

DARA'S Van

DELIVERING GOOD.

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE *empowering people*



FOOD PROGRAMMES VOLUNTEER MANUAL

We need you!



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INTRODUCTION

DARA (Development and Relief Agency) identifies, reaches out and supports those in our community who are disadvantaged, marginalised, oppressed or isolated by cultural, ethnic or religious differences. DARA provides practical assistance, an opportunity for socialisation and a pathway to integration via access to educational and vocational programmes.

DARA currently runs two services – Refugee Hub and DARA's Van.



DARA Food Programmes & DARA's Van provides hospitality and friendship to the marginalised in our community – the homeless, socially isolated, financially stressed and all who are vulnerable.

By offering food and refreshments, DARA's Van is a key outreach service which engages directly with people who may require support and assistance, as well as access to information and other services. DARA's Van is the principal local partner of Orange Sky Laundry in the Newcastle region.

Operated by dedicated teams of volunteers, DARA's Van and Orange Sky Laundry, offers access to mobile hospitality and support as well as laundry facilities five nights a week throughout Newcastle and the Hunter.



Refugee Hub plays an integral role in the settlement of refugees in the Newcastle and Hunter region. By working collaboratively with other service providers, Refugee Hub walks with refugees to support and empower them on their journey to independence.

Refugee Hub operates a comprehensive and individualised intake and referral system, as well as providing short-term casework support for refugees and new migrants to access community services. Utilising Refugee Hub's experienced and professional networks, refugees and new migrants are provided with strong advocacy and referral pathways to utilise the supports they need.

An outcomes-focused service, Refugee Hub also operates English language programmes and facilitates pathways to education, employment and training for refugees and new migrants. Volunteers are integral to Refugee Hub and each brings their own unique talents to help refugees benefit from health, education, social and welfare opportunities.

WHO WE HELP

DARA helps a wide range of people from all walks of life. We do not discriminate against anyone based on gender, financial status, sexual orientation or age. We aim to create welcoming communities to support people who may be experiencing varying degrees of homelessness, abandonment, social disadvantage, isolation and loneliness. The people who use DARA's services are not our clients or customers – but they are our **FRIENDS** on the street. While our main aim is to provide a free meal to people of Newcastle and the Hunter who are experiencing homelessness, all are welcome to participate.

TALKING ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

People working and volunteering with homelessness services often say 'people experiencing homelessness' instead of 'the homeless' or 'homeless people'. This is because for most people, homelessness is a temporary experience, not a life sentence. Saying 'experiencing homelessness' is one of the first steps to changing the perception of homelessness.



VOLUNTEER TEAM STRUCTURE

DARA has 2 part-time employees and over 200 volunteers. DARA is supported by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's shared services including but not limited to Finance, Human Resources, IT and Marketing. A brief explanation of the relevant volunteer and operational roles follows:

COORDINATOR - STAFF

The Coordinator is a staff member and is the first point of contact for all Team Leaders. Their role is to support Team Leaders, rollout new services, develop resources and processes which aid all services and providing all volunteers with the tools and resources needed to provide a safe a consistent quality of service.

TEAM LEADER (TL) - VOLUNTEER

Team Leaders are a crucial part of how DARA can help so many friends across Newcastle and the Hunter. Team Leaders should be making regular contact with their team to ensure that they have at least 3 volunteers confirmed for each service. Team Leaders assist the coordinator the ensure their assigned service run smoothly and consistently.

GENERAL VOLUNTEER (GV) - VOLUNTEER

General Volunteers make up the largest part of our organisation. General Volunteers commit to coming either weekly, fortnightly or monthly. They are responsible, along with a TL, to provide a free meal to all who attend & positive conversations.

CONVERSATIONS

Conversations at DARA are empowering and non-judgmental.

It's important that volunteers never use their position with DARA for leverage or to promote their own thoughts, beliefs or decisions. Leaving personal agendas at the door enables volunteers to be mentally present on shift and fosters an environment where our friends feel safe to talk about their experiences without fear of judgment.

PRIVACY

Privacy laws protect personal information about volunteers (including photographs and video footage), people our volunteers may come into contact with through their role and staff. You may need to be told specific details about a Friend to enable you to carry out your volunteer role. We will only provide information that is necessary for your role. Not all volunteers you are working with may need to be aware of this information. Therefore, this information needs to be treated as private and confidential.

The people we support have a right to privacy in their personal information, and volunteers should not seek information that is not relevant or necessary to continuing the conversation. Likewise, volunteers also have a right to privacy, and these boundaries will often need to be set with Friends who may seek personal information about volunteers, or want to have a relationship with a volunteer. Volunteers must never give their phone number, address, or other contact information to DARA's Friends.

Likewise, they must not give out the contact/personal information of any other volunteer or DARA employee to Friends.

CONFIDENTIALITY

While you are working as a volunteer you may receive or overhear confidential information regarding people we support – staff, students or other volunteers. Information received must be kept confidential. This is a legal requirement.

Discussing information you have received during your volunteer role with staff, students, family, friends or other volunteers – inside or outside the Diocese – is not acceptable or tolerated.

If you have an issue or concern, please discuss this with the Coordinator or the Volunteer Manager.

Confidentiality requirements apply to the use of social media and email.

BUILDING GOOD BOUNDARIES

Providing conversation and support to people experiencing homelessness raises many challenges for volunteers. The nature of volunteering with DARA can mean that you develop close and long-term connections with many Friends on the street. As a result, you may encounter situations where you are confronted with needs, requests or demands for services or support that are not your role as a volunteer. This section of the training will provide practical information on some of the key ethical and boundary issues in providing support in the community.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD VOLUNTEER

The qualities of a good volunteer are many and varied. Everyone brings different strengths to their volunteer role, different values, beliefs and practical knowledge and skills. But there are some key skills areas that make volunteers more effective, for example:

- Describe yourself as a volunteer, not a friend.
- Ability to listen empathetically and suspend judgement.
- Good communication skills.
- Acceptance of people experiencing homelessness.
- Willingness to collaborate and consult with others.
- Ability to accept and respect the choices of other people.
- Respect for different needs, values, beliefs and culture.
- Commitment to increasing independence and capability in others.
- Ability to share knowledge and skills but not to take over.
- Having a positive attitude.
- Consistency and ability to follow through.
- Limiting self-disclosure, particularly regarding personal financial problems.
- Professional – genuine, friendly, but not needy or dependant.

WHAT ARE BOUNDARIES?

Boundaries are limits in a relationship that the organisation is responsible for establishing and maintaining. Maintaining appropriate boundaries with friends is an important part of volunteering with DARA. Volunteers must understand what boundaries are and take steps to create healthy boundaries from the very beginning of any connection with a Friend on the street. As a volunteer representing DARA and providing a service to our friends, you are automatically the person with more power in your relationships with friends. The one with more 'power' has the most responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries.

WHY DO WE NEED BOUNDARIES?

We need to have a sound ethical framework to provide a good quality service and to protect the rights of people experiencing homelessness, especially those who may be more vulnerable. Boundaries are important for providing a safe and clear environment for volunteers to engage in conversation with our friends on the street.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Healthy boundaries involve respecting the personal space of friends and volunteers. Physical contact can convey a sense of acceptance and we ENCOURAGE volunteers to greet friends with a friendly:

- Handshake,
- High five, or
- Fist bump.

Any physical contact beyond the above is considered INAPPROPRIATE. For example, hugging, kissing, holding hands, linking arms or touching the belly of a pregnant woman. There are five main reasons why we do not engage in these kinds of physical touch:

1. We might assume that because someone has never said they do not want to be touched they are comfortable with physical contact.
2. Our friends have a rich and varied range of experiences and perspectives that can make touching highly inappropriate and/or unsafe. It may be reminiscent of sexual abuse, domestic and family violence, trauma and other violations.

RELATIONSHIPS

Your role as a volunteer is to provide a free meal and engage in conversations during shift times that allow friends to feel positively connected with the community. Relationships or friendships outside of DARA services between volunteers and Friends is a serious breach of ethical responsibility and should not occur under any circumstances. This means that volunteers are not allowed to give Friends rides or meet with them outside of shift. However, if you happen to see a Friend on the street in public, it is acceptable and encouraged for you to stop, say hello and have a conversation with that person.

Inappropriate relationships with Friends can have significant risks, including:

- Unreasonable demands and expectations from friends, e.g. car rides.
- Inability for volunteers to provide objective support.
- Difficulty setting limits and dealing with difficult behaviour.
- Favouring particular volunteers over others.
- Grief and loss for friends when volunteers leave.

BELIEFS AND POLITICS

DARA is a non-political organisation dedicated to ensuring an environment of inclusiveness for people of all religious and cultural backgrounds. DARA is an agency of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and understands that its volunteers and Friends who access our service come from a range of faiths and background. Any beliefs or views that volunteers communicate with friends on the street can be interpreted as the beliefs or views of the organisation. As such, it is important that volunteers refrain from imposing their own personal beliefs or opinions about religion, politics and other related topics, including but not limited to comments and clothing.

Some Friends of DARA may wish to talk to volunteers about their own religious or political views. It is the role of the volunteer to engage in these conversations and ask questions, without disclosing their own views or perspectives on the matter.

SUBSTANCES

Volunteers should never be involved in the purchase or consumption alcohol or legal/illegal drugs with Friends of DARA. Volunteers should also take care not to facilitate a person to access alcohol or drugs or encourage drug use in any way.

In the presence of Friends, volunteers should never discuss personal use of substances, the implication of the use of substances, or the glorification of the use of substances, including tobacco products, alcohol, or marijuana. There is no smoking in the presence of Friends. Volunteers may take a break during shift to smoke away from the vehicle providing there are sufficient volunteers on shift and someone is aware of their whereabouts.

MONEY

DARA volunteers are never allowed to give Friends money and they must avoid any type of transaction, bargaining, or deal. While it may be tempting to support our Friends' commercial endeavours, we strongly discourage volunteers from purchasing any products for sale or facilitating the sale of goods to any other person by friends (e.g. artworks and handmade goods).

SIGNS OF BOUNDARY PROBLEMS

- Disclosing your own personal information to Friends.
- Discussing your personal, marital, financial or other problems with friends.
- Wanting to visit friends outside of shifts. Staying for longer and longer at each shift just to speak with a particular Friend or agreeing to extend the shift to provide more laundry/shower services.
- Worrying about Friends when you go home.
- Feeling that you are the only one who "understands" a particular Friend.
- Noticing feelings of sexual attraction towards Friends.



HYGIENE PRACTICES

While on shift at DARA there is a chance that volunteers may come into contact with soiled clothing or individuals who use our service with poor personal hygiene. In these instances, we strongly recommend that we always remember our values of being non-judgemental and offer our friends the same quality service as any other person.

We will never ask volunteers to do something they feel uncomfortable doing on shift and if at any point you feel uncomfortable on shift speak to your Team Leader on shift.

To maintain a high level of food safety, after contact with a Friend gloves must be discarded and hands washed thoroughly.

FOOD SAFETY

At DARA we are committed to maintaining a high level of food safety, while you may not follow these procedures at home it is a requirement that you understand and practice these procedures on shift.

FOOD HANDLING

Volunteers must observe these Health and Hygiene requirements

- If you have symptoms or diagnosis of a foodborne disease, such as vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, cold or fever, you must report this to your Team Leader and not handle food;
- Ensure clothing is clean;
- If you have a cut, put on a blue dressing. Then put on waterproof gloves;
- Avoid unnecessary contact with ready to eat food. You must put sandwiches or other ready to eat food in a container, plastic or paper bag or wrap in cling film.
- Do not eat, sneeze, blow, cough, spit or smoke around food or food surfaces.

Make sure DARA's Friends don't touch food other than their own food. So if handing out biscuits from a packet, hand to the friend rather than letting the friend take from the packet.

GLOVES AND HAND WASHING

The Australian Food Standards Code does not require food handlers to use gloves. Even when wearing gloves, in many situations it may be preferable to use utensils such as tongs or spoons. DARA's policy is that gloves are not required at the Parry Street base, where correct hand washing as described below should be followed. Gloves are required when serving food without utensils. The following points should be observed.

- Gloves must be removed, discarded and replaced after using the toilet, smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief, eating, drinking or touching the hair, scalp or body.
- Gloves must be changed at least every 30 minutes.
- Put on a new pair of gloves at the start of each location.
- Wash hands whenever hands are likely to be a source of contamination, including: before handling food and after using the toilet, smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief, eating, drinking or touching hair, scalp or body;
- Wash hands before working with ready to eat food or after handling raw food. This includes where gloves are required.

FOOD STORAGE

Volunteers must ensure that food is refrigerated and stored safely. This includes:

- Keeping 'potentially hazardous food' safe through 'temperature control';
- Not using food past use by dates;
- Storing food safely

USING TEMPERATURE CONTROL FOR POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

The temperature range between 5°C and 60°C is the 'temperature danger zone' where food poisoning bacteria can grow.

Potentially hazardous food is any food that can support the growth of these food poisoning bacteria.

Examples of potentially hazardous foods are meat, fish, eggs, salad and dairy products (cheese, butter and milk).

DARA's volunteers must keep potentially hazardous foods according to the rules in this table.

FOOD STORAGE 2 HOUR/4 HOUR RULE

TIME ABOVE 5°C		
0-2 hours	2-4 hours	Over 4 hours
Use immediately or refrigerate below 5°C	Use immediately. Do not put back in fridge.	Throw away

After opening, canned food, which contains potentially hazardous food, this must be kept under temperature control e.g. canned tuna.

SHELF STABLE FOODS

Foods that are not subject to the above temperature control requirements are called, 'shelf stable foods'. These foods can be kept at room temperature for the duration of the shelf life of the food. Examples include:

- Whole fruits and vegetables;
- Canned food (unopened);
- Dried foods;
- Pickled or preserved foods.

USE BY AND BEST BEFORE DATES

There are 2 date marks on food.

- The 'use by date';
- The 'best before' date.

Foods must be eaten or thrown away by the use by date. DARA's Van policy is not to use food after the "use by" date. Volunteers must check labels and throw away food past the use by dates.

Foods are still safe to eat after the best before date as long as they are not damaged, deteriorated or perished e.g. canned foods. Volunteers must examine all packaging to ensure to food has not been compromised. If in doubt, throw out.

STORING FOOD SAFELY

If a product requires specific storage instructions to remain safe until its 'use-by' or 'best before' date, manufacturers must include this information on a label. It is important for volunteers to follow storage instructions, such as 'keep refrigerated' and 'store in a cool, dark place'. All food in the fridge should have a label indicating the date that it was purchased and/or the date that it expires. If volunteers are putting something in the fridge, which does not have a 'use-by' or 'best before' date, a label must be made and put on the food with the date of purchase.