed and encouraged to reapply as a volunteer for future Sydney Festivals. Sydney Festival accepts that volunteers may instead choose to seek employment or not to return to volunteering.

3. Volunteer Training & Development, Support and Recognition

3.1 Orientation and Induction

All volunteers will receive a general induction prior to commencing, which includes an introduction to Sydney Festival, Work Health and Safety (WHS) information and Visitor Care training. Sydney Festival will provide volunteers with the tools they need to carry out their role successfully, including any additional training as required, that is relevant to the role.

If a volunteer commences post-induction, they will receive an online recording or a condensed version of the Induction delivered by the Volunteer staff member/s,

and where requested, supplemented by 'on-the-job' learning with an experienced volunteer.

Sydney Festival will provide a handbook for volunteers, covering any considered relevant information needed during the season.

3.2 Ongoing Training and Development

To support Volunteer's continued learning and development, Sydney Festival will provide additional (optional) training and learning opportunities in the lead up to and throughout the exhibition. These will help to best prepare volunteers for their specific roles, gain new skills, share existing skills with each other, familiarize themselves with Sydney Festival venues, and act as a social opportunity to build new relationships with each other with Sydney Festival staff.

3.3 Volunteer Recognition

It is important for volunteers to feel appreciated and valued, and Sydney Festival will ensure that we provide our volunteers with regular, appropriate thanks and acknowledgement. Formally, this will take on the format of a 'Thank You' celebration at the end of the season on **28th January 2024** with Sydney Festival staff and Artists to celebrate the contribution of volunteers and staff to Sydney Festival.

3.4 Volunteer References and Career Progression

Sydney Festival recognises that some volunteers join Sydney Festival to gain valuable skills and experience to help with job prospects and career progression. While volunteering with Sydney Festival does not follow a direct line into employment with Sydney Festival, we encourage and support volunteers to apply for jobs through the regular channels, if desired. Sydney Festival is happy to provide references on request, outlining experience and hours involved, providing the individual has met the minimum commitment as a volunteer.

4. Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

4.1 Volunteer and Staff relationships

Sydney Festival volunteers and staff are considered to be partners and will work collaboratively in implementing the mission and programs of Sydney Festival, with each having an equal but complementary role to play. It is important that volunteers and staff both understand and respect the needs and abilities of the other.

4.2 Feedback Mechanisms

Volunteers can offer feedback to Sydney Festival staff at any time either verbally or written, and are actively encouraged to do so, to allow us to continually improve and evolve.

4.3 Volunteer Care training for Sydney Festival staff

A presentation on best practice when working with volunteers will be provided to all staff prior to the season starting. In addition to this, staff are encouraged to attend volunteer training, networking and social opportunities to get to know volunteers, welcoming them to the Organisation.

4.4 Communication

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information relevant to successfully carry out their volunteer role. As such, volunteers will be included in and have access to all appropriate email communication, training notes and other material necessary to their role. In the lead up to and throughout the season, most of this information will be updated on or sent out via Be Collect volunteer software.

The Volunteer staff member/s are responsible for ensuring that the volunteer receives all news and information updates about their volunteering. The Volunteer is responsible for ensuring that their contact information is up-to-date, and will inform the Volunteer staff member/s if they require an alternative method of communication to phone or email.

4.5 Volunteer absence and finding a replacement.

Volunteers are expected to carry out their role on a regular, scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled shift, volunteers will inform the Volunteer staff member/s with as much advance notice as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. Continual absenteeism, without valid reason or communication, will result in a review of the volunteer's involvement with Sydney Festival.

Through the volunteer software system Be Collective, volunteers are able to self-schedule shifts based on their availability and similarly are able to amend these. If a shift change is required within 48 hours, the volunteer is required to notify the Volunteer staff member/s. Where cancelling a shift is unavoidable, volunteers will be encouraged to select a different shift in exchange.

Volunteers are encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences. The substitute should be another volunteer with the required qualification/s for the shift they are filling. Such substitution will only be accepted following consultation with the Volunteer staff member/s. Volunteer substitutes may only be recruited through people who are currently enrolled as volunteers with Sydney Festival.

4.6 Volunteer Evaluation

Volunteers have the opportunity to seek review from the Volunteer staff member/s at any time regarding their involvement and performance in their role. Evaluations are optional, and largely dependent on the individual's interest and desire to self-improve or provide feedback about their role. Evaluations may be undertaken informally via conversation with the Volunteer staff member/s, or if preferred a time may be set up to sit down to discuss in more depth.

Evaluations will include both a review of the volunteer's performance within their current role, and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the role or project with which they are involved. The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and Sydney Festival to review

and improve their relationship. Evaluations will be scheduled for a time that is suitable to both the volunteer and the Volunteer staff member/s.

In addition, at the end of the season, all volunteers will be asked to complete an annual volunteer survey, which will help Sydney Festival to identify what is working well, and where changes may be implemented for the future.

4.7 Volunteer Resignation and Exit Interviews

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer role with Sydney Festival at any time, however where possible advance notice is always helpful to ensure that the volunteer role will be covered. In the case of a volunteer leaving before the end of the season, Sydney Festival will offer them an exit interview which may be carried out in person, or via email. The Exit Interview will include; reason for leaving, suggestions and feedback about how to improve the volunteer role, and the option to involve the volunteer within a different capacity at Sydney Festival.

4.8 Volunteer Management Report

The Volunteer staff member/s will compile a final report at the end of each season, outlining all details relating to the involvement of volunteers. This will also include feedback collected from the annual volunteer survey, with recommendations for the following season as well as volunteer recognition and positive messaging about the Volunteer program for inclusion in the Annual Report. It will also include anonymous demographic statistics drawn from the final survey, which will help to improve diversity within the volunteer program for future Sydney Festivals.