

2025 VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Thank you for your interest in joining the Auckland Writers Festival | Waituhi o Tāmaki Volunteer Team.

Our 150+ volunteers play a critical part in helping us to deliver our Festival programme - over 200 events across six days. You fill 20 different roles across the Festival structure. We could not do it without you! AWF is a hugely popular Festival celebrating books, literature, and storytelling in all its forms. It is the largest attended book festival in Australasia per capita and considered by our loyal attendees and writers as one of the most inviting and inspiring festivals to be part of. This is due in part to the commitment and enthusiasm of our wonderful volunteer team. We look forward to another fun-filled Festival season and hope you will enjoy your time as a volunteer in 2025.

This document contains the following information:

1. Benefits of volunteering for AWF (page 1)
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Appendix 1. Volunteer Code of Conduct

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING FOR AWF

- New volunteers will be given an AWF T-shirt. (If your 2022, 2023 or 2024 T-shirt is in presentable condition and can be worn again, please re-use. None of our T-shirts have the year printed on them).
- You will be given a name badge or lanyard that gives you access to General Events, and you can collect your lanyard at the information desk during the Festival.
- When you are **not** working on your shift you are welcome to attend Festival general sessions if it is not a sold-out event. (Sorry, this does not include catered events, Gala Night, or Masterclasses). If there is something that is popular and may sell out, we advise buying a ticket. The Festival is happy to advise in advance about events that we expect to sell out. When you are attending an event, please wait until just before the session commences and then take a seat and note that you will need to give up your seat should an usher or volunteer on duty require it for a paying audience member.

- We provide refreshments and snacks in the Volunteers' Green Room. Tea, coffee, and filtered water are always available for your breaks. We ask you to have a meal before you arrive and bring your own lunch and snacks if you have specific requirements. There are food trucks nearby and a cafe onsite if you wish to buy lunch or dinner. Full lunches and dinners are not catered for.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A VOLUNTEER

- The Aotea Centre is a vast space with lots of stairs. We do require volunteers to have a reasonable level of fitness, to manage stairs, and be able to walk about and stand. Also, we do sometimes ask for materials to be carried or moved, so light lifting is sometimes involved. If you are unsure if you are 'volunteer fit' or have some restrictions, please advise this in the appropriate space in the application form – we will do our best to accommodate you but have a limited number of shifts.
- Please report to the Information Desk when you arrive for your shift to sign-in. Your rostered start time is your arrival time. Your start time includes time to sign in, drop your bag in the Volunteer Green Room, learn of any changes or updates, and get to your role location, plus some overlap time with the former shift. Those working at offsite venues should go directly to the offsite venue and report to the Festival staff member on duty. (Aotea Square volunteers, check-in as normal).
- Please ensure you are wearing your lanyard and Festival T-shirt on every shift for which you are rostered. Please do not wear your T-shirt when you are not rostered. Wear warm layers underneath your T-shirt on colder days.
- We require a minimum of three shifts throughout the Festival, so flexibility with roles you may like to choose, and your availability is very much appreciated. Also, we require most volunteers to do at least one of their shifts over the busy days and/or evenings, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- Please monitor your own breaks. There is always time when the sessions are in progress to have a break. Ensure your station/task is adequately covered and inform a fellow volunteer you are taking a break and the length of that break. There is a Volunteers' Green Room. Tea, coffee, water, and snacks are available.
- Please note that the Writers Lounge is a space exclusively for writers and their publicists to relax and plan for their events, and we would ask you to respect their privacy by not entering this space. Thank you.
- If you are not able to complete a shift due to illness or an unexpected event, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know as soon as you can and no later than 3 hours prior to your shift. Text or phone Vicki on 021 960690 to ensure that the message gets through. (No emails on the day please).
- Have a copy of the Festival Programme with you and familiarise yourself with the events you are working on. Any late changes to the programme will be marked on the timetable posters beside the Information Desk and behind the additional TM ticket desks in the main Foyer on Level 3.
- If you are not on duty, please do not visit any backstage area.

- In an emergency, follow the instructions of Auckland Live staff.
- Should any audience members ask you questions about the Programme which you do not feel confident answering, please direct them to the Information Desk on Level Two.
- Leave your personal belongings in the Volunteers' Green Room, but please do not bring anything of value.
- Please ensure that your mobile phone is set to vibrate whilst you are working.
- Noise is a challenge at the festival. If you are aware of anyone outside the auditoriums making noise that can be heard from inside, please politely ask them to be quiet or move away from the room.
- You must take reasonable care of your own safety and ensure your actions (or inactions) do not cause harm to others. Look out for yourself, look out for your fellow volunteers and workers, and watch out for others.

Report any of the following to your volunteer coordinator Vicki Angland

- Anything that is or looks unsafe - anything that could or has caused serious damage or harm.
- All accidents & incidents.
- If you feel uncomfortable doing any task for any reason.
- If you are not feeling 100% for any reason.

VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

These are descriptions of each role that is available during the festival. Please read carefully, to understand which role you feel you are suited for, and will enjoy 😊

Information Desk

You are the public face of the Festival and a key operations point for all Festival visitors. This role will require patience, friendliness and the ability to problem solve and needs exceptional customer service skills.

- Meeting and greeting Festival attendees and directing them to the various venues within the Aotea Centre.
- Assist with the distribution of all Festival lanyards and tickets.
- Meeting and greeting writers, sponsors, and patrons and directing them to the appropriate venues.
- Update the Information Desk whiteboard with any changes, info as provided by the AWF team.
- Restocking programmes in the wire baskets throughout the venue
- Helping position sponsor signage outside sponsored sessions and moving marketing collateral.
- Other tasks will be briefed each day but please allow help requests to crop up at any time.
- During quieter periods, enter data from the postcard survey.
- Encourage visitors to complete the postcard survey.

Notes:

1. We also have an information podium by the main doors and at busy times have two 'mobile information' volunteers stationed there. (We will roster you to either Level 2 or Main Doors).
2. We give you a tour of the venue during the volunteer briefing, but we ask you walk around the venue front of house on all levels (and get shown around backstage) enough times until you are familiar with it, before your first shift begins.

Front of House & Book Signing Assistant

You are the public face of the Festival. This role is outside the theatre and event rooms doors. Your main task involves meeting and greeting attendees as they arrive and enter, or queue up, for their next event, and then helping with book signing by the writer after the event.

- You will often be directing people to the correct theatre or room, or door level according to their tickets.
- You will be positioned in front of entrance doors to each theatre or room and will be 'in position' 15 minutes before each session, and sometimes earlier for the larger and fully booked sessions.
- You will help with orderly queue formation if needed.
- Once the session has begun, check with the info desk, and if no other help is required and if there are seats available, you may attend part of a session in progress, or take your break.
- Come out of the session five minutes before the session is finished as you will need to help with the book signing queues by getting attendees to write their names on post-it notes prior to meeting the author.
- You will have 15 minutes to help with book signing before being back at your door 15 minutes before the start of the next session. (There are 30 minutes between sessions).
- You'll be supported in this role by the Book Signing Lead volunteer and your Venue Lead Volunteer.

Venue Assistant

This role involves being helpful and welcoming to all Festival attendees. Your role is inside the theatres and event rooms.

- Working alongside ushers from Auckland Live, you will guide attendees, sponsors, Festival Patrons, and other VIPs to their designated seating
- You are responsible (with info from the AWF team) to place and remove reserved seating signs. In the busy sessions the AWF team will also help to ensure Patrons and lanyard holders are seated.
- To ensure the schedule runs smoothly, you will direct audience members to their seats

before the session and assist with their exit from these venues in a timely manner.

- At times when the session is very busy or sold out, AWF team and staff will help with this role, and instead you will be asked to help manage the entry queues or the book signing event in the foyer.
- During the session, please check with the info desk if any other help is required. If not, and if there are seats available, you may attend part of a session in progress or take your break. Be back inside your room to assist with the timely exit of all attendees.
- An important part of the Venue Assistance role is to ensure that the postcard survey is completed and collected – particularly during the free and unticketed sessions.
- Also, when the session is free, this role involves obtaining the room count from Auckland Live staff.

Book Signing Lead

This is an exciting new role and will require someone who can be kind but firm, managing queues and looking after the writers while they sign books after their sessions.

- You will ensure that the book signing desk is always tidy, clean and ready for the next book signing, including writer's name plates, 2 x pens for each author, post-its and pens for volunteers, water and clean glasses.
- You will manage the queues at your signing desk in an orderly process as Festival attendees line up to get books signed by the writers. The queue often begins before their session ends.
- Keep the front of the queue well back from the signing table.
- The authors will often be with their publishers/publicists, and at very busy signings AWF staff members might also be present. These are the only people who should be behind the book signing table.
- You will be responsible for making sure they have everything they need. Sometimes book signings go on for more than an hour. Writers may need other drinks, coffee, or food.
- Just prior to the signing, check with the publicist or writer what they are comfortable with, e.g. some don't want photos, or to get too close, some don't mind. Also, ascertain whether they are happy to sign other items other than copies of their book. (This can cause huge queues, especially on the school days).
- As attendees get to the front of the queue, check they have their names on the post-it and page open of their book, to expedite the process. Usher attendees toward the writer when it's their turn.
- The author will usually arrive within 5 minutes after their session ends for the book signing. Front of House volunteers and Venue Lead volunteer will help with getting all attendee names on post-it notes.
- You will need to prepare the book signing area for the next writer or writers immediately after each signing finishes.
- During the sessions you can take a break or watch part of a session, but you must be ready and 'in position' 15 minutes before the session ends.

Venue Lead

This is a new role created for experienced volunteers only. This role requires a complete understanding of how the sessions unfold throughout the whole day. You'll need to be a calm, confident speaker and have a positive personality!

- Your role is to oversee the flow of sessions and volunteers at one of the theatres/room areas (KTK, Hunua or LL/Waitakere).
- A full briefing will be given to you each morning by the volunteer coordinator, and you'll be responsible for briefing the front of house and venue assistants for your area at the beginning of each day and subsequent shift changes of volunteers during the day.
- You'll complete all your three required shifts in one day, so it's not for the fainthearted - A long but rewarding day 😊
- You'll look after the needs and questions of volunteers and attendees in your area for the whole day, taking plenty of breaks during the sessions, and liaising with the volunteer coordinator with all issues arising.
- You'll be working alongside the Auckland Live staff to understand their protocols for each space, especially around queuing.
- You'll help manage the reservation signs with the AWF team and your venue assistants and may help with sponsor signage in your area for the sponsored sessions.
- You'll help with the book signing queue management alongside the book signing lead volunteer and front of house volunteers.

Runner/Writers Escort

This is a highly active role, and you will play a vital part in the 'behind the scenes' operations of the Festival.

- You will meet writers at the AWF Information Desk or in the backstage area and escort them to the Stage Manager's office.
- Your role is overseen by the stage manager, so your pre-shift briefing with them.
- You will take writers to their appropriate room/venue on time and collect the author at the end of the session and take them to the signing table.
- You will ensure that the whereabouts of writers is known and that they are prepared for their sessions and book signings by being in the right place at the right time.
- This role is attached to each event space, you will be either Runner Hunua, Runner Waitakere, or Info Desk Runner. (Info Desk runner helps writers performing at Kiri Te Kanawa or Herald theatre go from the info desk on Level 2 to stage managers office).
- Details of each day's movements will be provided on the day by the stage manager.

Stage Manager Assistant

A pivotal role requiring careful focus, good organisational and troubleshooting skills and the ability to think ahead.

- Working closely with the Stage Manager, you will help with the smooth delivery of Festival sessions, workshops, performances, and any other Festival-related presentations at the festival venues.
- Your role is overseen by the stage manager and your pre-shift briefing is with them.

Workshop Assistant (Waihorotiu Room)

The Waihorotiu Room is used for Workshops. (Masterclasses). This is a key role to ensure that workshops run smoothly.

- You will ensure the writer taking the workshop has everything they need.
- You will be responsible for laying out any materials that have been provided and setting up the room if there are any special instructions.
- You will also gather feedback from participants on survey sheets.
- Between sessions, you will reset the room if furniture has been moved and ensure the room and adjacent spaces are clean and tidy.

Kōrero Corner Assistant

This is a key role to ensure this informal space runs smoothly

- Ensure that the writer speaking has everything they need.
- You will welcome and encourage participants to join, find seats and enjoy these free, bite-size sessions.
- Between sessions, you will reset the room if furniture has been moved and ensure the room and adjacent spaces are clean and tidy.
- You will do a head count of numbers to ensure that we can record attendance.
- This is a less formal space you may also need to manage noise in the venue.
- An important part of the Kōrero Corner Assistant role is to encourage completion and collection of the postcard survey.

Floater

Floater are especially important – they are often asked to assist **multiple** teams and perform a variety of tasks throughout a shift.

- Helping when there is an unexpected surge in crowds.
- Replacing another volunteer when they get called away.
- Help when a crucial task for AWF staff needs doing very quickly.
- Offer assistance anywhere, to anyone, and so provide much needed support at challenging times.
- You will work alongside the Volunteer Coordinator.

Note: this is not a 'spare' position, but rather, one that is quite crucial to the smooth operation of our team!

Caterer Assistant

This is a fun role for anyone who loves food and caring for food spaces and has a good sense of direction. This is a very active role.

- The Caterer Assistant will be responsible for helping the caterer to deliver and top up food in the Patrons' Lounge, Writers' Lounge, Volunteer green room and other green rooms as required.
- Ensure you top up food between sessions, to avoid the crowded foyer areas.
- You will be responsible for making sure the Patrons Lounge and Writers Lounge are tidy if there isn't an attendant on shift.
- Keep the Volunteer Green room tidy and help with dishes and wiping surfaces in those spaces.
- You will be responsible for topping up volunteer green room snacks after shift changes and may even pop over to the supermarket if we need anything.

Patrons' Lounge Attendant: Festival Patrons (private donors who have made significant financial contributions to the Festival), Sponsors (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) and participants have access to a Patrons' Lounge in the Circle Bar. The Lounge will be used by Patrons and guests as a place to relax and enjoy free refreshments between sessions. Your role is to manage access and to offer assistance to Patrons, Sponsors, and participants.

Writers' Lounge Attendant: The Writers' Lounge is a relaxing spot for Writers and Chairs to drop in and out of on the day of their events. It is also available to their publicists on the day of the writer's event. Your role is to be the welcoming face of the Festival to all our participants, keeping the space tidy and attractive, answer any questions including directing writers to the information desk if necessary or contacting the relevant team member for further information, managing the drink station (there will be some alcohol available from 3pm), and work with the caterer to keep food area fresh and clean. Lounge hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9am – 3.30pm and Friday, Saturday, Sunday 9am – 6pm.

Pukapuka Adventures Assistant: (Family Day)

Pukapuka Adventures features magical, free sessions for under-10s, it will be a high energy and fun-filled day. Volunteers need to be patient, proactive and have boundless energy. And love children!

- Ensure that all families feel welcome in the space, so volunteers greet everyone with a warm smile.
- The assistants for these events will help to usher and welcome families, and guide children on activities where necessary.
- Help with general information requests

- Assist with the set up and tidying up of the venue at the beginning and end of the day.
- Like our other venues, your role will be either as a venue assistant or helping front of house and book signing, all on this wonderful Level 5 space.
- An important part of the PukaPuka Adventures Assistant role is to encourage completion and collection of the postcard survey.

Schools Programme

During Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of Festival week, we run the Schools Programme with more than 6000 schoolchildren attending over 3 days. The programme features fantastic writers from Aotearoa New Zealand and around the globe. These exciting artists help students unlock their creativity and curiosity, across a variety of forms and styles. All the roles above are available during the Schools Programme, with the same responsibilities. The days are shorter, so shifts cover the full day from 8.30/9am to 2.30/3pm. Please bring your own lunch, there is plenty of break time during the day while the sessions are in progress.

Some sessions have specific requirements, e.g. before each session on the Upper Primary day, volunteers will need to place one of the free books on every seat in the Hunua Room. These are for the children to keep. Guidance for each event will be given on the day.

OFFSITE VENUES

Streetside: Britomart Assistant: The Atrium on Takutai and Takutai Square will be an unofficial starting point for STREETSIDE. STREETSIDE will take place on Friday 9 May this year, so a week earlier than usual. Volunteers will either be an 'Info Volunteer' or a 'Venue Volunteer.' Info Volunteers will be handing out STREETSIDE maps to introduce the public to STREETSIDE, answering questions about the events, directing audience to the multiple venues, and helping draw in the crowds. The 'Venue Volunteer' will be welcoming people into venues, checking capacity, managing audience flow, answering questions about the event, and helping draw in crowd (for public installations). Each venue has an MC to manage the artists and performers, who you will work alongside. Particular venues will have some other specific requirements, like looking after books or material provided by AWF inside the venue. You will be given a full briefing and assigned roles when you arrive for your shift at Britomart.

Aotea Square Activities volunteer: We hope to have extra square activities this year, and more details to follow on that soon. This is diverse role for volunteers who enjoy families and children, looking after some family related activities in Aotea Square, just outside of the venue. There may be a mix of adult programme activities as well. You will be fully briefed on the requirements of the role before your shift and supported by the AWF team.

Pre/Post-Festival roles: A variety of roles outlined below. Office assistant, Distribution and pack-in/pack-out shifts do count toward your three-shift minimum 😊

Festival Office Assistants:

- Preparing lanyards for writers, guests, volunteers, and staff
- Compiling writer and Patron information packs
- Preparing materials for PukaPuka Family Day activity tables
- Survey data entry post festival

Distribution Assistants:

Helping distribute Streetside: Britomart flyers in the central city and Schools Programme and other Festival information to various locations throughout Auckland. Some of these roles require use of your own vehicle, collection of materials from the city, and distribution on particular days. We really appreciate your help with this role.

Pack-in and Pack-out Help:

This includes lifting boxes in and out of the venue and vehicles. The day before the Festival begins, we pack-in and you will be assisting the AWF production team with preparing the Aotea Centre. You will be placing the book giveaways for schools in the relevant theatres, setting up the display boards and banners, unloading equipment from the production van and generally moving things around (i.e., lifting boxes of books). On the final day of the Festival, in the afternoon, you will be packing things up and loading the production van or trolleys to help clear out the venue.

Appendix 1: VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Expected behaviours:

- Volunteers should demonstrate manaakitanga showing kindness, respect, humility, and hospitality when welcoming our visitors and assisting them
- Be kind, be patient, be considerate
- Be mindful of cultural differences
- Be present at agreed times and give as much notice as possible if you are unable to volunteer
- Carry out all duties and responsibilities in a safe, efficient, and competent way
- Respect all our participants, our sponsors, the staff, and Trustees, as well as each other
- Respect the backstage area is a 'sacred space' for our people to relax. Approaches for photographs or book signings **are not allowed** in this space.
- Maintain the confidentiality of any information obtained while volunteering including their personal contact details
- Do not consume alcohol when on duty (at end of shift it is ok but please do not wear your AWF t-shirt)
- Have a charged phone and be always contactable during your shift - phone on vibrate mode or low volume to answer any urgent WhatsApp notifications during your shift
- Observe safety procedures including:
 - Notify the AWF team and/or venue staff about hazards or potential hazards
 - Notify AWF team and/or venue staff about any accident or incident, or any threatening or suspicious behaviour
 - Comply with NZ laws

Do not hesitate to ask an AWF team member or an Auckland Live team member for help. It is important to seek advice if you are unsure about anything.

Volunteers will not:

- Create any liability for our organisation
- Act in a way that may bring our organisation into disrepute (including use of email, social media, and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.)
- Engage in any activity that may or causes physical or mental harm of another person (such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, assault, sexual harassment, bullying, undermining safety of yourself and others)
- Be affected by alcohol, medication, or non-prescription drugs while volunteering
- Provide a false or misleading statement, declaration, or claim

Any breach of this code of conduct will result in either a warning, or immediately being asked to cease your volunteer role, return of lanyard, and being escorted from the venue.

Note: this has never happened, our volunteers are mostly wonderful, friendly, thoughtful people 😊

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR READING! IF YOU WANT TO APPLY TO BE A VOLUNTEER, PLEASE
[CLICK HERE](#) TO FILL IN THE FORM**