

## 12. JESUIT VOLUNTEERS AUSTRALIA



### 12.0.01 GENERAL POLICY & FRAMEWORK

#### Purpose

In 2005, at the request of the Jesuit Provincial Mark Raper SJ, the Province developed the Ignatian Volunteers Australia (IVA) program to encourage people who have or have had an association with the Jesuits to foster a sense of partnership in mission in practical ways.

The purpose of Jesuit Volunteers Australia is “*to engage through service and reflection the most marginalised people in our country*”\*\*.

(Commissioning document from the Provincial to Jesuit Social Services 27/11/07)

It was understood that the program was filling a gap. There were already many people voluntarily involved in Jesuit ministries across Australia - boards, parish work, Jesuit Refugee Service, Jesuit Social Services, etc. However, the original aim of the program was for volunteers to have a concurrent commitment to work directly with disadvantaged people and seek ways to reflect on that experience.

Now called Jesuit Volunteers Australia, the program provides a practical opportunity for volunteers to make an active expression of their faith in ministry to the marginalised and disadvantaged.

An integral part of Jesuit Volunteers Australia is to deepen volunteers' experience of volunteering with the marginalised by reflecting on their experience in light of Catholic Social Teaching and Ignatian tradition.

The program aims to be true to the original intention of filling a gap and does not seek to be an umbrella organisation for all the volunteers across the Australian Jesuit Province.

#### Ethos

The charism of Jesuit Volunteers Australia is founded in Ignatian Spirituality. A JVA volunteer strives to be a 'person for others', who offers 'companionship' for the homeless, the hungry, the poor, the lonely and others disadvantaged in our community.

JVA Volunteers respect the Christian faith grounded in gospel values, which is inescapably social in its implications. We desire hearts more compassionate and a world more just.

*The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. The Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour (Luke 4:18-19)*

## Volunteer Profile

Jesuit Volunteers Australia seeks to attract volunteers with the **maturity and capacity** to both:

- a. regularly engage with people on the margins, and
- b. commit to a process of reflection on that experience

Under the Jesuit Volunteers Australia program, volunteers are asked to spend a *significant number of hours* per month (depending on local needs) engaged in service to the marginalised and disadvantaged. The period is intended to allow volunteers the opportunity to engage with the person or persons with whom they work in the designated agency. It allows time to develop a supportive and meaningful relationship with the marginalised person(s).

The volunteers come from all walks of life and may volunteer in a vast array of services with Jesuit and non - Jesuit Ministries. These include: houses of welcome, drop-in centres for the homeless, advocacy centres, tutoring services for refugees, palliative care centres. Consideration will be given to the needs of Jesuit organisations when placing volunteers.

The volunteers also commit to a program of reflection on their service with those who remain socially and economically disadvantaged. The local Coordinator will support the volunteers to do this through a variety of means including a bi-monthly half a day gathering.

Jesuit Volunteers Australia is open to and will welcome existing volunteers in Jesuit Social Services and other Jesuit enterprises (plus non-Jesuit enterprises) who meet the joint criteria referred to above.

## Referral of Volunteers to Registered Agencies

JVA will assist applicants to work in the areas to which they are drawn to work.

Volunteers will be referred to agencies which:

- i. work with people who are poor and/or marginalised;
- ii. have similar objectives, ethos and charism to JVA;
- iii. carry public liability and accident insurance for volunteers;
- iv. provide orientation and training to support the volunteer in his/her work at the agency, and;
- v. ensure sufficient precautions for the physical safety of volunteers,

The volunteer and agency manager will agree on the hours of service per week, and the duration (usually one year), at the start of the placement. The volunteer may be required to enter into an agreement with the placement agency. The volunteer and the agency manager will review the placement at three months then least once a year.

Each agency will be responsible for obtaining at its own cost any necessary Police checks or Working with Children checks to enable volunteers to work within that agency.

## Volunteer Agreement

Applicants seeking to be JVA volunteers will agree to sign a Volunteer Agreement whereby they will undertake to:

- i. respect the privacy of others within the terms of the Privacy Act 1988;
- ii. agree to work according to the charism and ethos of Jesuit Social Services at all times;
- iii. work according to the Code of Conduct of Jesuit Social Services at all times, and;
- iv. commit to the mission and reflection program of the JVA program.

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

JVA volunteers offer supportive relationships with marginalised people. In the interests of the people served, JVA volunteers conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Jesuit Social Services Code of Conduct and of the agency to which they are assigned.

## Privacy

Whenever JVA collects and otherwise deals with personal information, it is governed by the National Privacy Principles (NPPs) which are contained in the Privacy Act 1988.

The Jesuit Social Services Privacy Policy specifies how JVA meets its privacy compliance obligations.

## Governance

The Australian Jesuit Provincial requested that Jesuit Social Services take up management of Jesuit Volunteers Australia in 2007. The Board of Jesuit Social Services accepted this invitation and Jesuit Volunteers Australia is now a program of Jesuit Social Services.

Jesuit Social Services works collaboratively with others to engage disadvantaged individuals, families and communities and the wider society to promote health and wellbeing and to address social exclusion. They do this by forming relationships as a basis for effective, holistic interventions, by building social capital and by effecting social change through social policy, advocacy and research.

Jesuit Volunteers Australia is managed by the National Coordinator who is assisted by State Coordinators. Regions will generally be defined by the normally accepted boundaries of a capital city.

**Organisational Structure**

