



bushfire&natural
HAZARDSCRC

SUSTAINABLE VOLUNTEERING

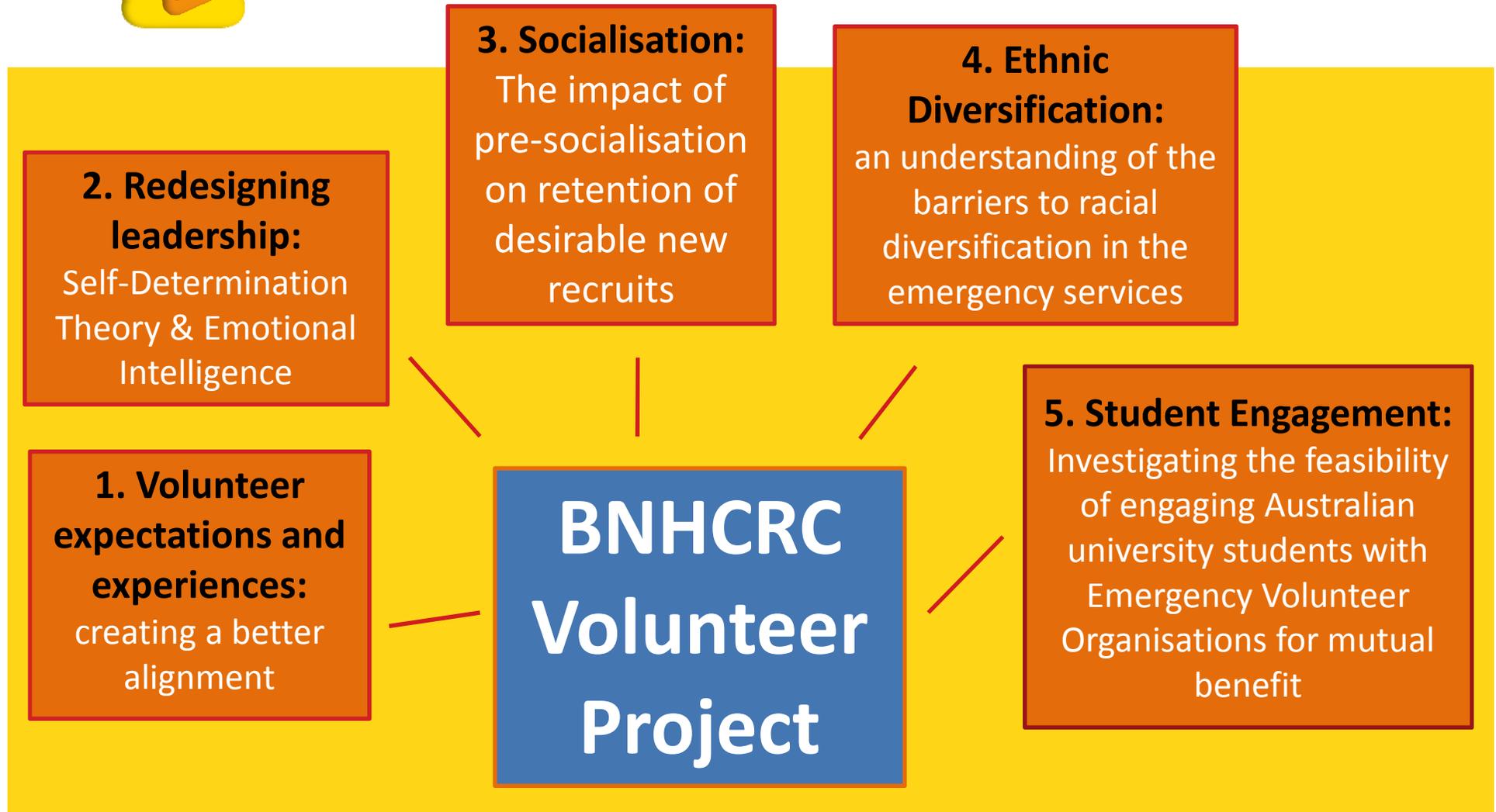
Improving the Retention and Engagement
of Volunteers in Emergency Service
Agencies

Michael Jones

Faculty of Business, University of Wollongong, NSW

End-Users:





End-Users:

AFAC:

Jill Edwards

AG Dept:

Raelene Thompson

CFA:

Kate Harrap Ali Martin
Tony Brown Martin Embery

NSW SES:

David Rae

RFS:

Narelle Koteff
John Davis

SAFECOM:

Toni Richardson

TAS Fire:

Lucas van Rijswijk

1. VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES: CREATING A BETTER ALIGNMENT

1) Project Team:

- a) Bill Calcutt (PhD Candidate)
- b) Dr. Michael Jones (Primary Supervisor)
- c) A/Prof Andrew Sense (Secondary Supervisor)

2) Problem Statement:

Dissonance between expectations and experiences partly explains the current level of volunteer turnover in emergency services. Organisational actions, starting with marketing and initial recruitment, have the potential to reduce this dissonance and increase personal satisfaction, team cohesion and morale amongst volunteers while sustaining and enhancing the organisation's response capabilities.

3) Objectives:

Development of a more comprehensive understanding of a sustainable volunteer profile is likely to have major practical implications for emergency services organisations with regard to retention

4) Outcomes:

PAR Study with applied interventions – empirically derived strategies for implementation across agencies for more sustainable engagement with volunteers.

5) Timeline:

This is a 3-4 year project.

2. REDESIGNING LEADERSHIP:

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY & EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

1) Project Team:

- a) Dr. Michael Jones
- b) Vivien Forner (PhD Student)
- c) Dr. Joakim Eidenfalk
- d) Dr. Dominique Parrish
- e) Dr. Senevi Kiridena

2) Problem Statement:

In a pilot study of the NSW SES, carried out by Jones and Francis (2012), poor leadership, at unit level, was found to be a significant factor contributing to the turnover of volunteers.

3) Objectives:

This project proposes to further investigate this finding to examine whether the development of leadership capacity is a viable solution to the challenge of volunteer retention. SDT & EI will be used to through training interventions to advance SES leaders' capacity to create environments that result in reduced turnover and increased engagement.

4) Outcomes:

Evidence-based solutions leading to a development of the organisation's understanding of leadership and measures to improve it, with a focus on reducing turnover in Emergency Management Agencies across Australia.

5) Timeline:

This is an 18 month project.

3. SOCIALISATION:

THE IMPACT OF PRE-SOCIALISATION ON RETENTION OF DESIRABLE NEW RECRUITS

1) Project Team:

- a) Dr. Michael Jones
- b) Dr. Yoke Berry (Research Fellow)

2) Problem Statement:

Prior research on the SES (Jones and Francis 2011) reveals an empirically derived model describing a sequence of endogenous factors governing socialisation. Further empirical analysis of the NSW SES shows that pre-socialisation of new recruits is problematic leading to self-exclusion and social expulsion.

3) Objectives:

This project will take an experimental approach to develop pre-socialisation strategies which will enhance the social cohesion of socially aligned recruits.

4) Outcomes:

Strategies to create early social alignment of volunteers leading to reduced 'critical' turnover and increased engagement.

5) Timeline:

This is a 2-3 year project.

4. ETHNIC DIVERSIFICATION: AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BARRIERS TO RACIAL DIVERSIFICATION IN THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

1) Project Team:

- a) Valerie He (Honours Student)
- b) Dr. Hui-Ling Wang (Research Fellow)
- c) Dr. Michael Jones (Supervisor)

2) Problem Statement:

Emergency service volunteers tend to be from WASP backgrounds. Great gains in recruitment (and if managed properly, in retention) can be made if volunteer resources can be drawn from CALD demographics. Little has been done to find out why this doesn't work, and how it can be made to work.

3) Objectives:

Empirical research within CALD communities and emergency service units to discover why people don't join/stay (and in some cases – why they do).

4) Outcomes:

Strategies to improve the recruitment and retention of CALD people.

5) Timeline:

This is a 1-2 year project.

5. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:

INVESTIGATING THE FEASIBILITY OF ENGAGING AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT

1) Project Team:

- a) Haider Almudaffar (Masters Student)
- b) Dr. Yoke Berry (Research Fellow)
- c) Dr. Michael Jones (Supervisor)

2) Problem Statement:

Volunteering is a competitive marketplace. When the potential volunteer has the capacity to donate their time, by default they are likely to preference their ideal organisation. Early socialisation aimed at “winning hearts and minds” is one way of creating preferred volunteer relationships.

3) Objectives:

This project will provide grounded research that will direct the attraction and recruitment of young volunteers (Post-secondary students) to create positive experiences so that these volunteers will opt to join an emergency service now and/or into the future.

4) Outcomes:

Develop strategy to assist in providing a mutually beneficial recruitment program; and providing ideas beyond recruitment, leading to retention of young volunteers.

5) Timeline:

This is a 12-18 month project.