



## INFO FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

Welcome to the warmth of our fire and the depth of our community. Thanks for considering volunteering for us! Please read through this information in order to gauge whether this opportunity may be of interest to you.

*“The local and extended network thrives through the huge gift of time and talents that keep us growing and nourishing one another and the environment we serve. We are at times able to offer volunteering opportunities for those wishing to enrich their spiritual practice through service.” ~ Judi Taylor, Secretary of Campfire in the Heart*

One of our dear and frequent volunteers, Fran Pegrem (pictured below on left with Nicola, our manager), said in an article about volunteering at Campfire in 2023 that “So many ... experiences of welcome and community punctuated my time there, but the enduring memory is of the deep silence, the birds, the magnificent skies, sunrises and sunsets, campfires, spending time in meditation, listening to people and the country. I had a real sense of freedom and joy being there.” You can read more [here](#).



## Our Vision Statement

Campfire in the Heart is a sacred place of retreat grounded in the contemplative Christian tradition and the world’s wisdom teachings. In the spirit of love the Campfire community welcomes all who come ... Our relationships with staff, volunteers and those we serve, are guided by our Vision:

Campfire desires to be:

### **A space that nurtures**

- Presence to Land and Spirit,
- Attention to the creative tensions unfolding into the new
- Openness to healing and reconciliation
- Transformation in depth and breadth

### **Grounded in Contemplative Practice through**

- Silence and simplicity
- Prayer and meditation
- A desert spirituality of deep listening
- Affiliation with The World Community for Christian Meditation

## A curious, inquiring community

- Intentional and service oriented
- Inclusive, Christian ecumenical
- Hospitality to all who come.

## Spiritual Offerings

Campfire in the Heart is a place that welcomes people from different traditions dedicated to spiritual awakening through the practice of regular meditation and prayer. The retreat centre has long practised meditation in the tradition recovered by John Main, and Laurence Freeman, both Benedictine monks and shared globally by [The World Community for Christian Meditation \(WCCM\)](#).

The Campfire Volunteer Program offers people a chance to make meditation a part of their daily life and make new friends who share their interest. When we serve together with a willing and joyful attitude we benefit the most from this program and develop spiritually. For this reason, we encourage participants in this program to attend in person weekly events that are offered - [Monday evening meditation and Campfire Reflection & Pot Luck Dinner on Wednesday evenings](#) - and perhaps some of the [Online Offerings sessions](#) each weekday morning (morning prayer and meditation).



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### I am not of the Christian faith. Could that be an issue?

Campfire in the Heart is a Christian contemplative community open to all people of goodwill regardless of their faith, sexuality or way of life.

### What can I expect from volunteering at CIH?

We hope your stay will be mutually beneficial and ask you to:

- provide service for three hours per day (5 days volunteering in 7 days is preferred, a maximum of 15 hours in any 7 days) in exchange for accommodation and being part of the life of the place together with the resident community.
- keep your living area tidy and clean up after yourself

- provide a current [NT Working With Children Clearance](#) (Ochre Card), or have applied for the card



## What do you expect from me?

In return, we will:

- provide you with an orientation to the goals, activities and charism/ethos of Campfire including the Campfire Vision Statement
- provide an orientation to the Campfire site including first aid, and a mechanism for reporting any incidents that may occur especially those representing a risk to people and property
- include you in the whole routine of our property
- treat you with respect, consideration and patience, and be available to you whenever possible
- offer flexible hours which allow you to have free days
- offer the experience in prayer/meditation in the spirit of Campfire
- provide clean, comfortable accommodation
- provide a variety of tasks, even if very basic, wherever possible working alongside you for companionship and to facilitate learning opportunities
- provide cleaning supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure your safety while doing any work that requires it
- demonstrate how tools and equipment work to avoid breakages and injuries & ensure you fully understand safety precautions & procedures
- document any OH&S issues that occur in relation to your role
- check in with you regularly, at least on alternate days, to debrief and check-in regarding possible (mutual) issues and concerns especially OH&S, volunteer satisfaction and any modifications needed; and will offer feedback, encouragement and support.

## What would a day of volunteering look like?

Volunteering at Campfire will involve a variety of different activities. Tasks might involve:

- Housekeeping (making beds; cleaning bathrooms, caravans & cabins; sweeping, vacuuming & mopping; taking rubbish out; cleaning windows; replacing supplies etc) - there will be a simple checklist for you to follow. You will sometimes work with others, but should be willing and comfortable to be on your own, and work and go about your day independently.
- Helping with washing bed linen and towels, hanging it out on the clothesline, then taking it off and folding it
- Helping with gardening and around the grounds
- Attending to meal preparation and washing up
- Participating in special projects, as and when needed

If a retreat is on while you are here, the retreatants may be in silence at times, so please bear that in mind. Please let us know if you are interested in any particular retreat in our [calendar](#), as you may be able to join, ideally arriving a few days before the retreat and staying on afterwards to assist with clean-up and preparing for next guests.



*Maybe you could even be a model for a day, like these volunteers were in May 2024!*

## How long should I stay?

We ask volunteers to commit for minimum of two weeks.

## Where would I stay, and what facilities would my accommodation have?

You could stay in:

- **One of our three onsite caravans** - All are simple, bright, clean and comfortable, and have bed linen, pillows, towels (bath, hand & tea), cutlery, crockery, glasses, cups, mugs and a kettle with tea and coffee. Some will have a small bar fridge and a microwave. In winter, there'll be hot water bottles available and in summer, there'll be fans. There is access to free wi-fi, no televisions however



- **Your own caravan/campervan/motorhome** - There might be space for you to set up in your vehicle for the duration of your stay. You could plug into our 240V power supply and you'd have access to a tap for water in your vehicle.



## What about facilities on the property?

Please note that bathrooms are shared, unisex and you'll walk along paths that are partially lit, so using a torch at night to access them. There will be bath towels available for your use, and face washers on request.

Other shared spaces on the property to enjoy include a contemplative labyrinth (a replica of the well-known medieval labyrinth laid in stone on the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France - more info [here](#)), barbecue, washing machine & clothesline, green lawns and a swimming pool. You can also help yourself to our comprehensive library that has many spiritual and religious books, as well as biographies and general interest books, and a few board games.



We invite all who are on the site to be mindful of water and power use, especially as water is a precious resource and overuse or wastage of water and power is costly.

Campfire is generally a quiet place, respecting the sacredness of the land and allowing residents and guests to enjoy an atmosphere of contemplation. If you are seeking a highly social 'party' atmosphere, this may not be the right place.

## How can I get food and supplies for my stay?

There are [Coles](#) and [Woolworths](#) major supermarkets in the CBD, which is 7 km away (10 min by car), they will deliver, for an extra charge. You may like to order the groceries you need for your stay online several days before arrival and have them delivered on your day of arrival. There are also a few smaller Aboriginal-owned IGA supermarkets in the suburbs of Gillen, Eastside, Northside and Larapinta.

There are two health food shops in town - [Afghan Traders Wholefoods](#) in 10 Smith Street, Ciccone, and [Go Vita](#) at Shop 35, 36 Todd Mall.

Online food ordering services such as [Door Dash](#), [Uber Eats](#) and [Menulog](#) also many local restaurants.

If you're feeling energetic and the weather permits, there's a [Pie Face outlet & United Petroleum service station](#) at 70 Palm Circuit, approximately a 30-minute walk one way (4 km round trip) from Campfire and has basic supplies and hot pies. And nearby that is the [Alice Springs Brewing Company](#) that not only brews local beers, but makes delicious pizzas, burgers and other meals, and will deliver to Campfire some nights of the week.

Don't forget there are barbecues on the property!

## What should I bring?

Please pack your personal toiletries, medication, reading material, chargers and other personal items. A head torch can be useful when walking around the property at night and headphones can be courteous to wear if you wish to listen to music/podcasts/radio when others are around.

Please know that the dry, arid environment can be very dehydrating, so we suggest you also pack a large water bottle, moisturiser and lip balm. The wind can stir up dust and pollens, which may affect those susceptible to hay fever, so bring medications if you think you may be affected.

With regard to clothing, it depends on the time of year you visit as temperatures in the desert can vastly fluctuate. If you're visiting in winter, temperatures can be mild during the day and reach below zero overnight. We suggest bringing beanies, scarves, gloves, thermal undergarments, thick socks, boots and warm jackets. Clothes that can be layered are ideal to remove as the day warms up. During summer, temperatures can reach the mid to high 40s during the day, so we'd suggest packing your swimsuit, clothing in natural fabrics and open toe shoes. A cooling neck wrap/towel can also be handy.

As some of your work will likely be inside a kitchen, you'll need to wear a pair of closed toe shoes for safety.

At all times of the year, we recommend you bring a wide brimmed hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, good walking shoes, a fly veil/net and swimmers. A trekking pole can be helpful if you are unsteady on rocky ground as there are some great walking tracks out the back of the property up to the base of the magical Tjoritja/East MacDonnell Ranges.



## Can I bring my dog?

We love dogs at Campfire, however just like humans, we need to make sure your pooch will be the right fit, so we'd need to chat with you first. Retreatants, guests and visitors come here for peace, prayer and meditation (including periods of silence), the property is situated on a Land for Wildlife bush block (that aims to create biodiverse habitats and regenerate wildlife habitat) and is also home to Bluey, a cute and friendly male Cavoodle.



## Are there many animals on the property to be aware of?

As we are situated on a designated Land for Wildlife block that backs onto a vast area of bushland, you will see a wonderful array of native birds, lizards, butterflies, moths and other creatures and critters. There have been spiders and snakes seen on the block, (snakes mostly during warmer months) - if you perchance see one, don't panic, simply back away and leave it be. There can be flies, mosquitoes and other insects, so bring personal insect repellent and don't forget to pack a fly veil!



*This was a late arrival for a Writing Retreat in October 2023, but at least he brought his own quills!*

## Is there any other info I should know?

During times of certain retreats, the participants will be entering periods of silence. Please be mindful at these times and at all times, keep your voice low and play music through headphones.

## I still have some questions about the volunteer program. What's the best way to contact you?

Feel free to email us on [campfirewelcome@gmail.com](mailto:campfirewelcome@gmail.com).

## I'd like to apply! How can I do that?

Great! Please fill in [our application form](#).