Valuing Volunteers Study

Better understanding the primary motives for formal volunteering in Australian emergency services

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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this country, & pay my respect to their elders past & present
Research context

An increase in the frequency & severity of threats posed by climate change-related natural hazards

A general decline in formal organisation-based volunteering

Growing Government concerns about the future resourcing of volunteer-based emergency response capabilities
Research findings

1. Emergency service volunteering represents exceptional civic participation

2. Values (particularly altruistic values) are primary motives for emergency service volunteering

3. Values preferences within the emergency service volunteer workforce vary significantly by gender & generation

4. Natural hazards objectively pose substantial & growing risks to human life, though Australia’s all-hazards risk management system is dominated by fear-based perceptions

5. Technology is facilitating fundamental changes in core values & social norms
Implications

A general community-wide decline in altruistic values will make the recruitment & retention of formal (traditional, committed) volunteers more difficult.

Sustaining volunteer commitment into the future will require strategies to satisfy & reconcile the divergent & potentially conflicting values preferences of different sections of the volunteer workforce.

Emergency services are confronted with critical choices about their core values & the nature of the organisational culture that they seek to engender.
Questions?

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