

Guide Dogs.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

Volunteer Strategy.

2025-29



Acknowledgement of Country.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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Overview.

The Volunteer Strategy 2025-29 provides a framework for volunteering at Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. Our volunteer program will enable us to work towards a world that is inclusive and accessible for everyone with low vision or blindness.

Volunteers, along with our supporters and Clients are at the centre of what we do. They provide us with unique strengths and talent across our community. This Strategy gives us direction to enhance our volunteer resources. It builds on existing volunteers and focuses on improving processes and practices for a coordinated approach to volunteer engagement throughout our organisation.

Vision.

Our vision is to cultivate a dedicated and skilled volunteer program that enhances the sustainability and growth of our programs. We aim to drive greater efficiencies while making a meaningful impact on the lives of individuals with low vision or blindness. We will increase the number of professional volunteers who bring expertise and innovation to our organisation, enabling us to deliver solutions for everyone. Through a strong commitment to inclusion and recognition, we will empower our volunteers as allies, and foster a community where diversity, equity and accessibility are at the forefront of our mission.

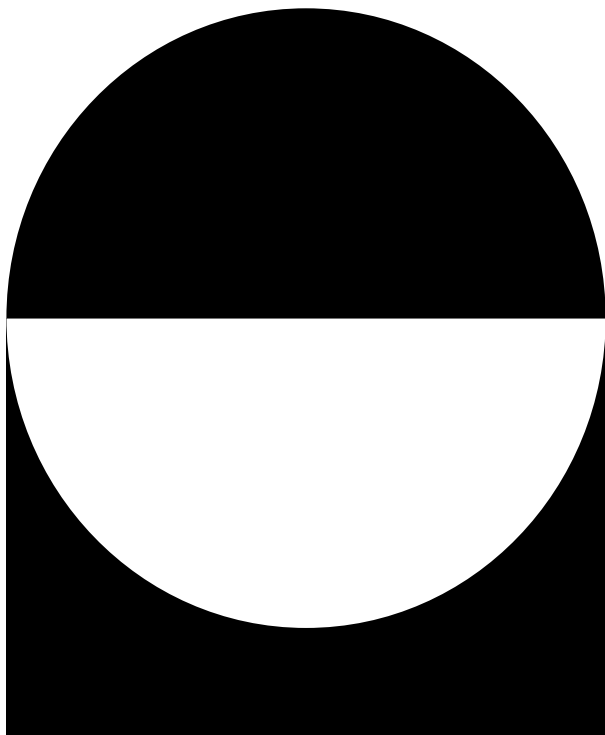
NSW Volunteering Strategy and the National Standards.

The NSW Volunteering Strategy 2020-30 is a guideline for volunteering in NSW. The state-wide strategy commits to growing, strengthening and supporting volunteering in the community. Guide Dogs NSW/ACT commits and recognises its part in contributing to the delivery of this vision for NSW, the ACT and beyond.

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement have been developed by Volunteering Australia, the national peak body for volunteering. These standards underpin our commitment to best practice volunteer management.

Eight standards guide best practice for volunteer involving organisations:

- Volunteering is embedded in leadership, governance and culture.
- Volunteer participation is championed and modelled.
- Volunteer roles are meaningful and tailored.
- Recruitment is equitable and diversity is valued.
- Volunteers are supported and developed.
- Volunteer safety and wellbeing is protected.
- Volunteers are recognised.
- Policies and practices are continuously improved.



Our volunteers.

As of June 2024, we had 628 volunteers across a variety of roles within four main categories:

- Dog Services and supports.
- Strategic and skilled.
- Community and fundraising.
- Administrative and event support.

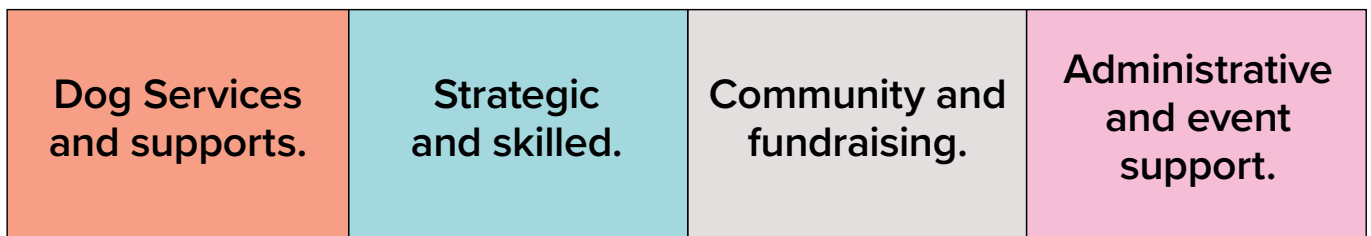
We are proud of the diversity of our volunteers, with many people having volunteered with us for decades. Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation and we could not do what we do without them. They selflessly give their time, care, expertise and energy to allow us to continue our vital work to support our Clients.

Our volunteers are remarkable people who contribute to all aspects of our organisation. At a strategic level, our Board of Directors and members of our Customer Advisory Panel provide expertise and guidance to help shape and govern the organisation. At an operational level, our volunteers support us with fundraising, marketing, advocacy, administration, transport, gardening, maintenance, events and all things dog-related! They assist us in all facets of our Dog Services including breeding, kennel cleaning, feeding, walking, grooming, temporary caring and of course, puppy raising.



Guide Dogs NSW/ACT volunteer programs.

There are four main categories of volunteers that support the organisation to deliver our services. Volunteers apply for the role and location of their choice.



Dog Services and supports.

This area currently involves the largest cohort of volunteers. These volunteers take on the responsibility of caring for our beloved dogs. There are many volunteer roles based at the Guide Dogs Centre in Glossodia and surrounds, that ensure the smooth running of the facility and the care of our dogs, including:

- Puppy Raisers.
- Home Whelpers.
- Home Boarders.
- Temporary Carers.
- Therapy Dog Handlers.
- Drivers.
- Grounds and maintenance roles.
- Administration roles.
- Kennels support roles (laundry and intake).
- Veterinary Clinic support roles.
- Corporate volunteers.

Strategic and skilled.

This group of volunteers provide expertise and guidance to help shape and govern the organisation and ensure we perform at the highest level:

- Board Members.
- Customer Advisory Panel.
- Corporate program.
- Professional services.
- Skilled volunteers in areas including research, legal and finance.

Community and fundraising.

This group of volunteers promote and raise awareness about the work we do through advocacy efforts and fundraising:

- Ambassadors.
- Client-facing volunteers.
- Inclusion Allies.
- Regional fundraising and support groups.

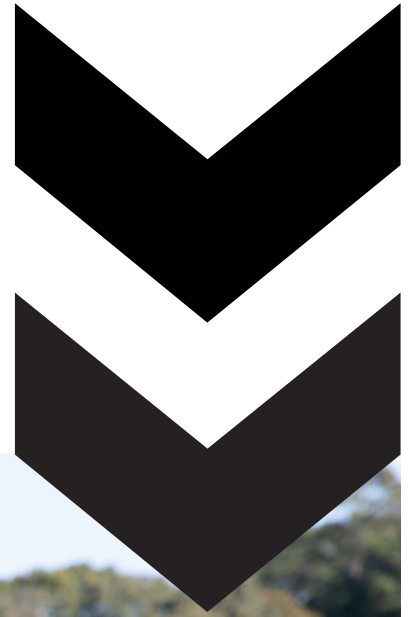
Administrative and event support.

This group of volunteers assist teams and departments across the organisation in a variety of roles.

- Administration, including data input, reception, packing, mail outs, marketing and fundraising.
- Drivers.
- Events and functions.

Volunteer Strategy.

The following Strategy has three pillars, including supporting our volunteers to thrive, the promotion and growth of our volunteers and programs, and celebrating our volunteers to enhance their experience. Our focus in the development of this Strategy is that it will future-proof Guide Dogs NSW/ACT volunteer engagement. We always seek opportunities to grow and diversify our volunteer programs.



1. Support volunteers to thrive (experience and engagement).

Support volunteers throughout the lifecycle of their engagement through best practice volunteer management.

Key strategies	How we will achieve it	Outcomes
1.1 Provide a safe and easy volunteering pathway by providing a supportive environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update volunteering processes. • Engage with volunteering bodies to stay informed of trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems and processes are accessible and easy to navigate. • Policies and processes are relevant and up to date.
1.2 Strengthen the capacity and capability of volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistent training for all volunteers. • Provide ongoing learning and development opportunities (where applicable). • Roles are tailored to suit volunteers needs, skills and experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved skills and knowledge of volunteers. • Increased access to training activities. • Volunteers feeling valued.
1.3 Work collaboratively with key stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Volunteer Advisory Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved volunteer experience.
1.4 Provide opportunity to hear the voice of the volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek volunteer input and ideas. • Provide several ways for volunteers to give feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced volunteer experience. • Volunteers feeling valued.

2. Promote and grow (sustainability).

Raise the profile of volunteering at Guide Dogs NSW/ACT to continue to promote volunteer participation.

Key strategies	How we will achieve it	Outcomes
<p>2.1 Promote volunteering.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the value of volunteers in the community. • Advertise available volunteer programs. • Promote the mutual benefits of volunteering. • Leaders support and promote volunteering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased volunteer participation. • Increased awareness of the diverse opportunities.
<p>2.2 Grow the volunteer program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a program for skilled volunteer opportunities. • Explore opportunities to increase volunteers across each department. • Develop a specialised service program for volunteers to provide support directly to Clients. • Create a program for corporate engagement. • Explore ways to remove barriers to participation for volunteers with a disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More volunteer roles are available. • Increased volunteer numbers. • Increased corporate partnerships. • Ensure systems are accessible.

3. Celebrate volunteers (recognition and culture).

Acknowledge and celebrate volunteers for their contributions.

Key strategies	How we will achieve it	Outcomes
3.1 Appreciate and recognise volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise volunteers through National Volunteers week. • Conduct volunteer recognition events and programs for volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers feel valued and appreciated for their contributions. • Increased volunteer retention.
3.2 Highlight volunteer achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominate volunteers for awards. • Celebrate milestones and achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers who demonstrate exemplary service are celebrated.



Monitoring and evaluation.

Implementation.

Our implementation plan will outline the procedure for monitoring and evaluating our volunteer program to ensure its success, effectiveness and alignment with organisational goals. We will track volunteer activities and satisfaction in real-time. We will also assess the overall impact and outcomes of the program.

The objectives of monitoring and evaluating our volunteer program are to:

- Ensure we're delivering on our three-pillar Strategy.
- Ensure volunteers are engaged, effective and supported.
- Assess the program's impact on the organisation and community.
- Identify areas for improvement and enhance future volunteer engagement.
- Measure volunteer satisfaction and retention.



Monitoring and evaluation implementation plan.

This plan outlines in greater detail the following components:

- Data collection tools.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Reporting and use of data.
- Timeline and milestones.
- Budget.
- Resources.
- Continuous improvement.
- Monitoring components, including data collection, method and frequency:
 - Volunteer recruitment and placement.
 - Volunteer performance tracking.
 - Volunteer engagement and retention.
 - Volunteer support and training.
- Evaluation components, including data collection, method and frequency:
 - Program goals and impact assessment.
 - Volunteer satisfaction and feedback.
 - Community impact.
 - Cost-effectiveness and resource allocation.



Collecting volunteer feedback.

To understand our volunteers, there are a range of consultation methods for them to provide feedback and for us to understand their level of satisfaction and overall sentiments toward our volunteer programs. These feedback mechanisms will provide quantitative and qualitative data to guide the planning and delivery of our future volunteer engagement strategies.

Volunteer Advisory Group.

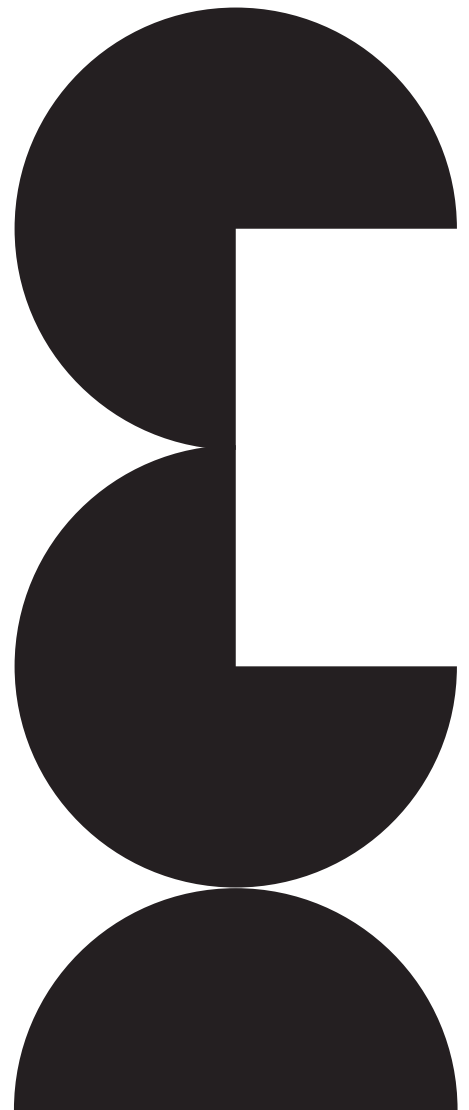
This group provides input into the following areas:

- Stakeholder analysis and engagement.
- Training and resource content review.
- Co-design of volunteer programs and services.
- Understanding of issues, barriers and enablers for participation in volunteering.
- A general sounding board for ideas.

Terms of Reference will outline the purpose, structure, frequency of meetings, number of members and selection criteria of the group. All meetings will have an agenda, minutes, and actions documented and shared with the group members.


Reporting.

Volunteers will be managed through a Volunteer Management System (VMS). The VMS will support the volunteer life-cycle, including recruitment, training, engagement and retention. The system will provide our staff with greater control and oversight to manage and report on their volunteers. It also allows volunteers to proactively manage their experience, while feeling connected, supported and in control.





We're here whenever you need us.

 1800 484 333

 nsw.guidedogs.com.au

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