

Attracting and Managing Volunteers

how to be equipped for volunteers, find them & keep them!

Volunteers are a vital ingredient for Landcare. From Landcare committees to Landcare projects, our members are what ensures Landcare is grassroots driven and connected to the community. Below are ideas for being volunteer-ready and how to find volunteers.

5 TIPS TO BE VOLUNTEER-READY

1. Insurance

Ensure your insurance covers your volunteers for the work they are undertaking. This includes Voluntary Workers Insurance, Public Liability Insurance for Landcare group activities and also Association Liability Insurance for Landcare Network Committees. Visit <http://qwalc.org.au/qwalc-insurance/> for more details.

2. Working With Children

If your Landcare organisation is involved in providing Landcare activities for children (persons less than 18 years of age), a Working With Children Check is essential for any volunteers. Checks for volunteers are free. For more details, or to access the online application Working With Children Check, visit www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

3. Induction

A Landcare Network is a busy place and it can be difficult to find the time to introduce volunteers to your organisation. Consider developing a 'Volunteer Welcome Pack', along with background information of your organisation, key contacts and a

calendar of events, which can be provided to any new volunteers. It can also be distributed at any Landcare display stands / stalls and also public offices like the local council office, library and community centre.

4. Work Health + Safety

It is vital to provide any new volunteers with a Work Health and Safety Induction, to ensure they are aware of health and safety risks involved with volunteering. This includes both outdoor Landcare project sites and also the Landcare office. See the QWALC templates 001-003 for a WHS Induction Checklist and examples of Job Safety Analysis / Risk Assessment documents.

5. Are you Attractive to Volunteers?

Do your volunteers enjoy themselves? Remember, volunteers are donating their labour and expertise free, so it is important to know they are also enjoying their volunteering experience. Do you have a clear idea of how volunteers could be involved in your organisation? Think about creating a role within your organisation to work on opportunities for volunteers, attracting volunteers and promoting volunteerism to the community.

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ATTRACTING VOLUNTEERS TO YOUR ORGANISATION:

1. Put the Word Out

The community needs to know you are looking for volunteers and that you also welcome volunteers. Consider a visit to a community service organisation such as Rotary, Probus or Lions, to promote your next volunteering opportunity. Remember, if the community knows the face behind the organisation, then they are more likely to feel a human connection to your Landcare group. They are also more likely to help!

2. Piggy Backing

There's nothing like free publicity. By piggy-backing on existing community events, you have the opportunity to promote your group free, or at reduced cost. Think about activities which coincide with National Volunteer Week, local festivals, town-wide promotions or your local show - this will help promote the work of your organisation and its volunteers.

3. Identifying Volunteer Tasks

Are there some office tasks at your Landcare organisation that

could be undertaken by volunteers? It may be as straight forward as collecting the mail, photocopying, photographing Landcare activities, dispatching flyers and newsletters or sending out welcome packs to new members. Or, it may be more in-depth, such as proof-reading, writing articles for the newsletter, or preparing a monthly press release. For many volunteers, office-based volunteering may be preferable to volunteering on Landcare project sites.

4. Business Volunteers

Volunteering can also extend to local business houses. This can include businesses that may donate office equipment, their training room at no charge or perhaps donating catering for a working bee at a Landcare project site. Attending a local meeting of the business community, such as a Chamber of Commerce meeting will provide an opportunity to promote areas where business can donate services to your Landcare group.

5. Talk to Education Providers

Students at TAFE, University and even high school are always looking for work placements. A high school student may provide

your group with tech-savvy skills to update your database, refresh your website, develop a new format for your newsletter or create a greater presence on social media.

University students can offer a range of potential skill-sets for your Landcare network, including NRM, marketing, research, accounting, IT, communications and graphic design.

Consider a media release prior to university holiday periods to connect your Network with university students. Or, talk to local education providers regarding work placement programs for students.

6. Acknowledgement

We all know that many of our volunteers happily go about their work without expecting to be publicly thanked. However, by publicly acknowledging your volunteers and promoting the work they do, you also have the opportunity to promote volunteerism in your community. You may choose to host a BBQ to thank volunteers, add a 'volunteer of the month' feature to your website, or perhaps include a 'volunteer's column' in your newsletter which is written by a volunteer.