Volunteer Rights & Volunteer Checklist

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by awards or work-place agreements. Volunteers however do have rights, some which are enshrined in legislation and some which could be considered the moral obligations of an organisation involving volunteers. Volunteering Australia promotes the following as the basic rights of a volunteer.

As a volunteer you have the right:

- to work in a healthy and safe environment (refer various Occupational Health and Safety Act[s]);
- to be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation;
- to be adequately covered by insurance;
- to be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are working;
- to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses;
- to be given a copy of the organisations volunteer policy and any other policy that affects your work;
- not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker;
- not to do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes;
- to have a job description and agreed working hours;
- to have access to a grievance procedure;
- to be provided with orientation to the organisation;
- to have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988; and
- to be provided with sufficient training to do your job.

Check that:

- The organisation is a not for profit;
- The purpose of the organisation matches your own values and beliefs;
- The organisation carries volunteer insurance;
- Your role is clear and specific;
- The organisation can provide you with written information about its purpose and activities; and
- You are satisfied that the funds of the organisation are expended in accordance with its mission.