Enabling sustainable emergency volunteering: Changing management practices

Findings from the Cultural Assessment Tool (CAT) Survey Wave 1

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Meet the Team!

Dr Darja Kragt – Leadership & Identity

Assoc. Prof. Patrick Dunlop – Recruitment & Selection

Dr Alex Luksyte – Diversity and Inclusion

Ms Hawa Ridhwani Farid – Holds us all together!

Dr Djurre Holtrop – Recruitment & Selection

Prof. Marylene Gagne – Motivation & Wellbeing

Email the team: sesresearch@uwa.edu.au
What is this project about?

What does it take to become an SES volunteer?

Recruitment

What makes SES volunteers happy?

Wellbeing

What keeps SES volunteers coming back for more?

Retention

How do we get more people to volunteer for SES?

Diversity

Background

Research Collaboration

• In 2017, the UWA collaborated with the DFES to improve retention rates of their emergency services volunteers.

CAT Creation

• Researchers from UWA and Curtin University developed a Cultural Assessment Tool (CAT) in the form of an online survey.

Survey Purpose

• Discover more about the State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers’ perspectives to obtain information on how to improve volunteer; • Recruitment, retention, wellbeing, and diversity.
Survey Information

Key Survey Information

- Conducted from September 2018 til the end of December 2018
- Online and paper and pencil
- All WA SES members were invited
- 109 questions (9 were demographics)
- 7 key themes

Survey Themes

1. Expectations
2. Reasons to Join and Reasons to Stay
3. Volunteer Needs
4. Volunteer Role and Identity
5. Wellbeing
6. SES Unit Environment
7. Intentions to Remain

Participant Demographics

Total of 398 volunteers across 53 SES units across Western Australia.

- Male (62%)
- Female (38%)

- Median Tenure
  - SES = 5 years
  - Current unit = 4 years

- Metropolitan (58.6%)
- Regional (41.4%)

- Average age = 46.1 years
  (Standard deviation = 15.5 years)

- Leaders (11.6%)
- Non-leaders (88.4%)

- 70.4% of participants were born in Australia
Key Findings

- People join to help community, and stay for the camaraderie
  - Women joined to meet people, men out of a sense of obligation (especially in regional units)

- Expectations were generally being met
  - Possible sampling bias here

- Lots of personal growth and learning in the SES!
  - Recruitment opportunity

- Feeling connected & competent, but less autonomous
  - Could be the nature of the role

What’s next?

- Investigating differences between SES Units and their origins
What’s next?

- Investigating cohort differences and their origins

Psychological Safety - Men and Women

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit members are able to say what they think</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<td>When there’s a problem, unit members talk about it</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>When they speak, unit members are considerate of others’ feelings</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit members are free to be assertive about what they think and feel</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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What’s next?

Current utilisation
- Measure the climate of inclusiveness (decision making and integration of perspectives).
- Study of SES recruitment that is currently being administered (presented at VMTG yesterday).
- Busting myths about leadership, support, and inclusiveness (and identifying issues that persist)
- Identify between-unit differences and potential causes

Future utilisation
- Survey results will be shared in May, report in July.
- Recruitment materials to be developed and shared (Recruitment 2030).
- CAT2 to be administered in September-November 19 to track changes over time.
- Facilitated research translation workshop (not accepted at AFAC19)
- Online training resources (Workforce 2030)
Thank you!

Email the team: sesresearch@uwa.edu.au