

# Volunteer Policy

## Policy

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**STATE RECORDS**  
of South Australia



Government of South Australia  
State Records

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## Purpose Statement

This Volunteer Policy (Policy) ensures transparency and clarity about the role of volunteers at State Records. It defines the relationship between the work of volunteers and that of paid staff. It also defines principal responsibilities of State Records and its volunteers.

## Introduction

State Records of South Australia (State Records) recognises that volunteering enables people to participate actively in society in a way that is personally satisfying and contributes to the spirit of community involvement. State Records' Volunteer Program contributes to the ongoing access to and use of the State Records archive by the community.

Volunteers choose to give their time, skills, and experience, and bring with them diverse expertise, life skills and knowledge. Volunteers are proven to be advocates for archival institutions. At State Records volunteers can engage with historical records and their love of history.<sup>1</sup>

The work of volunteers is welcomed and encouraged by State Records as a valuable supplement to the work performed by paid staff. Volunteers are not intended to replace existing staff or circumvent future recruitment of paid staff. It is with staff support and guidance that volunteers can best contribute to the work of the archive.<sup>2</sup>

## Background

State Records' Volunteer Program (Program) was established in 2013 with a project to item list, rehouse and digitise photographs of soldiers, sailors and nurses who enlisted in the First World War.

At the end of 2021 the Program had grown to seven volunteers working across digitisation, indexing and item listing projects. Volunteers have contributed to improving access to records relating to Aboriginal people and care leavers, as well as records that are highly popular for family historians.

## Scope

This Policy applies to State Records' volunteers and staff working onsite at any State Records office and offsite.

## Volunteer Policy

### Principles for engaging volunteers

Volunteers are engaged in work that, without their assistance, would not be undertaken or would not be done in the foreseeable future. Most of the tasks that volunteers

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<sup>1</sup> Annelie de Villiers, 'Volunteers in Australian archives', in *Archives and Manuscripts*, July 2017

<sup>2</sup> Australian Society of Archivists, *ASA Statement on Volunteers in Archives*, 2 December 2020: <https://www.archivists.org.au/about-us/statements/asa-statement-on-volunteers-in-archives>

undertake will increase knowledge of the contents of the archive and ongoing access to and preservation of the records.

Projects suitable for volunteers will be identified by State Records staff and developed by the Volunteer Program Working Group (Group). The Group will ensure projects meet requirements to improve access to, and preservation of, records. Projects will be allocated by taking into account a volunteer's interests and skills and State Records resources for supervision, quality control and finalisation work.

Volunteers will be supported to:

- contribute their skills, knowledge and experience to work that will benefit the community and State Records
- develop new skills aligned with their personal interests
- engage with a rich historical archive, and
- work on specific projects, such as digitising, indexing, item listing, transcribing, research or minor preservation.

### State Records' Responsibilities

- » Provide volunteers with appropriate induction and training
- » Provide onsite volunteers with appropriate access to State Records offices
- » Provide onsite volunteers with a healthy and safe work environment, including information and training regarding safe work practices, behaviours, and work environment
- » Make training available on trauma-informed approaches to using archives where volunteers may be working with upsetting and/or traumatic content<sup>3</sup>
- » Ensure the Program includes opportunities for volunteers living with disability and that projects and workspaces are accessible to people living with disability<sup>4</sup>
- » Provide Personal Accident Cover for onsite volunteers and ensure that they understand the coverage provided to them
- » Create volunteer positions that do not replace paid positions that undertake the core work of the agency set out in the *State Records Act 1997*
- » Provide appropriate levels and availability of support and management for volunteers
- » Ensure the duties undertaken by volunteers are suited to their capabilities
- » Provide volunteers with access to policies relevant to their role
- » Ensure that the rights of volunteers are respected and take action if they are infringed

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<sup>3</sup> An example of this training is the Australian Society of Archivists' *A Trauma-Informed Approach to Managing Archives*: <https://www.archivists.org.au/events/event/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-managing-archives> (accessed 17/12/2021)

<sup>4</sup> Attorney-General's Department, *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024*, October 2020: <https://www.agd.sa.gov.au/about-us/disability-access-and-inclusion>, Inclusive SA Theme 4: Learning and employment

- » Treat volunteers equally as valued team members, and advise them of opportunities to participate in decision making
- » Ensure volunteers are made aware of all changes to the workplace in a timely manner
- » Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of volunteers

State Records may decline the services of a volunteer applicant, or with due process, vary the duties or terminate the agreement with a volunteer.

### Volunteer Responsibilities

- » If working onsite, undertake volunteer work for a minimum of four hours per week
- » Contact a volunteer supervisor or Programs and Engagement Officer if unable to attend the workplace for any period of time
- » Accept direction and supervision
- » Provide feedback on progress of the tasks undertaken
- » Read notifications and communications from State Records
- » Respect and work towards State Records' vision, objectives and values outlined in State Records' Strategic plan
- » Comply with State Records' policies relevant to their role, including those outlined in the Volunteer Agreement
- » If working offsite, complete the Home-Based Workplace Hazard Self-Assessment Checklist
- » When working on a project, abide by all reasonable instructions provided by State Records
- » Be accountable and accept constructive feedback
- » Undertake training as required and ask for support when it is needed
- » When discussing State Records activities, clearly state that the views expressed are their own and that they are not speaking on behalf of State Records
- » Abide by all legislative responsibilities under the *Equal Opportunities Act 1984* and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, including the immediate reporting of any workplace injuries, near misses or hazards
- » Provide a National Police Check or Working with Children Check to be sighted by State Records, that has been issued within the previous three years

Volunteers may decline or resign from a project or, in consultation with State Records, vary the duties of a project.

### Volunteer Documentation

The following documentation is required to be completed by volunteers prior to their commencement with State Records or at induction:

- » Volunteer Application form

- » Volunteer Agreement
- » Volunteer Induction
- » Sighting of Police Check form

Need further assistance?

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