

Western Australia

Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002

As at 14 Nov 2002

No. 32 of 2002

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Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002

No. 32 of 2002

An Act —

- **to protect certain volunteers from incurring civil liability when doing community work on a voluntary basis;**
 - **to provide that community organisations that organise community work to be done by volunteers may incur the civil liability from which the volunteers are protected when doing that work,**
- and for related purposes.**

[Assented to 14 November 2002]

The Parliament of Western Australia enacts as follows:

1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the *Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002*.

2. Commencement

- (1) This Act comes into operation on a day to be fixed by proclamation.
- (2) Different days may be fixed under subsection (1) for different provisions.

3. Interpretation

- (1) In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears —

“community organisation” means —

- (a) a State agency or instrumentality or a department of the Public Service; or
- (b) an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1987*, a local government or other body corporate,

that organises the doing of community work by volunteers;

“community work” means work organised by a community organisation to be done —

- (a) for a religious, educational, charitable or benevolent purpose;
- (b) for the purpose of promoting or encouraging literature, science or the arts;
- (c) for the purpose of sport, recreation or amusement;
- (d) for the purpose of caring for, treating or otherwise assisting people who need assistance because of a physical or mental disability or condition;
- (e) for the purpose of conserving or protecting the environment;
- (f) for the purpose of promoting or preserving historical or cultural heritage;
- (g) for the purpose of establishing, carrying on, or improving a community, social or cultural centre;

- (h) for the purpose of promoting the interests of a local community;
- (i) for a political purpose;
- (j) for any other purpose approved under section 4(1)(f) of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1987*; or
- (k) for a purpose prescribed by the regulations, but does not include work of a kind that is prescribed by the regulations as work that is not to be regarded as community work for the purposes of this Act;

“organised” includes directed and supervised;

“volunteer” has the meaning given by section 4.

- (2) A reference in this Act to the doing of anything by a volunteer includes a reference to the omission by a volunteer to do anything.

4. Meaning of “volunteer”

- (1) In this Act —

“volunteer” means a person who does community work on a voluntary basis but does not include a person who is —

- (a) taken to be performing a function under an emergency services Act within the meaning of section 37(1a) of the *Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia Act 1998*;
- (b) performing a function as an honorary fisheries officer within the meaning of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*;
- (c) performing a function as an honorary wildlife officer, honorary forest officer, honorary ranger or honorary conservation and land management officer within the meaning of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*; or
- (d) performing a function prescribed by the regulations.

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- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), a person does community work on a voluntary basis if the person —
- (a) receives no remuneration for doing that work other than —
 - (i) remuneration that the person would receive whether or not the person did that work; or
 - (ii) the reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred by the person in doing that work;
 - or
 - (b) receives remuneration that is not greater than the amount, if any, prescribed by the regulations.
- (3) A person is not to be regarded as doing community work on a voluntary basis if the person is doing that work under an order imposed by a court.

5. Application

- (1) This Act applies in relation to civil liability for a thing done by a volunteer after the commencement of this Act.
- (2) This Act does not limit the protection from liability given by another written law.

6. Protection of volunteers from liability

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a volunteer does not incur civil liability for anything that the volunteer has done in good faith when doing community work.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not affect any right to recover damages in respect of defamation or in respect of the death of, or bodily injury to, any person directly caused by, or by the driving of, a motor vehicle if, at the time of the death or bodily injury —
 - (a) the vehicle was owned or being driven by a person who, but for the operation of subsection (1), would incur liability in respect of the death or injury; and

- (b) a contract of insurance —
 - (i) was, or was required to be, in force in respect of the vehicle under section 4 of the *Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act 1943*; or
 - (ii) referred to in section 3(4) of that Act was in force in respect of the vehicle.
- (3) The protection given by subsection (1) does not apply to a volunteer —
 - (a) who knew or ought reasonably to have known that at the relevant time he or she was acting —
 - (i) outside the scope of the community work organised by the community organisation; or
 - (ii) contrary to instructions given by the community organisation;
 - or
 - (b) whose ability to do the community work in a proper manner was, at the relevant time, significantly impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- (4) In this section —
 - “**drugs**” means drugs that are taken voluntarily otherwise than for therapeutic purposes;
 - “**motor vehicle**” has the meaning given in section 3(1) of the *Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act 1943*.

7. Liability of community organisations

- (1) A community organisation incurs the civil liability that, but for the operation of section 6(1), a volunteer would incur for a thing done by the volunteer when doing community work organised by the community organisation.
- (2) The operation of subsection (1) is subject to any protection from liability that would have applied to the community organisation

if the thing done by the volunteer had been done by the community organisation.

- (3) If more than one community organisation is involved in organising the community work referred to in subsection (1), that subsection applies to the community organisation that principally organises, or the community organisations that principally organise, that work.
- (4) Liability that would be incurred under subsection (1) by a community organisation that is a State agency, if the State agency were a body corporate, is incurred by the State.
- (5) In subsection (4) —
“State agency” means —
 - (a) a State agency or instrumentality that is not a body corporate; or
 - (b) a department of the Public Service.

8. Certain indemnities etc. have no effect

An agreement, undertaking or arrangement has no effect to the extent that it provides for a volunteer to give a community organisation an indemnity against, or to make a contribution to a community organisation in relation to, a liability that —

- (a) the volunteer would incur but for the operation of section 6(1); and
- (b) the community organisation incurs under section 7(1).

9. Regulations

The Governor may make regulations prescribing all matters that are required or permitted by this Act to be prescribed, or are necessary or convenient to be prescribed for giving effect to the purposes of this Act.