



# AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL  
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

## 1. Purpose

AIATSIS has developed this Volunteer program Policy to articulate the policy, principles and framework of the AIATSIS Volunteer program, and to provide a framework for the management and involvement of volunteers at AIATSIS. The Volunteer program Policy will also assist volunteers to perform their roles in an effective manner that is compliant with relevant legislation and government policies.

## 2. Rationale

AIATSIS is committed to providing a range of meaningful and engaging programs relevant to its vision: *A world in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures are recognised, respected, celebrated and valued.*

AIATSIS functions to develop, preserve and provide access to a national collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. The national collection is used to strengthen and promote knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. AIATSIS promotes the participation of community members in the volunteer program to enhance the understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. AIATSIS is an active supportive of the reconciliation process and demonstrates this through a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Volunteers engaged to participate in the volunteer program have an important role in supporting AIATSIS to achieve its strategic goals; they enhance the work of the institute beyond the resources of staff. Additionally, through the engagement of volunteers, AIATSIS is able to further its reach to the broader community, facilitating the two-way transfer of skills and knowledge.

This Policy is to be applied in conjunction with the following: *AIATSIS Volunteer program - Procedures.*

## 3. Volunteers at AIATSIS

AIATSIS Volunteer program defines volunteering as an activity undertaken for the benefit of the community and the volunteers; by the volunteer's own free will where financial payments are not applicable.

All principles and strategies for managing volunteers at AIATSIS are derived from the values described in *The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)* as published by Volunteering Australia.

AIATSIS will work with volunteers in ways that enhance their experiences and comply with legislation and duty of care.

Volunteering hours will be negotiated between the volunteer, the Volunteer Coordinator and staff supervisor based on the requirements of specific roles and the availability of the volunteer. The maximum regular commitment will be fifteen (15) hours per week; however, a volunteer working on a special project or event may be permitted to work more than fifteen hours with the approval and agreement of the volunteer's supervisor and the volunteer. The minimum regular commitment will be two (2) hours per week on average.

AIATSIS adheres to the following volunteering principles and volunteer rights stated by Volunteering Australia:

**Table 1: Volunteering Principles – *The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)***

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### **Volunteering Principles**

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*Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer*

*Volunteer work is unpaid*

*Volunteering is always a matter of choice*

*Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances*

*Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only*

*Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work*

*Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers*

*Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs*

*Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community*

*Volunteering respects their rights, dignity and culture of others*

*Volunteering promotes human rights and equality*

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**Table 2: Volunteer Rights – The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)**

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## **Volunteer Rights**

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**As a volunteer you have the right:**

*To work in a healthy and safe environment*

*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 organisation's 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 organization*

*To have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988*

*To be provided with sufficient training to do your job*

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## **4. Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers**

AIATSIS accepts volunteers who are enthusiastic and committed to meeting its vision: *A world in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures are recognised, respected, celebrated and valued.*

The recruitment of volunteers is conducted in a similar way to paid staff. The procedure for recruitment of volunteers includes a volunteer role description, an application, an interview, and induction and engagement process. Details of the volunteer recruitment and selection process will be documented in the *Volunteer program - Procedures* document.

### **4.1 Eligibility**

When assessing volunteers, AIATSIS will consider the following:

- Cultural competency and a commitment to working respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- Interest, knowledge, and skills relevant to the role, as outlined in the volunteer position description
- Suitability to perform a task on behalf of AIATSIS without any conflict of interest, perceived or real
- An interest in a specific function or general interest in volunteering later matched with a specific function
- Ability to pass a Police Check and, where required, obtain a Working with Vulnerable People registration

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and people from culturally diverse backgrounds are encouraged and supported to apply for volunteering roles.

AIATSIS is committed to the application of Equal Employment Opportunity principles in respect to the Volunteer program. Some volunteer roles may only be available to Indigenous volunteers in line with Section 8(1) of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975.

The offer of a volunteer role within AIATSIS is not a commitment to an offer of future paid employment with AIATSIS.

## **4.2 Police Check and Health Declaration**

All volunteers will be required to undertake a Police Check prior to commencing their volunteer role with AIATSIS. In addition, all volunteers will be required to sign a Health Declaration as part of the Volunteer Agreement.

## **4.3 Probationary Period**

New volunteers are subject to a probationary period of three (3) months following their initial training.

Volunteers who are deemed not suitable will be withdrawn from the role.

## **4.4 AIATSIS Staff as Volunteers**

AIATSIS staff cannot become volunteers while they are paid employees of AIATSIS. Former employees are eligible to apply for volunteer positions. In the case of former employees, supervisors ensure they perform within the agreed volunteer role description and do not undertake additional work, regardless of their capabilities, experience or knowledge.

## 5. Volunteer Program Management and Operations

### 5.1 Volunteer Supervision

AIATSIS recognises the importance of supervision and adequate feedback on performance. The supervising staff members have day-to-day responsibility for the supervision and support of individual volunteers. Discussion about work planning or completion is between the volunteer and their staff supervisor/s.

Other key elements of volunteer supervision include:

- The assessment of performance and progress based on the volunteer role description
- Providing regular feedback and identifying training requirements
- Establishing individual goals linked to the AIATSIS Vision and Goals as detailed in the Corporate Plan, observing the volunteer's activities, and providing guidance to maximize the achievement of the goals
- Being receptive to feedback on ways to improve the volunteer program

AIATSIS will conduct periodic reviews on its Volunteer program to ensure that the opportunities to improve the quality of the system are identified and actively pursued. For further details to the volunteer program management and operations please refer to the document *AIATSIS Volunteer program - Procedures*.

### 5.2 Resources

AIATSIS is committed to providing suitable resources to support and maintain the Volunteer program. This includes the provision of support and supervision, and the workspace and equipment necessary to satisfactorily undertake volunteer roles.

AIATSIS will ensure that volunteers have access to training, resources, feedback opportunities, and the recognition required to effectively fulfil their roles.

Volunteers adhere to the same Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media Policy adhered to by staff when in the workplace and using equipment and resources belonging to AIATSIS.

### 5.3 Volunteer Insurance

For the purpose of safety, rehabilitation and compensation, volunteers are considered employees.

While volunteers are providing assistance to AIATSIS, they are covered by *The Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*. This does not include travel to and from home to the AIATSIS location in which they are volunteering.

For insurance purposes, accurate sign-on and sign-off records must be kept for each volunteer.

## 5.4 Reimbursement of Expenses

At the commencement of his or her duties, the supervisor will provide guidance on seeking prior approval for reimbursement and the procedure for claiming expenses. Appropriate records and/or receipts are kept and given as supporting evidence for any claims for reimbursement.

## 5.5 Occupational Health and Safety

AIATSIS promotes and maintains an environment which protects the health, safety and welfare of employees at work, including volunteers.

AIATSIS has a workplace health and safety program with strategies for carrying out measures designed to ensure the health and safety of people at AIATSIS, and identifying potential hazards and risks. Volunteers will be provided with relevant information and guidelines to ensure the maintenance of a safe and healthy workplace along with training and information regarding emergency procedures. Volunteers will undertake online Occupational Work Health and Safety training during their induction.

Recruited volunteers will be covered under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act).

Volunteers are required to report any injury to their staff supervisor immediately.

## 5.6 Documentation and Records

AIATSIS will maintain documentation and personnel records related to the management of volunteers. Volunteer records are treated as confidential and subject to strict controls. Access to those records will be limited. Volunteers have the right to access their personnel file at any time, upon request.

# 6. Responsibility and Conduct of Volunteers

The key document which defines volunteer responsibilities is the 'Volunteer Agreement' negotiated at the commencement of his or her duties with their

supervisor, assisted by the Volunteer Coordinator. The Agreement includes a detailed role description.

The Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and AIATSIS Guiding Principles and Shared Behaviours provide a framework of expectations within which everyday work is conducted. These apply to all volunteers engaged by AIATSIS as well as to all permanent, temporary and casual staff.

## **6.1 Ethics and Protocols**

Volunteers must work and behave using the same ethical codes, protocols and policies as those adhered to by staff. The appropriate materials will be made available by their staff supervisor upon commencement in the volunteer role. Adherence to these frameworks and codes is mandatory.

Volunteers are required to:

- Operate in ways that show respect and understanding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, values, knowledge and practices.
- Demonstrate cultural awareness and inclusivity.

## **6.2 Confidentiality**

Volunteers with AIATSIS have the right to access information relevant and necessary for the satisfactory performance of the role they are undertaking. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that the confidentiality of any information to which they have access whilst working as a volunteer is maintained, whether this information involves restricted knowledge contained in collection materials, or about staff members, volunteers, clients or other persons involved with AIATSIS.

## **6.3 Representation of AIATSIS**

Volunteers are not permitted, without approval, to make public statements to the media, including online or via social media, engage in partnerships or lobbying with other organisations, or enter into any agreement involving contractual, financial or other obligations on behalf of AIATSIS.

## **6.4 Intellectual Property and Copyright**

Any materials produced by volunteers as a result of work performed on behalf of AIATSIS shall remain the property of AIATSIS and will be subject to copyright law. All volunteers must agree to adhere to copyright law in carrying out duties for AIATSIS.



## 6.5 Conflict of Interest

Any possible conflict of interest, including perceived conflict of interest, a volunteer may have shall be openly declared and satisfactorily resolved as soon as possible between the volunteer and AIATSIS.

## 6.6 Grievance

Volunteers have the right to express grievances, concerns or dissatisfaction with the volunteer program or AIATSIS operations without adverse consequences.

If a volunteer wishes to express their dissatisfaction they are encouraged to do so through the *Volunteer Grievance Procedure*. Grievances will be dealt with efficiently and in a manner that is equitable and fair to all involved. Wherever possible, all attempts will be made to informally resolve grievances at a local level, prior to escalating grievances to a formal stage.