

MAROONDAH

winter shelter

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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WELCOME

Maroondah Winter Shelter would like to welcome and thank you for volunteering in this program.

We believe it is a valuable opportunity for the churches across Maroondah to band together in order to serve those who need our love and support most.

We want the shelter to be a safe and welcoming environment where both guests and volunteers can enjoy their time spent together.

We hope that by reading this handbook you will come to understand how the program functions and what we expect of our volunteers.

CONTEXT

It is important to remember the vulnerability our guests may be experiencing as a result of complex life issues. Because of this, Maroondah Winter Shelter only aims to provide basic facilities and hospitality. We do not expect or encourage our volunteers to attempt to deal with these complex issues. We only expect our volunteers to listen and show care. As a volunteer, you should feel supported and comfortable in your role. The program will attempt to connect guests with appropriate agencies and organisations in order to further assist them if necessary.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT POLICY

To be a volunteer with Maroondah Winter Shelter, you are not required to have a personal Christian faith, but you would be expected to work according to the goals and purpose of the program. As a volunteer we hope that you would have a desire to serve, support and engage with people who are experiencing homelessness in our local community. We also look for volunteers who would be willing to reach out to the guests in a non-judgmental way, to meet guests "where they are at", acknowledging the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, trauma, sex-based discrimination and other social factors.

PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the program is to provide crisis accommodation to 12 men who are experiencing homelessness in the city of Maroondah for 12 weeks, every night of the week. On each night guests will be provided with dinner, the option for a warm shower, a bed to sleep on and breakfast in the morning. Guests will also be honoured with a warm welcome, the chance to socialise and assistance to connect with other services and agencies.

The goal of the program is to provide love, care and support to men in our community who are experiencing homelessness. In doing so, we hope to develop a strong community network where relationships are built between and within the guests and volunteers. The program also aims to increase awareness within our local community about the difficulty it can be to live without permanent or sustainable housing and to build a network of encouragement for those in this unfortunate position.

NIGHTLY TIMETABLE

5.30pm	First shift arrives. Prepare meal. Set up beds, tables etc. Briefing (Health and Safety/Guests) and Prayer.
6:00pm	Doors open, guests sign in and orientation/introductions. Assist guests to find bedding, toiletries. Offer hot drinks.
7:00pm	Grace & evening meal served.
7.30pm	Clean up and optional activities (e.g. games).
10:00pm	Shift Change. Briefing/debrief, volunteers sign in/out.
11:00pm	Last cigarette, doors locked, lights out and quiet (2 volunteers stay awake).
6:00am	Outer doors opened.
7:00am	Shift Change. Briefing/debriefing. Put out breakfast items.
7.30am	Bookings for the next night, bus details given, pack up.
8.30am	Guests leave, clean, pack and lock trailer.
9:00am	Debrief and lock up.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Each volunteer is required to read and sign a copy of this agreement before commencing work in the Winter Shelter.

Before participating as a volunteer in the Maroondah Winter Shelter program, you will need to have read through our Policies and Procedures document as well have read and signed a volunteer agreement form. The items of agreement are listed below.

- I have read, understand and agree to follow the Policies and Procedures of Maroondah Winter Shelter.
- I will not share personal contact details with a guest. (phone, email, home address, etc.)
- I will not loan or give any money to a guest.
- I will respect the privacy of all guests, whether it be personal stories shared with me or information stored on file.
- I will not share this information with any party unless I believe it to be an issue of personal safety, or if I believe the other guests and volunteers' safety to be at risk. In this case, I will talk to the shift leader or venue coordinator.
- I will treat everyone without judgement, with dignity, respect and care.
- I will not share the personal information of a guest or photos of a guest on social media.
- I will respect the guests' personal space and recognise that they may be feeling vulnerable.
- I will arrive on time for my rostered shift and will notify the Venue Coordinator if I am unable to do so.
- I will give as much notice as possible if I am unable to work my shift, so that a replacement can be found.
- Upon arrival to my shift, I will sign into the volunteer logbook.
- I will take responsibility for my own health, safety and welfare as well as that of the guests at the shelter.
- I will not be alone with a guest at any time.
I will carry out the duties assigned to me as a volunteer to the best of my ability.
- I will respect the beliefs of others and will not impose my political, cultural or religious views on anyone.
- I accept that the security of personal possessions brought into the shelter are my own responsibility.

ROLES

All volunteers are required to be 18 years and over, have completed their integrity checks, attended a training session and have read and signed the volunteer agreement. Volunteers will be rostered according to their availability and will work at whichever venue is hosting the Shelter that night.

There are a number of roles you can get involved with:

- Venue Coordinator - 5-10pm or until not needed
 - Shift Leader - Breakfast 7-9am, Evening 5.30-10pm Overnight 10pm-7am
 - Cook/Kitchen Help - 5.00-8pm
 - Shift Volunteer - Breakfast 7-9am, Evening 5.30-10pm Overnight 10pm-7am
 - Bus Driver - Mornings 8-8.45am, Evenings 5-6pm can stay on for Evening shift
 - Bus Helper - Mornings 8-8.45am, Evenings 5-6pm can stay on for Evening shift
 - Trailer Transporter - anytime between 8.45am and 4pm
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VENUE COORDINATOR

Venue Coordinators are responsible for managing their shelter and work closely with the Program Coordinator. Rostered time 5-10pm or until not needed. Duties:

- Organise the roster of volunteers for each shift.
 - Liaise as necessary with the Program Coordinator and/or Roster Coordinator to ensure shifts are fully staffed.
 - Be available for the 5.30-10 pm shift at their venue.
 - Ensure all volunteers have signed in and are made welcome.
 - Provide orientation of the venue and OHS rules to all volunteers.
 - Coordinate the volunteer teams and delegate roles.
 - Make sure the shift leaders are aware of their roles, including packing the trailer after AM shift, etc.
 - Receive the guest list from the Program Coordinator when it is ready. Only these guests are welcome at the venue. No unbooked guests or walk-ins are allowed.
 - Ensure booked guests are welcomed, rules explained and signed into the Shelter venue. May need to do random bag checks on guests not arriving on the WS mini bus.
 - Responsible for preparing the venue to host the guests including guest requirements such as bedding and towels.
 - Ensure adequate supply of grocery items for required meals and liaise with the cook.
 - Responsible for ensuring the venue is set up and left clean before and after use.
 - Maintain the "admin tub" including the logbook during the shift. Ensure it is kept secure and is placed back into the trailer for the next venue. Ensure that you can be reached throughout the shift.
 - Liaise and report to the Program Coordinator as required.
 - Be available for regular meetings with the Program Coordinator and other Venue Coordinators as advised.
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Shift Leader

The Venue Coordinator will appoint a shift leader (this may be themselves or another volunteer). Shift leader tasks will be dependent on the time of shift e.g. Breakfast 7-9am, Evening 5.30-10pm and Overnight 10pm-7am Duties:

- Delegate tasks to volunteers during the shift.
- Contact the Program coordinator by 9.30am and provide the overnight guest list and those who are rebooking for the following night.
- Take responsibility for key decisions or consult with the Venue Coordinator if unsure of the best course of action.
- Organise handover with shift leaders between the shifts.
- Liaise with Venue Coordinator and/or Program Coordinator if necessary.
- Ensure booked guests are welcomed, rules explained and signed into the Shelter venue.
- Responsible for ensuring the venue is set up and left clean before and after use including pack up of trailer.
- Record any communication or incidents in the logbook.

Cook/Kitchen Help

The evening meal will be served at 7:00 PM for between 12 and 20 people (including volunteers). Numbers are confirmed by the Venue Coordinator each afternoon prior to the shift. Rostered time is 5-8pm.

Duties:

- Responsible for shopping (costs reimbursed), menu planning, and preparing meals.
- Cook a healthy and homely meal for guests and volunteers.
- Liaise with the Venue Coordinator to ensure an adequate supply of food items and cooking utensils.
- Follow the Food Hygiene Policy and procedures and ensure all volunteers are aware of appropriate food handling
- Prepare sandwiches/lunch for guests to take the following day.
- Arrive at venue from 5pm and can leave at 8pm.
- Contact the Venue Coordinators if early access to the venue is required.
- It is the responsibility of guests and volunteers to help clean up following the meal.
- Following the meal, cooks and kitchen helpers can either leave the Shelter or stay on for the evening shift (the Venue Coordinator will assess if this is appropriate regarding the guest/volunteer ratio).

Off site cooks and kitchen workers

If a volunteer is cooking at home and not attending a venue at all then they do not need to complete a full registration or attend training. However, they do need to complete a simple application form and do a short online food handling course at

<https://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/index.php/en/>

We also suggest all kitchen helpers complete the basic online assessment.

Shift Worker

Rostered times - Breakfast 7-9am, Evening 5.30-10pm and Overnight 10pm-7am (if there are enough volunteers this shift could be shared)

Duties:

- On arrival, all volunteers are required to sign into the Log Book for their shift.
 - Specific volunteer tasks vary between breakfast, evening and overnight shifts.
 - Shift Leaders or Venue Coordinators will provide instructions for required tasks throughout the shift e.g. preparation of beds, meals and refreshments.
 - Help in setting up, packing down, cleaning and laundry duties.
 - Assist new guests to become familiar with the venue and its facilities.
 - Engage with the guests and help them to feel welcome.
 - Report any incidents to the shift leader or venue coordinator as soon as possible.
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Bus Driver and Bus Helper

Rostered times are:

Mornings 8-8.45am, Evenings 5-6pm option to stay on for Evening shift

Duties:

- Evenings - pick up guests at 5.30 pm from the designated location in Ringwood and drive them to the shelter venue.
 - Mornings - return guests to Ringwood the following day around 8.15 am.
 - The bus helper travels in the bus with the driver and ensures that those being picked up are on the list of booked guests provided by the Venue Coordinator.
 - Contact the Program Coordinator if unsure about a guest's suitability (eg. intoxicated), may also include random bag checks.
 - Bus driver/helper can be a shift volunteer and stay on at the venue if required.
 - Driver must be 25 years or older and depending on the bus being used, may need to be able to drive manual transmission, have a light rigid licence.
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Trailer Transporter

Duties:

- To pick up the trailer from one venue and move it to the next shelter venue (between 8.45am and 4pm).
 - Check all shower fittings have been returned into the shower (eg. hose/connection)
 - Trailer drivers are required to have a tow bar and be willing to use their own vehicle.
 - A video is available for all Trailer Transporters to view, showing how to connect and reconnect the Maroondah Winter Shelter trailer – see website.
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COMMUNITY CODE

The following Community Code is a set of rules that both volunteers and guests are expected to follow in order to make the program a safe and comfortable place for all.

Anyone who does not follow the Code will receive a warning or will be immediately banned from the shelter going forward.

The Venue Coordinator and/or Shift Leader should be informed of any breach of the Code and will implement the procedures.

If you witness an incident, you will be required to complete an Incident Report Form which will be kept with the volunteer logbook.

Community Code

- o No Smoking (except in designated areas)
- o No Drugs (except prescription medication which must not be shared)
- o No Alcohol (guests must not have alcohol on the premises)
- o No Aggressive Behaviour
- o No Weapons

While Winter Shelter referrals will be for people identifying as male, members of the LGBTIQ+ community may for example be gay, or transgender. Guests may or may not disclose this information, it is up to them.

Winter Shelter volunteers please note that Uniting (who assess our guests) work with people from the LGBTIQ+ community and on occasions people from the community may be referred to Maroondah Winter Shelter.

In the Guest agreement that is completed with all guests it is stated:

The Maroondah winter shelter is a welcoming space for all community members, including those participating as LGBTIQ+, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse, and those who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander.

The expectation is that guests as well as volunteers will be inclusive and welcoming to all.

VOLUNTEER SAFETY

For your own safety, you should observe the following:

- Only guests on the Venue Coordinator's list will be welcomed at the venue. No unbooked guests or walk-ins will be allowed.
- Never give out your home phone number or address to any guest.
- Never invite a guest to your home.
- Do not give or lend money to guests (the Venue Coordinator can be alerted to particular needs).
- Never be alone with a guest.
- Valuables should be left at home or stored securely at the venue.
- When dealing with lost property, never put your hand into a bag or pocket. Tip contents onto a flat surface. This will help prevent any potential injury.
- Use gloves when cleaning spills or body fluids.
- Act safely and do not put yourself, other volunteers or guests in danger. If you feel intimidated at any time during the shift, inform your shift leader.

Be sure that you are familiar with the building:

- Know where the emergency exits are and ensure emergency exits are unlocked and not blocked.
- Know where fire equipment such as extinguishers and fire blankets is.
- Know where the First Aid box is.
- Know where a telephone and a list of emergency numbers are.
- Know the evacuation/lockdown procedures in the event of an emergency.
- Inform guests where they can and cannot go.

Make sure any areas guests are not allowed are secure. Identify a safe area for volunteer belongings. Identify an outdoor area where guests can smoke. A receptacle for disposal of butts should be provided.

The Health and Safety Checklist should be used at the start of every shift to ensure that this policy is followed.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is an important part of any relationship and will be equally important to you when having conversations with the guests. A vital thing to remember is to approach a conversation without assumption or judgment.

As volunteers we endeavour to treat everyone with dignity and respect. From previous years some of our guests have mentioned that sometimes they felt the conversations from venue to venue became repetitive as they would be asked the same questions again and again. This is where non-verbal communication will be helpful to you. Sometimes silence is ok, or simply sitting next to a guest watching the same TV show or eating the same meal is enough to show that you care. Eye contact and body language are also important. Even if you are not having a verbal conversation with a guest, you can make eye contact with them and give them a smile to help them feel welcome and at ease.

If a guest is happy to have a conversation with you, try to ask open ended questions. Listen attentively and be sure to remove obstacles such as your mobile phone. It is ok, of course to be doing something with the guest whilst having a conversation such as playing chess or card games.

Try to use positive language when talking to the guests. For some of them their experiences may have been negative ones. Look for strengths in their story, rather than focussing on the problems. “What is going well for you?” “What are you proud of?” “What went well?” (WWW) “What are you good at?”

Be aware when the conversation is going nowhere. Be prepared to apologize if you have inadvertently hit on a sensitive topic OR simply to end a conversation that has gone on long enough. Short conversations made regularly over a long period of time have a positive effect.

Don't evangelize. If a guest asks you about Christianity/church etc, then it is fine to talk, but don't force it.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

Incidents of aggression are rare in the shelter. This is evident from our own shelter and research into other shelters. It is important however to recognise that violence could be a problem in dealing with this vulnerable group. These guidelines offer direction on the most effective ways of preventing and deescalating aggressive behaviour/situations and protection from its consequences.

Defining Violence and Aggression

Aggression can be physical, emotional or verbal and have an intimidating and undermining impact, damaging the harmony of the Shelter.

Managing Violence and Aggression

When responding to aggression or potential aggressive situations, your own safety, that of fellow volunteers and other guests must be the first priority. Guidelines can never cover every eventuality. If you are ever faced with aggressive situations, you will be able to draw on the training from the Maroondah Winter Shelter training.

You would also be required to report and record any of these situations and other unacceptable behaviours to the Shift Leader, who will deal appropriately with the situation, according to the Shelter policies and procedures.

If it is necessary to ban a guest based on a volunteer's report, that volunteer will not be named in the presenting of that decision. The decision should be presented as a unified decision and all volunteers must actively support the decision even if they have a different opinion.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

Deescalating Violence and Aggression:

In the event that you notice aggression in a guest, it is your responsibility to alert all other volunteers and to act cooperatively to deescalate the situation.

To deescalate:

- Have a confident volunteer talk to the individual concerned with another listening nearby.
- Ensure the volunteer is able to remain calm and fair but firm. They should not escalate the situation by raising their voice, changing their tone or by entering into debate.
- Allow the guest(s) the opportunity to back down without feeling humiliated. (Where possible, take the guest to one side). Have one volunteer ready with the a phone to call for police assistance if necessary. It may be useful to identify in advance who will have this responsibility should a situation arise.
- Have the other volunteers remain at a reasonable distance but paying attention in case the situation escalates.
- Have volunteers who are not directly involved attempt to keep other guests calm and prevent them from becoming involved unless they are friends who can assist. Ensure
- that any vulnerable people are removed from the area. Remove potential weapons
- (i.e. plates and cutlery).
- Allow space to ensure that people are not crowded or confined to an area. Do not stand too close.

If a situation does escalate and the guest(s) of concern cannot be calmed, volunteers should be prepared with an 'escape route' to vacate the area or to follow lock-down procedures. Personal safety is the highest priority and must be put before the protection of property. The police should also be alerted immediately.

In exceptional circumstances, if retreat to lock-down is not possible, volunteers should take appropriate measures to defend themselves. In the unlikely event of an attack, only use force sufficient to stop the attacker and prevent injury to self, colleagues or guests, but reasonable restraint is acceptable.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

Following an incident

Immediately after the event:

- Administer first aid if necessary.
- Reassure and help everyone to calm down.
- Report the incident to the police by phone, if appropriate.
- Give volunteers the option to leave early, if needed.

Soon after the event:

- Record details of the incident as soon as possible on an Incident Report Form and record it in the logbook.
- Organise longer term support where necessary (ie. counselling).
- Discuss the incident with the volunteer team and reflect on constructive lessons that can be identified to avoid a similar incident in the future.
- It is important to have clear communication between both volunteers and guests. Consider providing guests with brief details of the incident and how it was dealt with. This may reassure guests that incidents are dealt with effectively and may prevent the development of any rumours.

Action to be taken against aggressors or perpetrators of a violent incident

Any acts of aggressive or violent behaviour or attitude will result in a ban from the Shelter which will be decided via consultation between the Venue Coordinator and the Program Coordinator. Shift Leaders have the power to exclude or remove a guest from the night shelter if they feel it is necessary. Again this decision should be presented as a unified decision and not as the result of one volunteers report. All volunteers must actively support the decision even if they have a different opinion. This is for the benefit and safety of all concerned.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Program
Coordinator

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Beth Oswald

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boswalds1@gmail.com

Scott Hawkins

Pastoral Coordinator
scott.hawkins@urbanlife.org.au
0404 000 502

“The Book Shelf”

Mobile Library for our guests
Penny and Noelene
giftabook9@gmail.com

**Maroondah Winter Shelter
Homelessness Advocacy
Group**

Robyn Kilpatrick
kilpatrick@aapt.net.au



Find us on Facebook or head to the Winter Shelter website
www.wintershelter.org.au for more information

VENUES

Night	Location
Sunday	Urban Life Church - 143 Maroondah Highway, Ringwood
Monday	TLC Church - 265 Canterbury Rd, Bayswater North
Tuesday	Heathmont Baptist Church - 78 Cuthbert St, Heathmont
Wednesday	Ringwood Salvation Army - 49/53 Wantirna Rd, Ringwood
Thursday	Croydon Hills Baptist Church - 6 Bemboka Rd, Croydon Hills
Friday	Holy Spirit Catholic Church - 120 Oban Rd, Ringwood North
Saturday	North Ringwood Uniting Church - 14 Dickson Cres, North Ringwood

Please note - the morning shift occurs at the church which hosted the previous night



With thanks to Maroondah City Council for the supporting Winter Shelter since 2018