

Volunteer Sustainability Strategy 2021-2023

The Volunteer Sustainability Strategy 2021 - 2023 has been developed in response to societal and environmental challenges impacting emergency services volunteers and the WA community. The Strategy is focussed on strengthening relationships and skills for volunteers and staff, forming the foundation for innovative approaches to meet these challenges and supporting volunteer teams to build capacity to deliver services and meet the needs of communities into the future.

Who We Are Now:

Understanding who the emergency services volunteers in Western Australia are is an important step in supporting them effectively.

- ✓ Emergency services volunteers who deliver emergency response in the WA community belong to the Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service, Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, State Emergency Service, Bush Fire Service and Marine Rescue.
- ✓ In total 27,000 emergency services volunteers are registered with DFES and approximately 13,000 of them are actively providing operational and support response at emergency incidents.
- ✓ The average age of emergency service volunteers in Western Australia is 49 and they are made up of 76% men and 24% women.
- ✓ More than 3000 young people are also active in the volunteer emergency services as cadets, juniors and youth in emergency services. As well as 127 operational volunteer members aged 16-17.

What We Know:

- ✓ Changes in society and the way people volunteer is driving need for adaptation and traditional emergency services volunteering models are evolving to reflect these changes.
- ✓ Emergency service volunteers are being impacted by:
 - Changing societal expectations, attitudes to volunteering and use of people's personal time.
 - Availability of timely, efficient and meaningful training.
 - A desire for management capability grounded in support and trust.
 - A lack of consistency and wide variation in leadership styles and frequent movement of staff.
 - Demographic and economic shifts.
 - Environmental changes.
 - A need for organisational flexibility to support volunteer and staff capacity to adapt to local differences and change.
- ✓ Strong relationships and collaboration between staff and volunteer teams provides an essential foundation to grow our knowledge, skills and systems that support volunteer capacity to adapt to challenges.
- ✓ Volunteer emergency services are encountering significant change and challenges, yet they remain dedicated to the delivery of services in their communities.
- ✓ Trends and challenges being experienced in emergency services volunteerism throughout Australia are considered a high priority by State and Federal Governments, volunteer involving organisations and impacted communities. They inform strategic considerations and are at the forefront of planning and research.

Our Vision:

All Western Australians working together for a safer State.

Our Purpose:

To achieve a safer Western Australia by enabling and protecting the community before, during and after emergencies

Related Corporate Strategic Objective:

Our People nurture a culture where we value diverse and capable people who are united and supportive.

Strategy Purpose:

The Volunteer Sustainability Strategy 2021 - 2023 creates an environment that prepares the volunteer emergency services for the future.

Strategic Priorities

<p>1. Diversity and Empowerment</p> <p><i>A volunteering environment is cultivated that reflects the community and supports volunteers to act and lead.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Focus areas –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling volunteer teams to create new ways for people to volunteer in the emergency services.• Supporting proactive, diverse and inclusive recruitment of new volunteers.• Effectively and meaningfully engage volunteers in decisions that have impact on them.	<p>2. Support and Trust</p> <p><i>Relationships are promoted between volunteers, staff and stakeholders, based on common goals, trust and mutual respect.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Focus areas -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthening the culture of volunteerism in DFES to enable an effective, open and responsive relationship between volunteers and staff.• Increasing access to engaging and relevant training for volunteers.• Supporting volunteer leaders to identify approaches, and solutions that respond to local needs.	<p>3. Leadership and Management</p> <p><i>All people who work with volunteers have appropriate and effective management and leadership skills.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Focus areas -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing leadership and management capability for volunteers and staff who work with volunteer teams.• Ensuring staff and volunteers can leverage human and physical resources to create innovative ways to deliver services needed by their communities.• PAUL RYAN SUGGESTIONS
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How We Know We're on Track

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More diverse volunteer roles as measured by an increase in the range and number of emergency services volunteer roles that suit local needs. 2. A more diverse volunteer membership base as measured by a comparative analysis of gender breakdown, age range, CALD and Aboriginal volunteer membership. 3. Evidence that volunteers are included in decision making at all levels, including an emphasis on engaging with volunteers effectively in all matters that have impact on them. Measured by inclusion on committees, project teams and formal and informal consultation processes and ongoing analysis for trends of volunteer attrition rates. 4. Increased capacity for staff to support volunteer teams to proactively anticipate and target recruitment needs, measured by the implementation of recruitment activities focused on identified local needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More volunteers will be available to respond to incidents, measured by an increased percentage of trained responder volunteers and the number of volunteers who are responding. 2. Increased satisfaction with the quality and relevance of volunteer training for both participants and leaders. As measured by the timeliness of training delivery for new volunteers and the accessibility of ongoing training needs for current volunteers. 3. Volunteers and the staff who work with them report positive working relationships that support delivery of emergency services. Measured by a biennial volunteer and staff survey. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional development opportunities to increase leadership and management capability are offered to all volunteers and staff who work with volunteers. This is measured by the provision of professional development opportunities, supporting development of ensuring a baseline management and leadership skill set is developed in the emergency services. 2. Volunteers and staff understand about available resources and the processes for accessing them and are supported to maximise their use. 3. Volunteers and volunteer teams feel confident to put forward their ideas and express their needs. Volunteers initiate new approaches and seek support from regional teams to work to create workable solutions to meet local needs. This is measured by a biennial volunteer and staff survey, levels of volunteer satisfaction and case studies highlighting new approaches being undertaken by volunteer teams.
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