

National Emergency Volunteering Strategy



NSW Review of Volunteering

Following the 2022 flooding in NSW, the **2022 Independent Flood Inquiry** recommended that:

‘To plan for volunteerism into the future, the [State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC)] commission a review of volunteerism in NSW, acknowledging it is essential to the state’s emergency response to protect life and property.’

The Review was led by the Premier’s Department, supported by NSW Government agencies.



Approx.
4,000
people engaged
in the development
of the Review



16 group
interviews with
approx. 150
volunteers



2,559
responses
from volunteer
database



1,220
responses
from community
members

What the Review found



Increasing
workload
for
volunteers

More
frequent
and
intense
disasters

Increasing
professionalisation
of volunteering

Increased
opportunities
for online
volunteer
management

Increasing
cost of living
pressures

More
informal
volunteers
during
disasters

Growing
interest and
engagement
from the
private
sector

What we did in NSW

The background image shows a disaster scene with a brick building labeled "HOTEL" partially obscured by fallen trees and debris. In the foreground, two SES volunteers in orange gear are working. A white car is partially visible at the bottom. In the background, a fire truck and other emergency vehicles are present, along with a crowd of people. A yellow and red striped barrier with "SES" branding is in the lower right.

Updated **policy and legislation** to better recognise emergency volunteers

Developed **new guidance material** to build capability to engage and coordinate informal volunteers

New **grants program** to support local organisations prepare for informal volunteers

Development of more **standardised data and reporting** on the volunteer workforce

New online hub to link community members with volunteering opportunities in emergency services

National action for emergency volunteering

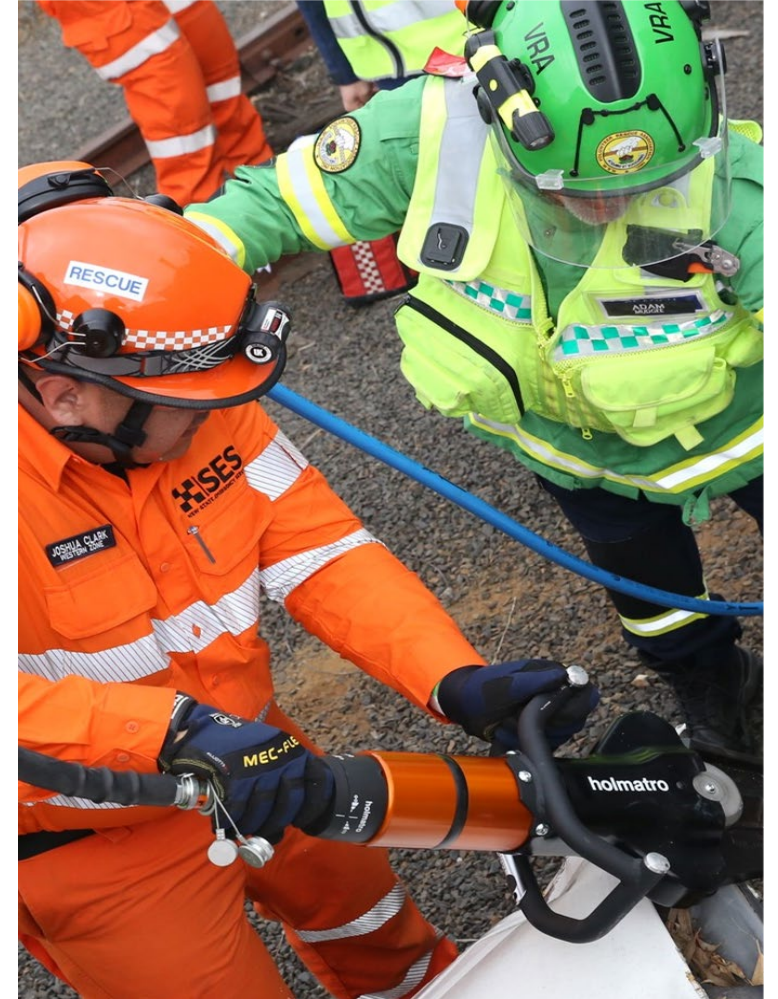
Recommendation 13 of the Review of Emergency Volunteering

That NSW develop and prosecute with the Commonwealth Government a platform of priority initiatives and reforms the Commonwealth should pursue to better support emergency volunteering and build community capability, in partnership with other States and Territories.



Guiding principles for national action

- Enhance and support State and Territory based capability
- Integrate within and support existing State and Territory command and control structures
- Recognise the importance of supporting and empowering local communities in areas of high disaster risk
- Build on existing work underway
- Flexible and adaptive
- Collaborative and community informed in design
- Consider all phases of emergency management



National Emergency Volunteering Forum

What we wanted and what we achieved:

- Inclusive conversations and the opportunity for all participants to contribute to discussions.
- Unpacking where the barriers are and what opportunities there are for a program of reform
- Identification of initiatives against the six priority areas for reform with high consensus across jurisdictions.



What we discussed



Streamlining of training, administrative and compliance requirements for volunteer organisation

Reform to Honours and Award systems

Funding eligibility for informal volunteers

Incentives and financial support (e.g. tax relief, leave entitlements)

National system for managing insurance for volunteers

Surge Capability - coordination of resources outside of jurisdictional boundaries

Linking to the Blueprint

- Tangible and measurable actions in the National Strategy
 - Supporting movement along the maturity matrix
- Government working at scale
 - Underpinned by the principles of the Blueprint

