THE FUTURE OF ‘NON-TRADITIONAL’ EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING
WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE AND HOW CAN IT WORK?

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‘NON-TRADITIONAL’ EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING

- What counts as emergency/disaster volunteering needs to be broadened

- Non-traditional volunteering needs to be supported and included in planning alongside more traditional EM volunteering

Figure 1: Hurricane Sandy Spirit NY by Thomas Good
RATIONALE

• The landscape of volunteering is transforming
• Informal, emergent disaster volunteering is prevalent and inevitable
• Community resilience is a bigger goal with more players

Figure 2: Cyclone Oswald – Recovery, Bundaberg, Queensland & New South Wales 2013 by John Bonello
WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

**Diverse types**
- Emergent (incl spontaneous)
- Extending
- Digital
- Episodic
- Employer-supported
- Skills-based
- Government outsourced
- Community-based, grassroots

**Multiple dimensions**
- Duration: One-off, short-term vs. On-going, long-term
- Formality: Informal vs. Formal
- Responsibility: Community/civil society vs. Government
- Delivery mode: On-line vs. In person
- Control: Polycentric/distributed vs. Centralised
- Position: External vs. Internal (disaster affected)
- Agency: Collective/group vs. Individual
HOW CAN IT WORK?

Case study of Be Ready Warrandyte

Figure 3: Warrandyte State Park back burning 08 by Erin Silversmith
**REPORTED BENEFITS AND IMPACTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>Reported by</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to an increase in the level of household preparedness</td>
<td>O2EM, O7EM, 01W, O2W, EM</td>
<td>“On that day of extreme fire danger on 9th February there were a lot less people in Warrandyte. So what are the differences that and in search about how things are being progressed?” (O2EM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Established a trusted network of community leaders that can engage with EMOs now and into the future</td>
<td>O0EM, O2EM</td>
<td>“I know that when something dramatically bad happens in Warrandyte, there’ll be a group of go-to people who will hit the ground running and they’ll be respected and they will be leaders and agencies will go to them and ask questions about “what do we do now?” which is very different to most other communities.” (EM participant)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased support for community safety initiatives amongst local fire brigade members</td>
<td>O0EM, O2EM</td>
<td>“I think it’s actually made the emergency management community realise that the community have a great amount of power. That something that’s born from right at the community level has the capacity to be fantastic and to really take off.” (EM participant)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informed and communicated on local community concerns and how they want EMOS to be involved</td>
<td>O0EM, O2EM</td>
<td>“I think they have opened a few of the emergency service’s eyes in no other way of how the community and local leaders are going to actually take the message and how else do we get community’s buy-in to accept that these messages are not only good for them but created by them.” (O2W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showed EMOS alternative ways to communicate with the community challenging one-size-fits-all approach</td>
<td>O2EM, O7EM, O0EM, O2W, EM</td>
<td>“It proved a concept that they didn’t know they were setting out to prove essentially and that a communication plan can run their own discussion and lead the way and that agencies can support that and have extraordinary outcomes for everyone.” (O2EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenced emergency management policy and dialogue in response to community concerns and priorities</td>
<td>O2EM, O7EM, O0EM, O2W, EM</td>
<td>“In the time that we’ve been involved the CFA’s position and Emergency Management Victoria’s position on bunks has changed. [...] The landscape is shifting on this and it’s shifting because of pressure, community pressure. [...] In our local community I think it’s probably very much about being Ready but I don’t think we’re the only people having this” (O2EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased awareness of local community safety issues with EMOS</td>
<td>O2EM, O7EM, O0EM, O2W</td>
<td>“They have discussed its CBOM between YarraRocks, Councils EMUs. Only Larry’s office, around some of the Warrandyte issues. I think the Be Ready project has contributed to that stuff being pushed to that level.” (O2EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built confidence in the community</td>
<td>O2EM</td>
<td>“The hard work that they’ve done and we’ve made a trusted relationship. The community has got just so much of an impact at what the operational response does.” (O2EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided to initial response</td>
<td>O2EM</td>
<td>“We’ve been working with the community for the past couple years. We’ve been to YarraRocks, we’ve been to Council meetings. We’ve actually been working with the community and they’ve become an integral part of the response.” (O2EM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed the community</td>
<td>O2EM</td>
<td>“We’ve also been able to do a lot more with the businesses [...] they’ve been able to go in there with a warm heart rather than cold, a state government body.” (O2EM)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Reported impacts of Be Ready Warrandyte on broader bushfire management thinking and practice
BRIDGING GAPS THROUGH COPRODUCTION

1) An example of effective coproduction in a high capacity community
2) Underpinned by good leadership, sound governance & project management, strong community authority
3) Highlighted how community-led projects can do things governments can’t
4) Benefited from good relationships with EMOs: didn’t go it alone

“Prior to Be Ready Warrandyte the responsibility of fire safety for the Warrandyte community was the CFA. Now the CFA is just a player. They’re just one of the participants. They do what they can, that will be respected. Thank you very much for doing what you could. Council did what they could. We as people did what we could.” (EM participant)
KEY POINTS

1. Future emergency volunteering will be more diverse, involve more (non-EM) players, and be more densely networked
2. This diverse volunteering needs to be planned for and supported by the EM sector
3. There are benefits from using a coproduction model
4. BRW demonstrates strengths that underpinned effective coproduction under good conditions
5. Additional case studies will include a focus on issues and tensions encountered under more difficult conditions
THE OUT OF UNIFORM PROJECT

Review Article
A review of informal volunteerism in emergencies and disasters: Definition, opportunities and challenges

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ABSTRACT

Simple, highly developed and capable emergency management systems, ordinary citizens are usually
faced with the need to intervene as they will, and even then after official services have ceased. Citizens
often play vital roles in helping those affected to respond and recover, and can provide invaluable
assistance to official agencies (Jackson et al., 2016); developed countries). Emergency and disaster
government relies largely on a workforce of professionals and, to varying degrees, volunteers affiliated
with official agencies. There are who operate outside of such systems that have not been
acknowledged as a source of assistance or liability, and their efforts are often underestimated. Given
the increasing disaster risk worldwide due to population growth, urban development and climate change,
we believe that informal volunteers will provide much of the additional surge capacity required to respond
to frequent emergencies and disasters in the future. This paper considers the role of informal volunteers
in emergency and disaster management. Definitions of volunteerism are reviewed and it is argued that
there is a focus on volunteerism for profit and for state and formal organizations. We offer a broader
definition of informal volunteerism that recognizes the many ways ordinary citizens volunteer in
times of crisis, types and roles of informal volunteers are identified, challenges andarking, and the implications for emergency and disaster management are considered. Particular
attention is given to enhancing digital volunteerism to the capacity of survivors and the role of
information and communication technologies. Cultural and legal liability are identified as key
barriers to greater participation of informal volunteers. We argue that more adapted and inclusive
models of emergency and disaster management are needed to harness the capabilities and resilience that
exist within and across communities.

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Thanks also to our end users who provided input to the Out of Uniform project.


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