

**Whale
Watchers
Volunteer**



**MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
VOLUNTEER POLICY**

WHALE WATCHERS 2010

**MACQUARIE
UNIVERSITY**



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Introduction

This policy is based on the Macquarie University Volunteer Policy and has been adapted for volunteers involved in Whale Watchers. It includes the rights and responsibilities of all volunteers throughout the program.

Defining volunteers

A *volunteer* is a person, who freely chooses to participate, and:

- is not paid,
- contributes to the mission of the organisation,
- extends, enhances or supports the work of the organisation,
- has responsibility limited to that voluntary service and does not extend to operations of the organisation,
- undertakes work that does not include accountability for management of the other staff or volunteers

A *Macquarie University Volunteer* is a volunteer who is individually registered on an official Macquarie University Volunteer Register and has completed all documentation required for that status. A Macquarie University Volunteer under 18 years of age must also have the written permission of their parent or guardian to participate in volunteer activities.

Each member must complete all the required documentation for Macquarie University Volunteer status. This ensures all volunteers understand Macquarie University volunteer rights and responsibilities, and ensures that all volunteers are covered by the university insurance.

Macquarie University wishes to work with volunteers at North Head to provide opportunities for the community to actively participate in the monitoring of migrating cetaceans. This is one way that Macquarie University can use its research activities to contribute to community education and involvement to promote awareness and conservation.

Developing quality volunteer activities

Whale Watcher aims to achieve objectives that are rewarding for both staff and volunteers, and also maintain robust and consistent collection of scientific data.

Jacobsen (1995; p8) outlines some key indicators of a quality volunteer program or project:

- Appointment of a *staff member with the role of coordinator* is vital to quality management of volunteers, a point of contact with the organisation and a focus for relationship building,
- All volunteer *inquires* are responded to promptly,

- Volunteers are *inducted* and *trained* for the tasks they are asked to do,
- Volunteers work in a *safe environment*,
- Volunteers receive *opportunities* to learn about conservation and the organisation,
- Volunteers have the *opportunity to share their knowledge*, skills and experience with staff,
- Volunteers have an *enjoyable, productive and sociable* time,
- Volunteers leave knowing they have made a *worthwhile contribution* to conservation and that the *organisation appreciates* their work,
- *Activities* are evaluated and the program or subsequent projects improved in light of this.

It is important to recognize that while physical tasks can be completed some of the most important and reliable outcomes of a volunteer activity are the messages and impressions taken away by volunteers. These include:

- Volunteers leave a project knowing more about the conservation of natural and cultural heritage,
- Volunteers leave a project knowing more about cetaceans; including behaviours and conservation,
- Volunteers feel they have made a contribution to the ongoing study of cetaceans,
- Volunteers go out into the community as advocates for conservation.

Purpose of the volunteer program

Whale Watchers is established to provide opportunities to members of the community to assist Macquarie University and with their yearly studies of migrating cetaceans, the North Head Whale Migration Study. In addition, it aims to promote awareness through education and research to the community.

Macquarie University acknowledges the participation of the volunteers, and recognize that the volunteers are essential to the North Head Whale research programs.

Volunteering

Whale Watchers is based on principles of access and equity. This means that all members of the community have access to Macquarie University volunteer opportunities on a regular basis, and that Macquarie University is consistently encouraging new members of the community to participate in the annual study.

Volunteers at North Head will be engaged for both the northern and southern humpback whale migration (mid June to mid July and during October). The intention of establishing a time frame for volunteers is to provide regular opportunities for all members of the community who have not previously volunteered to participate in the

current study. Volunteers are asked to commit to a fixed start date and end date of their volunteering term.

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer orientation ensures that volunteers:

- Are familiar with Macquarie University, its roles and structures,
- Understand the relationship of the Whale Watchers with Macquarie University.
- Understand the legislative and regulatory framework and how it relates to their activities,
- Are familiar with the place in which they will be volunteering,
- Are introduced to key staff and other volunteers,
- Understand where and how to complete the sign on/off for activities,
- Understand risk management arrangement for activities,

Insurance

All volunteers must be registered to be covered by the university insurance in case of personal injury.

In terms of public liability, it is the responsibility of volunteers not to undertake activities that place themselves and Macquarie University staff, students or volunteers, members of the public, or property at risk.

Public image

Macquarie University considers it important to maintain its reputation as a professional agency and volunteers are an important part of this public face. Two key areas need to be addressed: appropriate dress and volunteer conduct and agreements.

Appropriate Dress for Health and Safety

Macquarie University cares about the health and safety of volunteers.

- All volunteer conditions are to comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*,
- All volunteers must be appropriately dressed for the tasks they are to perform,
- Preventative health and safety measures using clothing and equipment strategies should be undertaken,
- Protective clothing and equipment must be worn by volunteers when undertaking tasks that require it.

Volunteer conduct and agreements

Whale Watchers volunteer conduct is a reflection of Macquarie University's commitment in dealing with the community.

In signing the Macquarie University volunteer agreement, volunteers undertake to abide by standards of conduct prior to joining any Macquarie University volunteer activity. The Macquarie University volunteer agrees to:

- Not disclose any confidential or sensitive information concerning Macquarie University, including information regarding the nd North Head Whale Migration Study to any persons unless authorized by the coordinator,
- Not disclose any confidential or sensitive information concerning any ongoing scientific studies or projects conducted at or around the site at any time,
- Not to act as a Macquarie University spokesperson or deal with the media on behalf of Macquarie University without prior approval and consent of the project manager,
- Observe Macquarie University policies and procedures and support their objectives,
- Report all complaints, problems, incidents and issues to the coordinator of Whale Watchers,
- Follow guidance from the coordinator and seek advice if directions are unclear,
- Recognise Whale Watchers is a non-discriminatory and harassment-free volunteering environment,
- Register attendance at each volunteering session; recording both the start and finish times for the day,
- Participate in orientation and training programs as required,
- Undertake tasks in a responsible, dependable, conscientious and courteous manner,
- Not engage in any law enforcing actions but contact the appropriate authority to report any legal infringements,
- Undertake voluntary service recognising health and safety laws and requirements,
- Follow risk management procedures.

Whale Watchers will involve regular evaluation and reporting to ensure that volunteers' needs are being met and the study is being implemented successfully.

Discrimination and Harassment

Harassment of, or unfair discrimination against staff, members of the public, or other volunteers is not acceptable under any circumstances or for any reason.

Instances of harassment or unfair discrimination should be reported immediately to the project manager.

Management Policy and Macquarie University's Commitment

Whale Watchers will have a project coordinator designated by Macquarie University, who will be responsible for the management of the volunteers and fulfill organisational and reporting requirements. Macquarie University is dedicated to supporting the program and its volunteers, which aims to facilitate volunteer input. In addition, Macquarie University is committed to providing a safe and pleasant environment for all registered volunteers.

All complaints, problems, incidents and issues must be reported to the study coordinator.

Conflict and termination of volunteer activities

Volunteers must keep in mind that the North Head Whale Migration Study site is frequented by the general public, especially during the peak migration of whales. Volunteers must :

- Respect one another and members of the public, including each persons thoughts, morals and ideas,
- Not engage in public arguments or conflict with each other, members of the public or Macquarie University staff and at all times consider how volunteer behaviour will be viewed by visiting members of the public,
- Act in an appropriate manner that will be representative of Macquarie University regulations,
- Report any complaints about the study to the program supervisor for appropriate resolution.

Where a volunteer refuses to abide by the Whale Watchers Volunteer Policy, their role as a Macquarie University volunteer will be terminated.

Ground rules for termination of voluntary activities with Whale Watchers include:

Information: the person involved is clearly informed of the specific complaint or issues (times, days, words or events).

Timeframe: the person concerned is given a reasonable time limit, agreed by both parties to change inappropriate behaviour (includes understanding that failure to change may result in dismissal).

Access: the person concerned is given fair access to all material circumstances surrounding the complaint.

Participation: person concerned is given every opportunity to participate in and agree to any changes or conditions and in setting limits.

Training: person may be offered training in specific skills, but this should not be a way of avoiding disengagement if it is necessary.

Volunteers are not paid employees and therefore cannot sue for wrongful dismissal.

Volunteer concerns

Volunteers are encouraged to report concerns to provide a better environment to all volunteers at North Head. Communication between the coordinator and volunteers is encouraged on a regular basis.

Macquarie University is committed to creating and maintaining a harmonious, productive work environment where no volunteer or staff member is troubled by an ongoing or unresolved grievance. Macquarie University recognises that grievances do arise and it is important that all volunteers and staff know what action to take to resolve them. The first step is for the volunteer to approach the coordinator and raise the issue directly, who will then undertake the appropriate actions to resolve the issue.

Agreement

Upon reading and understanding the above policy, all volunteers must sign the attached volunteer agreement.

Macquarie University

Whale Watchers

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Please make sure you have read the Whale Watchers Volunteer Policy and complete and return all sections of this application form to ensure that you are correctly registered as a Macquarie University volunteer. Please note – if submitting this form in hardcopy, you do not have to return the full policy document. If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this volunteer form, contact Megan Kessler on 0418 420 608 or mkessler@gse.mq.edu.au.

Name: _____

Mobile/Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Current situation (please circle):

STUDENT WORKING FULL TIME WORKING PART TIME RETIRED

LOOKING FOR WORK OTHER (please state) _____

Position of Interest:

Whale Watchers North Head

Number of days a week you wish to volunteer: _____

What day/s of the week are you available? _____

Over what period of time are you available and ideal starting date? (i.e. three months, six months, until you find work)

Why have you chosen to volunteer with Macquarie University?

As a volunteer, what are your expectations?

Other Information:

FIELDWORK PARTICIPANT

1. PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Volunteer Name:	Contact No.	After hours No.
Address:		

2. NEXT OF KIN Give name of person to be contacted in the event of an accident, problem, etc.

Name / Relation:	Contact No.	After hours No.
Address:		

3. FIELDWORK LEADER / ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR

Name: Megan Kessler	Contact No. 0418 420 608	After hours No. 0418 420 608
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4. THE TYPE OF FIELDWORK AND LOCATION (attach further details as necessary)

At the North Head Whale Watching Stations or at North Head Information Centre

5. LIST RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS / TRAINING / EXPERIENCE

Include date of certification / expiry (attach further details as necessary)

6. MEDICAL / HEALTH CONDITIONS Any medical condition / allergy / injury that may affect your ability to conduct the proposed fieldwork (attach further details as necessary)

Are you adequately fit to conduct tasks for the proposed fieldwork? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

7. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I will act responsibly & safely, taking reasonable care to protect my own Yes No
& other participants health & safety in the field.

I agree to comply with procedures given by safety officers & field supervisors. Yes No

The information that I have provided is accurate and complete. (Sign below)

(Participant) _____ Date: _____

8. Approval

I authorise this person to participate in the above-mentioned fieldwork (Sign below)

(Academic Supervisor - required for Undergraduate / Volunteer) _____ Date: _____

I authorise this person to participate in the above-mentioned fieldwork (Sign below)

(Fieldwork Manager / Head of Department) _____ Date: _____

Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers are required to read, understand and sign this Volunteer Agreement in order to carry out volunteer duties within the Graduate School of the Environment in the Division of Environment and Geography, Macquarie University.

As a volunteer with Macquarie University, you are expected to:

- fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the relevant Position Description to the best of your ability
- complete any necessary training and observe Occupational Health and Safety rules of the organisation
- clearly communicate any issues or concerns with your role to your Volunteer Supervisor

As a volunteer with Macquarie University, you have the right to:

- be treated as a professional team member of the project outlined in your Position Description
- receive appropriate orientation, training and access to equipment for your role
- have reimbursement of expenses as agreed with your Volunteer Supervisor
- be covered by Macquarie University travel and personal accident insurance
- provide feedback on the role as outlined in the relevant Position Description and have any concerns addressed

As a volunteer, you will be assisting in projects run on limited resources. You assist of your own free will in order to gain experience and knowledge. The researchers you will be assisting are usually undertaking post-graduate degrees and can afford you a limited amount of help with orientation and supervision.

Data you gather is the intellectual property of Macquarie University. Any subsets of data you wish to take or use are subject to strict confidentiality agreements and therefore necessitate a notification of request including a clear outline of the intended use. All confidential records, documents and other papers, together with any copies of extracts thereof, made or acquired by the volunteer in the course of their work shall be the property of Macquarie University and must be returned to Macquarie University on finishing volunteering for Macquarie University.

I, (print name) _____, have read and understood all details in the above Volunteer Agreement and associated Position Description and agree to carry out duties as a research assistant/volunteer under the conditions outlined.

Signed: _____

Date: _____