The Emergency Management Sustainable Volunteering Blueprint



This is a time of opportunity for emergency management (EM) volunteering to reframe and envision challenges to create effective solutions to workforce that achieve a sustainable and inclusive EM volunteering sector where volunteers are empowered, appreciated and valued.

THE CONTEXT

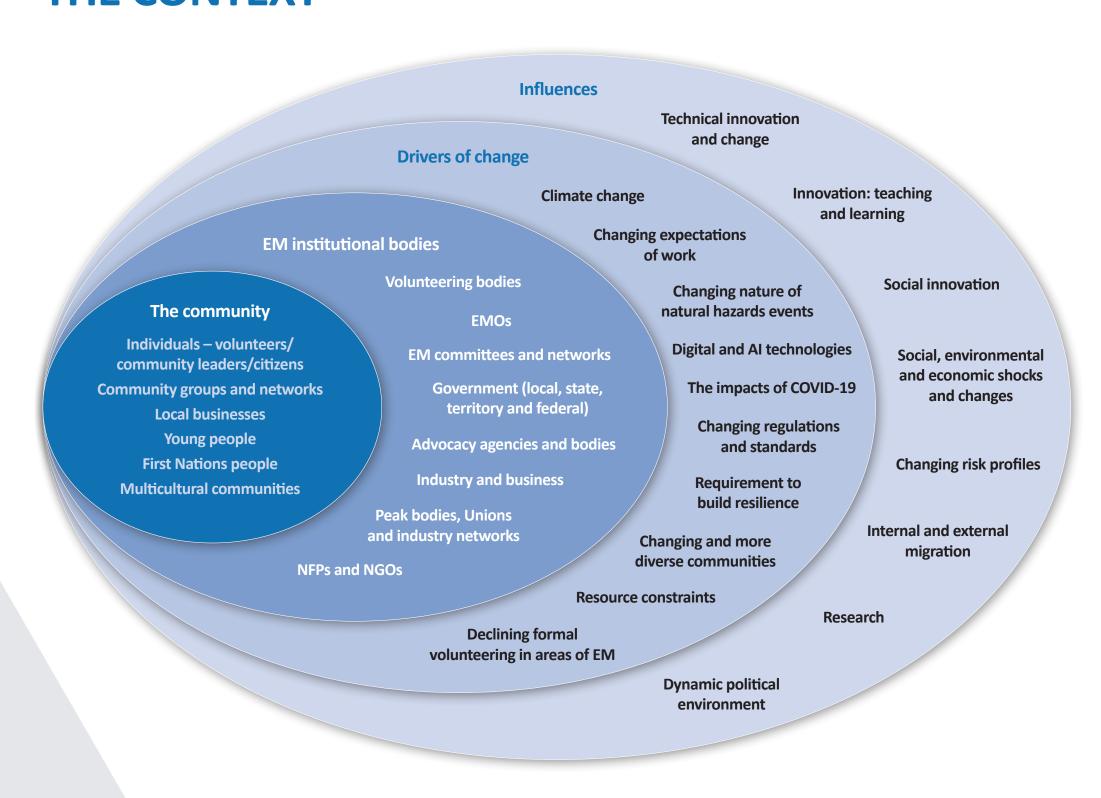


FIGURE 1: THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT VOLUNTEERING CONTEXT

The context in which communities and emergency management organisations (EMOs) exists is changing in response to a number of factors (Figure 1). This is creating compression points for EM volunteering which include:

- > Increasing demand and expanded roles, decreasing formal participation but increasing informal volunteering
- Changing communities, community contexts, and social and psychological contracts.
 Changing expectations of work and the need to enhance the volunteering experience.

THE BLUEPRINT

The Emergency Management Sustainable Volunteering Blueprint – more than just words

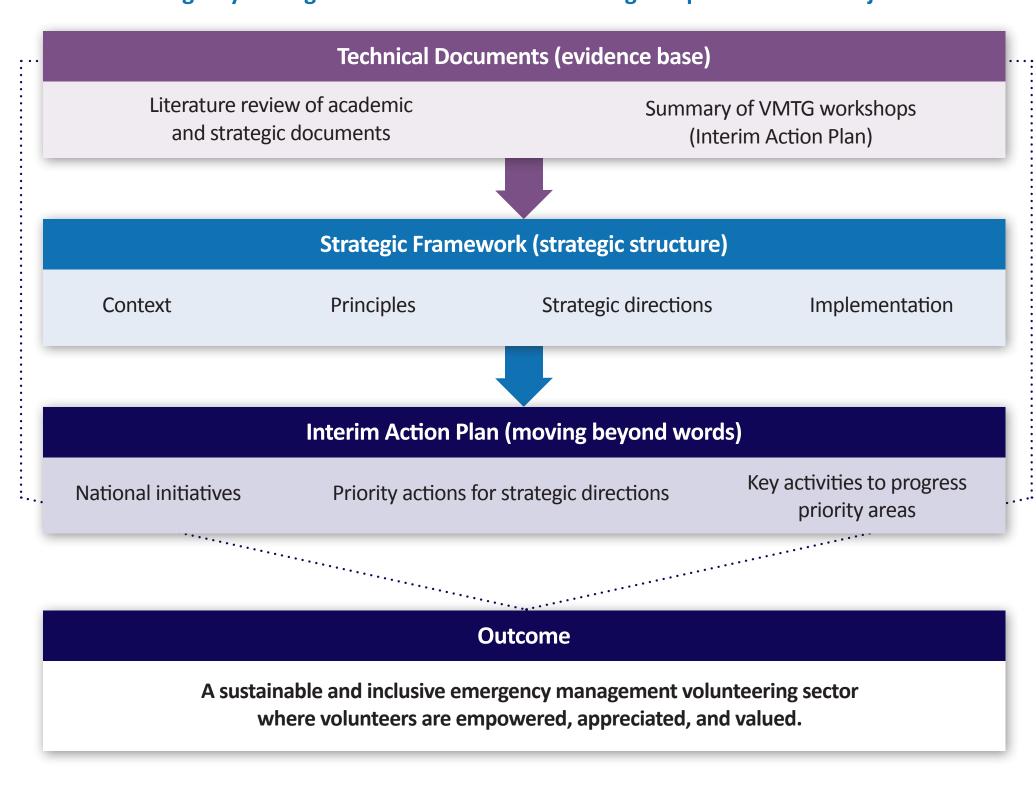


FIGURE 2: THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SUSTAINABLE VOLUNTEERING BLUEPRINT

The Blueprint (Figure 2) was developed as part of the 'Emergency management volunteering: more than just words' project was funded by NHRA and undertaken by Victoria University (VU) in collaboration with AFAC, members of the Volunteer Management Technical Group (VMTG), and representatives from across the broader volunteering ecosystem between March 2024 and June 2025. The AFAC VMTG) is the champion for **The Blueprint** and steward of **The Strategic Framework** and **The Interim Action Plan**.

The **function** of **The Blueprint** is to provide a foundational structure that:

- > Presents an evidence base that brings together existing knowledge with sector intelligence to provide a synthesis of what is known and what is needed to progress the agenda.
- > Organises and makes visible the different aspects of the EM volunteering system to support identification, planning and coordination of actions being undertaken across the sector.

It does this through two living documents – **The Strategic Framework** that links strategy to on ground action, and **The Interim Action Plan** that focuses on two key actions that will be the focus of the AFAC VMTG.

"The best way to predict your future is to create it." — Abraham Lincoln

Communities are changing and innovating and so must the EM sector if they are to sustain the volunteers they have and ensure the sustainability of volunteering for the future. This offers a substantial opportunity for the EM volunteering sector to evolve. Through forging collaborative, innovative pathways across the EM volunteering ecosystem it can realise the opportunity to revitalise and secure a volunteering workforce for the future which can continue to meet the needs of their communities.

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

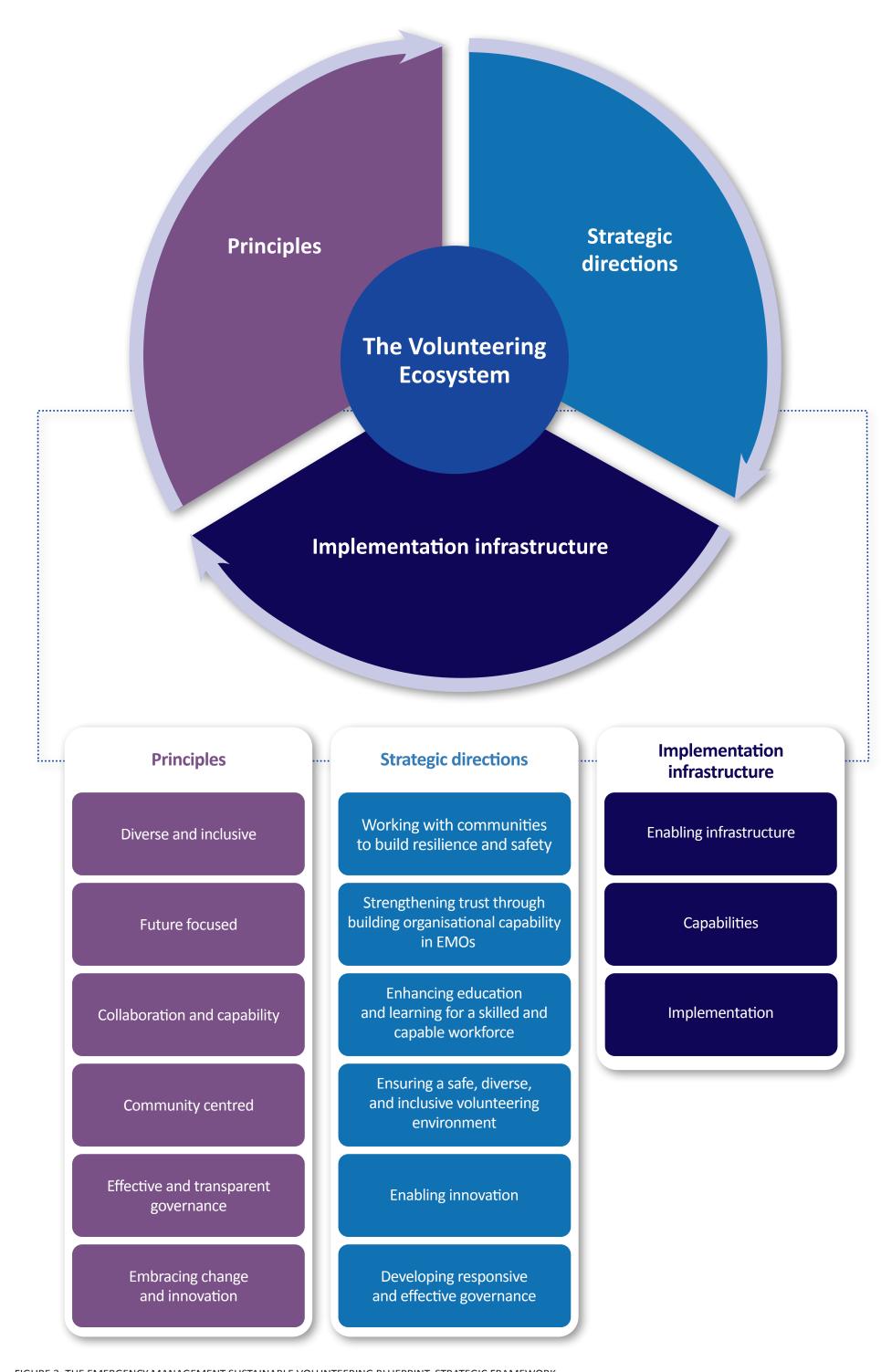


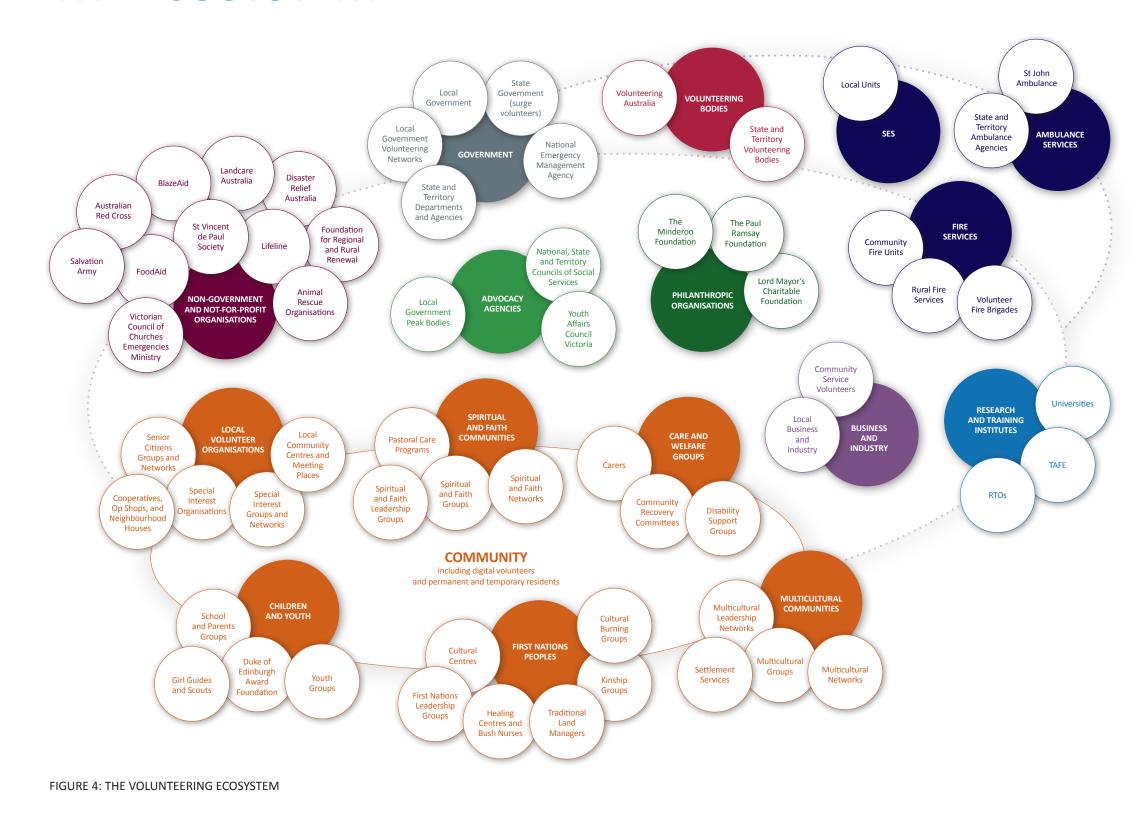
FIGURE 3: THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SUSTAINABLE VOLUNTEERING BLUEPRINT: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Framework has four components (Figure 3):

- **Principles** inform the ethical implementation of actions, and support collaboration, value learning, community, and connectedness.
- > **Strategic directions** provide the overarching areas of focus for sector-wide actions
- > The volunteering ecosystem provides the stakeholder and collaborative context for activities.
- > The implementation infrastructure and high-level guidance across three areas needed to support implementation and innovation case studies.

Innovation and education and learning are seen to underpin all actions.

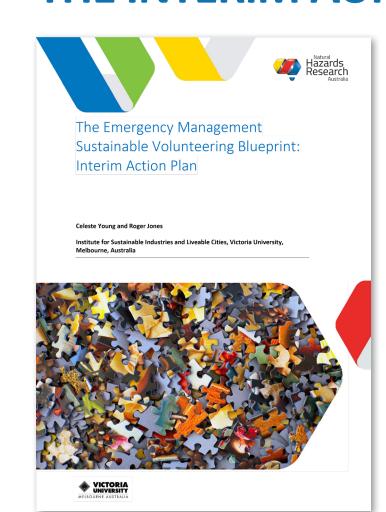
THE ECOSYSTEM



EM volunteering exists in **an ecosystem** (Figure 4) and community are a central part of this. In order to achieve effective outcomes across the sector, broad collaboration and clarification of volunteering roles and responsibilities across the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (PPRR) spectrum of the many different stakeholders involved is required. Strengthening trust and understanding between EMOs, volunteers and communities, and making the contribution of volunteers visible is central to this.

Communities are the volunteers, and the volunteers are the community.

THE INTERIM ACTION PLAN



The Interim Action Plan outlines two priority actions:

- Priority Action 1: Enhancing and building on the current national education curriculum to support volunteering skills pathways focusing on future capabilities needs and skills transferability.
- **Priority action 2:** A national initiative to assist organisations incorporate emergent and innovative models of volunteering, and understanding of where and how they can be applied across the PPRR spectrum.

"The growth of informal volunteering shows Australians are still willing to volunteer, if volunteering can fit in with the other demands of their busy lives." (Davies, 2023)

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Reference: Davies, A. (2023). How can we bolster Australia's depleted army of volunteers to match the soaring demand for their services? *The Conversation*. Accessed 20 April 2025 at https://theconversation.com/how-can-we-bolster-australias-depleted-army-of-volunteers-to-match-the-soaring-demand-for-their-services-205218



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