ENABLING SUSTAINABLE EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING – CHANGING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
WHO ARE WE?

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Dr Djurre Holtrop - Recruitment

Dr Alex Luksyte - Diversity

Prof Marylene Gagne - Wellbeing
THE VOLUNTEER TYPOLOGY

Volunteer Ability Fit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capable but reluctant</th>
<th>Capable and enthusiastic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not capable and reluctant</td>
<td>Enthusiastic but not capable</td>
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Volunteer Motivation Fit
WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

What does it take to become an SES volunteer?

What makes SES volunteers happy?

What keeps SES volunteers coming back for more?

How do we get more people to volunteer for SES?
WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- Interview SES volunteers
- Develop a survey tool
- Organisational survey
- Improve practices
- Deliver workshops
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

1) Recruitment
   a) Majority of units experienced issues in recruiting new members, even in the metropolitan areas
   b) Yet many volunteer units did not have a clear recruitment strategy or plan

2) Socialisation
   a) Most of the time informal
   b) Many units had an informal ‘buddy’ system in place
   c) Trying to increase new members’ identification (e.g. providing uniform)

3) Engagement of members
   a) Some units found it hard to keep members engaged in the absence of call-outs
   b) Devising roles and responsibilities for each member

4) Leadership
   a) A strong need for balanced leaders: not too little (e.g. laissez-fair) not too much
   b) The more remote the community – the more important the leader

5) Affective experiences as a source of motivation
AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES

Oh, it's just the challenge in dealing with half a dozen people along this street, who were all experiencing issues and dealing with them, and coming up with solutions and working out what you were going to do. And yeah, it was just exciting.

You know I thought, you know, joining there was you know, fun. But after being there for 5 years, I think you know, some of the volunteers, I think they run me down.

And it's, it's disappointing when you put up ideas and solutions that people think the way that they treat volunteers, is exactly the same way that you would treat an employee.
EMS VOLUNTEERS IN WA: FIRST YEAR SURVEY DATA

1) Sample: 539 volunteers (12%) response rate
2) 72% males
3) 45% in Perth metropolitan area
4) 60% working full time
5) 41% Bushfire service, 18% SES, etc.
REASONS TO JOIN AND EXPECTATIONS

1) What you influenced you to join?
   a) Help the community
   b) Reputation of an emergency services volunteer
   c) Meet new people

2) What did you expect to do in your first year?
   a) Operational support
   b) Emergency response
   c) Undertake or provide training
THREE PROFILES

The focused volunteer
• Clear motivation and expectations
• 83% joined to help community
• 84% expect to undertake training

The overenthusiastic volunteer
• ‘Too much’ motivation
• Expected to do nearly everything

The lost volunteer
• Not sure why they are there
• Only activity expected is emergency response
WHERE ARE THESE VOLUNTEERS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Focused</th>
<th>Enthusiastic</th>
<th>Lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUTCOMES: EXPERIENCES

- Positive experiences:
  - Focused: 3.2
  - Enthusiastic: 4.0
  - Lost: 1.7

- Negative experiences:
  - Focused: 0.2
  - Enthusiastic: 0.2
  - Lost: 0.3
OUTCOMES: INTENT TO STAY

Figure 3: Intention to stay by profile

- Focused
- Overenthusiastic
- Lost
NEXT STEPS

- Deliver workshops
- Interview SES volunteers
- Develop a survey tool
- Organisational survey
- Improve practices
THANK YOU!

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