

Australian Volunteers

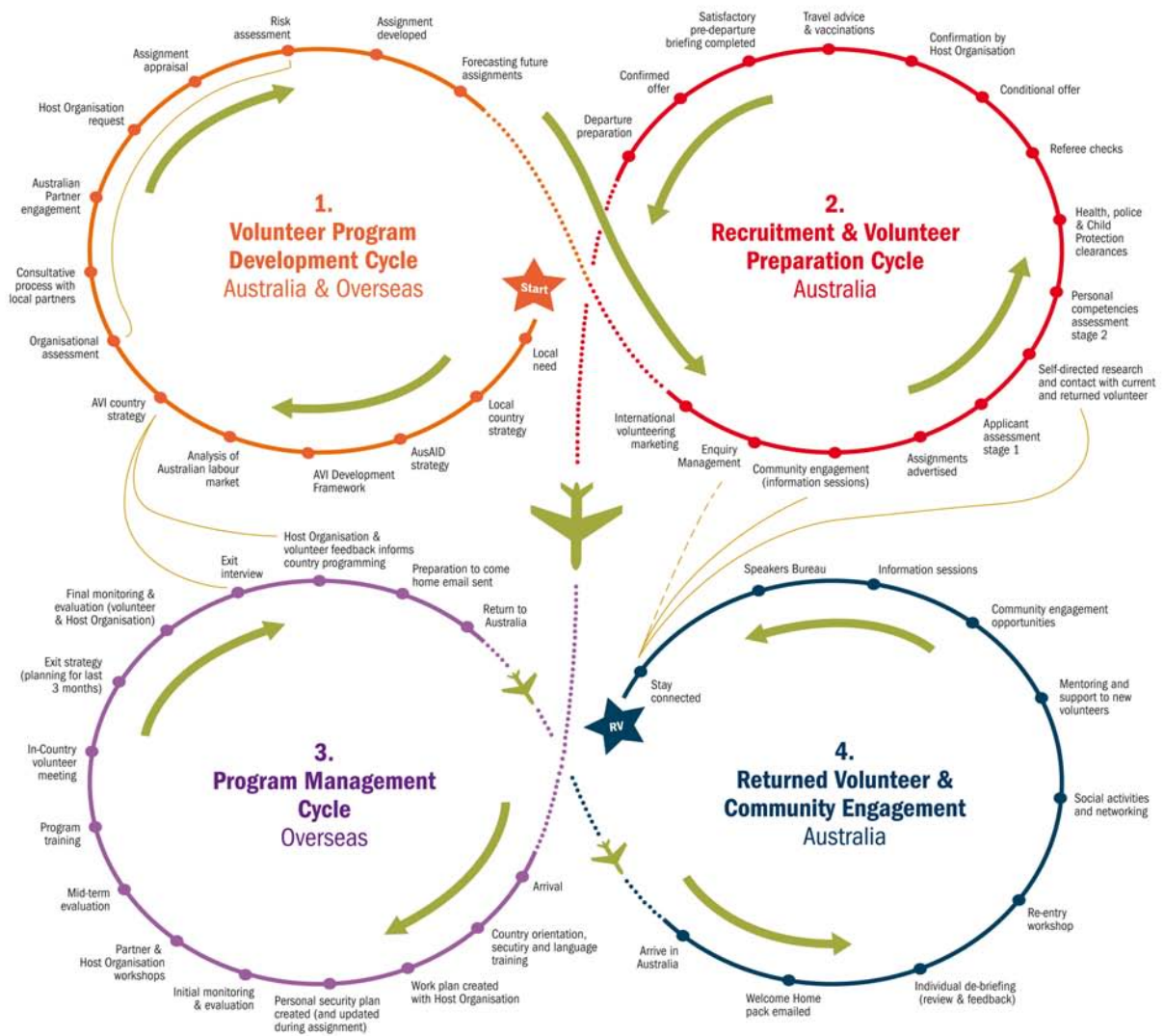
for International Development

» The AVI Guidebook

for The Australian Volunteers for
International Development program



AVI Program Cycle



» About this guidebook

Congratulations on beginning your overseas Australian Volunteers for International Development (Australian Volunteers program) assignment with Australian Volunteers International (AVI). AVI greatly values the skill, energy, professionalism and commitment that you bring to the Australian Volunteers program.

This guidebook is your key resource throughout your AVI assignment and is organised according to your journey as a volunteer, from pre-departure to your return home, you can expect to find important information regarding health and insurance, safety and security, your roles and responsibilities, and financial issues within this manual.

Please do not hesitate to contact our staff with any questions relating to this guidebook, other Australian Volunteers program information or AVI policies.

Background

Since 1951, over 8500 AVI volunteers have been supported to work by the Australian Government in over 60 countries. From the highest levels of government through to isolated village communities, these volunteers have provided technical assistance, capacity building and mentoring in education, environment, governance, health, rural and infrastructure development.

The Australian Government, through AusAID, has partnered with Australian Volunteers International, Australian Red Cross, and Austraining International to provide a range of rewarding international development opportunities for a diverse range of Australians.

Australian Volunteers for International Development draws all Australian Government overseas volunteering initiatives together under a single banner making it easier for more skilled Australians to contribute to Australia's overseas aid efforts.

Updates

The terms and conditions in this guidebook are subject to change. If a section is updated, AVI will send you the updates via email. Please print the updated pages and add them to your guidebook. Updates will be available from your Country Manager.

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» The Australian Volunteers for International Development Volunteer Code of Conduct

The Australian Volunteers for International Development volunteer Code of Conduct sets out the standards of individual behaviour required of all people assigned overseas through the Australian Volunteers for International Development program.

The code is designed to ensure that all volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities as part of a program funded by the Australian Government.

By accepting the intent of the code and through complying with its provisions, Australian Volunteers for International Development volunteers acknowledge their privileged status as representatives of the Australian people within local communities overseas. Failure to comply with the code may lead to the withdrawal of a person from the Australian Volunteers for International Development program.

Compliance with the code also helps to ensure:

- > maintenance of the excellent reputation enjoyed overseas by Australia's international volunteers
- > continuing public confidence within Australia of the integrity and efficacy of international volunteering programs.

Adherence to the Australian Volunteers for International Development volunteer Code of Conduct is a requirement for all volunteers in line with contractual obligations between the Commonwealth of Australia and AVI.

» Standards of the Australian Volunteers for International Development volunteer Code of Conduct

In signing the Declaration attached to your copy of the code, you are acknowledging the following standards:

1. Standards of conduct

The Volunteer Code of Conduct sets the standards of individual behaviour required of all people assigned overseas through the Australian Volunteers for International Development Program.

The code is designed to ensure that all volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities as part of a program funded through the Australian Government.

Compliance with the code helps to ensure the:

- > maintenance of the excellent reputation enjoyed overseas by Australia's international volunteers, and
- > continuing public confidence within Australia of the integrity and efficacy of international volunteering programs.

Adherence to the Australian Volunteers for International Development Program volunteer Code of Conduct is a requirement for all volunteers in line with contractual obligations between the Commonwealth of Australia and Australian Volunteers International.

1.1 Laws of the host country

- > I will abide by all the laws, regulations and workplace requirements of the country of assignment.
- > I will avoid involvement in politics, and refrain from public comment and /or demonstrations on political, cultural and religious matters.
- > I will respect the symbols of nationalism and religious practices of the country of assignment.

1.2 Cultural sensitivity

- > I will seek, develop and display understanding and sensitivity of local customs, including those relating to personal behaviour and dress.
- > I will respect customs that protect local cultural property.
- > I will not use my position as a volunteer to request advantages or favours (including sexual favours).
- > I will refuse any financial or material gifts, or promises of such gifts or other advantages, except for small cultural and customary gifts given in appreciation or mutual respect. Gift examples include small handicrafts, food and beverage, and other small items of decoration.
- > I will not make personal donations to my host organisation while on assignment, understanding that doing so may have unforeseen consequences for the organisation or my colleagues.

1.3 Working with the host organisation

- > I will abide by the workplace policies of my host organisation overseas, and accept that my first line of responsibility is to my host organisation.
- > I will not make any change, or agree to any change being made to the nature of my assignment overseas, without prior agreement from both Australian Volunteers International and my host organisation.
- > I will undertake my assignment and professional duties diligently and to the best of my ability in line with appropriate professional standards.
- > I will not engage in any paid work and/or business enterprise for personal gain in the host country.
- > I will not accept any supplementary payment from a government or any other source, even when intended to cover the performance of any additional duties or activities, while on a volunteer assignment funded through the Australian Volunteers for International Development Program, without Australian Volunteers International approval.
- > I will not engage in any unpaid part-time work in addition to my volunteer assignment without prior approval from my host organisation and Australian Volunteers International.
- > I will advise Australian Volunteers International at the earliest opportunity of any issue that may affect the outcome of the assignment.
- > I accept that if I do not meet in good faith my obligations and the terms of my assignment, I may be liable to refund to Australian Volunteers International all expenses incurred as a result of my participation in the program.
- > While I understand Australian Volunteers International negotiates in good faith with overseas host organisations and volunteers, and takes responsibility for matters under its direct control, I accept that all arrangements are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.
- > I understand that significant changes to the nature of my assignment overseas may be subject to approval by the Australian Government through AusAID.
- > I am entitled to 1 week leave for 3 months served, and I will not take leave in excess of the assignment's entitlements except with prior explicit approval of Australian Volunteers International and my host organisation.

- > I will not leave the country of my volunteer assignment, unless requested by Australian Volunteers International, or unless prior approval has been provided by Australian Volunteers International and my host organisation.

1.4 Limits to work—Medical and legal practitioners

- > I will not act as a medical, allied health, or legal professional without adequate professional indemnity, unless I have obtained written approval from Australian Volunteers International.

1.5 Working with Australian Volunteers International

- > I understand that I have chosen to work with Australian Volunteers International for the length of my assignment, and that my personal information may be shared with other agencies delivering the Australian Volunteers program for safety and security purposes, or in the event I apply for another Australian Volunteers assignment with another core partner.
- > I understand that I have professional obligations to treat all agency personnel and in particular, in-country personnel with courtesy and respect at all times.
- > I understand that any extension or reduction in the duration of my assignment must be negotiated and agreed to by the host organisation and Australian Volunteers International.
- > I will follow all safety and security instructions given by Australian Volunteers International during my assignment, and I will keep my program agency informed of movements away from the location of assignment at all times.

1.6 Assignment reporting and monitoring

- > Should any issue arise that may affect my personal wellbeing or the outcome of my assignment, I agree to bring this to the immediate attention of my host organisation and Australian Volunteers International.
- > I will participate in regular monitoring checks, meetings and reviews with Australian Volunteers International and/or with AusAID.
- > Should any personal conflict or any issue that may adversely affect my personal circumstances arise during my assignment, I will follow the established program communication protocols, including the grievance procedure in the Australian Volunteers International volunteer guide book.
- > I will keep Australian Volunteers International informed of any change in my residential or work addresses throughout the assignment, and will notify Australian Volunteers International of the dates and locations of any travel I undertake.
- > I will complete required monitoring and evaluation reports in a timely manner.
- > I will ensure that Australian Volunteers International is notified of any potential donations or grants awarded made to the Host Organisation as a result of my assignment.

1.7 Terms and conditions of payment and allowances for work

- > I understand that the living and accommodation allowances paid to me by Australian Volunteers International are only to be used while I am in country working on my assignment. Australian Volunteers International will not be liable to pay any living or accommodation allowance or other financial compensation resulting from unforeseen delays in mobilisation.
- > If there is a contribution to my assignment by an Australian Partner Organisation or the host organisation, I understand my allowances will be adjusted accordingly.
- > I understand that if I leave my assignment before completion, I may be required to repay Australian Volunteers International any allowances paid in advance of the termination date.

- > I understand that program provisions and coverage cease as early as my official assignment completion date. This includes medical and travel insurance, emergency assistance, visas, and in-country support. Should I choose to stay in the country past my official assignment completion date I understand that I am responsible for arranging my own insurance cover, and for any costs associated with changing my return flight and visa.

1.8 Appropriate personal behaviour

- > I will refrain from any conduct that may bring into disrepute the Australian Government, AusAID, the Australian Volunteers International Development Program, the host government, my overseas host organisation or Australian Volunteers International (where applicable).
- > I will refrain from engaging in any fraudulent or dishonest activity or behaviour.
- > I will refrain from possessing or using any drug that is illegal either in Australia or the host country, and I will abide by any regulations of the host country in relation to alcohol and drugs of any description.
- > I will avoid any form of behaviour that may be considered discriminatory, including on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, gender, political affiliation, culture, religious belief or activity, age, race, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability or impairment.

1.9 Child protection

- > I acknowledge and accept that Australian Volunteers International abides by laws regarding child exploitation, child pornography and the abuse of children.
- > I will abide by the policies of Australian Volunteers International to protect the rights of children in all aspects of my assignment.
- > I acknowledge and accept that protection of children is in all cases the overriding consideration.

1.10 Health and wellbeing

- > I agree to disclose all known pre-existing health conditions, including mental health conditions, as part of the application process.
- > I will accept responsibility for maintaining my health and wellbeing.
- > I will exercise all reasonable caution when undertaking any activities that may result in harm or injury to me or others.
- > I understand that should AusAID and Australian Volunteers International believe that I am a risk to myself or others, it can take whatever steps necessary to ensure my safety and the safety of those around me.
- > I will complete a post-placement medical assessment upon completion of my assignment in accordance with Australian Volunteers International procedures.
- > I agree to identify, minimise, and optimise management of health risks through a health management plan involving myself, my treating physician, and Australian Volunteers International.

1.11 Safety and security

- > I will follow any reasonable instruction by Australian Volunteers International (or its agent) relating to security, and I understand this may include sharing my contact details with fellow volunteers, host organisation, or program agencies.
- > I will ensure that Australian Volunteers International knows where I can be contacted at all times, especially in the event of any security risk or emergency.

- > I will register and immediately update my personal details with the Australian diplomatic mission responsible for the country in which I am placed.
- > I will monitor and take account of the regular travel advisories issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- > Should I wish to take leave from my assignment, I will:
 - obtain permission from my host organisation
 - obtain permission from Australian Volunteers International, giving dates of departure and return, along with a contact address
 - advise the local Australian diplomatic mission, AusAID post or equivalent.
- > I will exercise all reasonable caution when undertaking any activities that may result in harm or injury to me or others, such as wearing a motorcycle helmet, bicycle helmet, life-vest, or relevant safety gear.
- > I have read and understood the Country Security Plan supplied by Australian Volunteers International.
- > To enable effective insurance coverage, I will follow any reasonable instructions from Australian Volunteers International (or agent), and abide by the terms of the insurance policy.
- > I understand that following an evacuation situation, Australian Volunteers International will inform me as to if, and when, I am cleared to return. I acknowledge that I cannot return to the country of my assignment without Australian Volunteers International clearance to return.
- > I understand that failure to comply with safety and security instructions may result in termination from the program.

1.12 Representation, research, publication and media

- > I will not represent myself as an employee or agent of the Australian Government or of Australian Volunteers International.
- > I will not issue public statements in any way related to the activities or interests of the Australian Government or the host country without the prior explicit approval of Australian Volunteers International, who will seek permission from AusAID.
- > I will seek the prior approval of Australian Volunteers International before: undertaking any research; issuing statements to the press or other agencies of public information; releasing visual information for publication; submitting articles, books or other material for publication or formal research assessment; or taking part in mass communication activities such as social networking, blogs, film, radio or television productions that are in any way related to my assignment—unless these activities are part of my normal assignment duties.
- > Where possible, I will participate in promotional activities organised by Australian Volunteers International or AusAID during and after my assignment.

1.13 Privacy and confidentiality

- > I will respect the confidentiality of information received during my assignment relating to my Australian Volunteers participants and host organisations.
- > I will not disclose, summarise or publish any restricted government documents or confidential information, including reports, to third parties without the authorisation of my host organisation, and/or without obtaining prior consent from the appropriate national authority.
- > I understand Australian Volunteers International will comply with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Information Privacy Principles when handling any personal, sensitive or health information as defined in section 6 of the Privacy Act 1988.

1.14 Grievance and dispute resolution

- > Should a grievance arise during my assignment, I will first make all attempts to resolve the situation locally. If this is unsuccessful, I will notify Australian Volunteers International according to the Grievance Policy outlined in the volunteer guide book. After exhausting all these procedures with Australian Volunteers International, I will refer any irreconcilable concerns to the Volunteer Unit, AusAID, Canberra.

1.15 Recognition of risk

- > I understand and recognise that there is significant potential health and other hazards (both foreseeable and unforeseeable) associated with participating in volunteer assignments.
- > Both through the information provided by Australian Volunteers International and my own efforts, I have obtained enough information to make an informed decision about the risks of participating in this assignment.
- > Despite these potential risks, and after considered evaluation of the conditions under which I will be living and working, I have decided to participate in this program.

1.16 Consequences of violations

- > Breaches of this code of conduct may require the termination of a volunteer assignment.

Section 1

» Before You Go

This section contains important information on:

- > Confirmation of your assignment
- > Passports and travel arrangements
- > Pre-departure health preparation
- > Assignment provisions and allowances
- > Postponed or cancelled assignments
- > First Aid Training

» 1. Mobilisation and travel arrangements

1.1 Confirmation of assignment

Once you have been selected into the volunteer program and received an offer of an assignment, the following additional steps must be completed before AVI can provide official confirmation of your assignment:

- > A satisfactory medical report
- > Police clearance (Australian Federal police check)
- > Confirmation from the overseas host organisation (and in some cases, the state or central government and any coordinating body that oversees the assignment)
- > Successful completion of all AVI assessments and referee checks
- > Successful participation in and completion of pre-departure briefing
- > Successful visa application
- > A signed copy of the AVI Volunteer Code of Conduct returned to AVI

Please undertake any medical and police check requirements promptly so that these do not delay your confirmation and departure.

AVI strongly advises you not to make any irrevocable decisions – such as selling a house or business, giving up a flat, resigning from a job or storing household effects – until you receive medical clearance, police clearance, attend pre-departure briefing and host organisation confirmation. AVI reserves the right to withdraw a candidate at any stage of the process, subsequent to additional information coming to our attention.

AVI will send you a final letter of confirmation once all of the above steps have been satisfactorily completed.

1.2 Passport

Volunteers must be an Australian Citizen or a Permanent resident of Australia or a New Zealand resident in Australia with a Special Condition Visa (SCV).

You will need a current passport valid for **at least six months** beyond the expected completion date of your assignment. It is also worth checking that your passport has an adequate number (usually six) blank pages in it. It is your responsibility to ensure that your passport meets these requirements and that you follow any recommendations made by AVI. Details of how to obtain a passport are available at www.passports.gov.au and from Australia Post outlets.

Volunteers with non-Australian passports need to inquire well in advance about regulations for obtaining re-entry visas to Australia. It is also important that you understand the effect that working as an AVI volunteer might have on the period of eligibility for permanent resident status and unemployment and sickness benefits.

We strongly advise those with dual citizenship to travel on an Australian passport, so as to be eligible for Australian consular support. Travellers on non- Australian passports are reminded that visa applications and consular matters are the responsibility of the country that issued the passport.

1.3 Visa applications and work permits

You may be asked to complete application forms and other documents (including a medical report) in order to obtain a visa and/or work permit. Please complete and return these promptly to AVI with any supporting documents required.

1.4 Registration with DFAT

Before you leave, it is your responsibility to register with DFAT online (see Section 5.6). If you are unable to do so, please speak with your Country Manager as soon as you arrive in country (see section 5.1).

Further to registering online, it is also your responsibility to be familiar with the travel advisories for the country that you will be working in, as this may impact your safety and security. This information can be found at the Australian Government Smart Traveller website: <http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/>

1.5 Police clearance

As part of the recruitment process for the volunteer program, all volunteers must successfully complete an Australian Federal Police check. You will be asked to submit a consent form allowing AVI to complete the Federal Police check on your behalf at AVI's expense. You may also be required to complete an international police check, ask your recruiter for more information.

1.6 Travel to your country of assignment

AVI will organise your flight to your country of work. These dates are set and cannot be flexible, as your arrival date has been set for you to attend your compulsory in-country orientation program. This program has been designed for you and is critical for you to attend as you will receive further country specific information, cultural, security and language training. It is also an important opportunity for you to meet other volunteers who may become invaluable for personal support while you are in-country.

1.7 Postponed or cancelled assignments

Circumstances occasionally arise prior to departure that make it impossible for a volunteer to travel to the country of assignment. These circumstances include problems such as poor health, an emergency situation in the place of assignment, an assignment ceasing to exist, or the denial of an entry visa.

If a departure has to be postponed or cancelled, the appropriate staff member will discuss the situation with you in detail and organise the best arrangements. AVI cannot be held responsible for major changes in circumstances and reserves the right to make the final decision about your departure.

1.8 Personal financial arrangements

AVI strongly recommends that you have access to additional funds while overseas in case of unexpected events or emergencies. We also recommend that you arrange for someone in Australia to assist in managing your personal financial affairs while you are overseas.

Please note that any payments made to you by AVI will be paid into an Australian bank account and in Australian dollars. AVI suggests that you plan well in advance if you want to transfer any money overseas.

Options for money transfer should be discussed with your bank prior to departure.

It is your responsibility to ensure that sustainable arrangements are in place to take care of your home and financial affairs in Australia during your assignment. This also includes clarifying your situation with the Australian Tax Office to ensure all tax rules are complied with.

You should also seek professional advice on the taxation requirements applicable to your country of assignment before going overseas.

» 2. Pre-departure health preparation

Your health is your responsibility. AVI is committed to supporting your good health and encourages you to make careful decisions and take actions appropriate to your circumstances.

“**Health**” is defined holistically including all physical, mental and social aspects of health and well being and not merely just the absence of disease.

AVI has contracted **The Travel Doctor (TMVC)** to review pre-departure physical health reports and provide travel medical and vaccination advice where needed. Further to this, AVI has contracted **Response Psychological** to perform the pre-departure wellbeing assessment– the initial session will be in the form of an on-line assessment with further advice and guidance where needed.

2.1 Health report and medical check-up

Please make an appointment with your GP as soon as possible to complete the pre-departure health report and have a medical check-up. If you do not have a GP, then TMVC is able to complete your health report.

Section One of the Pre-departure Health Report is a personal health profile which you will need to complete. Section Two must be completed by a doctor who has reviewed your medical history.

Please complete any tests required in the Pre-departure Health Report including a dental check and send the completed and signed report, together with test results and any specialist reports, to TMVC as directed.

If you have a pre-existing condition (physical or mental), it is critical that you disclose this in your report, and in conjunction with your GP/Specialist prepare a Health Management Plan for the duration of your assignment. This must take into consideration the location and any physical constraints of your assignment. This plan will need to be approved by the AVI health advisor at TMVC Melbourne before you are medically cleared.

Please note: A volunteer who is not medically cleared will not be able to pursue their assignment.

2.2 Travel preparation and vaccinations

Where you have access to a TMVC clinic, AVI recommends that you make an appointment with one of their doctors for advice on travel preparations and vaccinations required for your country of assignment. If you are not able to attend a TMVC please make arrangements with an alternative travel health specialist.

It is AVI's requirement that you will complete the required vaccinations before going on assignment. If you have any concerns please contact the mobilisation team ASAP.

2.3 Costs

- > You are responsible for covering the costs of the initial consultation concerning your medical clearance, and associated tests, procedures and dental check.
- > Once medically cleared for service, AVI will pay for a subsequent travel consultation and any recommended vaccinations.

- > AVI will pay for prescribed, cost-effective anti-malarial prophylaxes. Prescriptions for high-cost medications can only be paid where deemed necessary on medical advice (eg allergic reactions). Prescriptions for high-cost anti-malarial medications must be approved by AVI prior to being filled.
- > All other costs for pharmaceuticals and other items, eg pathology, are your responsibility.
- > AVI will provide you with a basic first aid kit. It is your responsibility to add any additional items into this kit as you need and to maintain it while you are away.
- > Please take the letter provided in your Inclusion Pack to your doctor. This letter sets out those costs chargeable to AVI, and those for which you are responsible.

2.4 First Aid Training

It is a requirement for all volunteers to complete an appropriate certified Level 2 First Aid Course (unless they can prove a satisfactory level of competency). AVI offers a certified Level 2 First Aid Course with additional modules relevant to working in an international context. This will be at the expense of AVI, if you wish to complete this course with a provider that is not AVI, you will need to discuss the cost and re-imbusement with AVI before you confirm attendance.

» 3. Assignment provisions

3.1 Airfares and tickets

- > **Outbound:** AVI will provide you with the most cost-effective one-way air ticket to your place of assignment. Please note that AVI has planned for your arrival, and the compulsory in-country orientation dates have been set. There is no flexibility in these dates.
- > **Inbound:** At the end of your assignment, AVI will deposit into your Australian bank account the cost of your return flight/s based on the dates you provide, for a flight from your assignment location to your city of recruitment in Australia.

Before your return to Australia, please secure three quotes for best fares for your return trip and present these to the Country Manager. Country Managers may accept a quote or seek another if they feel the quotes are unreasonable. Once approved, funds will be deposited into your account to purchase the fare. You must then present your Country Manager with a copy of your return ticket. The ticket must be for a return flight to Australia before the end date of your assignment.

You are responsible for personal en route costs, excess baggage charges, departure tax and any other travel-related costs.

3.2 After-hours emergency travel assistance

If you need to make emergency travel arrangements please telephone ACE Assistance on +61 2 8907 5995. See Section 10.4 for more information.

3.3 Excess baggage

AVI cannot arrange an excess baggage allowance. Most airlines apply stringent rules regarding baggage limits. If your assignment term is more than six months, you will receive a settling-in grant prior to departure which can be used to offset excess baggage costs (see Section 3.4.2).

3.4 Allowances and payments

3.4.1 Living allowances

AVI volunteers are usually paid part or all of their living and/or accommodation allowance by the host organisation. Some host organisations pay a salary based on the prevailing local rates for similar skill levels. This usually meets basic living costs. Others provide an allowance that covers basic living requirements (food and/or accommodation).

If the salary/allowance from your host organisation does not cover basic living expenses, AVI provides an extra allowance to bridge the gap. Where a salary is not provided by the host organisation, AVI pays the entire allowance in lieu of the host organisation contribution.

3.4.2 Settling-in allowance

If your assignment is for six months or over in duration, AVI will provide you with a settling-in allowance of A\$1000. This is designed to contribute towards the cost of passports, excess baggage, initial food, helmet, household items and any other costs incurred during departure. The allowance is paid prior to departure by direct transfer to your Australian bank account.

3.4.3 Resettlement allowance (RSA)

A resettlement allowance (RSA), designed to offset some of the costs of excess baggage, departure tax and en route, medical check and resettlement expenses, is paid on completion of an assignment with a term served of over six months.

The RSA of \$1,200 will be paid at the conclusion of your assignment when you return to Australia.

AVI reserves the right to withhold the RSA in the event of a breach of the Code of Conduct, until outstanding monies are repaid, or until completion of required monitoring and evaluation paperwork.

3.4.4 Payments

Payments to AVI volunteers will be made on a quarterly basis. These payments will be made in Australian dollars and will only be paid into an Australian bank account (bank, credit union or permanent building society). Payments cannot be made directly to a credit card but payments can be made to an account that is linked to a credit card.

Prior to departure, you should discuss with your financial institution what options are available for transferring funds to your assignment location overseas. This is particularly important for credit unions and building societies, which may not offer easy access to funds for customers overseas. If this is the case, you may need to open an account with an Australian bank. In order to transfer funds overseas, AVI recommends that your Australian bank account is linked to a credit or debit card. This is usually quicker and cheaper than other methods.

You are responsible for in-country bank charges and any currency conversion costs. AVI does not expect refunds of any exchange rate gains made on payments, nor are we able to reimburse any losses incurred in this way.

In the case of expense reimbursements, AVI will add amounts less than A\$100 to your next quarterly payment upon receiving your receipts. For reimbursement amounts over A\$100 you may request to have these put into your Australian bank account prior to your next quarterly payment. All reimbursements must be negotiated and approved by your Country Manager.

3.5 Housing

AVI endeavours to provide secure and reasonable housing for all volunteers. Accommodation allowances are provided, where required, for the payment of rent and the amounts may vary between volunteers and countries.

The host organisation is usually responsible for ensuring that suitable accommodation is available and AVI often negotiates with host organisations to provide housing.

Housing shortages can be common, especially in urban areas, and volunteers may be required to share accommodation with another person. This may also be recommended for personal security reasons. Where housing is not immediately available, temporary accommodation may be arranged in a hostel or hotel.

In some countries AVI houses volunteers in guesthouses for a short initial period. Individuals then become responsible for finding their own long-term accommodation. Host organisations and other AVI volunteers will usually be helpful in this process.

While couples (volunteers with their partners) will be provided with reasonable secure housing, agreed accompanying dependants do not receive a separate accommodation allowance.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to notify AVI immediately if they feel that their accommodation is not secure.

3.6 Approved Accompanying dependents

AVI has a limited number of places for the partners and children of volunteers in the Australian Volunteers program. Partners accompanying a volunteer, who have been offered 'Approved Accompanying Dependant' (AAD) status by AVI cannot work whilst in-country. For any voluntary work, approved accompanying dependants must first get approval from their Country Manager as any work may potentially jeopardise a volunteers visa status.

Where AVI agrees to support partners and/or dependants of volunteers, the following provisions apply:

- > Partners of volunteers and any dependants who are 15 and over, are expected to attend pre-departure briefing. The costs for attending the briefing will be covered by AVI.
- > For all assignments over 12 months, approved accompanying dependants (partners and children) will receive a supplementary allowance.
- > Partners or dependants will not receive other allowances, including those for settling in, accommodation or resettlement.

» 4. The host country

4.1 Formal agreements with host governments

AVI operates under the terms of formal agreements between the Australian Government and the governments of most countries in which our programs operate. These agreements set out the rights and responsibilities of AVI volunteers and the government of the country. Please refer to your Country Manager for further information.

4.2 Laws of your host country

AVI volunteers are subject to all local laws and regulations. In some post-conflict societies or countries transitioning from a state-led to a free-market economy, laws regulating the economy and monetary transactions may change regularly.

As part of the research you should undertake prior to leaving Australia, you should familiarise yourself with local laws through discussions with your host organisation and other expatriates where possible.

Offences and penalties can differ markedly from those in Australia, eg for possession of drugs or pornographic material. You should also be aware of local laws relating to same-sex relationships.

In the event of an accident or injury, non-adherence to local laws and regulations, such as not wearing a helmet on a motorcycle or holding a valid drivers license, may invalidate any insurance claims.

Any civil or criminal proceedings arising from breaches of local laws and any consequent judgments, such as fines or imprisonment, or if legal issues arise during an assignment, either overseas or in Australia, it is your responsibility to deal with them. AVI or the consular section of the local Australian diplomatic mission may be able to assist with advice about legal representation but you are responsible for obtaining and funding such representation.

AVI staff are unable to provide legal advice.

4.3 Politics and religion

The right to hold particular views on political and religious matters is taken for granted in Australia. In other countries, however, these can be extremely sensitive areas.

You should exercise caution when entering into political discussions or making comments about local politics, particularly early in an assignment. Do not become involved in local politics, attend public demonstrations, or make any public comment (written or broadcast) on political or religious matters. Even the signing of a petition in some countries can precipitate action against you. Symbols of nationalism in particular should be respected.

Comments can not only affect you but also others in the community, including your host organisation and colleagues and fellow AVI volunteers in your country of assignment.

It will usually be acceptable to practice your own faith, provided respect is shown for the official religion and there is no attempt to proselytise (preach or attempt to convert an individual or group to a religion other than the particular religion to which they belong).

4.4 Illegal drugs

All volunteers are responsible for being informed of and adhere to the laws of their Host Country. Laws relating to the consumption, supply, trafficking, or cultivation of drugs – including alcohol and tobacco – vary from country to country. Similarly, penalties for breaking local laws vary from minor fines to mandatory death sentences. Volunteers should be aware that in almost all cases, penalties relating to drug use are more severe than in Australia

For this reason, the use of drugs contravening local laws will result in the immediate termination of your assignment.

Section 2

» In the Field

This section contains important information on:

- > First steps in country
- > In-country orientation and registration
- > Relationship with your host organisation
- > Relationship with AVI
- > Your obligations and responsibilities
- > Personal Study

» 5. Arrival in country

5.1 First steps in country

Upon arrival at the place of your assignment:

1. Advise AVI of your local contact information (see 5.4).
2. Discuss with your Host Organisation and Country Manager culturally appropriate ways to minimise risks as an expatriate in your new community.

If you have not been able to register with DFAT on-line, this may be the last opportunity you have to be able to register at your nearest Australian Embassy, Consulate or High Commission. It is important to discuss this with your Country Manager on arrival in-country and they will assist in organising a visit to the Embassy for you (see 5.6).

5.2 In-country orientation

AVI organises an orientation program within your first week in country. The orientation includes important health and security information and is designed to help you with the settling-in process. It builds upon the pre-departure briefing to help make you operationally effective as soon as possible.

5.2.1 Security

At your in-country orientation, you will be given a country specific security briefing by an expert who is knowledgeable in local issues. It is essential you pay close attention to the information that is given to you.

At this time you will begin to develop a personal security plan, which is an essential part of being an AVI volunteer, and which you will update throughout your assignment.

5.3 Language training

Language training is conducted in country at the start of an assignment for volunteers who require knowledge of the local language to communicate effectively within the workplace or community.

AVI covers the cost of initial lessons, but approval from your Country Manager must be obtained if additional language instruction is required and is only available to volunteers on the program (not their accompanying dependants).

5.4 Contact details

Please provide your AVI country office with your correct contact details as soon as possible, including at least one phone number and an email address. Please ensure that the person responsible for mail at your host organisation is notified to expect mail for you. You must advise AVI of any changes to your contact details immediately.

5.5 Emergency contacts in country

Please notify AVI of someone in country who can be contacted if we are unable to reach you during an emergency. These contacts may include the local store, police, school principal, work colleague, neighbour or someone who is able to relay a message. This information should also be supplied to your next of kin in Australia.

Your emergency contact should be able to speak English, and you should advise them that you have provided AVI with their name, address, telephone and email contacts, and that we will contact them in the event of an emergency. It is vital that you notify AVI of any changes to your emergency contact information.

5.6 Residency registration

All AVI volunteers (and their families) who hold an Australian passport must register with the consular section of the Australian diplomatic mission in their country of assignment immediately on or before arrival. This can be done in person or online at www.smarttraveller.gov.au or www.orao.dfat.gov.au. You should also advise the mission that you are an AVI volunteer.

If Australian Diplomatic representation does not exist, registration should be made with the nearest diplomatic mission serving in that area. British or Canadian diplomatic missions generally service Australian nationals where no formal Australian representation exists.

If you hold a passport for another country, you must register with the diplomatic mission of the issuing country, and also advise the Australian diplomatic mission that you are part of an Australian program.

5.7 Volunteer ID Card

All volunteers will be issued with an Australian Volunteers program ID Card. This is designed to be your identification in-country (especially if you do not have your passport in your possession). The ID card should be carried on you at all times.

You will be issued with the card on arrival in-country, and if lost you must contact your Country Manager to get it replaced as soon as possible. When you finish your assignment, during your exit interview, you should return the card to the country office.

The card is designed, not as official identification, but rather a form of identification in case of emergency. It will also have, in the local language, who to contact in the case of emergency (this will be your country office).

» 6. Relationship with your Host Organisation

A key element of the Australian Volunteer for International Development program is that the volunteers are considered 'employees' of their host organisation and not of AVI. Your first line of responsibility is therefore to your host organisation.

In the same way, problems in the workplace should initially be dealt with at a local level. If resolution proves especially difficult, your Country Manager may be able to help with advice and, if required, can act as a mediator with the host organisation.

Any major change to the three-way agreement between the host organisation, the volunteer and AVI must involve discussion between all parties before any decision or action is taken. This includes such matters as changes to employment conditions, alterations to allowances, housing or job responsibilities.

6.1 Assignment descriptions and work plans

Prior to departure, you will have received an initial assignment description from AVI that outlines the main focus of your assignment and what it aims to achieve.

Once you commence your assignment, you and your host organisation are expected to review the assignment description and make any necessary amendments to better reflect the organisation's current priorities. Major changes to the assignment objectives must then be discussed with your AVI Country Manager.

This meeting should also serve as an opportunity for you and your host organisation to develop a work plan that you can both use to monitor your progress – but please keep in mind that your work plan may evolve over many months.

6.2 Terms and conditions of employment

AVI will endeavour to finalise suitable terms and conditions of employment prior to departure. This includes the assignment description and information about allowances and accommodation.

However, arrangements may still be subject to change.

AVI recommends that you confirm the following arrangements during the first few weeks of your assignment:

- > Hours of work
- > Leave entitlements
- > Travel entitlements
- > Compassionate and sick leave entitlements

If there are serious issues in resolving the terms and conditions of your employment, please contact your AVI Country Manager immediately.

6.3 Holidays

> Public holidays

AVI volunteers are entitled to the same public holidays as other local employees.

> Accrued leave

AVI volunteers are eligible to receive one weeks annual leave for every three months served. You should consult with your host organisation and obtain approval when planning leave. The host organisation is within its rights to request changes to the timing and duration of leave in accordance with its own organisational priorities.

Volunteers are not able to accrue TOIL (Time Off In Lieu) to add to their normal leave. Exceptional leave requests must be agreed to by the host organisation and AVI.

If you are planning to travel either inside or outside the country, ensure that you comply with any local regulations (such as a re-entry permit).

Volunteers must notify AVI of all intended holidays and provide alternative contact details to both your host organisation and to your Country Manager. Failure to do so may result in being taken off the program.

6.4 Absences

Permission for significant absences from the workplace should be sought from your host organisation. If approved by your host organisation, please also notify AVI, providing dates of departure and return, along with a contact address and contact number. The local Australian diplomatic mission should also be advised if possible, as this information may be vital in the event of an emergency or family crisis in Australia.

6.5 Special leave

If there is a serious illness, death or crisis involving immediate family (partner, parents, children, siblings, official guardian) you may consider returning home for a period of up to six weeks on approval from your host organisation and Country Manager.

Any extension of absence beyond the standard four weeks annual leave must be discussed and approved by your Country Manager and Regional Manager and your host organisation. An extended absence from any assignment will require a review of the feasibility of your assignment. Such action must be discussed fully with your host organisation and AVI before you leave for Australia. Among other issues, re-entry requirements to the country of assignment need to be carefully considered.

Travel arrangements in these circumstances should be discussed with AVI, not with ACE Assistance. In some circumstances AVI's insurance may reimburse travel costs. You will need your original air ticket and any documentation concerning the reasons for return (eg death certificate) to submit when making your insurance claim. If AVI arranges your travel, you will need to provide this documentation to us. (See Section 12 for further information about this cover.)

» 7. Relationship with AVI

AVI will maintain regular communication with you while you are on assignment. AVI will contact you for formal assignment monitoring discussions, updates on issues relevant to our program, security reasons and to ensure that you have appropriate support.

7.1 AVI Country Managers

AVI has appointed Country Managers and locally-engaged staff with the responsibility for managing the volunteer program in a specific country or region. While you are on assignment, the AVI Country Manager is your first point of contact, whether they are based in country or elsewhere.

It is also your responsibility to keep your Country Manager updated on your progress, change of circumstances or identified risk issues.

7.2 Correspondence with AVI

AVI uses email to send volunteers important information about the volunteer program, security updates and other news. If you are using an email system that employs bulk mail filters, ensure that the filters enable any messages with an @australianvolunteers.com address to get through.

Many volunteers find email to be a quick, convenient and cost-effective way to communicate with friends and family, as well as with AVI. You should realise that this is not a confidential communication medium when sent on your work computer system and that whatever you write can be read by others, including your work colleagues or superiors. If you use an internet café, your emails can be accessed by a wide range of people, even when you think you have deleted the message you have sent.

If you need to send confidential correspondence to AVI by post, please mark the envelope 'Personal and Confidential', and address it to the relevant staff member. While your privacy will be respected, please remember that administrative procedures necessarily require the involvement of more than one staff member.

Please contact AVI immediately if serious personal, security or financial problems arise. Staff will do all they can to assist as quickly as possible but it is your responsibility to keep us updated of your current contact details due to any change of circumstances.

7.3 Assignment monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

As an AVI volunteer, your primary relationship is with your host organisation who will monitor your day-to-day progress.

AVI facilitates this process through formal monitoring and evaluation procedures that require both the volunteer and the host organisation to provide written feedback on progress made, outcomes achieved and overall satisfaction with the assignment.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a core component of the volunteer program and a compulsory part of your assignment. The information provided by volunteers and their host organisation enables AVI to provide targeted assistance where needed, and contributes to the continuous improvement of the program as a whole.

7.4 Volunteer Assignment Support Fund (VASF)

Under the Volunteer Assignment Support Fund (VASF) volunteers can apply for competitive small grants of up to \$1500 for activities that will support and enhance the achievement of their objectives.

VASF application rounds are held four times per year. The closing dates for each round are 1 January, 1 April, 1 July, 1 October. For further information ask your Country Manager.

Applications are reviewed by AVI Melbourne staff. Due to limited VASF funding all applications are assessed competitively and funds are allocated based on criteria including alignment with assignment objectives and sustainability of the activities. Volunteers must be up to date with their monitoring and evaluation to be eligible for VASF.

Volunteers who receive VASF funding will be required to report on the activities and submit receipts for all expenditure.

7.5 In-country meeting

AVI will facilitate an in-country meeting of volunteers once every 12 months. This provides an opportunity to exchange ideas, reflect on each volunteer's experience, share lessons learnt and discuss the country's development trends. It also allows volunteers to address issues of immediate concern and gives AVI the chance to gather feedback about assignment and program development, and to provide refresher training as needed (health and security). It is compulsory for all volunteers to attend this meeting.

7.6 Emergency support

AVI has 24-hour support for both medical and non-medical emergencies. Refer to Section 9.1 and 10.4.1 for contact details in the event of an emergency.

It is your responsibility to notify your Country Manager with any changes to your next-of-kin or emergency contacts – either in country or in Australia.

7.7 Obligations and responsibilities

All Australian Volunteers for International Development volunteers must comply with the Volunteer Code of Conduct (see the first chapter of this guidebook). As a condition of inclusion into the volunteer program, you must sign a form stating that you have read and accepted all conditions of the code.

The code establishes, among other matters, that all Australian Volunteers for International Development program participants must abide by the laws of the country in which they are placed and refrain from any conduct or wrongdoing which may bring AVI or the Commonwealth of Australia into disrepute. The code also states that Australian Volunteers for International Development program participants must not represent themselves as employees or agents of the Commonwealth of Australia or of AVI.

The code requires volunteers to exercise all reasonable caution when undertaking any activities that may result in harm or injury to themselves or others. This includes wearing motorcycle helmets or other appropriate safety gear.

All AVI volunteers must also comply with AVI's Child Protection Policy (Section 14).

Participants in other AVI programs or projects may receive individual contracts containing additional information regarding their obligations and responsibilities. These vary according to the work undertaken. Please check with AVI for further details if you are in this category.

7.8 Training

During your assignment there will be requirements and opportunities to attend and participate in training. This will cover areas such as security, Child Protection (especially if you are in an assignment in which you have significant contact with children), and sectoral workshops.

7.9 Donations, Gifts and Fundraising on behalf of your Host Organisation

While volunteers may wish to contribute financially to their Host Organisation, it is against the Code of Conduct to make a personal donation while on assignment as this can have unanticipated, negative consequences for colleagues in the work place. There is no exclusion of post-assignment donations.

Many volunteers obtain funding to support their Host Organisations through fund-raising and proposal writing. All volunteers are asked to ensure that AVI is notified of any donations or grants awarded to the Host Organisation as a result of his/her assignment.

7.10 Personal Study and Research

Volunteering overseas, when combined with the pursuit of assignment objectives and becoming part of a community, is a huge commitment. AVI asks our volunteers to dedicate their time and effort to achieving these outcomes.

Volunteers are placed in the field to assist organisations that have requested expertise and skills that they need in their organisation. These organisations have not asked for a researcher, but a colleague who will work with them to help make their organisation more successful. Volunteers are not to conduct research unless the host organisation and AVI agree that it is appropriate to the Host Organisation, AVI and the Australian Volunteers for International Development program.

Volunteers may undertake distance study of limited course-work, as long as it does not undermine their assignment obligations.

The Volunteer Code of Conduct includes an agreement to not publish research on your assignment(s) without permission from AVI and/or the host organisation.

7.11 Media and public comment

Volunteers should be aware that while they do not officially represent AVI, the Australian Volunteers for International Development program or the Australian Government, their comments or behaviour will nonetheless reflect on these agencies, and on Australia as a whole.

Volunteers must therefore refrain from any public comment on issues of political, cultural or religious sensitivity, and from making any public statements relating to the activities or interests of the Australian Government or the government of your host country.

AVI strongly recommends that you consult the AVI Marketing and Communications team before making any statements to the media, submitting articles for publication or participating in other mass communication activities. AVI supports volunteers in sharing their experiences and promoting the work

of their host organisations and its staff, and will provide advice and recommendations for any volunteers participating in publicity activities. Volunteers may maintain personal websites and blogs to share their experiences while on assignment, however the content of these sites should in no way bring AVI, your host organisation or the governments of Australia or your host country into disrepute.

AVI requests program participants to take a responsible approach to any media and communication activities, and to respect the way they represent the communities they live and work in and to remember their roles as an Australian Volunteers for International Development program participant by following these guidelines.

You can contact AVI's marketing and communications team by phone on +61 3 9279 1763 or email on mystory@australianvolunteers.com.

7.12 Grievance procedures

Processes exist to resolve any differences or grievances that arise between AVI volunteers and staff. Refer to Section 16 for the Volunteer Grievance Policy.

7.13 Early withdrawal from assignment

In accepting to undertake an assignment, AVI volunteers agree to all of the terms and conditions outlined in the assignment description and volunteer code of conduct, including the duration of the placement.

Volunteers who do not fulfil this obligation for reasons that are deemed controllable, are liable to refund all or part of the expenses incurred as a result of their participation in the volunteer program. For this reason it is critical that you keep us fully informed and discuss issues with your Country Manager before any such action is taken.

In most countries, AVI volunteers must complete their agreed assignment duration before they can take up any other voluntary or paid work in that country. Immigration and work permits are based on this agreement and AVI is obliged to advise local immigration authorities when volunteers are no longer under our auspices. Insurance is also conditional on being a volunteer under the AVI program. Any enquiries about this should be directed to your Country Manager.

7.14 Completion advice

AVI will send a 'Return Dates & Address Form' to you prior to the end of your assignment. In some instances this will be incorporated into the final monitoring and evaluation form.

This form should be returned to AVI as soon as possible because it includes essential information on returning you home to Australia.

7.15 Procedures for extending assignments

A host organisation considering the need to extend a volunteer assignment must first discuss this with the Country Manager. If the Country Manager agrees that the extension is valid, AVI will then consider the extension on receiving a written request from the volunteer and the host organisation. Extensions must be submitted at least four months before the end of the assignment. As the original arrangements including budgets, visas and permits will need to be changed, the volunteer will be required to participate in a psychological debrief, and will need to resign the Code of Conduct. If the

extension exceeds three months, a medical review is required to ensure the volunteer is physically fit to remain in the country. Ultimately it is AVI who will approve the extension or transfer. Approvals for extension of assignments are not guaranteed and are considered on a case by case basis.

7.16 Transfers

AVI considers transferring to another assignment as a last resort and it will only be considered after the Host Organisation and volunteer have demonstrated, in good faith, their best efforts to make an assignment viable into the future. The request for a transfer must be made in writing to your Country Manager. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

7.17 Resettlement allowances for extensions

See section 3.4.3

7.18 Exit interview

In addition to your final M&E evaluation form, prior to the end of your assignment you will be asked to complete an exit interview with your Country Manager or another AVI representative. This interview will help you and AVI to reflect on the assignment as a whole, identify any issues that need to be resolved and make recommendations for future assignments with your host organisation. The exit interview will be conducted either face to face or via the phone.

» 8. Other issues

8.1 Australian Partner Organisations

Australian organisations provide funding and resources towards many volunteer assignments. Your assignment may or may not be affiliated with an Australian Partner Organisation. If an Australian Partner supports your organisation, your direct line management remains with your Host Organisation, though you may assist with communication and reporting to the Australian Partner Organisation.

If you identify a potential Australian Partner Organisation that maybe able to assist with your assignment, or the development of another assignment, contact your Country Manager

8.2 Part-time work

Engaging in any paid work and/or business enterprise for personal gain while on assignment is inappropriate for volunteers and contravenes the Australian Volunteers program Code of Conduct.

If you are contemplating any unpaid part- time work in addition to your volunteer assignment, it is necessary to obtain prior approval from your host organisation and AVI. It is important to be aware that such activities might contravene visa conditions and formal agreements with host country governments.

8.3 Employment of an accompanying partner

For partners of volunteers who have 'Approved Accompanying Dependant' status (AAD), any work must be negotiated with their Country Manager as visa restrictions and program requirements may prevent paid work being undertaken.

8.4 Change of status

AVI negotiates your assignment on the basis of your status on application (eg single, couple, couple with children). If this changes (eg separation, marriage, pregnancy, de facto relationship), please notify your Country Manager immediately as there may be implications for all involved. AVI reserves the right to terminate an assignment if it is substantially affected by a change of status.

8.5 Relationships

Please consider carefully the possible implications of entering into a relationship while on assignment. Seek local advice as well as the experience of other expatriates as part of your consideration.

If you marry during your assignment, it is entirely your personal responsibility. AVI does not provide any benefits for a new partner, and you cannot assume that AVI or the host organisation will make any changes to salary and housing arrangements or provide additional furnishings.

Under Australia's immigration policy, there is no guarantee that non-Australian citizens who marry Australian citizens will gain automatic residency in Australia.

8.6 Pregnancy

There are many implications involved in starting or growing a family while on a volunteer assignment. As an AVI volunteer, you have committed yourself to a host organisation for an assignment and your host organisation is not obliged to alter terms and conditions if you or your partner become pregnant and cannot work for all or part of that time.

Please note that Australian Volunteers program requires that pregnant woman must pass a medical check on confirmation of pregnancy and then return to Australia at 28 weeks to see the pregnancy to term. It is possible that a volunteer assignment location may have insufficient infrastructure to support the mother and child during pregnancy, or that a medical check is not cleared, in this case, the pregnant volunteer and/or accompanying dependant may be required to leave their assignment location for their health and safety.

When AVI is notified of the birth of a child during assignment, the child can be included in our insurance policy, but please be aware that any medical problems resulting from childbirth are excluded from coverage.

8.7 Separation and divorce

There is no way to predict how separation and/or divorce will affect you or your partner's assignment. It should be noted that a divorce granted in another country may not be legal in Australia. It is your responsibility to seek appropriate Australian legal advice and meet costs involved.

8.8 Voting while overseas

The Australian Electoral Commission advises that Australian citizens going overseas for periods of three years or less can register as Overseas Electors and vote by post in state and federal elections.

Please contact the division where you are enrolled and notify electoral officers that you are going overseas and for how long. You will then be registered as an overseas elector. Failure to do this can result in being struck off the electoral roll and having to apply to be re-enrolled on return to Australia.

8.9 Correspondence

If family or friends are expecting to hear from you regularly, please write or contact them by phone or email. Please remember that mail can take a long time to arrive from overseas so it is wise to advise family and friends of this. AVI expects you to keep your Country Manager, as well as your family, informed of any travel plans.

Section 3

» Health, Security & Insurance

This section contains important information on:

- > 24-hour medical service
- > Medical cover and expenses
- > Personal security
- > What to do in the event of an emergency
- > Financial issues
- > Insurance cover and making claims
- > Counselling services

» 9. Health

9.1 About ACE Assistance

ACE Assistance provides a team of medical professionals who are contactable 24 hours a day for medical emergencies for AVI volunteers.

You will receive your emergency card, with an ACE Assistance telephone number, prior to departure from Australia. Please carry this card with you at all times. In the event of medical emergencies overseas, you or someone acting on your behalf should call the phone number on your card (see also Section 10.4).

ACE Assistance will provide if appropriate:

- > Access to a registered medical practitioner for emergency assistance and advice
- > A second opinion on treatment or surgery if deemed necessary by ACE Assistance medical practitioners
- > Payment guarantees to hospitals and insurance verification, when able
- > Hospital case management
- > Emergency transportation to the nearest suitable hospital
- > Emergency evacuation if necessary

When contacting ACE Assistance you or your agent will need to tell them your name, your status as an AVI volunteer, your contact details, your passport details, and quote the policy number below, or as written on your emergency card.

When speaking with ACE Assistance please make sure that you clearly understand what they have agreed to do and in what time frame.

If for any reason you cannot contact AVI locally in the case of an emergency, you can phone ACE assist who will contact AVI Melbourne for you.

Emergencies: ACE Assistance (all hours)

Tel: +61 2 8907 5995
(reverse charges accepted)

Email: assist@customercare.com.au
(not to be used in the case of emergency)

Quote policy number: 02PP014769

ACE Assistance provides access to the AVI emergency expatriate insurance policy. Volunteers should plan to have funds to pay for medical services and will be reimbursed for medical claims according to the policy.

9.2 Serious illness or accident

In the event of serious illness or accident you or someone acting on your behalf should contact ACE Assistance to organise appropriate medical assistance or an emergency medical evacuation if necessary.

9.3 Medical expenses

Australian citizens living overseas cannot claim medical or hospital expenses through Medicare.

AVI's insurance policy covers medical expenses incurred overseas for the treatment of accidental bodily injury, sickness or disease. This includes:

- > Consultations with a registered health service provider such as a medical practitioner
- > Consultations with a surgeon or specialist on referral from the above practitioner
- > Emergency dental treatment (but not general dental maintenance)
- > Emergency optical treatment
- > X-rays on referral from the above practitioner
- > Physiotherapy or chiropractic treatment and specific medical supplies in some circumstances

You will receive several copies of insurance travel claim forms before departure, and these should be used when making a claim. When making a claim please note the following:

- > General medicines and pharmaceuticals are not covered.
- > Submit claims direct to the insurer as per the claim form (provided to you by your Country Manager). See section 12.9.
- > Forward only receipts for invoices that would have been covered by Medicare if you were resident in Australia.
- > Include your bank account details in the space provided for prompt payment.
- > Itemise each payment to be reimbursed.
- > Calculate the total to be reimbursed in local currency and Australian dollars, and include all receipts and dockets.

Sometimes, particularly in emergency situations, hospitals may request payment up front or before discharge. In some cases, ACE Assistance can guarantee payment. You or someone acting on your behalf should contact ACE Assistance via the number on your emergency card to ask them if a guarantee to the hospital can be made.

9.4 Medicare cover in Australia

When a volunteer is medically evacuated and returns to Australia, all Australian citizens or applicants for permanent residency are immediately covered by Medicare for basic medical and public hospital costs. While in Australia, AVI insurance does not cover medical services or costs. Please ensure Medicare is notified of any change of address.

Medicare does not cover private hospital charges or extras, eg dental treatment and other ancillary services. Private health insurance funds do provide cover for these, but there are waiting periods for eligibility. Following a major sickness or injury AVI suggests that you contact Medicare as you may be eligible for the Medicare Gap Safety Net. NB. AVI's insurance does not extend to cover the Medicare gap.

Remember that before proceeding back in-country, you will need medical clearance by your doctor (see section 12.3)

9.5 Private health insurance in Australia

Private health insurance has undergone a number of significant changes which may affect the cover you have as a result of taking up an overseas assignment. Some health funds have special conditions for suspending and reinstating your cover.

You should investigate whether a suspension of your private health cover might affect your lifetime health cover entitlements. You must negotiate this with your private health fund prior to your departure.

You should consider maintaining private health insurance in Australia during your assignment to ensure you gain maximum coverage especially against those items that are not applicable under our insurance (eg conditions for which treatment began prior to departure, general dental or pregnancy).

If you return to Australia for medical treatment and have not maintained private health insurance, you will be treated as a public patient under the Medicare system

9.6 Ongoing Illness

If any ongoing illness or disability results from an assignment, AVI should be notified immediately.

9.7 Counselling Services (about Response Psychological)

AVI has contracted Response Psychological Services to provide counselling (to all) for AVI volunteers. This service provides volunteers with the opportunity to speak to a psychologist who is experienced in assisting (dealing) people on assignment overseas and working in community development and humanitarian aid field. Response offers volunteers short term solution focused counselling and as such is not a clinical service. Each volunteer is (automatically provided) allocated a total of three hours of phone counselling, however in exceptional circumstances this can be extended.

To access this confidential service you should contact Response using the details below. Response will reply and arrange a time to conduct the counselling session. In an event of an emergency, you may ask your local AVI personal to assist you to contact Response.

In some circumstances AVI will recommend or require a volunteer to speak with a counsellor, for example, after a traumatic incident, or program evacuation. A volunteer will be (asked) required to have an assignment de-brief in the event of an assignment extension or transfer.

Volunteers will learn more about Response Psychological Services during Per Departure Briefing as they present a session on their service.

Response Psychological Services (all hours)

Tel: (International) +61 3 9016 0400

Tel: (Australia local freecall) 1300 854 053

Skype: responsepsychological

Email: response@responsepsychological.com
(delayed response)

» 10. Security

10.1 Personal security

Security issues are present in all countries where AVI volunteers work, including Australia. These may involve loss of personal property, personal physical assault or problems arising from natural disaster, civil unrest or war.

AVI recognises that in issues concerning personal security, individual situations require individual responses.

Regular consultations with AVI volunteers, host organisations, Australian diplomatic missions and local government officials help our staff to monitor and respond to changes, whether in relation to civil unrest, natural disaster or general security.

There are some basic steps that you should take on arrival and some general guidelines to follow if, as sometimes occurs, the security situation at an assignment deteriorates.

10.2 General safety

There are numerous safety issues that may arise during an assignment, particularly as a consequence of your status as a visitor in another community. In regard to these issues it is very useful to seek the ongoing advice of the local community. If for any reason you are concerned, or feel that there is increased tension at your assignment, discuss this with your host organisation and your Country Manager immediately.

AVI insists that you always exercise caution in regard to all aspects of your personal safety and the security of your possessions. This includes road safety, such as being a licensed driver, wearing a helmet and using a safety belt. Be mindful that what may be considered a minor accident or situation in Australia can be much more serious overseas.

Every 12 months, each country program will conduct a compulsory in-country meeting. During this time, you will receive updated security training and any additional information that might be important to your placement and/or location.

If a volunteer is involved in an incident, witnessed an incident or event, or has felt threatened they must contact their country office immediately – even if the incident seems minor. All incidents may have implications that the volunteer might be unaware of, or there might be future issues from the incident that arise while the volunteer is still in the country, or after they have left.

10.3 Updating your contact details and registration

Keep AVI and your family informed of your contact details and advise us of any changes as soon as possible. Advise your host organisation and AVI of movements and contact details when travelling.

Remember to also update your details with the Australian diplomatic mission via the Smart Traveller website. Ensure your passport is kept secure, but accessible.

Remember in the event of travel, the volunteer must seek approval and keep AVI up to date with their contact details and itinerary.

10.4 Emergency contacts

10.4.1 Medical emergencies

Carry your ACE Assistance Emergency Card at all times. For medical emergencies telephone the reverse-charge, 24-hour number printed on this card. ACE Assistance will relay messages to AVI if required. In an event of an emergency do not reply on SMS or email communications. You must call.

Emergencies: ACE Assistance (all hours)

Tel: +61 2 8907 5995
(reverse charges accepted)

Email: assist@customercare.com.au
(delayed response)

Quote policy number: 02PP014769

10.4.2 Non-medical emergencies

Your first point of contact while on assignment is your Country Manager.

During your in-country orientation, you may be given the details of an additional emergency contact that will be available at all hours. Use this contact to register all non-medical emergencies, including security incidents.

You can contact any individual at AVI by email using their first initial and their surname (all in lower case, with no punctuation or gaps) followed by @ australianvolunteers.com (eg. jsmith@australianvolunteers.com).

10.4.3 Local emergency contacts

Keep a list of emergency service numbers in your wallet or purse, and near the telephone: this may include the local police, doctor, ACE Assistance, the in- country non-medical emergency support number provided by AVI, and the Australian diplomatic mission.

In the event of telecommunication interruptions, send a letter or message to AVI via local transport, which can be relayed from another area. AVI staff will take action where necessary, as well as inform family.

10.5 Security Plans

AVI has developed Country Security plans which you will be given. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to ensure they have read the plan and are familiar with them.

10.5.1 Personal Security Plans

You must develop and regularly update a personal security plan with details of how you plan to deal with emergencies, a list of local contacts and available methods of transportation. AVI will assist you to develop this plan. This is one of the most important documents in allowing AVI to assist you in the event of an emergency.

10.6 Evacuation

Decisions about evacuation of AVI volunteers in the event of war, unpredictable and violent political situations or natural disaster will be coordinated by AVI with the Australian or other diplomatic missions in the host country. Please note registration requirements (see Section 5.6), and keep in contact with AVI and the authorities issuing emergency instructions should an incident occur. AVI reserves the right to evacuate AVI personnel.

10.7 Emergencies in Australia

Before you depart, you will receive an Emergency Contacts form. AVI asks you to provide the name and contact details of a person in Australia whom we can contact in the event of an emergency (see Privacy Policy in Section 15).

If this person or family members in Australia need to contact you urgently and are unable to do so, they can get in touch with AVI by phone or by email. The relevant AVI contacts should be passed on to family members before departure.

In view of privacy considerations, AVI prefers to be contacted by one of the people you have nominated as our emergency contacts in Australia.

If you decide to return home early owing to emergency, please inform your Country Manager immediately, and your host organisation before taking action. AVI may be able to assist with obtaining an air ticket quickly if necessary. It is wise to have some money readily available in case of emergency.

» 11. Financial Affairs

11.1 Australian government payments

You should contact Centrelink or the relevant government department to ascertain your entitlement and/or liability while away from Australia, as you may be requested to refund any overpayments made to you.

11.2 Superannuation

If you are taking extended leave from an Australian employer, you should seek advice from your employer and/or superannuation fund for details on whether:

- > superannuation contributions will be made by the employer in your absence
- > it is possible to contribute while overseas
- > payments can be suspended.

AVI cannot make superannuation contributions on your behalf, as AVI is not your employer.

11.3 Wills

AVI strongly recommends that you make a will, leave it in an accessible place and tell a nominated emergency contact where the will is located. Parents should appoint a guardian for their children.

11.4 Union dues and professional fees

Payment of union or professional membership dues while overseas is an individual responsibility. Some associations may waive or reduce fees, and a letter outlining the nature of work performed during assignment can be provided on request from AVI.

11.5 Personal financial commitments

AVI strongly recommends that you have access to additional funds in case of unexpected events or emergencies.

All personal financial commitments are your responsibility, both in Australia and overseas. These include mortgages, other loans, insurance premiums, family support and storage.

AVI does not assist with such payments, so make sure that your financial arrangements are organised for the duration of your time overseas. We recommend that you nominate someone in Australia to administer financial matters on your behalf (see Section 1.8).

11.6 Australian income tax

AVI does not provide advice on taxation matters. Volunteers are not employees of AVI and we recommend that you seek independent professional taxation advice to determine whether the allowances paid to you by AVI qualify for exemption under Section 23 AG of the Income Tax

Assessment Act 1936. You should also seek professional advice on the taxation requirements applicable to your country of assignment before going overseas.

» 12. Insurance

AVI provides expatriate emergency medical cover during your term overseas, which gives some protection against injury, illness, disability and death. Cover commences from the time you depart for your assignment until the end of your assignment, including holiday travel during your assignment.

The cover does not provide for workers' compensation or professional indemnity. You should ascertain from your employer the level of workers' compensation provided.

These policies do not cover every eventuality. If you have concerns about the level of cover provided, we suggest that you seek individual additional cover. Additional cover should be sought prior to your departure.

A summary of insurance cover and general exclusions is on the inside back cover of this guidebook. Exceptions to the period of cover are detailed in Section 12.7.

Cover provided through AVI ceases at the completion of your assignment – this gives you reasonable time to pack up and travel back to Australia. If you are wanting to do some further travel after the completion of your assignment, you should arrange your own travel insurance beyond this time.

Emergencies: ACE Assistance (all hours)

Tel: +61 2 8907 5995
(reverse charges accepted)

Email: assist@customercare.com.au
(non-emergency contact only)

Quote policy number: 02PP014769

12.1 Baggage and money

AVI insurance cover for possessions and money applies only during periods of travel from Australia to your assignment location, and during return travel from assignment to Australia. It is limited to A\$2000 per claim and A\$1500 for any one item. Theft or loss of cash, travel documents or credit cards is covered up to A\$1,000.

Your possessions and money are not covered during your assignment. You may wish to purchase cover for your possessions while you are in your assignment location. You can apply through Jardine Lloyd Thompson Pty Ltd, using a baggage application insurance form (available from your Country Manager). You may instead prefer to seek cover for your possessions during assignment through an insurer of your choice.

12.2 Medical expenses

Emergency medical expenses incurred overseas (as defined in Section 9.3) are usually covered by insurance.

It is essential that ACE Assistance is advised immediately of any serious illness/injury incurred while overseas. Hospital and medical expenses incurred overseas are covered up to and not exceeding A\$500,000 for each insured person.

If a medical condition warrants return to Australia or your country of domicile for medical treatment, and if such treatment is covered by Medicare or similar insurance scheme, then AVI's insurance is not able to respond and pay for those expenses.

12.3 Emergency repatriation travel

Should an illness or injury arise which cannot be treated at the place of assignment, AVI insurance will arrange and provide cover for travel to the nearest first world available treatment facility or return to your country of domicile if appropriate.

It is essential that you contact AVI and ACE Assistance (our emergency medical assistance provider) immediately before such travel is undertaken. ACE Assistance will advise you of the next action to be taken, this may include obtaining an authorising medical certificate in-country. The medical certificate must state that the illness/injury cannot be treated at the place of assignment and that it is necessary to obtain treatment elsewhere. ACE Assistance will assist in the identification of the most suitable location for the required treatment.

Following a medical emergency repatriation, a medical clearance will be required before you return to your assignment. AVI medical consultant, TMVC will provide a medical assessment and clearance for you to go back to your assignment. Travel costs for your return to your assignment after treatment are also included under the insurance cover. Any return to Australia, such as that described in Section 6.5 (Special Leave) should be discussed with AVI. The discussion should include travel arrangements.

12.4 Death or illness of a relative

AVI's insurance provides for travel to Australia in the event of unexpected death, serious injury or illness of relatives under the age of 80, that is not the result of a pre-existing condition (see Section 12.7). A relative is defined as a member of your immediate family (partner, parents, grandparents, children, siblings, official guardians).

Travel arrangements of this nature should be discussed with AVI before taking action.

12.5 Death and disability

AVI's insurance cover provides for death or disability that arises from accidental injury. Benefits for injuries that lead to death or disablement, permanent or temporary, total or partial, are not payable to persons over the age of 80.

12.6 Cover for incidents caused by war or invasion

Although assignments are not located in dangerous or highly volatile areas, volunteers regularly accept positions in countries where security issues do exist. However, our policies include a standard exclusion in the event of any injury or loss of property incurred as a result of an act of war, declared or undeclared, civil war or invasion. This means that in some rare cases AVI's insurer may decline to pay, if the injury or loss is deemed to have occurred as a result of these excluded events. In this event AVI will provide a limited range of benefits in the following areas: medical expenses, medical

evacuation, medical repatriation, rehabilitation and death. Benefits are determined on a case- by-case basis, and are capped at a total of \$80,000 per claim.

12.7 Exclusions

The insurance policy provided includes several standard exclusions, including the following:

- > Any person over the age of 80
- > Expenses incurred where a journey is undertaken against the advice of a Doctor or when the insured person is unfit to travel
- > Expenses incurred where the purpose of the journey is for the Insured person to seek medical attention and ACE Assistance has not agreed to the journey
- > Expenses incurred after the period of twenty-four (24) months from the date the insured person sustains an Injury or Sickness
- > Expenses incurred for any medication for a condition which commenced prior to the commencement of a journey and which such medication the insured person has been advised to continue during travel
- > Expenses incurred for routine medical, optical or dental treatment or consultation
- > Expenses incurred as a consequence of a condition wholly or partly caused by childbirth, pregnancy or the complications thereof unless such expenses relate to emergency medical complications that are not considered routine treatment and are incurred before the 30th week term of pregnancy
- > Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or other sexually transmitted diseases: However this exclusion does not apply to the accidental contraction following medical treatment provided by a registered medical practitioner or nurse rendered necessary as a result of injury or sickness as defined, and/or assault, and/or in respect to those insured persons who through their particular work-related activities accidentally contract HIV, provided the incident causing such contraction was reported to and documented by AVI and a medical practitioner within five days of such incident
- > Declared or undeclared war, civil war or invasion once an event has been publicly acknowledged by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or other such government department/ agency (except for the first 7 days, to allow time for evacuation)
- > Suicide, attempted suicide or any deliberately self-inflicted injury or self-harm.
- > Being a pilot or crew member of any aircraft, or engaging in aerial activity except as a passenger in any properly licensed aircraft
- > Training or participating in professional sports of any kind
- > Expenses incurred as a result of the rendering in Australia of a professional service which Medicare benefits are or would be payable in accordance with Health Insurance Act 1973.
- > Expenses recoverable from any other source
- > Any expenses that are prohibited by law from being paid

These exclusions apply to all insured persons including volunteers and their relatives. Please note each claim will be assessed by AVI's insurers and any reckless behaviour that results in injury or accident may invalidate your claim.

12.8 Professional indemnity insurance

Medical practitioners, including doctors, are required to have their own indemnity cover. This may also be provided by the in- country host organisation. This is a condition of some assignments. AVI is not able to offer professional indemnity cover.

12.9 Making a claim

In the event that you need to make a claim, please use the claim forms as provided by AVI. This form should be used for all claims, and must be sent to the address printed on the form (not to AVI). These forms are available from your Country Manager.

An insurance claim is the sole responsibility of the volunteer (where required, AVI may assist you in the completion of the insurance claim form). Submitting and tracking the insurance claim is the task of the volunteer. AVI is not involved, nor is it responsible for this process.

AVI has found that speedy resolution of claims depends to a large extent on sufficient documentation, so the following guidelines should be followed:

- > Complete all relevant sections of the form and attach relevant receipts.
- > Retain copies of receipts for your records.
- > Baggage and money claims: Always report damage, loss or theft of property to local police or relevant authorities and attach a copy of the official report to the claim form. Proof of purchase or ownership of lost goods, and evidence of any repairs claimed for is required.
- > Return the completed and signed form to the insurers. It may take up to eight weeks for the claim to be processed, with payment being made in accordance with the detail provided in the form.

Corporate Services Network (CSN) administers claims on behalf of AVI. If you have any questions regarding a claim you have submitted, please contact:

Corporate Services Network

Tel: +61 2 8256 1770

Email: claims@csnet.com.au

» Summary of Insurance Cover

Insurance Benefits - Policy No: 02PP014769

Medical & Related Expenses	
Medical Expenses	\$500,000
Emergency Medical Evacuation	\$150,000
Injury Resulting in Fractured/Broken Bones (Limit varies depending on bone(s) Fractured/Broken)	Up to \$5,000
Blindness or Paralysis by Sickness	\$10,000
Personal Accident - Capital Benefits (Death, Loss of limbs, Total Disablement)	
> Adult (18 years of age and over)	\$50,000
> Child (under 18 years of age)	\$10,000
Repatriation of Mortal Remains	\$20,000
Travel / Personal Effects	
Luggage, Personal Effects, Travel Documents (maximum total of claim)	\$2,000
> Limit of Any One Item	\$1,500
> Limit for Deprivation of Luggage	\$1,000
> Limit of Money/Credit Cards and Travel Documents	\$500
Portable Business Equipment	\$5,000
Cancellation / Curtailment Expenses	\$100,000
Loss of Deposits	\$10,000
Political / Natural Disasters / Other Items	
Kidnap, Ransom and Extortion	\$250,000
Political Evacuation and Natural Disaster Expenses	\$20,000
Resumption of Assignment Expenses	\$20,000
Personal Liability	\$10,000,000

Section 4

» Coming Home

This section contains important information on:

- > Securing return tickets
- > Debriefing services
- > Return medical examination
- > Resettlement allowance
- > Government benefits

» 13. Returning to Australia

13.1 Return ticket

Before your return to Australia, please secure three quotes for best fares for your return trip and present these to the Country Manager. The Country Manager may accept a quote or seek another if they feel the quotes are unreasonable. Once approved, funds will be deposited into your account to purchase the fare. You must then present your Country Manager with a copy of your return ticket. AVI Insurance will cover you until the 'end of your assignment' this includes sufficient time to pack up your house, say your goodbyes and return to Australia. If you are planning to do further travel, you will have to organise your own personal travel insurance.

13.2 Volunteer Contact Details

It is important that AVI has your up-to-date Australian details as many volunteers who return to Australia move their location. Please communicate with your Country Manager or the Returned Volunteers Coordinator your Australian details, so that we are able to stay in touch with you on your return.

13.3 Return volunteer debriefs

Following your return to Australia, all AVI volunteers are invited and encouraged to participate in a debrief session provided by AVI. The debriefing can take the form of a one-on-one interview (either face-to-face or via telephone) or a group debriefing session, or both. It is designed to allow personal reflection on the challenges of the experience and resettlement in Australia. It also helps to identify ways to utilise your experience as an AVI volunteer back in Australia. All volunteers are requested to attend a de-briefing session when they arrive back in Australia, held within three months of return to Australia. Resources to assist you through this adjustment period are provided to you at the time of your de-brief.

Returning home can be incredibly stressful, and many returned volunteers have commented that the reverse culture shock has been harder than the initial in-country culture shock. Sometimes it helps to talk with an independent person about your challenges. Should you require this on your return and up to 12 months after your assignment ends Response Psychological is available for you to call them directly (refer section 9.7).

13.4 Medical examination on return

An overseas assignment, and the journey home, can be emotionally and physically taxing. It is not uncommon that a latent illness becomes apparent soon after your return home. It is important to anticipate this by trying to maintain adequate rest and a balanced diet just prior to departure and on immediate return to Australia. Any illness after returning home should be treated seriously.

It is also important that you have a medical examination within three months after you complete your assignment. A post-assignment medical report will be posted to your nominated Australian address soon after your expected completion date.

The examination may be performed by the doctor of your choice. There is some value in seeing the same doctor who performed your pre-departure medical examination.

At the post-assignment medical examination, it is important to describe as comprehensively as possible any health problems suffered while overseas, any close contact with any particular diseases and any current symptoms or concerns and any travel history. The doctor can arrange any necessary tests or arrange a referral to an appropriate expert if this is necessary. Remember that malaria may develop or recur long after leaving a malarial area.

Within Australia, appointments can be made with your local doctor, TMVC or another travel medicine clinic. Where the completed report is returned directly to us by the doctor, a copy will be made available if requested.

13.5 Statement of service

At the end of your assignment AVI will provide you with a statement of service, on completion and return of your end-of- assignment evaluation form. The statement of service confirms details of the place of employment, host organisation, positions held and length of assignment overseas. It also provides a brief explanation of AVI.

AVI does not provide personal references.

13.6 Staying connected

AVI values the continued engagement of returned volunteers and provides opportunities for returned volunteers to stay involved with AVI. This includes opportunities to share your experience through speaking engagements, media stories, networking and social events.

It is important to update AVI with your contact details, so we can keep you connected to the returned volunteer community.

13.7 Government benefits

On resettlement in Australia, it may be necessary to apply for the Newstart Allowance. It is your responsibility to register with the local Centrelink where staff will determine your eligibility.

Changes to regulations in the Newstart Allowance area can occur, and inquiries should be directed to the Department of Family and Community Services or Centrelink.

If you have returned to Australia as a result of medical illness you will need to register with Centrelink as soon as possible to be eligible for any appropriate allowances.

13.8 Health Care Card

Following your return to Australia, if you are eligible for Newstart Allowance, you will automatically receive a Health Care Card.

The Department of Human Services has a number of regulations surrounding the eligibility for receiving Health Care Cards. Generally they relate to your marital status, whether you have children and how much you have earned in the previous four weeks. For further information, check with Centrelink.

» 14. AVI Child Protection Policy

AVI is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of harm. In particular the safety and wellbeing of the children involved in AVI programs is a paramount concern. AVI also supports the rights and welfare of all our staff and volunteers and encourages their active participation in creating safe and respectful workplaces whilst on assignment or during travel overseas. This policy provides guidance to staff and volunteers on the acceptable behaviours and appropriate boundaries when working with children.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for managing and reducing risks of child abuse by persons engaged in international cooperation activities under the auspices of Australian Volunteers International (AVI). AVI aims to create an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person can be raised in a compassionate and just manner. Under this policy, AVI is further enhancing its approach to child protection through risk assessment and risk management procedures for development activities, clear procedures for raising concerns about child abuse, and training AVI personnel on child protection matters.

3. Scope and persons affected

This policy applies to all AVI personnel, defined as including AVI program participants (i.e. volunteers and deployees), AVI staff, AVI board members and associates, AVI service providers and contractors, and AVI office volunteers and interns. This policy also applies to other individuals and third parties who through their association with AVI may visit our development partners overseas (i.e. donors, Australian Partner Organisations).

4. Principles

a) AVI is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of harm. The safety and wellbeing of the children involved in AVI supported programs and the promotion of the safety and wellbeing of all children is of paramount concern.

b) The Policy is based on the principle of empowering children and young people through meaningful participation, having children and young people involved in decision making, listening to children and young people and giving them a voice. Through empowerment, children and young people are more likely to speak up when they have a concern for their safety or wellbeing.

c) AVI supports the rights and welfare of all AVI personnel and encourages their active participation in creating safe and respectful workplaces whilst on assignment or during travel overseas. AVI owes a moral and legal duty of care to do everything reasonably possible to ensure AVI personnel placed to work with children and young people are safe and suitable, have an appropriate depth of awareness of child protection issues, and that child safe practices are implemented through adequate and appropriate Policy and Procedures.

d) AVI personnel are expected to operate in accordance with Australian Commonwealth Laws (including extra-territorial laws) and relevant local laws.

5. Definitions

a. AVI Codes of Conduct

- > AVI Staff Code of Conduct – see AVI Policy Manual
- > Australian Volunteer for International Development Code of Conduct - see Volunteer Guidebook and Deployee contract

b. Child and young person

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, AVI defines a child or young person as any person below the age of 18 years, regardless of local laws or other definitions.

c. Child Abuse

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. Both boys and girls can be the victims of abuse, and abuse can be inflicted on a child by men, women and children.

- > **Physical abuse** occurs when a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing.
- > **Emotional or psychological abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected and/or intimidated through verbal and non-verbal means. This may involve insults, taunts, threats and ridicule, or continual coldness from parent or caregiver to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.
- > **Neglect** is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.
- > Child **sexual abuse** occurs when an adult, more powerful child or adolescent uses his or her power to involve a child in sexual activity. That coercive power can be physical, verbal or emotional.

d. Child Protection

An activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child abuse or neglect.

e. Child-Sex Tourism

ECPAT International defines child-sex tourism as:

'...the commercial sexual exploitation of children by men or women who travel from one place to another, usually from a richer country to one that is less developed, and there engage in sexual acts with children, defined as anyone aged under 18 years of age.' (ECPAT International, 2006)

f. Particularly vulnerable children

Child abuse takes place not only within the family environment but also outside the family such as in institutions, at work, on the streets, in war zones and emergencies. Children in emergencies are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In an emergency or crisis situation children are extremely vulnerable when they become part of a displaced or traumatised population.

AVI also acknowledges the increased vulnerability of children with disabilities and the limitations that sometimes exist in terms of being able to indicate or disclose abuse. Unless otherwise stated, all definitions are from Child Wise, Choose With Care®, 2006.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

AVI views child protection as a shared responsibility. To effectively manage risks to children, AVI requires the active support and cooperation of all AVI personnel. AVI also encourages awareness of child protection issues among our partner organisations. AVI endeavours wherever possible to reduce the risk of inappropriate behaviour by AVI personnel. Accordingly, AVI will exercise its right to dismiss or withdraw AVI personnel when it considers that the person poses an unacceptable risk to the safety or well-being of children. If deemed appropriate, AVI may suspend personnel or transfer them to other duties as a temporary measure while an investigation is conducted.

AVI personnel will:

- > conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model to children and as a representative of AVI
- > listen to children, take their concerns seriously, and allow them to have a say in the decisions that affect them
- > be visible when working with children, e.g. avoid being alone with children and, wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children
- > treat children with dignity and respect (i.e. how they want to be treated; as appropriate to personal development needs) regardless of ethnicity, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- > use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium
- > refrain from disciplining children (excluding their own children), or the physical punishment of children
- > refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour, which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- > comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- > ensure that touching will only be:
 - in response to the need of the child
 - with the child's permission or, where appropriate, the permission of the parent or guardian (except in an emergency situation)
 - in an open and non-secretive manner and environment that avoids the breasts, buttocks and groin
- > immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with the AVI Complaints Management Procedures

AVI personnel will not:

- > use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- > engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws
- > behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative towards a child
- > invite unaccompanied children into the home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- > take children into the home or sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case a supervisor's permission is obtained and another adult is present
- > do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes

- > hit or physically assault children
- > develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that can in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- > act in ways that may be abusive or place a child at risk of abuse
- > condone or participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- > act in a way that favours particular children to the exclusion of others
- > photograph, film, or video children before carefully considering the context and setting, in particular avoiding images that may be viewed as sexually suggestive, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate
- > hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way

AVI child protection advocates

The AVI Executive is responsible for providing support and guidance to other AVI personnel regarding child protection or child abuse issues, and as a point of contact in relation to the Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Procedures Manual.

The Executive's role involves:

- > answering questions concerning this Policy or the Procedures Manual
- > responsibility for the implementation and review of the Policy and Procedures
- > receiving feedback on the Policy providing support and guidance to AVI personnel impacted by child abuse

7. Reporting procedures

Observations of child abuse

While working overseas, AVI personnel may observe incidents where children or young people are abused or harmed by their parents, carers or in an institutional setting such as a school, orphanage or hospital. Immediately reporting instances of abuse or maltreatment to local authorities may not always be in the best interests of the children involved. Many countries do not have the resources, agencies or support services available to effectively handle these types of situations.

In the first instance, AVI personnel should follow the reporting procedures laid out in the Child Protection Procedures Manual. AVI management will provide support and guidance to AVI personnel in relation to any concern for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

Concerns identified by 'third parties' involving AVI personnel should be directed to the AVI Executive at childprotection@australianvolunteers.com. AVI personnel should be reassured that there will be no action taken against those who report, in good faith, information indicating a breach of the AVI Child Protection Policy or Codes of Conduct or any behaviour or action of AVI personnel that may be harmful to a child. However, if AVI personnel knowingly and wilfully report false or malicious information regarding other AVI personnel, such false reports will lead to disciplinary action.

Concerns that must be reported include:

- > a reasonable belief or observation that a practice or behaviour of an AVI staff member or program participant may be harmful to a child
- > disclosure by a child that he or she is being harmed, or fears being harmed, by AVI personnel
- > breaches of AVI Codes of Conduct or inappropriate behaviour by AVI personnel

- > concerns expressed by an agency, NGO, INGO or government partner about the behaviour of AVI personnel
- > suspicious behaviour of a person in regard to the sexual exploitation or trafficking of children
- > images, SPAM, pop ups or emails received on a computer which involve child pornography or the exploitation of children

Confidentiality

AVI will ensure that any concern raised is handled according to the principles of confidentiality, safety, impartiality, thoroughness, timeliness and accuracy. All complaints and reports, and the names of people involved, will be handled in the strictest of confidence. Details will only be released on a “need to know” basis, or when required by relevant local or Australian law, or when a notification to police or child protection authorities has been made. Please also refer to the AVI Privacy Policy.

8. References

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

www.unicef.org/crc

AusAID Child Protection Policy, March 2008

http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/child_protection.pdf

ACFID Code of Conduct

<http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct>

» 15. AVI Privacy Policy

AVI is committed to handling all personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (as amended). AVI will collect, store, use and disclose personal information, including sensitive information, for the primary purpose of arranging your participation in an AVI program. The following policy statement provides an overview of how we are meeting these privacy compliance obligations.

Policy Statement

Protecting your privacy is important to AVI. Whenever we collect and otherwise deal with your personal information, we are governed by the National Privacy Principles (NPPs) which are contained in the Privacy Act 1988. Therefore, whenever collecting and dealing with information such as your name, address, email address, phone number or any sensitive information such as health information, we will be bound by the NPPs. Whenever we collect personal information from you, we will make every reasonable attempt to inform you of why we are collecting your information, to whom we will disclose that information and the purposes for which we intend to use that information.

In general, the purposes for which we collect your personal information include, but are not limited to:

- > processing an application to become a participant in our program
- > facilitating your placement in an appropriate position
- > liaising with overseas host organisations, government departments and AVI sub- contractors to facilitate your placement
- > assisting you with services whilst you are placed in our program
- > providing feedback and follow-up on your placement
- > obtaining feedback from you about your experiences
- > processing a donation, sponsorship or other financial support
- > processing your membership to our website or other databases
- > allowing us to review and improve our program
- > keeping you informed of AVI developments and future placement opportunities
- > publicly acknowledging your contribution.

Consent

Consent to our handling of your personal information in accordance with our privacy policy will be implied by your completion of the forms and provision of the information requested at various stages of the program.

If you do not consent to our use of your personal information, you should not provide it to us. However, if you do not provide us with the requested information, we cannot include you in our programs. For example, police checks and medical reports are a contractual requirement of the majority of AVI activities.

Disclosure

To place you in our program, it will be necessary, where relevant, to pass on some of the information that you provide to appropriate third parties such as Australian Volunteers for International

Development Core Partners, AVI sub-contractors, overseas government departments, Australian indigenous or overseas host organisations, health service providers, our insurer and auditors, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

Where it is necessary for us to collect sensitive information from you such as information about your health, we shall only disclose this information after receiving appropriate consent. When you are asked to complete a medical report as part of the application or returning home process, we may arrange for this report to be reviewed by a medical practitioner outside AVI. You may also be required to complete a medical report to meet the entry requirements of a particular country. If an emergency arises while you are overseas, AVI may be required to provide relevant medical information to our emergency assistance provider in order for that company to provide you with appropriate support.

Accuracy

AVI will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the personal information that we collect, store, use or disclose is accurate, complete and up-to-date. You should keep us informed of any changes to personal information, such as your name, address, email or other means of direct contact, particularly while on assignment.

Security

AVI will also take all reasonable precautions to protect your personal information from misuse or loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

Privacy protection outside Australia

You should be aware that in most countries in which AVI operates there is unlikely to be privacy protection of a similar standard to that in Australia, and this may have implications for how your information is handled in that country.

Re-application

If you wish to re-apply to AVI programs after the completion of your initial assignment, you can expect to be requested to provide us with new, updated application materials. In compliance with the privacy legislation, AVI destroys information related to any previous AVI assignment that is no longer required.

Confidentiality

It is expected that you will respect the confidentiality of personal and sensitive information of other AVI volunteers, and also respect the confidentiality of information about your overseas host organisation. You should not disclose such confidential information to third parties without authorisation

Further information

At all times, AVI will take great care to ensure that your personal information is protected and treated confidentially and in accordance with the Privacy Act. If you believe that we have not dealt with your personal information in a manner that complies with the Privacy Act or if you wish to access personal information that we hold about you or if the information is found to be incorrect and you wish to

request its correction, please write to or email the AVI privacy compliance officer at the following address requesting a form on which to document the matter which you wish to discuss or the information that you would like to access.

All correspondence should be directed to:

Privacy Compliance Officer Australian Volunteers International PO Box 350
Fitzroy VIC 3065

Email: privacy@australianvolunteers.com

» 16. Volunteer Grievance Policy

AVI greatly values our relationship with you. Should you have any concerns relating to your relationship with AVI, we advise you to contact your Country Manager as soon as possible.

If a point of dispute is raised during an AVI assignment, AVI is committed to explore all reasonable avenues for reaching a collaborative resolution wherever possible. However it is recognised that there may be instances when this will not be possible and in such instances the formal grievance procedure outlined in this section will operate.

Procedure

A volunteer or participant who has a grievance arising from AVI programs shall have the right for their grievance to be heard.

In the first instance, the participant must inform their Country Manager of their grievance in writing, who will attempt to address the grievance within 14 working days. If the participant believes that the grievance has not been addressed within this time, he/she must inform their Country Manager and the matter shall be referred to AVI's Regional Managers.

If the matter remains unresolved after a 7 days following referral to the Regional Managers, the matter will be referred to the Senior Manager of International Services at AVI.

If the grievance is still unresolved a further 14 working days from the referral to the Executive Manager, the matter shall be referred to the Chief Executive Officer or his/her nominee, who shall consult with the parties.

» 17. Volunteer Holiday Policy

As part of AVI's duty of care to volunteers while you are on an assignment, AVI's insurance covers you for your assignment and holidays taken during it.

Following a review of AVI's insurance claims history it has become apparent that there have been a small number of volunteers requiring significant assistance while on holidays in locations DFAT either "warn against travelling to" or "advises reconsidering travelling to".

As you can imagine AVI's ability to respond in these locations and the costs of these claims can undermine our ability to support the majority of volunteers. To ensure AVI continues to provide holiday cover for program participants while on assignment, we are introducing a new approach to holiday cover.

The following Volunteer Holiday Travel policy sets out the insurance cover provided by AVI when you take holidays during your assignment and your responsibilities to AVI as a program participant.

1. Scope / Persons Affected

This Policy applies to Volunteers and Approved Accompanying Dependents when on holidays during their assignment. Program participants (volunteers, approved accompanying partners and children) are covered under AVI insurance when undertaking an international assignment.

Partners and children not accompanying a Volunteer on their assignment are not covered by AVI while on holidays with a Volunteer.

2. Principles

AVI recognises and supports program participants to take holidays during their assignments to support a healthy life balance.

AVI needs to appropriately manage risk, provide emergency support and purchase cost effective insurance cover to support the health and safety of program participants during an assignment.

To enable this balance to be appropriately managed, AVI will not provide insurance for program participants holidaying in countries (or regions within countries) which the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) either:

a) warn against travelling to <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/do-not.html>; or

b) advise reconsidering travelling to <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/reconsider.html>.

The key exception to this principle is where program participants take holidays in their assignment country (or the Middle East region) to a location which has the same travel advisory as their assignment location, AVI support mechanisms and program participants are briefed and understand the risk management plan for the country/region.

3. Policy

The object of this Policy is to ensure program participants have a clear understanding of the extent of cover provided while on holiday during an AVI assignment.

Regardless of the assignment location, Program Participants must ask permission for leave from their Host Organisation and AVI Country Manager and provide in writing the location, duration and emergency contact details for the holiday. If travelling to another country, apart from the “Home Country”, AVI advises Program Participants to register with DFAT

<https://www.orao.dfat.gov.au/orao/weborao.nsf/homepage?Openpage>.

Non-Australian program participants are not able to register online with DFAT therefore AVI advises them to register with their “Home Country” high commission for the holiday destination country.

There are several categories of locations volunteers may wish to take their holidays and the following lays out cover available for each of the various scenarios:

Holidays in the country of assignment

Program participants will be subject to the same in-country risk management policies and procedures, and will be covered by AVI insurance to the same extent, as when working in their placement.

Holidays in the “Home Country” Due to cost and legal considerations AVI insurance does not cover program participants for incidents that occur when on holiday in your “Home Country”. For most program participants this will be Australia.

Holidays in another country

As mentioned above, AVI will no longer provide cover for program participants taking holidays in locations DFAT either warns against, or recommends not travelling to, at the commencement of the holiday (see 4. Principles). If program participants choose to holiday in such a location, AVI will not provide insurance or emergency support. AVI strongly recommends program participants purchase their own insurance cover, at their own expense, if electing to holiday in such locations.

Program participants are covered for holidays in locations where DFAT does not warn against, or recommend not travelling to, however should be aware that AVI will not be able to provide the same level of support and informed advice for locations where AVI does not have a program.

Program participants will be covered if the security situation in the country changes during their holiday and DFAT revises its advice to either warn against, or recommend not travelling to, the country.

Exceptions

Holidays in the Middle East region:

Program participants in the Middle East regional program may holiday in Lebanon as AVI has established a regional support mechanism. Program participants will be subject to the same regional risk management policies and procedures, and will be covered by AVI insurance to the same extent, as when working in their placement.

Holidays for Timor Leste Program Participants to Indonesia:

Program participants in East Timor may holiday in Indonesia as AVI recognises the proximity to Indonesian holiday locations popular with Australians ie. Bali. Program participants will therefore be covered by AVI insurance to the same extent, as when working in their placement.

4. Definitions

Home Country:

The country to which the program participant is to returned at the end of the assignment for AVI insurance purposes

5. Responsibilities

Program participants must ask permission for leave from their Host Organisation and AVI Country Manager and once approved, provide in writing the location, duration and emergency contact details for the holiday.

Program participants without access to email will need to call or text holiday details to AVI.

It is the responsibility of the program participants to research the safety and security issues pertaining to their holiday destination, to mitigate any risks identified and purchase additional insurance if required.

AVI will keep program participants informed of any changes to this policy and the procedures associated with its implementation.

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Fitzroy Victoria 3065, Australia

Tel +61 3 9279 1788

Fax +61 3 9419 4280

Email info@australianvolunteers.com

www.australianvolunteers.com

EMERGENCIES

ACE Assistance (24 hours)

Tel: +61 2 8907 5995 (reverse charges accepted)

SMS: +61 408 971 729 (include name and call-back details)

Email: help@customercare.com.au

Quote policy number: 02PP014769

Response Psychological Services (all hours)

Tel: 1300 854 053 (Australia local freecall)

Tel: +61 3 9016 0400 (International)

Email: response@responsepsychological.com

Skype: responsepsychological