



# **Volunteer Handbook**

**HR-GUI-001**

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## Welcome

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Welcome to Carrie's Place Domestic Violence and Homelessness Service Inc (Carrie's Place). We thank you for volunteering with us and are looking forward to working with you.

This Handbook is designed as an introduction to Carrie's Place and serves to educate and inform all volunteers about the organisation and the role you will play within it.

The Handbook must be read in conjunction with related documents such as the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement, constitution which will be provided during the induction and orientation process.

Carrie's Place is a non-government, Not-For-Profit Incorporated Association in NSW registered with the ACNC as a Public Benevolent Institution and endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

We work with women, men, families, and communities impacted by domestic violence and / or homelessness, providing inclusive services to address the needs of people experiencing domestic violence and / or homelessness.

## Vision

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Carrie's Place vision is to work towards a community where there is zero tolerance towards violence and homelessness.

## Mission

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Carrie's Place works to increase the number of families in the Maitland and Lower Hunter area, who are housed, safe, and live free from abuse.

## Purpose

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Carrie's Place provides person-centered, culturally appropriate programs that aim to empower vulnerable people who may have experienced domestic violence and other forms of trauma and abuse.

## Values

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Fostering collective culture through committing to a set of values is a vital component in achieving Carrie's Place vision and mission.

Through a collaborative process, Carrie's Place developed the following set of values:

- **Growth and Change** – we believe in the power of learning, change and growth. We support our clients and each other through the challenges and emotions that come with change.
- **Inclusive and Accessible** – we respect all by creating an inclusive and accessible organisation based on individual's diversity of ideas, backgrounds, heritage and experience.
- **Authentic** – we demonstrate the courage to be authentic and invite our clients and community to walk with us in authenticity and integrity in all we do.
- **Socially Just and Safe** – we recognise that safety is a human right, and we strive to create and support safe places and behaviours.
- **Teamwork** – we achieve what individuals can't by working collaboratively in an environment of mutual trust and respect.

## Service Delivery

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Carrie's Place provides a broad range of person-centered, culturally appropriate programs to empower vulnerable people who have experienced domestic violence and other forms of trauma and abuse including:

### 1. Hunter Valley Women's Domestic Violence and Court Advocacy Services (WDVCAS) and Local Coordination Point / Safety Action Meetings

We support women who are experiencing domestic violence by:

- making contact after domestic violence incidents where Police have been called;
- identifying needs and referrals to specialist services; internally and externally;
- providing support at Maitland, Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Raymond Terrace, Scone and Dungog Local Courts in relation to domestic and family violence matters;
- sharing our expertise on domestic and family violence with service users and the community;
- providing information, support, and advocacy related to Apprehended Domestic Violence Order processes;
- providing advocacy for women with the legal system;
- enabling access to legal advice and in some cases legal representation for women who have experienced domestic violence; and
- having Aboriginal focused Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Workers available for support.

## 2. **Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV)**

We are the current service provider for Upper Hunter, Cessnock, Singleton, Dungog, and Maitland LGA's SHLV program. We offer case management to support women and children including:

- safety audits to assess the safety of the home and undertake upgrades to increase security of the home;
- assistance with safety planning, information, and equipment to help women and their children to be safe;
- personal security devices;
- E-safety assessment to identify any security issues with IT equipment and to detect listening devices or GPS trackers;
- support and advocacy during the various legal processes including liaising with police and in both the Local Court and Family Law Court;
- support to achieve goals (e.g. education and employment);
- referral to other specialist services as needed, both internally and externally;
- emotional support and
- assistance to obtain financial support and information.

## 3. **Lower Hunter Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS)**

We are the SHS service provider for Maitland, Cessnock, and Dungog Local Government Areas. A range of accommodation options are provided including refuge accommodation for women and their children, transitional and supported temporary accommodation services.

Our primary goal is to support people of all genders, including families and children to sustain an existing tenancy or secure safe and affordable housing.

Across all Carrie's Place services, we collaborate extensively with other agencies in sectors such as domestic violence, homelessness, legal, finance, Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, mental health, health, community development, family support, youth, and Local and State Government sectors.

Carrie's Place is well connected to the Hunter community and receives financial and material support from community members and businesses which enables us to deliver additional comprehensive services to enhance our government funded programs.

We are committed to leading change and innovation, and are focusing on growing our capacity in the following areas:

- addressing the housing crisis – by working with our external stakeholders (community housing providers, local councils), to expand the number of purpose-built, trauma-informed transitional accommodation and refuges available within our footprint, supported by intensive case management;

- building future workforce in the domestic and family violence and homelessness professions through a coordinated and collaborative effort with higher education providers and affiliated agencies, to grow a capable workforce pipeline of the right quality and mix, to drive integrated service delivery in the region; and
- growing workforce capability – through building on our staff capacity with professional development opportunities to deliver the essential skills and knowledge required to enhance service delivery in the region.

## Volunteering with Carrie's Place

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### Induction and Orientation

Before you commence as a volunteer with Carrie's Place, you will need to:

- sign a volunteer agreement;
- provide personal details and contact details so we can safely manage your volunteering;
- understand your duties and responsibilities as a volunteer; and
- have access to this Handbook for reference during your volunteering.

Upon starting as a new volunteer, you will complete an Onboarding Checklist with your Onboarding Supervisor and complete an orientation process. During this time, you will get the opportunity to meet the Carrie's Place team and familiarise yourself with the site, service and / or program you have been assigned to.

You will also learn about your role and duties, complete any mandatory training, and most importantly, ask questions.

### Confidentiality Agreement

As a volunteer of Carrie's Place, you will need to ensure you have read, understood and are willing to comply with the **NSW Data Protection Principles** and Carrie's Place policies and procedures in relation to confidentiality and the protection of information.

### Code of Conduct

The Carrie's Place Code of Conduct describes the behaviours (conduct) expected of all employees and Association members of the organisation. This applies to all people involved in the organisation including staff, volunteers, Association members and Governance Committee members. In the event of serious misconduct, your volunteer role may be ceased or suspended with immediate effect.

## Background Checks

### Working with Children Clearance

Carrie's Place has a commitment to ensure our people and places are safe. A Working with Children Check is a requirement of your volunteering with Carrie's Place. This clearance is based on our risk management process and factors such as legislative and organisational requirements. It is illegal to work with children without the appropriate checks in place.

### COVID Vaccination

Due to the work Carrie's Place does with vulnerable community members, a requirement to volunteer with us is evidence of your COVID vaccination status.

### Police Clearance

You also have an obligation to let your supervisor know of any offences you have committed where a reasonable person may question your suitability to work with children and vulnerable people.

As legislation changes, the requirements for your role may also change. You will always be provided with information and time to complete new requirements so that it does not disrupt your volunteering.

## Roles and Responsibilities

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In order to ensure Carrie's Place achieves good governance, the roles of those involved within the organisation must be clear and understood. As a volunteer, you are part of the Carrie's Place workforce and have certain responsibilities. During the course of your volunteering, we expect you to:

- agree to and meet the requirements of the role and the organisation's policies;
- report any changes to your personal circumstances which may have an impact on the outcome of your background checks or health and safety;
- treat others with respect, dignity and compassion;
- be a positive representative of the organisation by not behaving in a way that would poorly reflect you or Carrie's Place;
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of service users, staff and other volunteers;
- complete your duties as described; and
- provide as much notice as possible if you are no longer able to volunteer.

Some of your duties could include, but are not limited to:

- banking;
- grocery shopping for the pantry;
- assistance in the kitchen;
- assistance with fleet vehicles when service or repairs are required;

- working within our accommodation places – this may involve changing beds and getting rooms ready when clients leave the accommodation;
- manual handling where appropriate;
- working at events and being an advocate for Carrie's Place; or
- working in specific areas of speciality or for different campaigns / project.

## WHS and Infection Control

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### Work Health and Safety (WHS)

Carrie's Place is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all stakeholders of the organisation. It is everyone's responsibility to help create and maintain a safe working environment. As a volunteer, you are responsible for:

- complying with WHS processes, requirements and instructions which will be explained to you by your onboarding supervisor;
- taking reasonable care to work safely and control risks and hazards through your actions; and
- reporting all incidents, accidents, injuries, hazards or near misses to your supervisor.

As a volunteer, you also have the right to be consulted if your work practice is to be changed. You can discuss the changes with your supervisor on how they impact WHS risks.

### Infection Control

Carrie's Place is committed to preventing and managing the spread of infection at Carrie's Place client service environments, through its infection control measures. Carrie's Place Infection Control Policy will seek to minimise the risk of infection for:

- clients receiving services at Carrie's Place;
- staff and volunteers employed or engaged at Carrie's Place; and
- visitors and other persons at risk of infection at Carrie's Place.

Your supervisor will ensure you receive training and supervision related to infection prevention and control procedures, understand the importance of handwashing, always act with caution, and use necessary protective equipment and resources provided.

## Drugs and Alcohol

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All staff, contractors and volunteers are expected to present to Carrie's Place in a physical and psychological state where they are able to safely and effectively complete their required duties. This includes being alert, unimpaired and free from the effects of alcohol and other drugs.

This requirement also includes being legally fit to drive a vehicle.



If there are reasonable grounds to believe you may be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs whilst undertaking your volunteering role, your supervisor will meet with you and hold a confidential conversation. If substantiated, appropriate steps will be taken in line with organisational policy, including possible suspension from your volunteering role in repeated circumstances.

## Dealing with Issues

If an issue arises, we want to resolve it as sensitively as possible and in a timely way for all parties involved.

### Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Carrie's Place has a zero-tolerance policy on actions that are discriminatory or may be seen as bullying or harassment. It is never acceptable to humiliate, victimise, intimidate or threaten anyone directly or indirectly.

### Complaints and Grievances

Carrie's Place is committed to ensuring that any person within the organisation or using Carrie's Place services has the right to lodge a complaint or to appeal a decision.

All concerns raised will be addressed in ways that ensure access and equity, fairness, accountability, and transparency.

If required, your onboarding supervisor will direct you to Carrie's Place complaints form and explain the complaints management process so we can ensure we are able to continue to deliver quality improvements in our services.

### Reporting Obligations

All staff and volunteers must ensure the safety of all individuals by taking immediate and appropriate action to remove and / or reduce the risk to a child. You should notify your supervisor or any Carrie's Place staff member if you:

- become aware of any allegations of child abuse;
- have concern for the safety of a child at Carrie's Place; or
- notice any staff or volunteer/s behaviour which is contrary to the expectations of behaviour outlined in Carrie's Place' Code of Conduct.

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that makes someone feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. It can be physical, verbal, or non-verbal, and may include comments, gestures, jokes, or advances that are inappropriate or unwanted. Intent is not required; what matters is the impact on the person experiencing it.

Carrie's Place is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all volunteers, staff, and community members. Sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

If you experience or witness harassment, please advise your supervisor. All reports are taken seriously, treated confidentially and managed in line with our policies and legal obligations.

Volunteers who engage in sexual harassment may face disciplinary action, including termination of their volunteering role.

## Insurance, Expenses and Reimbursements

### Insurance

Carrie's Place holds Voluntary Workers Insurance which covers medical expenses and potential loss of income if you are injured whilst volunteering with Carrie's Place. Completing the Carrie's Place Volunteer Agreement will ensure that you can access this insurance if necessary.

### Motor Vehicle Use

If your volunteer role involves driving, you will have access to a Carrie's Place fleet vehicle which is covered by Carrie's Place Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy. In the unlikely event that for any reason you are asked to conduct a duty and need to use your own personal vehicle, we strongly suggest having comprehensive insurance as it will not be covered by Carrie's Place Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy. Please check with your insurer to ensure coverage whilst undertaking driving as part of your volunteer role.

### Expenses and Reimbursements

Carrie's Place is incredibly grateful for your generous contribution of your time, but we cannot make payments, in cash or kind, that relate to your volunteering role. Reimbursements and out-of-pocket expenses may be made in some circumstances, however these must be pre-approved by Carrie's Place CEO.

## Declaration

I have read and understood this Volunteer Handbook and agree to the terms and conditions contained within.

<b>Volunteer Name:</b>	
<b>Volunteer Signature</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	