Challenges and opportunities for volunteering in the emergency management sector

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Welcome

Reflections

A changing world

Changing nature of emergency volunteering

Program overview

The value of volunteers in emergency management

Volunteering in Australia

• 6.4mill. people in Australia volunteer

• $200 bill. per annum contribution to the Australian economy

• Greater economic contribution than mining, agriculture & retail

• 500,000 volunteers in 'emergency management'

O'Dwyer, University of Adelaide

A time of change…..

- Climate change

- Demographic change

- Technological change/evolution

- National/International events & impacts

- Threat of terrorism & pandemic

- Evolving policy environment

Hazard scape/Climate change

- Higher fire danger days (more and greater intensity) in South east Australia

- More intense rainfall in some areas, other areas will become drier

- Uncertainty over what will happen with Cyclones
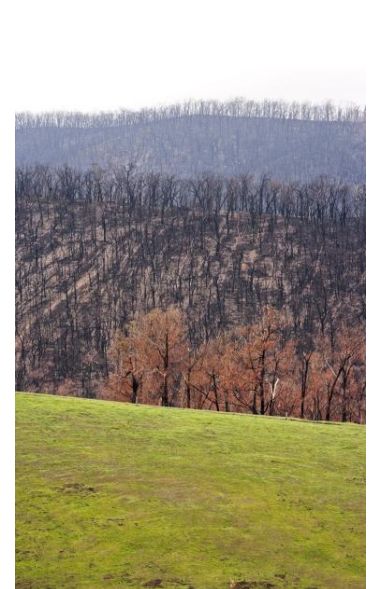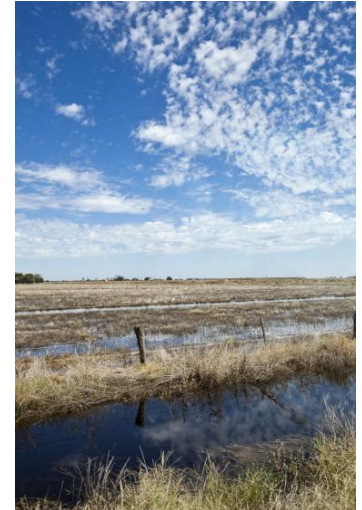
Demographic changes

- Adding a Canberra sized city to the population each year

- Ageing population

- 2.2million people in the age range 15-64 or around 15% of the population have a disability

- 27% of Australians were born overseas

- 20% of people speak a language other than English

- Mobility of employment
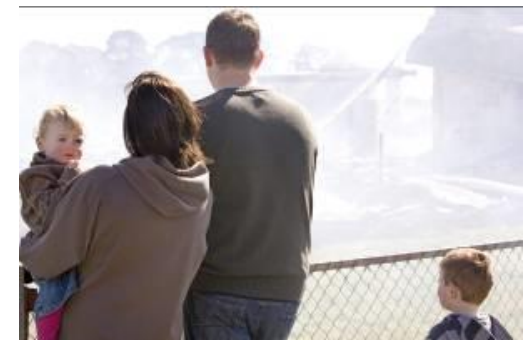
Societal changes

- Working longer

- Commuting more

- Less cash

- More on-line connection

- Different motivations and approaches to volunteering

Policy evolution

- National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR)
- Resilient Recovery
- Building Back Better
- Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience
- National Mitigation Framework

*Resilience to disasters is part of strengthening individual and community resilience
more broadly, enabling people to function more effectively in regard to
a wide range of daily challenges*

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Volunteering in emergencies

Traditional
- Focus on Prevention/Preparedness/Response/Recovery
- High levels of government funding, particularly for response activities
- Strong governance models, driven by state/territory governments
- Predominance of command/control and understanding of emergency management
- High levels of training/skills development

Emerging
- NSDR; collaborative approach across government, business, community
- Changing nature of volunteering
- Social media based
- Reactive, intuitive & innovative

Traditional approaches/organisations

- Rural fire services

- State/territory emergency services

- Larger not for profits

Traditional approaches/organisations

Attributes
- Well organised and trained
- Skilled and disciplined
- Command/control
- Committed
- Established and highly regarded within community

Challenges
- Organisational size and scale
- Traditional solutions
- Sustainability

Solutions/enablers
- Best suited to well defined, technical, skills based roles

Emerging approaches/organisations

- Mud Army

- Blazeaid

- NZ student army

- Crowd funding

- Go volunteer

- Volunteer apps

- Facebook

- etc.

Emerging approaches/organisations

Attributes
- Enthusiasm, innovation, flexibility, nimbleness
- Mobilise around an event or activity (episodic volunteering)

Challenges
- May work independently or form groups
- Relevance of existing governance structures
- Personal impacts and responsibility

Solutions/enablers
- Efforts would be enhanced through greater understanding of emergency context

The future: Challenges & developments

- Maximising volunteer opportunities and input

- Sustainable volunteering models
  - Flexible governance
  - Changing and adapting funding models

- Harnessing enthusiasm & commitment

- Recognising and adapting to community change

- Governance systems and processes that support and enable rather than block and stifle

- Harnessing corporate involvement

- Providing newer volunteers/emergent groups with context and insight into emergencies

- Understanding and utilising digital technology, social media, etc.

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- Attraction, support and retention

- EM volunteering in 2030

- Research and Developments

- Young volunteers

- Spontaneous volunteers

- The AIDR Knowledge Hub

- Where to from here?

Program themes/objective

Where have we come from?

- Recommendations from the previous volunteer summit

Where are we now?

- Current situation and developments

Where do we want/need to be?

- Challenges and opportunities
- Identifying the big issues
- A way forward

Previous Summit recommendations

- Time

- Cost

- Recognition

- Training

- People

- Research

Previous Summit recommendations

Time

- That emergency management volunteer organisations **minimise the amount of time operational volunteers are required to devote to non-operational tasks** including administrative functions

- That emergency management volunteer organisations **review volunteer membership policies to ensure attendance requirements are flexible** other than for operations and essential training

Previous Summit recommendations

Cost

- That emergency management volunteer organisations **investigate new ways to offset out of pocket expenses** including the supply of protective clothing, safety equipment, training and professional development

Previous Summit recommendations

Recognition

- That emergency management organisations through the AEMVF be given the **opportunity to contribute to the development and review of policy initiatives** that impact on volunteers

- That **the role of recovery organisations is better recognised** and that recovery organisations be provided with improved funding and support

Previous Summit recommendations

Training

- That **volunteer training requirements be streamlined without compromising operational standards**. Training should be dynamic, interactive, flexible and accessible equally to all emergency management volunteers. Delivery methods should include e learning and face to face and on the job training

- That **volunteer leadership programs be increased and accessible** to all emergency management volunteers

- That emergency management volunteer organisations ensure that **all training qualifications are portable.**

- That emergency management volunteer organisations be provided with necessary **support to meet training compliance requirements**

Previous Summit recommendations

People

- That emergency management volunteer organisations draw on the expertise and capacity of various partners by **establishing strategic alliances** between relevant organisations and agencies

Previous Summit recommendations

Research

- That **sector wide research** be undertaken at the local, state and national levels to gain a better understanding of how emergency management volunteers can be better recognised and what current best practice exists within the sector

2018: Setting the agenda for the future

Where do we want/need to be?

- Identifying the big issues
    - Challenges and opportunities

- A way forward

- Who and how