



## Volunteer Information Sheet

This sheet provides information in five sections:

- Volunteer Satisfaction
- Registration, Orientation and Training
- Volunteer Roles
- Shifts and Rosters
- Working in the Festival Office before the Festival

### ***Section 1: Volunteer Satisfaction***

The Festival believes that having highly satisfied Volunteers is not only a good thing in itself but also that a high level of Volunteer satisfaction translates directly to Festival patrons having a great Festival experience.

The Festival measures Volunteer Satisfaction through a short survey provided to all Volunteers.

Last year, 92% of the 2009 Volunteers who responded to the survey rated their overall satisfaction with the Volunteer Program at 8 out of 10 or better.

The Festival promises future Volunteers that it will not rest on its laurels and that it will continue to take all practical measures to deliver a Volunteer Program that generates a similarly high level of Volunteer satisfaction.

The main elements of the Festival's 'Volunteer satisfaction promise' are:

- setting out a timetable and sticking to it;
- providing Volunteers with their rosters by email in a timely fashion and aiming to be flexible about changes;
- providing useful and practical training at the Volunteer Orientation;
- supporting Volunteers with clear information about what is expected of them and giving instructions in a friendly and respectful manner;
- building rosters that are balanced, with neither too much nor too little work;
- having experienced and delightful people as Volunteer Supervisors to task Volunteers during the operation of the Festival;
- giving Volunteers a clear identity as members of a valuable group by means of their T-shirt and welcome kit;
- recognising Volunteers for the significant worth of their contribution and encouraging and valuing their feedback; and
- providing Volunteers with a safe working environment.

## ***Section 2: Registration, Orientation and Training***

### **Compulsory Registration, Orientation and Training Session on Saturday 8 May 2010**

All Volunteers, even vastly experienced ones, are required to attend a Registration, Orientation and Training session on Saturday 8 May that starts at 10.00am. This will be held at the Bangarra Dance Theatre, Pier 4/5, Hickson Road, Walsh Bay.

At the session on 8 May, Volunteers will be registered and receive their IDs, T-shirt and welcome pack. After the registration process, which includes information presentations from Festival staff, Volunteers will be divided into two groups on the basis of whether they have experience from the 2009 Festival. Brief refresher training will be provided to the experienced Volunteers but new Volunteers will get more intensive training. This means the session will conclude after an hour and a half for experienced Volunteers and after two and a half hours for new Volunteers.

If new Volunteers are not able to make the Orientation and Training session on 8 May, they will not be permitted to volunteer at the Festival.

Volunteers with experience from 2009 who are not able to attend the 8 May session may be permitted to volunteer at the Festival provided they meet the Volunteer Coordinator at the Festival office on either Tuesday 11 May or Thursday 13 May to be registered and collect their ID, T-shirt and welcome pack. If experienced Volunteers cannot make either of these two dates, they will not be able to volunteer at the 2010 Festival.

## ***Section 3: Volunteer Roles***

Volunteer roles are:

- Walsh Bay Precinct Writers' Green Room Staff
- Walsh Bay Precinct Writers' Green Room Supervisor\*
- Writer and Guest Guide
- Sydney Theatre Green Room Staff
- Book Signing Guides
- Walsh Bay Precinct Front of House Staff
- Information Booth Staff
- Patrons with Special Needs Staff
- Historic Houses Front of House Staff
- State Library Workshop Staff
- Floaters and Reserves
- Volunteer Supervisor\*

\*Supervisor roles are open only to experienced SWF Volunteers who volunteered in 2009, and may require an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Walsh Bay Precinct Writers' Green Room Staff**

The Writers' Green Room (WGR) at the Walsh Bay Precinct is one of the vital organisational hubs of the Festival. Writers, their publicists and session facilitators are asked to check into the WGR at least 45 minutes before their sessions start and the WGR Volunteers then ensure they are despatched to the correct venues 15 minutes before their sessions start. Training on wakie-talkie usage will be provided to Volunteers working in the WGR.

Preference will be given to rostering experienced Volunteers to the WGR as the job requires a thorough knowledge of how the Festival works and the location of the venues.

In addition to managing the process of ensuring writers, facilitators and publicists get to the WGR and then on to the venues on time, Volunteers need to manage catering for the WGR to ensure it is a welcoming and hospitable space for guests. To this end, Volunteers need to ensure only accredited guests gain entry.

## **Walsh Bay Precinct Writers' Green Room Supervisor**

Volunteers who have previously worked at least two shifts in the WGR at previous Festivals, one of which must have been at the 2009 Festival, are eligible to be rostered as WGR Supervisor.

## **Writer and Guest Guide**

During very busy periods of the Festival, particularly on the Saturday and Sunday, Volunteers are needed to guide writers and other guests from the WGR to the venues where they are appearing. This work requires Volunteers to be thoroughly acquainted with the Walsh Bay Precinct and its venues. There may also be a need to guide writers and other guests to book signings.

## **Sydney Theatre Green Room Staff**

One Volunteer is needed to assist Festival staff at Sydney Theatre to manage the Green Room there. The work is at the direction of Festival staff working at Sydney Theatre and will suit someone who does not mind working pretty much on their own.

## **Book Signing Guides**

Volunteers are needed to assist with managing queues at book signings. In addition to managing queues at Gleebooks venues at the Walsh Bay Precinct, Volunteers will also be needed to provide this service at some of the large events held in the evening at the Sydney Town Hall, the City Recital Hall and the Opera House.

## **Walsh Bay Precinct Front of House Staff**

This role involves:

- Managing queues for free events;
- Checking tickets at paid events;
- Guiding patrons into venues at the commencement of sessions;
- Ushering patrons to available seats;
- Securing the door during sessions;
- Maintaining quiet in the spaces outside venues;

- Managing the exit of patrons from venues at their conclusion and assisting with the set-up of the venue for its next use.

Volunteers will be supported in undertaking their role by Volunteer Supervisors who will direct their work and task them directly during the course of their shifts.

### **Walsh Bay Precinct Information Booth Staff**

The Information Booth at the Walsh Bay Precinct is another vital organisational hub for the Festival. It is usually the first port of call for patrons and the questions come thick and fast and generally do not let up. This work suits energetic people who like dealing with the public in a fast-paced, high-demand environment.

Some physical labour is required in terms of shifting bundles of programs and other material. Training on walkie-talkie usage will be provided to Information Booth Volunteers.

The Information Booth is the point from which patron surveys and other materials are distributed and collected.

### **Patrons with Special Needs Staff**

This role is attached to the Information Booth on the understanding that they perform the duties of staff in the Information Booth but are also available to provide assistance to patrons with special needs. Training will be provided at the Orientation to support Volunteers doing this job.

### **Historic Houses Front of House Staff**

A number of Festival events take place away from the Walsh Bay Precinct at various Historic Houses Trust properties such as The Mint. Front of house roles at these venues require Volunteers to work closely with Historic Houses Trust staff to determine what tasks are required at the venue. This might include, staffing stationary posts to provide directions, collecting tickets, ushering and helping set up the venue.

### **State Library Workshop Staff**

The Festival runs a number of popular and well-regarded writing workshops. These take place at the State Library of NSW on Macquarie Street. The workshops begin on Saturday 15 May and run until the close of the Festival on Sunday 23 May. Work here involves:

- Providing directions to the workshop locations within the Library;
- Registering workshop participants; and
- Assisting with the set up of the venues and the catering.

### **Floater and Reserve**

A number of Volunteers are rostered as Floater and Reserve for each shift. This does not mean that they are not really required or are on 'stand-by'. Rather, being a Floater and Reserve means that Volunteers in this role will not know what type of work is required of them until they turn up for their shift and are allocated to cover for other Volunteers who have not been able to make it or to supplement particularly busy or demanding areas of work. In building the rosters, it is hoped that only experienced Volunteers will be allocated a role as Floater and Reserve.

## **Volunteer Supervisors**

Volunteer Supervisors are responsible for the hour-by-hour tasking of Volunteers around the Walsh Bay Precinct. To do this job, it is essential that Volunteers have experience from the 2009 Festival where we introduced the role of Volunteer Supervisor. All of the 2009 Volunteer Supervisors are automatically eligible for this role again if this is what they would like.

Volunteer Supervisors are expected to work at least two consecutive four-hour shifts on the same day to ensure continuity of staffing in their areas of supervision.

Volunteers wishing to be considered for an interview to become a Volunteer Supervisor should indicate their desire on their application form or contact the Festival via the contact form on the website. (Please allow at least five working days for a reply.)

## ***Section 4: Shifts and Rosters***

### **Length and Time of Shifts**

Morning, afternoon and early evening shifts are four hours in duration. The evening shift is three hours long.

The day is divided into the following shifts:

- AM                    8.30am to 12.30pm
- PM                    12.00pm to 4.00pm
- Early Evening    3.30pm to 7.30pm
- Evening             7.00pm to 10.00pm\*

\*For shifts going past 8.00pm, Volunteers will be provided with a cab charge to share with other Volunteers on the same shift to transport them to the nearest public transport hub such as Wynyard, Central Station or Town Hall Station.

### **Minimum Number of Shifts**

We would like Volunteers to be available for a minimum of two shifts, at least one of which should be between Thursday 20 May and Sunday 23 May. (For a full explanation of why we ask for Volunteers to do at least one shift between 20 and 23 May, see the discussion below under the heading 'Building Rosters'.)

### **Consecutive Shifts**

Other than for Volunteer Supervisors, it is not usual practice for Volunteers to be rostered on consecutive shifts. However, where this does occur, Volunteers working consecutive shifts at venues at the Walsh Bay Precinct will be provided with a meal voucher.

## **Signing on for Shifts**

Volunteers working at one of the Walsh Bay Precinct venues need to sign on for their shifts at the Volunteer Green Room before they start their shifts.

## **Becoming Unavailable for Shifts**

At the Orientation, Volunteers will be given the mobile telephone number of the Volunteer Coordinator. If you become unavailable for your shift you need to let the Volunteer Coordinator know as soon as possible.

## **Building Rosters**

Rosters are built once applications close on Friday 16 April. It is a complicated business. There are usually 200 Volunteers who indicate availability for at least 400 slots in the roster. Matching Volunteer availability with Festival need and balancing that with trying to satisfy Volunteer preferences for type of work with relevant experience at previous Festivals is more art than science. While the Volunteer Coordinator makes every effort to satisfy Volunteer preferences, this cannot be guaranteed and we ask for your understanding in the event that all preferences are not accommodated.

We do aim to provide every Volunteer with at least one shift even though we ask Volunteers to make themselves available for at least two shifts. In 2009, we were not able to provide shifts to meet Volunteer availability in only two cases out of 207 applicants. However, a large number of Volunteers were disappointed to get only one shift. This occurred in the main when Volunteers had indicated availability only during low activity periods.

While there are Festival events from Saturday 15 May until Sunday 23 May, there are very few events at the start of this period with the greatest need for Volunteers starting on Thursday 20 May and running until Sunday 23 May. This means that there are very few shifts available from Saturday 15 May until Wednesday 19 May but a large number of shifts after that. It is likely that if you indicate availability only for shifts before Thursday 20 May, you will get one shift.

## ***Section 5: Working in the Festival Office before the Festival Begins***

There are a small number of labour-intensive administrative tasks where help is needed in the Festival office before the Festival begins. These tasks and a rough idea of when help is needed are:

- Assisting with the preparation of Festival packs (late March)
- Sorting competition entries (Mid-to late April)
- Putting together Volunteer packs (First week of May)
- Putting together Festival Guest packs (Second week of May)

If you are interested in assisting the Festival with any or all of these tasks, please use the contact form on the website to let the Volunteer Coordinator know of your interest and availability.