

Emergency management volunteering

More than just words

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Project co-leads

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Overall project aims

1. Reframe and reimagine emergency management volunteering challenges and opportunities differently to the past to reveal new kinds of solutions.
2. Identify and undertake action research that supports volunteers and organisations to broaden their horizons in ways that influence the sector to invest in new, innovative, and sustainable approaches.
3. Develops and refines a **National Emergency Volunteer Sustainability Blueprint** and action plan as a living document that supports emergency management volunteers (the people), volunteering (the activities) and volunteerism (the culture).



Research team

- Roger Jones (VU) – co-lead, systems, risk, economics
- Celeste Young (VU) – co-lead, inside-out decision-making, risk, framework development
- Kara Dadswell (VU) – psychology, the individual experience
- Daniel Ooi (VU) – sociology, the community experience
- Nada El-Masri (VU – ex CFA) – end-user experience, diversity and inclusion, project support
- Steve Cameron (Bloc consulting) – community volunteerism, technical advice



Project management team

- Blythe McLennan, NHRA project manager
- Trina Schmidt, NSW RFS
- Sandra Lunardi, AFAC
- Andrew Coghlan, Australian Red Cross
- Celeste Young (VU)
- Roger Jones (VU)

- A working group of the most engaged participants will also be convened



Phase 1 - Design

The blueprint will provide guidance for volunteer-involving organisations in the emergency management sector, and the sector as a whole, to make changes to improve the sustainability of emergency management volunteering into the future.

Phase 1 will provide a conceptual foundation for the project, as well as identify and design the work to be undertaken in Phase 2.

Project length is 8 months.



Key research questions

1. What are the major gaps that need to be addressed in order to provide better support for volunteering in the EMS?
2. What opportunities are there for new investment or modest reallocation of resources to provide increased benefits to individuals, organisations and communities?



Project tasks

1. **Literature review:** this will pull together all the different threads currently identified, then spread the net wider to identify jumping off points for future opportunities.
2. **Scenario decision making workshop:** we will devise a set of problem–solution oriented scenarios to dig deeper into the broader barriers and opportunities for the sector identified in the lit review.
3. **Decision making framework:** research, workshop and mapping will be used to develop an overarching framework that supports the blueprint and action plan.
4. **Action plan:** this will define the blueprint and roadmap for Phase 2. Extensive review will ensure wide input from the sector.
5. **Final workshop:** opportunity for fine-tuning and endorsement.



Focus areas for review

1. The individual experience
2. Community and society
3. Organisations and the volunteer workforce
4. Institutions and governance



Work to date

Previous projects from the BNHCRC undertaken by RMIT and Curtin Uni produced a rich array of work, including co-designed scenarios for future volunteering.

This was supported by a number of graduate student projects.

The urgency and importance of the issue is widely recognised by the sector

BUT

It has been an issue since at least the 1980s. Despite the widespread goodwill and interest, decline in volunteer numbers may have slowed, but has not been reversed.



Delphi results from 2030 scenarios workshop

Important trends

17 Important
7 Somewhat Important

Contributing uncertainties

19 Important
1 Somewhat Important
6 High



National Volunteering Strategy Objectives

Equity and Fairness

- 1.1 Focus on the Volunteer Experience
- 1.2 Make Volunteering Inclusive and Accessible
- 1.3 Ensure Volunteering is Not Exploitative

Community and Society

- 2.1 Diversify the Understanding of Volunteering
- 2.2 Reshape the Public Perception of Volunteering
- 2.3 Recognise the Inherent Value of Volunteering
- 2.4 Enable a Community-Led Approach

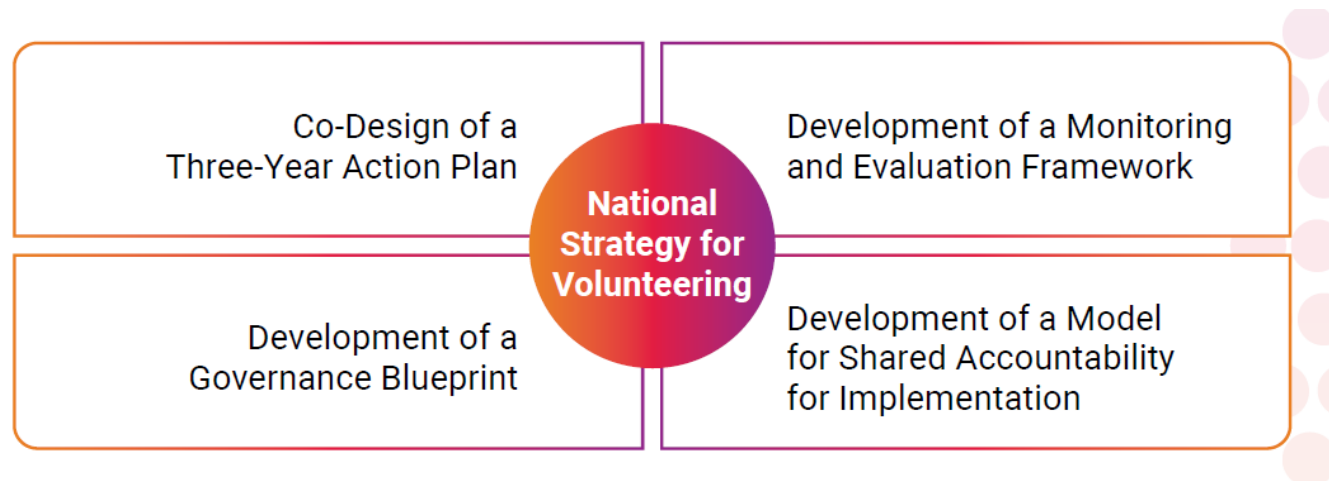
Governance

- 3.1 Make Volunteering a Cross-Portfolio Issue in Government
- 3.2 Build Strong Leadership and Shared Accountability
- 3.3 Commit to Strategic Investment
- 3.4 Recognise the Importance of Volunteer Management



Parallels between the National Strategy and Emergency Services

- Identification of a volunteering ecosystem
 - What does the volunteering ecosystem in the emergency services look like and what is its relationship with the national ecosystem? (Strengths, weaknesses, challenges)
- Establishment phase and blueprint



The challenge

The combination of:

- many important trends and uncertainties,
- distributed responsibilities and accountabilities,
- multi-layered governance systems; and
- varying leadership styles

has resulted in a stalemate with two choices:

1. Put up with an unsatisfactory situation that everyone is familiar with
2. Step into the unknown and unfamiliar for uncertain reward

The blueprint will be a guide to explore the unknown, test the unfamiliar and taste the rewards.

Please join us.



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