



# Volunteer Policy Handbook

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Communities Creating a Sustainable Canberra

SEE-Change Inc

Approved by SEE-Change Inc Committee January 2014



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# 1. General Policy

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## 1.1 Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide guidance for volunteers at SEE-Change
- Outline policies and procedures for volunteer involvement
- Assist SEE-Change in meeting volunteer needs
- Provide a basis for volunteer involvement
- Inform volunteers about their rights and responsibilities
- Outline the membership or volunteer process

## 1.2 About SEE-Change

SEE-Change is a community, not-for-profit group that supports and inspires people to join together and act in a sustainable way. Its activities are practical, and based on local Canberra realities. Some previous activities SEE-Change has been involved in include solar panel bulk buys, educational workshops, sustainable home tours, market stalls and Government submissions, to name but a few.

The vision of SEE-Change is based around communities creating a sustainable Canberra whilst the mission is to inspire, inform and support action to reduce Canberra's ecological footprint. In order to do this, SEE-Change relies on its many devoted members and volunteers who dedicate their time and energy toward this mission. SEE-Change welcomes everyone and is constantly seeking to expand its diverse volunteer force.

## 1.3 SEE-Change Values

SEE-Change values include:

- Peaceful empowerment
- Respect for difference
- Friendship and support
- Social justice
- Healthy people on a healthy planet
- A sustainable future

## 1.4 Code of Ethics

SEE-Change Inc operates on the following guiding principles and ethics:

- We will treat all people with dignity and respect
- Our governance and work practice will promote equity and reflect the diversity of our community
- We will commit to continuous improvement
- We will approach our work with flexibility and innovation
- We will strive for sustainability in all our activities
- We will be accountable and professional
- We will have fun and be supportive

## **1.5 Commitment to Volunteers**

A volunteer is someone who performs, or offers to perform a service of their own free will and without monetary payment. SEE-Change has a strong commitment to its volunteers and appreciates all contributions. SEE-Change would be unable to operate without its volunteers, and as such is always interested in ways to improve the volunteer experience at SEE-Change, as well as attract new members. Volunteers are involved in almost all SEE-Change activities, including organising events, website maintenance, research and practical demonstrations and are treated with the same regard as paid employees.

SEE-Change volunteers may choose to, but need not be registered members of SEE-Change. Similarly, formal members may choose to volunteer with SEE-Change or not. The term 'volunteer' in this document therefore refers to both members and non-members who volunteer with SEE-Change. As a volunteer there are countless ways to contribute to the vision and mission of SEE-Change! More information about how to be involved with SEE-Change can be found at the [volunteering page](#) on the SEE-Change website or by calling the SEE-Change support office. SEE-Change is also committed to meeting the needs of its volunteers and welcomes any feedback, ideas, suggestions or thoughts about SEE-Change and our activities.

## **1.6 Adherence to National Standards**

This policy was developed with close adherence to the *National Standards for involving volunteers in Not-For-Profit Organisations* (2001). The *National Standards* were consulted throughout the development process of this policy to address the standards relevant to SEE-Change. Some standards have been omitted at SEE-Change's discretion and may be re-evaluated annually or as necessary.

## 2. General Management of Volunteers

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### 2.1 Principles of Volunteering

SEE-Change recognises and upholds the following principles of volunteering, as set out by the *National Standards for involving volunteers in Not-For-Profit Organisations* (2001).

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- Volunteer work is unpaid
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice
- Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances
- Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- Volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- Volunteering promotes human rights and equality

### 2.2 Volunteers' Rights and Responsibilities

SEE-Change volunteers have the responsibility to:

- Inform SEE-Change in a timely fashion of any changes in contact details or any factors affecting their volunteering
- Behave in a responsible way which upholds the good name of SEE-Change when conducting SEE-Change business
- Treat others within and outside of SEE-Change with respect and consideration
- Inform SEE-Change of any inappropriate behaviour witnessed by them
- Abide by SEE-Change organisational policies
- Maintain professionalism when performing tasks for SEE-Change

Volunteers at SEE-Change have the right to:

- Work in a healthy and safe environment
- Be recruited in accordance with equal opportunity and anti discrimination legislation
- Be adequately covered by insurance
- Be given accurate and truthful information about SEE-Change
- Be given or directed to copies of this volunteer policy and other relevant organisational policies
- Not be placed in a position which could be held by a paid worker
- Be appropriately informed about SEE-Change
- Have confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance to the *Privacy Act 1988* and SEE-Change's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

### **2.3 SEE-Change's Rights and Responsibilities**

SEE-Change's responsibilities towards volunteers have been adapted from the *National Standards* (2001) and are as follows:

- Recruit volunteers in accordance with equal opportunity legislation
- Provide volunteers with appropriate information about SEE-Change
- Provide a healthy and safe volunteer workplace
- Provide appropriate insurance for volunteers
- Not to place volunteers in roles which could be held by paid staff
- Differentiate between paid and unpaid roles
- Provide appropriate support and management to volunteers
- Provide or direct volunteers to the appropriate policies pertaining to volunteer staff, including OH&S policy, privacy and confidentiality policy, dismissal policy etc
- Acknowledge and uphold the rights of volunteers
- Treat volunteers as valuable team members and involve them in relevant decision making
- Acknowledge the valuable contributions of volunteers

SEE-Change also has the following rights:

- The right to release volunteers following the appropriate release procedures
- The right to be informed in a timely manner about a cessation of volunteer involvement

### **2.4 Volunteer Supervision**

Volunteers are directly responsible to the Volunteer Co-ordinator, who is responsible to the Executive Officer. In the case that the Volunteer Co-ordinator is unavailable for any reason, or this position does not exist, or is not filled, volunteers are directly responsible to the Executive Officer or any other person identified by the Executive Officer.

### **2.5 Volunteer Co-ordinator**

Whilst there is the need for a Volunteer Co-ordinator, the Executive Officer, Administration Officer or a volunteer identified by the Executive Officer will perform this role to the best of their ability until such a time as funding is received for this position and/ or the position is filled. The Volunteer Co-ordinator is responsible for all tasks relating to volunteers, including, but not limited to managing volunteer contact details, contacting volunteers, matching volunteer tasks and activities, dealing with volunteer complaints and disputes, reviewing the Volunteer Policy Handbook and so on. Volunteers should consider the Volunteer Co-ordinator as their first port of call within SEE-Change.

## 3. Recruitment and Involvement

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### 3.1 Early Stages

Most SEE-Change volunteers first hear about SEE-Change through family and friends, community events, SEE-Change stalls and SEE-Change pamphlets. People interested in volunteering with SEE-Change can expect at the early stage to have informal chats with the Volunteer Co-ordinator or Executive Officer about volunteering, to be given information about becoming a volunteer and to be given examples of previous and current volunteer involvement in SEE-Change. People may volunteer for specific events or tasks within SEE-Change without becoming a formal member. Volunteers can expect the same courtesy and respect as members and are valued equally. Furthermore, volunteers may also follow part of the membership process below if desired without becoming a member of SEE-Change, such as completing the survey and being informally welcomed to SEE-Change.

### 3.2 Formal Membership/ Registration

Becoming a formal member of SEE-Change involves the following steps:

- **Membership Form** – A membership form is filled out, either through the website at [www.see-change.org.au/index.php?q=civicrm/contribute/transact&reset=1&id=1](http://www.see-change.org.au/index.php?q=civicrm/contribute/transact&reset=1&id=1) or through the membership form attached to SEE-Change pamphlets. Pamphlets can also be obtained from the website, by contacting the SEE-Change office by phone (02) 6162 2320, emailing [admin@see-change.org.au](mailto:admin@see-change.org.au), or visiting the support office at Room 4, Downer Community Centre, Frencham Place, Downer.
- **Payment** – To become a formal SEE-Change member requires making a membership payment to SEE-Change. The annual fee is \$25 per individual/ household, \$10 for concession card holders or low income earners and \$50 for organisations. Payments can be made by cash, cheque or direct debit. Members will need to renew their membership annually and will be informed by email when their membership expires. For more information about payment, please see the membership form on the pamphlet or contact the SEE-Change support office
- **Committee Approval** – All new members will be formally approved by the SEE-Change Inc Committee at the following Committee meeting
- **Survey and Database** – New members and volunteers will be invited to complete the online member survey or will be given a hardcopy of the survey. This survey is completely voluntary and aims to find out about member's general interests, their interests in SEE-Change, their interest in volunteering and their specific skills and resources. This information will then be used to better meet volunteer needs within SEE-Change by allowing SEE-Change to form a database to better connect volunteers with each other as well as with activities and tasks that may interest them. *Please note:* individual survey responses and the database will remain confidential and will be used only for SEE-Change purposes. Volunteer privacy is important to SEE-Change. Please see *Section 4.6* of this policy or the *SEE-Change Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* for more information.
- **Welcome to SEE-Change** – Members can expect to be contacted as a welcome to SEE-Change. This may include an informal discussion of interests, an invitation to a welcome afternoon tea or an invitation to visit the relevant local SEE-Change group. Volunteers may also be given the opportunity to meet other SEE-Change members and volunteers informally.

### 3.3 Orientation/ Induction

When a person makes the decision to volunteer with SEE-Change for the first time, they can expect to undertake the following process of orientation:

- *Volunteer Policy Handbook* – All volunteers can expect to be given an electronic copy of this policy handbook as a guideline for their interactions and volunteering within SEE-Change. This policy handbook is available online in PDF format.
- *Organisational Policies* – If requested, volunteers may also be directed to copies of the broader organisational policies, including *OH&S Policy*, *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* and so on. These are also available online in PDF format.
- As part of informal orientation, both volunteer members and non-members are highly encouraged to explore the SEE-Change website and read about SEE-Change’s mission, philosophy and history in more detail.
- Volunteers will also need to sign the form at the end of this handbook stating that they have read and understood the *Volunteer Policy Handbook* and will adhere and agree to the responsibilities outlined in it. This record of your volunteering engagement is also of importance to SEE-Change for insurance purposes and for maintaining an up to date register of all our volunteers.

### 3.4 Continuing Involvement

Volunteers who volunteer on an ongoing basis with SEE-Change can expect to be:

- *Matched to events and tasks* – This will be based on the survey results and informal chats with the Volunteer Co-ordinator or Executive Officer. As events and tasks arise, the Volunteer Co-ordinator will search the database for specific volunteers and members who have relevant skills or an interest in these activities and may approach them accordingly. Volunteers can then choose to be involved in these activities or not.
- *Given Specific Volunteer Roles* – Wherever possible, role or project descriptions will be developed. Many of these role descriptions will also be available online on the [volunteering page](#) and can be viewed and applied for by interested volunteers. Volunteers will be recruited by the Volunteer Co-ordinator based on their suitability for the position, their skills, their interests and in line with Equal Employment Opportunity legislation. Those who apply but are not successful may be offered alternative roles.
- *Given Access to an Online Volunteer Feedback Form* – As SEE-Change is committed to improving the volunteer experience, we have an online feedback form which may be completed by volunteers. It can be found at [www.see-change.org.au/?q=node/191](http://www.see-change.org.au/?q=node/191) and can be completed at any time.
- *Given Reminders about Annual Membership Renewal* – If a volunteer is also a formal member, membership must be renewed annually. Members will be notified by email or letter when their membership payment is due. Volunteers may register as members at any time. For more information about how to become a member and how to make a membership payment, see *Section 3.2* of this handbook.

### 3.5 Training and Development

Volunteers will be given the opportunity for training and development at SEE-Change wherever possible. This may include for example informal training through the orientation process outlined above and/or the opportunity for involvement in workshops, demonstrations, education seminars, conferences, meetings and so on.

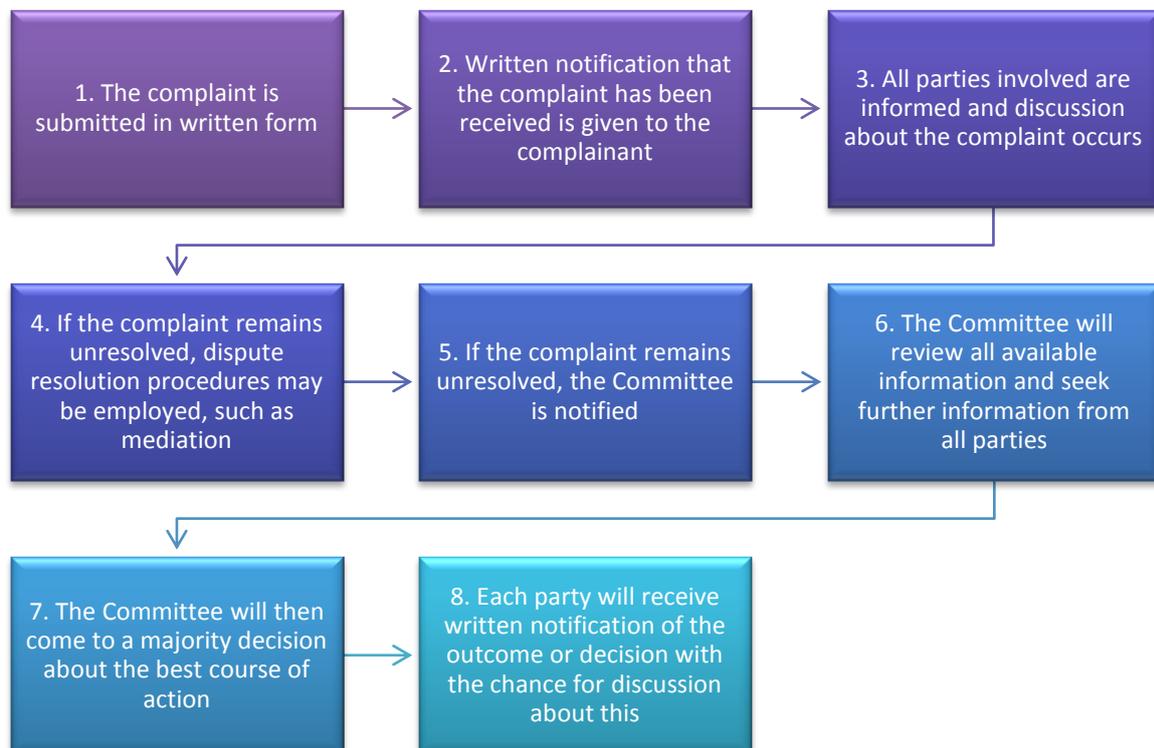
## 4. General Workplace Policies

### 4.1 Reimbursement Policy

Due to a limited budget, SEE-Change is unable to reimburse volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses accrued whilst carrying out SEE-Change activities, such as petrol costs. By signing the form at the end of this handbook, volunteers are agreeing that they will not seek reimbursement for these expenses. However, SEE-Change will make every effort possible to ensure that volunteers are not left significantly out-of-pocket as a result of their involvement with SEE-Change and will review this policy if and when more funds become available.

### 4.2 Complaint, Grievances and Dispute Resolution

Unfortunately, there are a number of situations that may arise in which volunteers may feel it is necessary to make a complaint. This may include instances of harassment, intimidation or discrimination within SEE-Change or may relate to process failure and disputes with another volunteer or staff member. Where appropriate, volunteers are firstly encouraged to attempt to resolve the issue informally by engaging other parties (for example, speaking with a Committee Member, the Executive Officer or Local Convener) before following the complaint process as outlined below:



1. All formal volunteer complaints must be submitted in written format to either the Volunteer Co-ordinator or the Executive Officer. Should the complaint specifically involve the Volunteer Co-ordinator or the Executive Officer, and attempts to resolve the issue internally have failed, the complaint may be made to the appropriate local group convener, or another Committee member who will also follow this complaint process.
2. The person overseeing the complaint will then give written notification to the complainant that they have received the complaint.

3. The overseer will, at their discretion, inform all parties involved. All parties will have the opportunity to be heard by the person overseeing the complaint. All interactions and discussions throughout the entire process will be recorded including the date, time, details of the conversation and so on.
4. If the complaint or dispute is not resolved during the course of these conversations, the person overseeing the complaint may choose to employ a dispute resolution process such as mediation by an impartial third party.
5. Should the complaint remain unresolved, the overseer will, at their discretion, bring the issue to the attention of the SEE-Change Committee at the next Committee meeting.
6. The Committee will review all available information, seek new information and hear from each party if desired.
7. Following this discussion, the Committee will then come to a majority decision about the best course of action.
8. Each party will then receive written notification of the outcome or decision which in extreme cases may include dismissal from volunteer duties and involvement in SEE-Change. This notification will include any steps or responsibilities that are expected of each party and each party will also have an opportunity to comment on the decision before it is finalised.

Please see SEE-Change's *Complaints, Grievances and Dispute Resolution/ Disciplinary Procedures and Dismissal* document for more details.

### **4.3 Disciplinary Procedures and Dismissal**

There may be some situations where SEE-Change is required to discipline or release volunteers for unacceptable conduct whilst performing SEE-Change duties, or behaviour that does not uphold the volunteer responsibilities outlined in this policy. These acts of misconduct may include, but are not limited to: drunkenness, theft, violence, obscenity and threatening behaviour. In these instances, SEE-Change will follow a three-strike procedure as outlined below:

1. A verbal informal warning about the misconduct will be given by the Volunteer Co-ordinator, Executive Officer or Committee member at their discretion, as well as an explanation of the three-strike procedure. The Volunteer Co-ordinator, Executive Officer or Committee member will record the details of the first warning, including the date, time, details and any subsequent relevant conversations.
2. If the behaviour continues, a formal written warning will be given by the Volunteer Co-ordinator, Executive Officer or Committee member with possible consequences for the continuing behaviour outlined. Clear reasons for the written warning will be given with the chance for discussion. The volunteer will be given any and all opportunities to cease the misconduct.
3. If the behaviour continues after the formal written warning is given, the volunteer or member will be given written notice that their case has been taken to the SEE-Change Committee or Executive Officer who will then follow the dismissal procedure outlined in Section 3 of the *SEE-Change Constitution*. This may include an invitation to attend the next SEE-Change Committee meeting to present their case in written format or verbally, a written notice of the resolution which may include dismissal or member suspension and information about their right to appeal the resolution or decision.

Please see SEE-Change's *Complaints, Grievances and Dispute Resolution/ Disciplinary Procedures and Dismissal* document for more details.

#### **4.4 Volunteer Insurance**

All volunteers, whether financial members or non-financial members, who undertake agreed tasks and activities specifically for the purpose of SEE-Change are covered by personal accident insurance. Motor vehicle insurance is not included in SEE-Change's Volunteer Insurance Policy. It is expected that SEE-Change volunteers using a vehicle in the course of their volunteering for SEE-Change have a current and legitimate driver's license, a registered, road worthy vehicle and that they have adequate private insurance for their vehicle. For insurance record management purposes, volunteers must sign the form at the end of this handbook agreeing that they have read and understood these expectations. Volunteers may request to see SEE-Change's *Volunteer Insurance Policy* for more information.

#### **4.5 Occupational Health and Safety**

Both SEE-Change employees and volunteers have a number of different responsibilities and expectations around safe behaviour and risk management in the workplace. These must be followed in order to ensure the safety and good health of all persons involved with SEE-Change, and are outlined below:

SEE-Change's OH&S Responsibilities:

- Address and take seriously any safety risks reported by volunteers
- Employ risk management strategies at SEE-Change events etc to minimise possible hazards
- Consult members and volunteers about any changes that may affect their health and safety at SEE-Change
- Identify, assess and effectively control risks

Volunteer's OH&S Responsibilities:

- Report any incident or hazards to the Executive Officer
- Obey any reasonable instruction aimed at protecting their health and safety while volunteering
- Use any equipment provided to protect their health and safety while volunteering
- Consider and provide feedback on any matters which may affect their health and safety
- Act in a responsible and safe manner that does not put others at risk of harm
- Inform the Executive Officer of any harm or injuries received whilst performing SEE-Change duties
- Ensure they are not affected by alcohol or another drug which may endanger their own or another person's health and safety
- Read, review and follow risk management strategies

By signing the form at the end of this handbook, volunteers are agreeing that they have read, understood and will adhere to their OH&S responsibilities as outlined above. See SEE-Change's *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* and *Risk Management Strategy* for more information.

#### **4.6 Privacy and Confidentiality**

SEE-Change's and Volunteer Privacy and Confidentiality Responsibilities are as follows:

- All volunteer and member contact and personal details are stored electronically in a secure fashion
- All volunteer and member information is treated as private and confidential

- The Executive Officer, Administration Officer, Volunteer Co-ordinator and IT Volunteer are the only people who have access rights and can grant access rights to this information. Parts of this information including contact details may be shared with Committee members and local group convenors for the purpose of SEE-Change business. Where such information is shared electronically it shall be done so in a secure fashion
- Personal information may be used in order to contact SEE-Change members and volunteers or to seek interest in volunteering
- Personal information will be accessed as little as possible to ensure privacy and confidentiality and will not be passed onto third parties except where permitted by law, or with the express permission and consent of the relevant person
- The Executive Officer and Administration Officer may grant access rights to Committee members and volunteers within SEE-Change at their discretion for the specific purpose of SEE-Change business and will communicate confidentiality responsibilities to them upfront
- Should access to this information be misused or not treated in the most confidential fashion, access rights will be revoked and the person responsible may be disciplined
- SEE-Change will only collect personal information and data that is relevant to the primary function of SEE-Change and to understand SEE-Change's demographic profile
- Data may be analysed and summarised for the purpose of SEE-Change's primary function. Individual's information will not be disclosed and summaries will remain anonymous. Information that may be used to identify any individual will not be used.
- Individuals have the right to seek access to their own information and to correct their personal information
- All volunteers are expected to treat the personal information of others as private and confidential at all times and this will be communicated to volunteers.

By signing the form at the end of this handbook, volunteers are agreeing that they have read, understood and will adhere to the privacy and confidentiality responsibilities as outlined above. See SEE-Change's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* for more information.

#### **4.7 Working with Vulnerable People**

Both SEE-Change employees and volunteers have responsibilities and expectations around working with vulnerable people as part of the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011*. These must be followed in order to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people.

A person is defined as being vulnerable if they are a child under the age of 18 years or an adult who is experiencing disadvantage and accesses a regulated activity or service in relation to the disadvantage.

From November 2014, SEE-Change volunteers who are engaging in activities with vulnerable people may need to complete a *Working with Vulnerable People Application for Registration Form*. The cost of applying for this registration is free to volunteers, and requires the applicant to provide proof of identity, passport photographs and a range of other information.

If you are involved with an activity that is working with vulnerable people, please review the *Working with vulnerable people - exemptions to the WWVP Act* to determine whether you are exempt from needing to register. If you are unsure whether you are exempt or would like a copy of either the factsheet or registration form, please contact the SEE-Change Office.

## 5. Policy and Procedure Review Process

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### 5.1 Volunteer Recognition and Feedback

SEE-Change aims to recognise and give feedback to volunteers for their work and contributions in a number of ways. This may include, for example, placing the name of a volunteer on something they have designed, written recognition in the SEE- Change newsletter or a ‘thankyou’ card, phone call or chat.

### 5.2 Review of Volunteer Policy

In line with annual reviews of broader SEE-Change policies, the Volunteer Policy should be reviewed annually by the Volunteer Co-ordinator or, should this position not exist or be filled, by the Executive Officer or someone designated by the Executive Officer. It should be reviewed in adherence with the *National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-For-Profit Organisations (2001)* and in relation to any changes experienced by SEE-Change since the last review. Any changes are to be confirmed by the Committee.

### 5.3 Review of Organisational Policies Referred to in this Policy

The broader SEE-Change policies should be reviewed annually by the Executive Officer, a member of SEE-Change Inc, or a person designated by the Executive Officer. They should be reviewed in relation to any recent changes in local, state or national legislation affecting these policies and any internal changes within SEE-Change since the last review and updated if necessary.

# Volunteer Consent Form

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SEE-Change promises to undertake all of its responsibilities as outlined in this handbook and endeavours to make your time with SEE-Change as enjoyable, educational and valuable as possible. SEE-Change is committed to its members and volunteers and is continuously seeking feedback about how to better meet your needs.

Once you have read and understood the *Volunteer Policy Handbook* and before you commence volunteer work with SEE-Change, please take the time to complete the following consent form.

If you are under 18 years of age, both you (the volunteer) and your parent or guardian must sign this form. Please do not hesitate to contact SEE-Change regarding any information or queries about the *Volunteer Policy Handbook* or this form by phoning the office on (02) 6162 2320. Please return forms to the Volunteer Co-ordinator or Executive Officer. Forms can be:

**Dropped off:**

SEE-Change Support Office  
Downer Community Centre  
Frencham Place, Downer  
ACT 2602

**Posted:**

SEE-Change Inc  
PO Box 7025  
Watson, ACT 2601

**Emailed:**

office@see-change.org.au

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood this policy. I am aware of SEE-Change's continuing commitment to its members and volunteers and understand my rights as a SEE-Change volunteer as set out by this policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent or Guardian if under 18 years of age)