

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

POLICY STATEMENT NO. 32

VOLUNTEERS

SEPTEMBER 1989

1. BACKGROUND

CALM has traditionally enjoyed support from volunteers working as groups or as individuals. These activities have been organised at a local level without a Departmental policy and administrative framework. Volunteer activities were dealt with in general terms in Policy Statement No. 15 (which should be read in conjunction with this document) but a more specific policy is required.

Volunteer activities are of value to CALM not only because the Department's work capabilities and skills base are expanded at minimal cost, but also because such activities build communication links and understanding between the Department and the community.

A volunteer may be defined as someone who undertakes work of their own free will without payment and for the benefit of the community.

Two types of volunteer activity are of benefit to CALM. These are:-

- (1) Volunteer groups or individuals working directly with the Department on activities managed by CALM.
- (2) Volunteer groups or individuals whose independent activities assist in the achievement of CALM's objectives.

Both forms of volunteer assistance are recognised as being of value to CALM and need to be supported accordingly. Although some volunteers will be formally recruited to carry out defined tasks which assist CALM, another important source of volunteer assistance is from individuals and groups who offer their services on an informal basis. Such volunteers can be encouraged to assist with specified projects, where resources are available for supervision etc.

A "corps" of Honorary CALM Officers, to be treated as an extension of CALM employees, will be appointed under the Act and will be invested with certain of the powers of CALM employees in order to enable them to carry out particular functions for the Department. As the Department will have a finite capacity to accommodate Honorary CALM Officers, where appropriate, other volunteers will be recruited both formally and informally for specific roles.

Other groups also engage in unpaid work to assist CALM. These include:

- (1) Those seeking work experience associated with formal studies.
- (2) Those required to perform community work as a result of having committed an offence of some kind.

These groups are not dealt with in this policy. Also outside the scope of this policy are volunteer groups who are paid a fee for work done for CALM and volunteer bush fire brigades, administered by local authorities, in conjunction with the Bush Fires Board, who continually provide invaluable assistance to CALM.

2. OBJECTIVES

To encourage and facilitate voluntary activity which contributes to the achievement of nature conservation and land management objectives; and to build community awareness, understanding and commitment to these objectives.

3. POLICIES

In addition to the policies contained within Policy Statement No. 15 (Public Participation), the Department will:

- 3.1 Provide a range of opportunities for volunteers to assist the Department in ways which complement the functions of paid employees.
- 3.2 Recognise the range of motivations and devise appropriate rewards to acknowledge the contributions of volunteers.
- 3.3 Seek and recruit interested members of the community as volunteers.
- 3.4 Provide volunteers with appropriate placements, training, equipment and identification of their status as volunteers.
- 3.5 Train CALM staff in the management of voluntary activities.
- 3.6 Administer and manage voluntary activities according to a code of work arrangements including such factors as safety, insurance cover, equity and nature of activities to be undertaken.
- 3.7 Support community groups and individuals in voluntary activities which assist CALM in achieving its objectives.

4. STRATEGIES

In order to implement the volunteer policy effectively, the following strategies will be adopted:-

- 4.1 Volunteer activities, relating to CALM will be coordinated by the Community Involvement Coordinator.
- 4.2 A register of projects and other opportunities suitable for involvement by volunteers will be developed and kept updated in consultation with operations and specialist staff.
- 4.3 Operational guidelines will be provided to assist staff in the administration of voluntary activities. These will cover both Honorary CALM Officers and other volunteers.
- 4.4 The Department will organise at least two pilot volunteer programmes to provide information for the development and refinement of operational guidelines.
- 4.5 One officer in each Region or Branch will be given responsibility for the administration of volunteer activities. Adequate budgets will also be allocated.
- 4.6 Volunteers and CALM staff involved with them will be provided with the necessary training and equipment to ensure maximum effectiveness of volunteer activities.
- 4.7 A formal volunteer training programme will be developed enabling volunteers to progress through a series of standards in a range of disciplines relevant to their activities with CALM.
- 4.8 Registers of volunteer names, activities and hours worked will be maintained by all CALM staff working with volunteers. A central register will be compiled and maintained by the Community Involvement Coordinator.
- 4.9 Honorary CALM officers will be appointed for duties requiring long term commitment and specific powers under the CALM Act. These volunteers will be appointed for a probationary period and will be given extensive training prior to their formal appointment. Standard administrative procedures will be developed for Honorary CALM Officers including annual appraisals.
- 4.10 Other volunteers will be recruited where required (and feasible) to supplement the roles of Departmental staff and Honorary CALM Officers. Formal recruitment procedures will be used where special skills or aptitudes are required for a

project and/or where limited numbers of volunteers can be accommodated. Informal recruitment procedures will be used where the skills required for a project are likely to be possessed by the majority of potential volunteers and where all potential volunteers can be accommodated.

Administrative guidelines will be developed to cover aspects including recruitment and termination procedures, training requirements, work arrangements etc. for these volunteers.

- 4.11 Volunteer activities will be continuously evaluated by the Department and feedback will be provided to volunteers.
- 4.12 Permanent volunteer groups formed to assist Departmental staff and Honorary CALM officers will be encouraged to become self-administering although the Department will provide administrative and financial assistance where possible until adequate self-administration is achieved.
- 4.13 The Department will actively seek information on volunteer motivations and levels of satisfaction. This information will be used in devising methods for maintaining high levels of motivation among volunteers.
- 4.14 The Community involvement Coordinator will evaluate the need for a regular forum for the discussion of volunteer activities as they relate to CALM. This forum would involve CALM staff and volunteers from around the State.
- 4.15 The Community Involvement Coordinator will monitor developments in volunteer management in other agencies, other States and overseas as necessary.
- 4.16 In implementing this policy, CALM will be guided by Policy Statement No. 15 which states in Strategy 4.5:

"Voluntary assistance programmes will be conducted within guidelines developed through discussions with unions and industrial officers, resolving legal, insurance and industrial matters."

Syd Shea
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

14 September 1989

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