



Fishability VOLUNTEER Manual

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Welcome to Fishability

This manual has been designed to provide you with the information you need to successfully perform your tasks in your volunteer role at Fishability.

Use this manual as a reference whilst you are volunteering for us.

If you have any questions regarding volunteering at Fishability, please feel free to discuss any issues with the Program Coordinator in your region.

Fishability has comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure we meet our statutory and legal obligations to our staff, volunteers and the community we serve. Some policies are available on our public website, and others can be made available to you upon recruitment.

We thank you for your valuable contribution and hope that you find your time with Fishability rewarding.

Organisation

Overview

Fishability is a not for profit organisation that delivers programs and activities designed to increase the active involvement of people with disabilities into recreational fishing. The organisation was incorporated in 2003. Fishability has since provided recreational fishing opportunities to many members of our community living with disabilities.

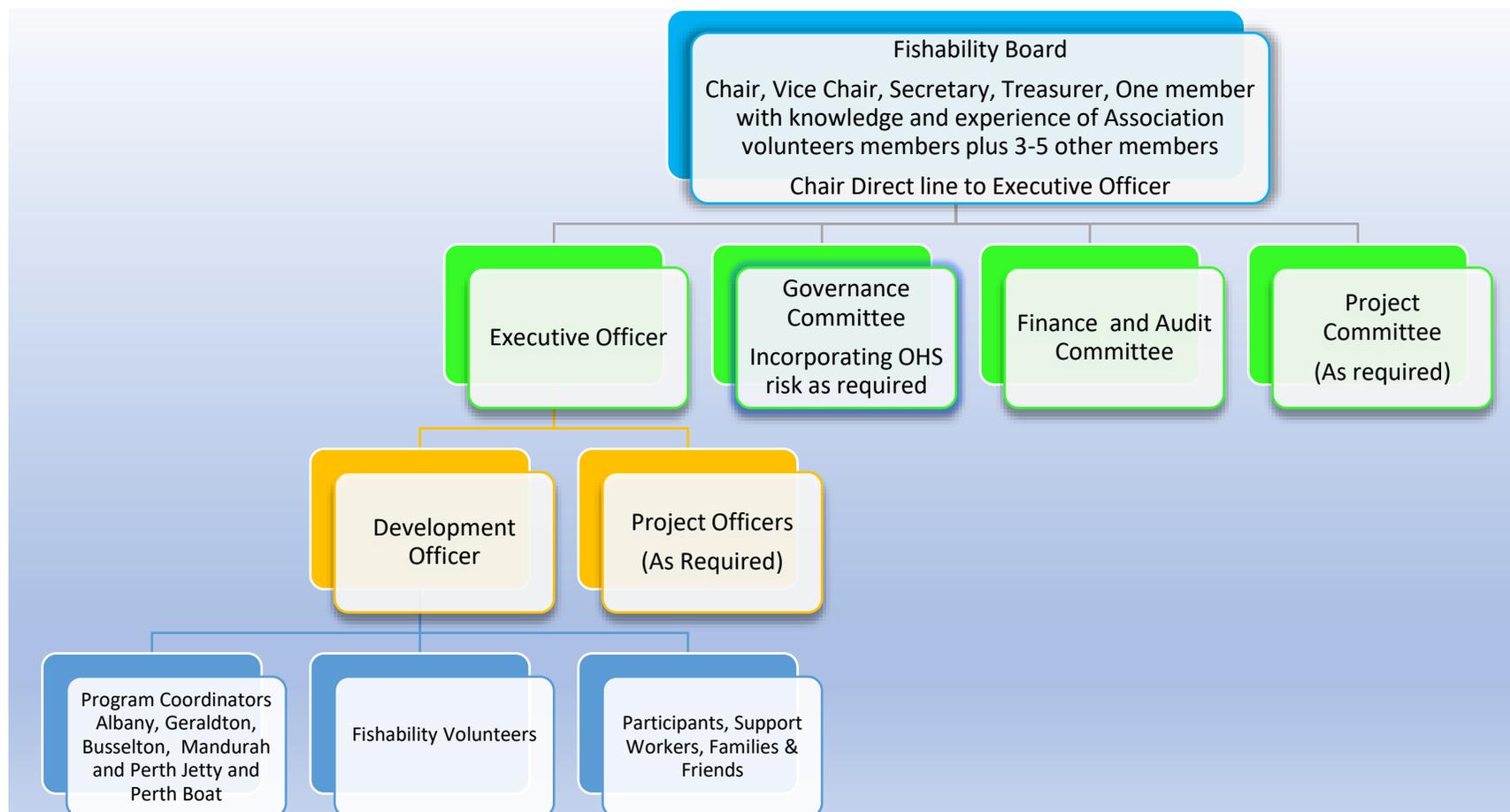
Background

Fishing is one of the most popular recreational activities in Australia. Every year, over 700,000 Western Australians bait up and cast a line. While so many fishers take for granted the opportunity of heading to the water and casting a line, in 2000 it became evident to a group of people that there were barriers hindering people with disabilities from being able to do the same.

That awareness led the Department of Fisheries Volunteer Fishing Liaison Officer, Mr. Neville Thomas to the development of a program to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to get outdoors and enjoy the excitement and reward of fishing. As the idea caught on the "Fishing for all abilities" concept took form and developed into ***Fishability***.

The continued undertaking of the Fishability program is only possible through funding and support by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development; Recfishwest; Act, Belong, Commit along with many other state and location sponsors and by the tireless work of volunteers on the ground.

Organisational Structure





About

Mission

To enhance the well-being and self-esteem of Western Australians living with disabilities by facilitating quality recreational fishing opportunities and experiences.

Values

Inclusion: We are committed to building fishing communities that are welcoming and inclusive.

Accessibility: We want to create fishing communities where all people are able to access opportunities for development and fulfilment.

Innovation: Actively seeking new ways to deliver effective services to participants and provide support for support workers and volunteers.

Respect: We value practices that uphold the individuality and personal and community choice of participants, volunteers and staff. We appreciate difference as an integral part of our society and value the contribution of all individuals. We support the rights of individuals to make choices and be empowered to make decisions about their own lives.

Policies and Procedures

For a full list of policies and procedures which must be adhered to, see Appendix 1 [Click Here](#).



Communication

General Communication Skills

In delivering the Fishability program effective communication is imperative. Communication is the imparting, conveying or exchange of ideas, knowledge, skills etc. It is a two-way process that involves listening to others and expressing oneself.

These steps provide a basic introduction to the principles of communication.

-Approach

It takes only seconds for a person to form an opinion of you. Their first impression will go a long way in determining how they will interact with you for the length of the activity. A first impression will depend on the following:

- The words you speak;
- The way you say them;
- Your body language (appearance, personal space, posture facial expressions, gestures etc).

Remember: Be positive and friendly!

-Introduction

Always introduce yourself to participants and support workers you are dealing with, and use your first name in the introduction to ensure a warm and friendly approach.

-Don't Touch

Do not touch a participant unnecessarily. It may be a friendly gesture on your part, but people may take offence or feel uncomfortable.

-Watch Their Space

Be careful of intruding into a person's personal space. Approximately 1 metre in an open area is a good guide, but this will vary from person to person and depending on the assistance you are providing.

-Body Language

Face the person speaking to you, maintain appropriate eye contact and focus on what is being said. Be conscious of your body language – try not to fold your arms, put your hands on your hips or behind your head, or look disinterested.

Remember to smile!



Communicating with People with a Disability

During your activities you will be required to communicate with people with a disability. Often, they will have communication difficulties.

The ability to communicate well with people with communication difficulties is extremely beneficial in delivering the Fishability programs effectively.

-General Advice

- Speak directly to the person with disability rather than through a companion or support worker;
- Offer to shake hands when introduced – even if the person has limited hand use or an artificial limb. Using the left hand is acceptable to most people;
- Always identify yourself, and others with you, when meeting someone with a visual impairment. Remember to identify the person you are speaking to;
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instruction;
- Treat adults as adults. Address people with a disability by their first names only when doing the same to all others;
- Never patronise people in wheelchairs by patting them on their head or shoulder;
- Do not lean against or hang on someone's wheel chair. People who use wheelchairs usually view their wheelchairs as extensions of themselves;
- Where possible, place yourself at eye level when speaking with someone in a wheelchair or on crutches;
- Relax.

-Communicating with People with a Hearing Impairment

It is very difficult for a person with normal hearing to imagine what it is like to have a hearing loss. A hearing impairment is invisible and often the only way to find out if someone has a hearing impairment is to talk to them. The following provides some general advice for communicating with someone with a hearing impairment:

- Get the person's attention. This will allow them to be able to look at you and listen to the whole message. It is best to move into their line of vision or wave your hand. Ask them how they prefer for you to indicate that you would like their attention. Remember that some people may not like to be touched;
- Make sure that they can see your face clearly. They can then gain as many clues as possible from your facial expressions and your mouth. Face them and get on the same eye level. Try not to turn away, walk around, or cover your lips with your hands. Keep the light on your face rather than behind you. If they are looking into the light, you will just be a silhouette;
- Do not assume that the person will be able to lip read everything. The best lip readers only pick up one third of what is said (Australian Hearing 2000, p.3), as so many speech sounds are made hidden behind the lips and teeth within the mouth;
- Give visual clues and use facial expressions. Use your hand and body to convey meaning, use gestures and body language. Use any signs that you may have learnt but only if you know that they use Auslan (Australian sign Language);
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- Speak naturally. Try not to exaggerate your lip movements, speak too slowly or too quickly, shout or mumble. These distort the sound, make it harder to lip-read and could be very painful to a person wearing a hearing aid;
- Use simple language. Rephrase your message if it is not understood and don't use unnecessary long words. Try to speak in short sentences, if you are not understood, try to find a different way to say the same thing;
- Consider writing down what you want to say;
- Reduce background noise;
- Do not assume that hearing aids make hearing perfect and do not expect every person with a hearing impairment to wear one. A hearing aid cannot restore hearing the way that a pair of glasses is usually able to restore sight. A hearing aid amplifies everything, including background noise, which may make the understanding of speech very difficult. Hearing losses also vary from person to person and some people can be helped more than others can. A hearing aid will make sounds louder but not clearer, and the sound still has to pass through the impaired hearing system;
- Some people are unable to adjust the hearing aid to a volume that is comfortably loud – it is either too loud or too soft for them. If you are in a quiet environment with a person who may have their hearing aid turned up during conversation, you should advise them if you are about to start a loud noise (i.e. running a boat engine);
- Be careful not to patronise and assume the people are not intelligent or well educated;
- Be patient. Take time to make sure that you are understood and be prepared to repeat yourself;
- Do not be afraid to ask the person to repeat what was said. You must not pretend to understand when you do not;
- Ask for assistance from the person's support worker if you are having difficulty with communication.

-Communicating with People with an Intellectual Disability

Some people with disability have problems understanding and comprehending what is said to them because of injury to or abnormal development of the areas of their brain which interpret what is heard. It may be difficult for them to analyse and understand the meaning of some words and sentences. Some people have only mild difficulty while others cannot understand spoken language at all. The following strategies may assist them to understand a little, or quite a lot, of what you have said.

At first you must get the person's attention aiming to gain and maintain eye contact. Use their name; ask them to look at you, come down to their face level if they are sitting.

You may need to change the way you speak:

- Speak slowly but not loudly and not in 'baby talk' (to children) or in a patronising way (to adults);
- Keep sentences short and concise;
- Repeat what you have said if necessary;
- Avoid slang words;
- Talk about things in the 'here and now' that can be seen and experienced as you speak about them;
- Emphasise the most important words and put them at the end of the sentence.



Visual clues are very beneficial:

- Use facial expressions to emphasise what you are communicating about;
- Use natural gestures such as pointing at what you are talking about;
- Objects can be given or held up as they are talked about;
- Signs can be used, especially for important key words in the sentence you say;
- Photos or pictures can be held up as they are talked about.

Conclusion

People with a disability have the right to communicate and participate in activities to the best of their ability. It is your responsibility to try to adapt your communication style so that you communicate in the way that the participant requires. You will not be alone with this responsibility. You can ask the advice of the participant or their support worker. Participants support worker's will be only too happy to assist you with any communication problems.

Occupational Health and Safety

Fishability is committed to providing a safe work place for all staff and volunteers and in return ask that volunteers accept their responsibility to work safely. This means working intelligently, with common sense and foresight.

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare

-Commitment

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare is the shared responsibility of all Fishability Board, Staff & Volunteers.

Fishability acknowledges that the provision of a safe and healthy environment for staff, volunteers and participants is not just a moral and legal responsibility but also necessary to achieve its goals of providing safe and enjoyable recreational fishing experiences.

This commitment also extends to ensuring Fishability activities do not place the local community at risk of injury, illness or property damage.



-Objectives

The organisation ensures compliance with the Western Australian Occupational Safety and Health Act and Regulations, other legislation and industry standards by:

- Providing and maintaining safe working and volunteering environments and systems;
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure safe environments, systems and practices;
- Providing and maintaining safe plant and machinery, equipment, materials and substance control;
- Consulting and cooperating with all relevant Safety, Health and Welfare authorities;
- Providing and maintaining personal protective equipment as required;
- Continuously reviewing and improving its safety performance.

-Responsibilities

Fishability is responsible for:

- The provision and maintenance of a safe activity environment, systems and practices;
- Involvement in the development, promotion and implementation of safety and health policies and procedures;
- Training and supervising employees and volunteers in the safe performance of assigned tasks;
- The provision of resources to meet the safety and health commitment.

Employees and Volunteers will:

- Take reasonable care of their safety and health and that of others;
- Follow all safety and health policies and procedures;
- Maintain the activity environment in a safe and hygienic condition at all times as far as is practicable;
- Use protective clothing and equipment as required;
- Report all known or observed hazard, incidents and injuries;
- Attend training courses and information sessions as required.

You can access Fishability's complete *Jetty Guidelines* via the website. Click [here](#).

Risk Management

-Consideration for People with a Disability

Attention should be given to any person who may have a disability and not be personally aware of the dangers or conditions that may occur through involvement in Fishability activities i.e. sunburn or heat exhaustion.

Some participants may have little or no sensation in various areas of the body. This should be considered in regard to weather conditions. Use of precautions such as sun protection, warm clothing, adequate fluids etc should be discussed with both the participant and their support worker.



Duty of Care v Dignity of Risk

Duty of Care refers to “the obligation to take responsible care to avoid injury to a person whom it can be reasonable foreseen, might be injured by an act or omission”. In addition, whilst enjoying activities, volunteers should be alert to potential hazardous situations.

Dignity of Risk refers to the ability of a person to decide to take a “Safe” risk. Dignity of Risk is acknowledging a person can make their own choices, i.e. although a decision may look risky to you as the volunteer, the person making the choice knows exactly and is responsible for what they are doing.

Duty of Care verses Dignity of Risk needs to be assessed on a case by case basis. Your Program Coordinator will be able to assist you in these situations.

Being Sun Smart

As all Fishability activities occur outdoors it is imperative for all employees and volunteers to be aware of and actively address the issue of sun protection.

You can access Fishability’s complete *SunSmart Policy* via the website. Click [here](#).

Evaluation

The Volunteer Manual and the program in its entirety will be reviewed and updated as required. Feedback to Fishability on this manual and its contents is welcomed.