

Volunteer Handbook

Yarra Valley Waterwheel Tourism Information Centre

Introduction

Welcome to the Waterwheel Tourist Information Centre (Waterwheel Hub) - a place where art, community, and the natural beauty of the Yarra Valley meet.

Thanks for becoming a volunteer, you are not just helping run a space—you are shaping an experience for everyone who walks in the door. Visitors should feel an immediate sense of ease and warmth; their curiosity gently sparked the moment they step into The Yarra Valley Tourism Information Centre.

The visitor experience is created by people who care, pay attention, and act with integrity.

As a volunteer, this handbook is both your guide and our shared standards: friendly in tone, clear in expectations, and strong policies and procedures to support fair decisions when needed.

You will find all policies and procedures and operational guides that pertain to your role on the website.

Our Vision and Values **Vision**

A hub showcasing the arts, culture and environment of the Yarra Valley Region, inspiring visitation and engagement

Our Pillars

- Volunteerism
- Tourism
- Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Environment
- Revenue/Sustainability

Our Values

- **Community** – welcoming, inclusive, and respectful
- **Creativity** – celebrating artists and handmakers
- **Connection** – linking visitors to experiences in the Yarra Valley region
- **Integrity** – honest, fair, and accountable
- **Sustainability** – caring for place and environment

Our Commitment – Waterwheel Hub Incorporated Association (WHInc) will:

- Support volunteers through an induction, and provide guidance and training when required
- Value your respectful feedback

- Provide branded name badges
- Provided with local Upper Yarra shop discount vouchers
- Access to local events for free. For example, gardens, movies and local festivals.
- Donation box funds will support volunteer dinners and volunteer events.

Volunteer Commitment

Volunteers are asked to:

- Welcome and assist visitors to contribute to a safe, calm, and engaging environment
- Share local knowledge
- Support retail sales
- Represent handmakers and artists that are exhibiting at the gallery
- Help maintain gallery presentation as needed
- Help with events and workshops as needed
- Through induction training, be able to provide visitors with specific knowledge of events and places to visit around the Yarra Valley region.

Operations

Volunteers are the living bridge between place and people. Volunteers operate across five connected areas:

A) Art Gallery

- Rotating exhibitions

- Artist storytelling and engagement
- Exhibitions are held in 4-week slots. Any enquiries can be directed to the curator (curator@yarravalleywaterwheel.org). Please give those interested in being an exhibitor the General Information packet in the green folder behind the front counter. The Expression of Interest form at the end of that packet must be completed and submitted to the Committee to apply to be an exhibitor.

Note: No dates or exhibitions are guaranteed until the Curator and the Committee have provided approval and a deposit is paid.

- At present, all artwork sales are made through the Information Centre sales system and recorded manually on the artwork “stock list” for each specific exhibition.
- For all those items sold during an exhibition, a red sticker dot is placed on the tag of the item. With the artists instruction, the item remains until the end of the exhibition. Purchaser collects the item at the end of the exhibition.
- A record of the items sold are kept at the main desk for the duration of the exhibition. Separate sales slips also are filled out and kept with the

stock list. Instructions for this process are in the Gallery sleeve in the diary.

- At the end of an exhibition, sold items will have their sales slip attached, and buyers contacted unless otherwise arranged with the exhibitor.

B) Retail - Shop

Consignment-based sales located in the foyer area of the building

C) Handmaker Space

- While the **Handmakers** are responsible for their own spaces, you are encouraged to clean and tidy this area as needed. If you have any concerns or questions related to the *Handmakers section*, please contact the Administration Officer via email (See contact section).
- All Handmakers **must** sign in when attending to their stock (clipboard located at the front desk). Any changes to box location or cancelling of a box must be done through the Administration Officer.

D) Community Hub

- Know the calendar of events due to be held in the Waterwheel Hub. See the Website for updates.
- Events may be held in the gallery from time to time and may require your help.
- Workshops will be held in the art gallery on a weekly and monthly basis – There will be

information on the website to help gain knowledge of all upcoming workshops.

- Workshops will be held in the front section of the gallery. These will be run throughout the year and paid directly to the workshop artisan. Sometimes volunteers may be required to help.

E) Visitor Information

- Brochures, books and maps are available to help visitors explore the Yarra Valley region.
- It is encouraged to approach visitors who show interest in the information display and assist them with tourism advice and recommendations and any other question they may have
- Historical referencing – share publicly known Aboriginal history as well as white settlement.
- Ensure all conversations regarding current culture are positive and inclusive.
- The website will also contain information regarding all known activity in the Yarra Valley hinterland – guide all community and tourists to this resource.

Standards

Professional Conduct (See Code of Conduct on the website)

- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Waterwheel

- Treat everyone equally. Embrace and value differences within the team.
- Use all reasonable endeavours to promote the interests of Yarra Valley Waterwheel Tourism Information Centre.
- Be punctual and reliable

Integrated Role Responsibilities

Front of House

- First point of contact
- Maintain awareness of entire space

Retail and Handmakers

- Process all sales through the current Point of Sales (POS) system
- No unauthorised discounts
- Treat all artists fairly

Gallery

- Protect and respect artworks
- Share artist information – according to given information provided by exhibitor
- Ensure exhibition space is always clean and free from litter

Information Services

- Provide accurate, current information
- Promote the website as a good source of information on events, spaces to stay and surrounding attractions
- Promote all business' in the main street of Warburton and surrounding towns, when asked where to eat

Events & Community

- Support all events within the community without judgement or bias
- Help maintain a welcoming environment
- Create a safe and inclusive space that is accessible for all visitors and members of the community.

Retail & Artist Ethics

- Transparent pricing and commission
- Equal treatment of all makers
- Inclusive artist access – promoting handmade in small batches regardless of product similarity.
- No personal promotion without approval from the committee
- Careful handling of all stock

Artwork Protection Protocols

- Do not touch artworks unless authorised by artist
- Monitor visitor behaviour discreetly
- Report damage or risks immediately
- Ensure artwork is not in the sun or spaces that will harm the work – contact admin if a Handmakers' craft needs to be moved

Accessibility & Inclusion

We welcome everyone

- Use inclusive language – Avoid derogatory or patronising terminology
- Be patient and adaptable
- Support different needs and abilities
- Foster a collaborative atmosphere that respects all perspectives
- Ensure all visitors feel safe and appreciated

Procedures

Daily Operations

See Appendix for all operating procedures such as opening and closing the facility as well as tasks during the voluntary shift.

Information and Contacts

Health & Safety

- Report hazards immediately to volunteer coordinator.
- Follow emergency procedures regarding personnel safety
- Be aware of emergency procedures including exits and emergency contacts

Grievances & Support

- Raise concerns early via email or telephone to Volunteer Coordinator or members of the Committee

Training & Development

- Volunteers to complete induction training, where required for role.
- Working with children's check needed for workshops and events
- Shadow shifts (spending time with an experienced volunteer) encouraged for all new volunteers to enable better understanding of job procedures
- Ongoing learning supported

Operating Hours

The opening hours for the Waterwheel is currently 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, 7 seven days per week in the holidays and Friday to Monday in school terms.

ON CODE RED days the centre is closed.

Waterwheel Operational Team

Waterwheel Committee (WHInc)

Waterwheel Hub Incorporated is the volunteer management committee responsible for overseeing the governance, operations, and strategic direction of the Waterwheel. The committee works to ensure the Waterwheel remains a welcoming, sustainable, community-led hub that supports visitors, volunteers, local artists, handmakers, businesses, and the wider Yarra Valley region.

Its responsibilities include financial oversight, policy and procedure development, volunteer support, compliance, partnerships, programming, facility use, and long-term planning.

The committee also works closely with volunteers, staff, Council, community groups, and local stakeholders to ensure the centre continues to serve as a vibrant place for visitor information, local creativity, tourism, culture, and community connection.

Waterwheel Activation Team

The Activation Team is made up of dedicated voluntary community members and is responsible for turning the hub's vision into everyday reality, supporting the smooth day-to-day running of the space while keeping its purpose and energy alive. Working alongside the committee and volunteers, they act as a bridge between planning and action,

they help deliver exhibitions, events, and community experiences.

Volunteer Co-ordinator

Working in collaboration with the Administration Officer, Waterwheel Activation Team, and WHInc, the Volunteer Coordinator fosters an inclusive, supportive, and well-organised environment for all volunteers.

The role is responsible for managing volunteer rosters and calendars, ensuring adequate coverage by coordinating shifts and arranging replacements when volunteers are unavailable.

As a key point of contact, the Volunteer Coordinator provides guidance, communication, and support to volunteers, helping maintain a positive and connected team culture.

Administration Officer

The Administration Officer oversees all operational and administrative functions of the Waterwheel, ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the space.

This role includes supporting the Handmakers as artists and creators, fostering strong relationships, coordinating their involvement, and ensuring their work is thoughtfully presented and integrated within the broader visitor experience.

Working closely with the Waterwheel Activation Team, volunteers, and WHInc, the Administration Officer coordinates activities, supports

communication, and maintains alignment across all stakeholders

Marketing and Communications Officer

The Marketing and Communications Officer manages the Waterwheel's social media presence, creating consistent, engaging, and visually compelling content across platforms.

Working in collaboration with WHInc, this role promotes exhibitions, events, and activities while capturing and sharing the stories of artists, volunteers, and the wider community.

Through thoughtful storytelling and a strong sense of visual identity, the role helps grow audience reach, strengthen community connection, and enhance the visibility and character of the Waterwheel.

Curator/s

The Curator/s leads the creative direction of the art gallery, overseeing the planning and delivery of exhibitions and ensuring a vibrant, engaging, and evolving arts program.

Working in close collaboration with WHInc and the Waterwheel Activation Team, the Curator/s develops and delivers workshops, exhibition openings, and event nights that activate the space and invite meaningful community participation.

A key focus of the role is supporting and showcasing local and emerging artists, fostering strong relationships, and creating opportunities for

creative development, storytelling, and visibility within the region.

The Curator/s ensure all exhibitions and programs are thoughtfully curated and professionally presented, aligning with the Waterwheel's vision and creating inclusive, welcoming, and memorable experiences for both artists and visitors.

Key Contacts

You can find updated information at the waterwheel.

All Yarra Valley Waterwheel contacts will answer emails within 24 hours.

- **Volunteer Coordinator**

Email:

volunteercoordinator@yarravalleywaterwheel.org

- **WHinc Representative**

Email: secretary@yarravalleywaterwheel.org

- **Admin staff**

Email: admin@yarravalleywaterwheel.org

- **Emergency – 000**

- **Yarra Ranges Council**

Ph: 1300 368 333 or 9294 6905

Email: mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

- **Website: <https://yarravalleywaterwheel.org>**

- **FB:**
- **Instagram:**

Forms available on website

Also available physically and given where needed

- Incident report form
- Volunteer agreement
- Shift checklist – Daily Operations
- Grievance Policy
- Emergency evacuation protocol
- Code of Conduct
- Code of Ethics Policy
- Complaint Handling Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Volunteer Role description