



Highlands Community Hospice Service: Volunteer Training and Development

The Highlands End-of-Life Project (Highlands) is deeply committed to the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers, contractors, and employees. Volunteers are the heart of our programs, particularly in our proposed hospice service, where their contribution will make a profound impact in our community.

We are dedicated to providing a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment. Through comprehensive volunteer training, ongoing professional development, support systems and a strong community, we aspire to ensure our volunteers feel respected, valued, and equipped to care for others while also prioritising their own health and wellbeing.

The following information on volunteer training and development for the Highlands Community Hospice Service is in draft and will be finalised prior to the commencement of the volunteer training in 2025. It is intended to guide the application process.

Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment will take place in February each year – additional recruitment may also occur in September if needed, with applications open throughout the year. Applications are assessed by the Highlands Management Committee and as part of the application process, applicants may undergo interviews.

Please also refer to the *Highlands Community Hospice Service: Volunteer Position Description* which outlines the expectations of the volunteer role including the key qualities, responsibilities and requirements for the position.

Training and Development

The main volunteer training is conducted between March – May each year.

The training process includes:

- online learning: prior to, and during the volunteer training – approximately 10hrs
- volunteer training: approximately 20hr training program conducted over a number of days; the training which will explore topics such as:
 - What is Palliative Care?
 - The Volunteer Role
 - Volunteer Procedures
 - Communication
 - Death and Dying
 - Trauma Informed Care
 - Personal Care – Non-Medical Care
 - Grief, Loss, and Bereavement
- induction: a 3hr induction program for all new volunteers, covering organisational and program policies, procedures and guidelines, and the expectations, rights and responsibilities of the volunteer role.

Volunteers also attend ongoing training: refresher courses and professional development, including speciality training – for example, Dementia care and biography work.

Dates for 2025

- **31 January 2025:** Highlands Community Hospice Service volunteer applications close
- **31 January – 9 February 2025:** application assessment by Management Committee
- **10 – 14 February 2025:** interviews
- **17 February 2025:** applicants notified of application outcome
- **3 March 2025:** online training commences
- Face-to-face training workshops will be held in Armidale:
 - **22-23 March 2025** (9am-1pm both days)
 - **5 April 2025** (9am-1pm)
 - **12 April 2025** (9am-1pm)
 - **10 May 2025** (9am-1pm)
- **12 May 2025:** inductions during the week – individual / small group
- **12 May 2025:** the Highlands Community Hospice Service commences

Support

Highlands prioritises the wellbeing of our volunteers, contractors and employees. Support mechanisms include:

- ongoing communication pathways with the Volunteer Coordinator
- 1:1 catch ups with the Volunteer Coordinator: fortnightly and as required
- support groups: monthly volunteer support groups for peer support, guidance, and ongoing education
- counselling sessions: as needed
- annual review process.