



# DCS VOLUNTEER UNIT

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

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Providing support  
for prisoners and offenders.



Government  
of South Australia

## MISSION STATEMENT

Utilising volunteers to support offender community reintegration and reduce reoffending.

## VALUES

### Making a Difference

Volunteers add value to DCS and the South Australian community by contributing their people in custody and under community supervision in a range of educational and social need areas.

### Inclusion and Diversity

The unique breadth of skills that volunteers bring assist DCS to be responsive to the diverse cultural and support needs of people in custody and under community supervision, assisting them in their process of change.

### Opportunity for Change

The work of volunteers is important and positively impacts the lives of people during their time in custody and through their journey to community reintegration; Volunteers believe people are capable of change and offer them respect and support.

### Contributing to Community Safety

Volunteers are supported by DCS to undertake their work ethically and safely, in order to provide assistance to people in custody and under community supervision, to contribute to community safety.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO COUNTRY

The State Government acknowledge the Kaurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kaurna people today. The State Government would also like to pay respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal people from other areas of South Australia and Australia.

*All stock photography used for illustrative purposes only.  
Many individuals depicted in the content are models.*

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# VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

## SERVICES PROVIDED TO ABORIGINAL PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS



DCS recognises Aboriginal people are over-represented in the prison system. As well as the provision of the preceding volunteer programs, the Department provides a range of programs and services to support prisoners and offenders throughout their contact with DCS.

Many of these programs are facilitated through the Aboriginal Services Directorate (ASD).

ASD is responsible for informing and developing the provision of culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal clients and is a significant contributor to policy development around the management and rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders.

Volunteers of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent are crucial in the provision of support in this area.



**If you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and are interested in volunteering with us, please contact us.**

## VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAM



Many people in contact with the Department have limited financial means or social supports to enable them to meet their rehabilitation needs.

Those prisoners and offenders in the community who are assessed as in need of support are assisted by volunteers to undertake rehabilitative support appointments such as:

- ▶ medical appointments;
- ▶ job network agencies and interviews;
- ▶ rehabilitation programs;
- ▶ supervision appointments; and
- ▶ housing appointments.

As well as the more practical aspects of this support, volunteers play an important role by providing emotional and practical guidance to the offender (especially on job interviews or court appointments).

Most volunteer roles also include acting as an important communication link between the offender and their Case Manager or Volunteer Coordinator to ensure the prisoner or offender is receiving adequate support to meet their needs.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS **CONTINUED**

**EDUCATION PROGRAM**



The Department has placed a strong focus on the provision of basic education to prisoners and offenders. As a Registered Training Organisation, DCS can deliver competency-based training in a wide range of areas.

Volunteers with an interest in education or tutoring may:

- ▶ assist Education Coordinators and other staff to provide literacy and numeracy support to prisoners and offenders
- ▶ support staff to provide a dynamic learning environment

- ▶ complete tasks nominated by the Education Coordinator and teachers
- ▶ provide 1:1 support for literacy, numeracy, English as a Second Language and computing
- ▶ help provide resources to support the curriculum
- ▶ proofread student work and provide general classroom support
- ▶ support the implementation of the DCS education assessment tool (subject to qualifications).

**LIBRARY SERVICES PROGRAM**



Volunteers with library skills and/or experience, or an interest in reading development, may provide support to a number of prison libraries across SA.

Supported by the Education Coordinator, volunteers work with Prisoner Librarians to manage the provision of those library services.

Library Services are managed differently in each prison. Volunteers provide additional support to each library as needed.

The type of support Departmental volunteers may provide includes:

- ▶ collecting donations of books/magazines
- ▶ assessing suitability of library material in line with Departmental policy
- ▶ distributing books/magazines throughout prisons
- ▶ checking returned books for contraband
- ▶ transferring books between locations.

Additional library programs such as Book Clubs etc may also be supported by volunteers where available.



## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS **CONTINUED**

### **LIFESKILLS PROGRAM**



The Lifeskills program aims at highlighting various daily living skills and information to prisoners that can be used within the prison environment or out in the community.

This program is adapted to both male and female prisoners. The program currently runs for four weeks on a continuous rotation for about two hours.

Topics include:

- ▶ Health and hygiene
- ▶ Correct food handling and storage methods
- ▶ Sewing instruction and cookery.

Other topics of discussion include:

- ▶ Household budgeting
- ▶ Personal goals
- ▶ Personal presentation.

Any skill you can learn can be considered a Lifeskill and most are surprised to learn that they have accumulated other skills aside of housework for example using a computer or learning to drive a car.

Lifeskills are necessary and develop indirectly through experience and practice. Through social interaction the prisoners learn to converse and improve their social skills, develop coping mechanisms and have discussions on conflict resolution.

Roleplay further builds on the skills they are learning with the long-term aim of improving their quality of life.

### **PRISON RECREATION PROGRAMS**



The Recreational Programs are supported by a diverse range of volunteers with a range of skills and experience. The Prison Art programs helps inspire positive change in offenders.

Some of the programs included in the Recreational Programs are:

- ▶ Creative writing
- ▶ Poetry
- ▶ Visual Arts
- ▶ Yoga
- ▶ Fitness.



**If you have skills in an area you think may be of interest to our client base, please get in touch with us.**

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS **CONTINUED**

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM**



The principle behind Community Service is for 'reparation to be made to the community' in lieu of financial penalties. If someone is not able to pay a fine, or receives a Community Service penalty, they are assigned to a Community Service Program at their local Community Correctional Centre.

Offenders may also be sentenced to undertake Community Service as part of Parole or Home Detention.

Volunteers support staff in community service work bases to assist offenders repay their debt to the community.

By mentoring and positive role modelling, volunteers support offenders to remain engaged in meaningful work whilst they are undertaking Community Service.

### **PRISONER VISITING PROGRAM**



Many prisoners within the prison system do not have anyone to visit them while they serve their sentence.

They may have lost touch with their family or friends, they may not have any family left, or they could be from overseas or interstate.

Departmental volunteers are able to visit socially isolated prisoners to help them develop social skills such as communication as well as providing them with news from 'outside the walls'.



**We endeavour to match volunteers and prisoners with similar interests so the visits remain engaging for the prisoner and volunteer.**

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS **CONTINUED**

### **PRISONER FAMILY VISITS PROGRAM**



Volunteers play an integral role in keeping families together and in touch by providing practical and emotional support through the transporting and supervision of family visits.

Each request is unique and the provision of support is assessed in line with the prisoner's individual needs.

Child protection legislation is also considered as part of the assessment process to ensure support provided is appropriate.

There are many different aspects to this program and tasks may involve:

- ▶ providing transport for children and their accompanying parent or guardian to visit a prisoner
- ▶ supervising unescorted children to visit parents in prison
- ▶ assisting interstate, elderly or infirm people to visit prisoners.

### **COMMUNITY MENTOR PROGRAM**



Volunteer Mentors provide valuable support as a positive role model to socially isolated community based or newly released offenders. By working collaboratively with offenders and case managers, Volunteer Mentors help offenders build skills and capacity to improve their confidence, self-esteem and independence.

These role models assist offenders to develop or rebuild relationships with people who may provide a positive influence for them, family members and the wider community to strengthen their capacity to cope with the challenges of modern day living.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS **CONTINUED**

### **PRISONER RELEASE PROGRAM**



Leaving prison can be a very confronting and daunting experience for some people. Some may have been in prison for a very long time while others may just need a bit of extra help if they have no family or other support networks. Volunteers provide both practical and emotional support to help prisoners through what can be a very difficult experience.

Each prisoner is involved in an assessment process on leaving prison to ensure they receive the support they need. Each person has their own difficulties and support is tailored to suit their specific requirements, but examples of the type of support provided by volunteers through this program are:

- ▶ meet at prison or transport to prison to collect property
- ▶ assist with visiting Centrelink or Housing SA
- ▶ reporting to Community Corrections
- ▶ going shopping/collecting emergency food parcel
- ▶ attend bank to resolve banking needs
- ▶ using public transport
- ▶ transport to nominated address
- ▶ attending medical appointments
- ▶ buying/collecting clothing.

## PROCESS OF ENTRY



Please find application form via QR code,  
email [DCS.volunteerunit@sa.gov.au](mailto:DCS.volunteerunit@sa.gov.au)  
or call on 08 8440 3620.

#### **PLEASE NOTE**

Some programs may not currently be available at all prisons.  
If unsure, please contact the Volunteer Unit.



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