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# EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING 2030: VIEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

Environmental Scan Report No. 3

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RMIT University & Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC





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## KEY MESSAGES

- This report presents findings from an online, qualitative survey of 48 community sector representatives in Australia. It is one of a series of Environmental Scan reports being prepared to capture diverse views of the current and emerging landscapes of emergency volunteering.
- While some community sector organisations have formally recognised roles in relevant state and local emergency management and recovery plans (i.e. delivering disaster welfare services), these are just a small portion of the community sector organisations and groups that contribute to emergency management and community resilience goals on a day-to-day basis.
- A significant and widening gap between expectations and capacities of community sector organisations in emergency management is concerning. Many community sector representatives flagged a need for more equitably distributed funding for emergency management that reflects the important contributions made by community sector organisations and groups.
- Community sector participants see current volunteering models and approaches as broadly unsustainable over time. Were current trends and issues to continue unchanged, most anticipated a serious shortage of volunteers in future, mounting expectations on government to deliver emergency management services, a rise in cost to government, and/or poorer outcomes for communities as a result.
- Despite closer relationships developing, there remains disconnect between the emergency management and community sectors, particularly for community-based emergency management. This is exacerbated by a 'top-down' EM culture, professionalisation, bureaucracy, and high staff turnover.
- The baseline future envisioned for emergency volunteering in the community sector contrasts sharply with the goals of national and international policy discourse and agendas.
- More needs to be done to coordinate & integrate spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering for the benefit of communities, volunteers and organisations.
- Greater collaboration between the emergency management and community sectors, and stronger government leadership are two key enablers for moving towards a preferred future for emergency volunteering in the community sector.
- Community-wide preparation and mobilisation is a key element in a preferred future but there is currently relatively little training offered beyond EMO staff and volunteers that supports this. Where it is currently provided it is funded through short-term grant programs and does not have ongoing funding.



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, which this research was conducted and pay our respects to their Elders both past and present.



## FOREWORD

**Bridget Tehan**, Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS)

Volunteering is critical to delivering the Australian Government's priorities of building strong and resilient communities.

Over 5.8 million Australians, or 31% of the population, engage in formal volunteering activities and programs.<sup>1</sup> Volunteering extends across the arts, education, emergency services, sports, environment, health, aged care, disability, community and social services, the private sector and other vital programs.

Like the emergency management sector, the community sector depends on the contribution of volunteers. In fact, volunteers encompass 2.97 million members of the charitable sector workforce, compared to one million paid staff members.<sup>2</sup>

The community sector is pivotal to disaster resilience, providing the glue or informal insurance necessary to prepare, respond and recover from disasters. Its capacity lies in its inclusivity, innovation and ability to empower, and with its close ties to members of the community, the community sector can absorb and integrate prevention and preparedness techniques to a wide audience.<sup>3</sup>

There is increasing government acknowledgement of the community sector as essential partners in building disaster resilience and providing support during and after a disaster to promote and enact resilience. This report demonstrates that with the right support, paid staff and volunteers of the community sector can use their willingness, specialist skills, assets and capacity to increase their contribution to the resilience and adaptive capacity of their clients and the community more broadly not only for day-to-day resilience but for resilience to disasters.

However there remain serious gaps in policy frameworks to ensure the sector's role is recognised and resourced. This creates a lack of clarity about their roles and responsibilities and potentially limits their capacity to organise and provide sufficient support to people in need during emergencies or disaster.

Improving cooperation and collaboration, supporting and formalising links and partnerships between community sector organisations and the emergency management sector are key to harnessing the benefits that the community sector and volunteers can bring to emergency management.

Ensuring that all organisations who play a role in emergency management clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, and are resourced to fulfil them will lead to improved emergency management as well as meaningful and effective support to local individuals, families and organisations impacted by emergencies.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015), General Social Survey, Summary Results, Australia, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4159.0>

<sup>2</sup> Giving Australia (2016), Giving and volunteering: the non-profit perspective, [https://www.communitybusinesspartnership.gov.au/wpcontent/uploads/2017/12/nonprofit\\_report\\_final\\_4dec17.pdf](https://www.communitybusinesspartnership.gov.au/wpcontent/uploads/2017/12/nonprofit_report_final_4dec17.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Australian Red Cross, *Beyond the Blanket: The role of not-for-profits and non-traditional stakeholders in emergency management*, 2nd National Disaster Resilience Roundtable Report, Melbourne 2015.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

This report presents findings from an online, qualitative survey of 48 representatives of community sector organisations (CSOs) and local governments in Australia. It is one of a series of Environmental Scan reports being prepared to capture diverse views of the current and emerging landscape of emergency volunteering.

The reports are being prepared by RMIT University researchers as part of a research study for the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre called *Emergency volunteering 2030: Adapting the sector*. The study aims to support the emergency management sector to enable and enhance the value of emergency volunteering for communities into the future, in the face of a fast-changing volunteering landscape. ‘Emergency volunteering’ is taken here to refer to any and all volunteering that supports communities before, during and after a disaster or emergency, regardless of its duration or its organisational affiliation, or lack thereof.

The Environmental Scan reports will be synthesised and presented to an expert panel that will assist researchers in developing the alternative scenarios for the future of emergency volunteering.

### Context

The modern landscape of emergency volunteering in Australia is characterised by far-reaching change, converging challenges and emerging new opportunities. In this context, a key concern for the emergency management sector is how the changing landscape is putting pressure on the long-term sustainability of Australia’s formal emergency management volunteer capacity. However, the changing landscape also opens doors onto new and innovative ways to enable and enhance the value of emergency volunteering for communities. However, developing “the capacity to adapt to changing volunteer demographics, motivations and expectations” is a significant on-going challenge for many Volunteer-Involving Organisations (VIOs) [1].

Most CSOs are volunteer-involving, and many are operated solely by volunteers. While some CSOs have formally recognised roles in relevant state and local emergency management and recovery plans (i.e. are recognised support EMOS that deliver of disaster welfare services), these are just a small portion of the CSOs that contribute to emergency management and community resilience goals on a day-to-day basis.

### Approach

Community sector views on the emergency volunteering landscape were elicited primarily through an online survey administered from 1 November to 14 December 2018. In addition, two interviews conducted in late 2017 and early 2018 are also included. All but six participants were associated with Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs). They represented: community-based emergency



management groups (7), community organisations (12), health & social services (7), peaks and other representative groups & networks (6), faith-based organisations (4), not-for-profit support EMOs (7) and local governments (6). The findings reported here are not representative of views from the wider community sector. Rather, they constitute insights from experienced community sector representatives who are involved with their communities to better prepare, respond and/or recover from emergencies.

## Implications

The findings presented in this report have a range of implications with respect to enabling the value of emergency volunteering associated with CSOs, much of which is not traditionally viewed as part of the emergency management sector.

- 1. The widening gap between expectations and capacities of community sector organisations in emergency management is concerning.** Many community sector participants flagged a need for more equitably distributed funding for emergency management that reflects the significant contribution of Volunteer-Involving CSOs, whose contributions can be overlooked or unsupported.
- 2. The status quo is not a foundation for sustainable formal emergency volunteering into the future.** The picture of the baseline future for emergency volunteering – the anticipated future state if current trends and issues do not change – that was painted by community sector representatives is concerning and clearly indicates that current volunteering models and approaches are broadly seen to be unsustainable over time. Without change, most participants envisioned a serious shortage of volunteers leading to mounting expectations on government to deliver emergency management services, an associated rise in cost to government, and/or poorer outcomes for communities.
- 3. The baseline future envisioned for emergency volunteering in the community sector contrasts sharply with the goals of national and international policy discourse and agendas.** While international and national disaster management policy and statements raise expectations of community sector organisations and their volunteers in the context of shared responsibility for disaster resilience, representatives of these same organisations see current approaches and forces leading to a likely future in which their volunteer bases have contracted, and their organisational capacity to fulfil such expectations is severely constrained.
- 4. More needs to be done to coordinate & integrate spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering for the benefit of communities, volunteers and organisations.** It was clear that community sector representatives see a need for greater collaboration to develop models and processes to coordinate spontaneous, as well as other forms of self-organised and informal emergency volunteering, to better manage risk while also realising benefits. Furthermore, several participants anticipated that these forms of emergency volunteering would grow further in the future. Without change, in a baseline future, they saw the emergency management sector struggling to embrace and integrate informal community responses to



emergencies and disasters, with some seeing this as a factor contributing to a greater disconnect between community and formal emergency management structures.

5. **Greater collaboration between the emergency management and community sectors, and stronger government leadership are two key enablers for moving towards a preferred future.** Participants indicated that closer relationships and partnerships between organisations in emergency management and community sectors have grown, but that collaboration and coordination need to develop much further. Impacts of the professionalisation of volunteering, bureaucracy and emergency management culture were flagged as key barriers to greater collaboration, particularly for community-based groups. Many of the things that community sector representatives see as necessary to move the sector towards a preferred future for emergency volunteering require stronger government recognition, leadership for change, and financial support. This suggests a need for further and renewed lobbying to wider government on behalf of Volunteer Involving CSOs and their volunteers in the emergency management space.
6. **Currently, there is relatively little training offered beyond EMO staff and volunteers that supports community-wide preparation and mobilisation.** Where such training is currently provided it is funded through short-term grant programs and does not have ongoing funding. An opportunity exists to support and enable emergency volunteering beyond that affiliated with emergency services and build community resilience through more widely available, and ongoing, community preparedness training.

## Key findings

The key emergency volunteering issues raised by community sector participants were: 1) sustainability of their volunteer workforces in the face of the changing external and internal environments; 2) a disconnect between the emergency management and community sectors, particularly for community-based groups; 3) addressing the implications of the rise of spontaneous and informal emergency volunteering; and 4) a gap between expectations of CSOs to support communities before, during and after emergency and disaster events, and their capacity and resources to do this, including funding, human resources, and levels of organisational planning and preparedness.

While there were some differences amongst participant views, overall the preferred future seen by community sector participants has five core elements: 1) people prepared, trained and mobilised community-wide; 2) collaborative, community-centred culture and service delivery models in the EM sector; 3) connected, resilient and empowered communities that drive emergency management; 4) recognition and resourcing for CSOs to participate in emergency management, and 5) formal volunteering that is accessible, flexible, rewarding, inclusive and highly valued.



## INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from an online, qualitative survey of 48 community sector representatives from across the states of Australia. The purpose of the survey was to find out more about the community sector in relation to emergency volunteering and to elicit the views of key community sector representatives about changes in the volunteering landscape that have occurred in the past and are occurring now; and about their visions for a preferred future for community sector volunteering that supports communities before, during and after emergency events.

Following Barraket [2], this report uses the term 'community sector' to mean:

***those organisations that are not for profit, rely on high levels of volunteerism, and broadly respond to welfare needs.*** Community sector organisations work in related areas of health, education, employment and community services, amongst other industries. They comprise small informal community groups through to large incorporated organisations, and range in orientation from member-based consumer advocacy groups through to privately constituted but publicly-oriented service providers [2, p.3. Emphasis added.].

Thus, the community sector is a subset of the not-for-profit sector that is focused on the delivery of community welfare services.

**Most community sector organisations (CSOs), are volunteer involving.** In Victoria for example, 86% of community sector charities engage volunteers [3, p.11] According to the Australian Charities Report 2017, almost 45,000 charities engaged 3.3 million volunteers that year [4, p.16]. Moreover, 49% of those charities were operated solely by volunteers [4, p.16].

**CSOs have important roles in emergency management** [5-7]. Many CSOs have worked with their communities for decades and have well-established community networks. This rich engagement and local knowledge, developed over time, means they can provide essential services and support during a crisis, particularly for more disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

## THE RESEARCH

The community sector representative survey was conducted by RMIT University researchers as part of a research study for the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre called *Emergency volunteering 2030: Adapting the sector*.<sup>4</sup> The study is being undertaken in accordance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research [8]. It is approved and overseen by the RMIT University Human Ethics Advisory Network (project number CHEAN B 21057-08/17).

'Adapting the sector' is ultimately a foresight and scenario-planning project [9-11]. It aims to support the emergency management sector to enable and enhance the value of emergency volunteering for communities into the future, in the face of a fast-changing volunteering landscape. In this study, researchers are engaging with a range of stakeholders to develop alternative future

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.bnrcrc.com.au/research/resilience-hazards/3533>



emergency volunteering scenarios and consider their implications for today's decision-making in Volunteer-Involving Organisations (VIOs) and the emergency management sector.

The focus of the *Adapting the sector* study is emergency volunteering in all its guises. Thus, the term 'emergency volunteering' is used to refer to **any and all volunteering that supports communities before, during and after a disaster or emergency, regardless of its duration or its particular organisational affiliation, or lack thereof**. This definition encompasses formal volunteering as well as informal volunteering that occurs outside the context of a formal organisation. It also encompasses short-term and project-based volunteering as well as long-term volunteering [see also 12, 13, 14]. Importantly for this report, **a wide range of volunteering associated with CSOs that are not traditionally recognised as part of the emergency management sector supports communities before, during and after a disaster or emergency, and therefore constitutes emergency volunteering.**

This report is one of a series of Environmental Scan reports that will capture diverse views of the current and emerging landscape of emergency volunteering [see for example 15, 16]. The Environmental Scan reports will be synthesised and presented to an expert panel that will assist researchers in developing the alternative scenarios for the future of emergency volunteering.



## CONTEXT

### THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF VOLUNTEERING

The modern landscape of volunteering in Australia is characterised by far-reaching change, converging challenges and emerging new opportunities [17-20]. On one hand, **formal volunteering roles are becoming more demanding**. Expectations on formal, highly-committed volunteers by governments, organisations and communities are rising due to impacts of government regulation, corporatisation and professionalisation, and growing dependency on volunteers for public service delivery, amongst other forces [21-23].

Meanwhile, **people's availability for formal, long-term volunteering has declined** due to factors like competition between paid and voluntary work time and demographic change, including an ageing population, urbanisation, and declining population in some rural areas [22, 24, 25].

**At the same time, the way people choose to volunteer, and how they seek to fit volunteering into their lives, are also changing.** People increasingly eschew the long-term, formal style of volunteering, choosing instead to engage more flexible, more self-directed, digitally-enabled, and cause-driven volunteering [26, 27]. The rise of social media has been an important catalyst for this change, increasing people's capacity to self-organise outside of formal organisations [28, p.15].

In this context, **a key concern within the emergency management and the wider voluntary sector today is how the changing landscape is putting pressure on the long-term sustainability of Australia's formal volunteer capacity** [21, 24, 29-32]. However, the changing landscape also opens doors onto new and innovative ways to enable and enhance the value of emergency volunteering for communities [17]. Examples include access to new volunteer bases and skilled volunteers, increasing surge capacity in times of emergency, and harnessing and empowering local resources and skills in the wake of an emergency event.

Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) that can respond effectively to the changing landscape have much to gain. However, developing "the capacity to adapt to changing volunteer demographics, motivations and expectations" is recognised as a significant on-going challenge for many VIOs [1, p.48].

### ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING

There are five main organisational contexts for emergency volunteering (see Figure 1, over page). Three are based in the community sector: expanding support EMOs, extending community organisations, and emergent groups.

**Expanding support EMOs** (hereafter support EMOs) are organisations that have wider social welfare, community service, humanitarian or environmental conservation missions that also have formally recognised emergency management responsibilities, particularly for the delivery of disaster welfare services. This category includes many not-for-profit, community sector organisations like the Australian Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Anglicare.

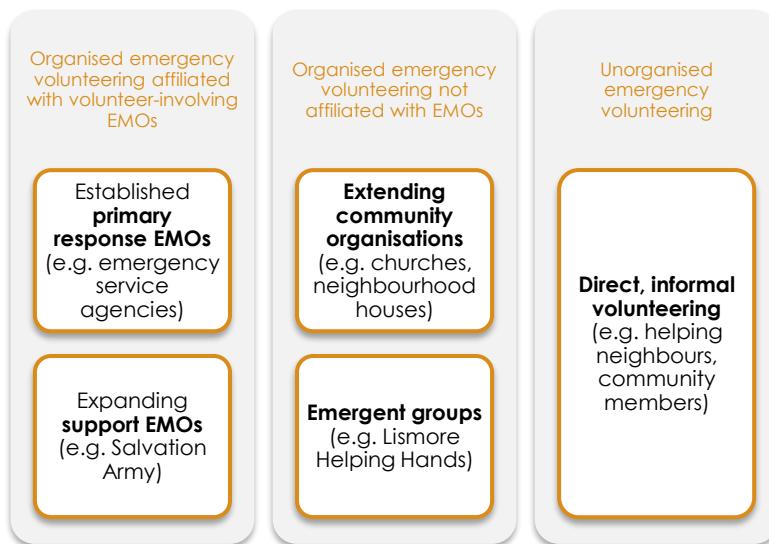


FIGURE 1: FIVE ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING  
(BASED ON DYNES 1970, FIGURE 6-1, P. 138 [SEE 33]).

**Extending community organisations** (see also [12, p.359-60]) are community sector organisations that do not have formal emergency management responsibilities but which build individual and community resilience before, during and after a disaster strikes in their communities [6]. These organisations may also ‘extend’ their activities into emergency relief and recovery when their communities are impacted by an emergency event. Examples include churches, community associations, neighbourhood houses, health and social services organisations, and sporting clubs.

**Emergent groups** [12, p.359-60, 34]) are new, self-organised groups or networks that form in direct response to an arising need when a disaster strikes. They include, for example, self-organised, informal collective responses within disaster-affected communities (“arguably the most underestimated component of human resources available to disaster managers” see [35, p.397-8, 36]), as well as self-organised informal volunteering by the wider public to assist impacted communities that is increasingly mobilised via social media.

This report primarily considers emergency volunteering associated with **extending community organisations**. It secondarily considers volunteering in emergent groups and support EMOs. Volunteering with support EMOs is considered in more detail in a companion Environmental Scan report [15].

Additionally, ‘**spontaneous volunteering**’ is a form of emergency volunteering that is on the rise and receiving increased attention in the emergency management sector. Potential spontaneous volunteers are “individuals or groups of people who seek or are invited to contribute their assistance during and/or after an event, and who are unaffiliated with any part of the existing official emergency management response and recovery system and may or may not have relevant training, skills or experience” [37]. Spontaneous volunteering commonly overlaps with emergent groups in post-disaster settings. However, it can take place within any of the organisational contexts described above, and it is likely to increasingly do so in future [see for example 38].



## IMPLICATIONS

The goal of the *Adapting the sector* study is to enable and enhance the value of volunteering for communities – before, during and after disasters – into the future. The findings presented in this report have a range of implications with respect to enabling the value of emergency volunteering associated with community sector organisations, much of which is not traditionally viewed as part of the emergency management sector.

The implications highlighted below were identified from the findings by the researchers. Subsequent stages of the study will include activities to further consider implications of this research jointly with stakeholders and participants.

An important antecedent to discussing these implications is to recognise and reiterate the important contribution of the community sector broadly in supporting communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters. While some community sector organisations have formally recognised roles in relevant state and local emergency management and recovery plans (i.e. are recognised support EMOs), these are just a small portion of the community sector organisations that contribute to emergency management and community resilience goals on a day-to-day basis.

Furthermore, a report by the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS), emphasises the numerous benefits of greater CSO involvement in emergency management:

*Working with the community sector will bring: experience in building resilience; existing networks and connections; significant levels of community trust and legitimacy; community engagement and strengths-based approaches; unique assets, resources and skills; a deep understanding of local communities; a focus on people who may be vulnerable or disadvantaged; the willingness to contribute to disaster resilience.*

*By leveraging the resources, knowledge and skills of community organisations, the emergency management sector can significantly enhance Victorian communities' resilience before emergencies and disasters strike [6, p.3].*

### **1. The widening gap between expectations and capacities of community sector organisations in emergency management is concerning.**

Community sector participants clearly see a significant and widening gap between government and societal expectations of community sector organisations in emergency management and the capacity of those organisations.

Decreases in government funding for CSOs and for public service delivery has left CSOs and their volunteers striving to meet greater government and community expectations and needs with diminishing resources. Community sector representatives are concerned about how this will affect their communities and clients, as well as their staff and volunteers.



Many flagged a need for more equitably distributed funding for emergency management that reflects the significant contribution of Volunteer-Involving CSOs, whose contributions can often be overlooked or unsupported. As one participant in this study explained, “*there is no recognition or resources to ‘support the supporters’ - and this inevitably takes a toll on the individuals and organisations involved*”.

## **2. The status quo is not a foundation for sustainable formal emergency volunteering into the future**

Community sector participants clearly articulated a need for change in the way emergency volunteering is coordinated, managed and supported. Volunteer Involving CSOs face many of the same volunteer sustainability challenges as Volunteer Involving EMOs. It is widely recognised that significant change has occurred in the social, technological, economic and political contexts of volunteering and the not-for-profit sector [17], all of which were reiterated by community sector participants in this study. As a result, it is harder for CSOs to recruit and retain formal volunteers, particularly in many rural communities where the volunteer base is already small and increasingly overburdened [31].

Community sector organisations are struggling with high competition for volunteers, and mounting workload and administrative and training burdens for their volunteers that is exacerbated by the requirements of meeting rising government compliance and the professionalisation of volunteering. At the same time, people have less tolerance for bureaucracy and high training requirements in formal volunteering roles, leading more and more people to choose to volunteer informally or in shorter-term and more flexible ways.

Consequently, the picture of the baseline future for emergency volunteering – the anticipated future state if current trends and issues do not change – that was painted by community sector representatives is concerning and clearly indicates that current volunteering models and approaches are broadly seen to be unsustainable over time. Without change, most participants envisioned a serious shortage of volunteers leading to mounting expectations on government to deliver emergency management services, an associated rise in cost to government, and/or poorer outcomes for communities.

## **3. The baseline future envisioned for emergency volunteering in the community sector contrasts sharply with the goals of national and international policy discourse and agendas.**

There is a clear disparity between the view from community sector participants of the baseline future for emergency volunteering, and the ‘shared responsibility for disaster resilience’ policy agenda in emergency management nationally, and disaster risk reduction internationally.

In Australia’s National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, for example, it states:

There is a need for a new focus on shared responsibility; one where political leaders, governments, business and community leaders, and the not-for-profit sector **all adopt increased or improved emergency management and advisory roles and contribute to achieving integrated and coordinated disaster resilience**. In turn, communities, individuals and households need to



*take greater responsibility for their own safety and act on information, advice and other cues provided before, during and after a disaster [39, p.3, emphasis added].*

Meanwhile, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction outlines a comprehensive list of contributions that “States should encourage” from “Civil society, volunteers, organized voluntary work organizations and community-based organizations” [40]. These include participating in disaster risk reduction planning and strategy, implementing plans and strategies, contributing to disaster risk awareness and education, and advocating for resilient communities and “all of society disaster risk management”. Further, as stated by the United Nations Volunteer Program, “There is growing international awareness that nations and communities can and should build resilience to disasters through a “bottom-up” process in the form of volunteer initiatives rooted in the community” [41, p.xxii].

Yet, while international and national disaster management policy and statements such as these continue to raise expectations of community sector organisations and their volunteers in the context of shared responsibility for disaster resilience, representatives of these same organisations see current approaches and forces leading to a likely future in which their volunteer bases have contracted, and their organisational capacity to fulfil such expectations is severely constrained. This implies that current policy agendas are out of step with the looming reality, unless change is made to address the expectation-capacity gap highlighted in this report.

#### **4. More needs to be done to coordinate & integrate spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering for the benefit of communities, volunteers and organisations**

In emergency management, the rise of spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering is a key outcome of shifts in the volunteering landscape. This kind of emergency volunteering has always occurred, but it has gained prominence and visibility, and has been further enabled by new communications technology [12, 17].

Community sector participants expressed divergent views on spontaneous volunteering. This reflects a basic tension between managing risks associated with engaging unknown and untrained (in emergency management) helpers who step-up in times of disaster on one hand and realising significant potential benefits from this volunteering for communities, volunteers and organisations on the other hand. There was further distinction between the views of participants from community-based groups compared to those from larger, and more formal organisations. Participants from community-based groups were more likely to emphasise community leadership in emergency management, and framing spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering as community mobilisation and responsibility-sharing in action compared to those from larger and more formal organisations.

Despite these differences, however, there was general consensus that, although there has been progress in planning for and building capacity to, coordinate spontaneous volunteering and self-organisation within emergent groups [see for



example 38, 42], current arrangements remain insufficient. It was clear that community sector representatives see a need for greater collaboration among EMOs and CSOs to develop models and processes to coordinate spontaneous, as well as other forms of self-organised and informal emergency volunteering, to better manage risk while also realising benefits. Furthermore, several participants anticipated that these forms of emergency volunteering would grow, as more and more people eschew the restrictions and requirements of formal, long-term volunteering. Without change, in a baseline future they saw the emergency management sector struggling to embrace and integrate informal community responses to emergencies and disasters, with some seeing this as a factor contributing to a greater disconnect between community and formal emergency management structures.

## **5. Greater collaboration between the emergency management and community sectors, and stronger government leadership are two key enablers for moving towards a preferred future.**

While there were some differences amongst participant views, overall the preferred future as seen by community sector participants has five core elements: people prepared, trained and mobilised community-wide; collaborative, community-centred culture and service delivery models; connected, resilient and empowered communities that drive emergency management; recognition and resourcing for CSOs to participate in emergency management, and formal volunteering that is accessible, flexible, rewarding, inclusive and highly valued.

To achieve this future, responses from community sector participants highlighted two fundamental enablers: greater collaboration and coordination between the emergency management and community sector organisations, and stronger government leadership.

Regarding collaboration, participants indicated that closer relationships and partnerships between organisations in these two sectors have grown, but collaboration, and coordination, needs to develop much further. Impacts of the professionalisation of volunteering, as well as bureaucracy, top-down emergency management culture and high staff turnover were flagged as barriers to greater collaboration, particularly for community-based groups.

The need for greater collaboration is supported by a 2019 review by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management in Victoria on connecting with the private sector and community organisations. The review highlighted the importance of community sector – and private sector – involvement in emergency management, as well as the need for the emergency managing sector to build capacity for collaboration:

*Helping communities become safer and more resilient will depend on the sector working closely together and with private and community sector organisations [...] Collaboration will play an increasing role in emergency management governance, resilience building, capability and capacity development, and effective response and recovery performance. This requires the sector to strengthen capability to establish, develop and work effectively with the private sector and community organisations. [7, p.2]*



Regarding the second enabler – government leadership – many of the things that community sector representatives see as necessary to move the sector towards a preferred future for emergency volunteering require stronger government recognition, leadership for change, and financial support. This suggests a need for further and renewed lobbying to government on behalf of Volunteer Involving CSOs and their volunteers in the emergency management space.

The importance of government leadership to enable the value of emergency volunteering is also a key finding in the United Nations Volunteers' 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism report, which emphasises the need to "understand and nurture local capacities [to] help transform volunteerism from a coping strategy to a strategic resource for the prevention of crises and to enable adaptation to new risks" [43, p.97]. This report calls for strong government support and leadership to enable this:

Governments and other stakeholders can strengthen the contribution of volunteerism to resilience-building in two ways: firstly, by nurturing an ecosystem for effective volunteering and secondly, by forming partnerships based on greater appreciation of the value of communities' own contributions [43, p.ix].

## **6. Currently, there is little training offered beyond EMO staff and volunteers that supports community-wide preparation and mobilisation.**

The final implication concerns the prominence given by community sector participants to a preferred future featuring people prepared, trained and mobilised community-wide. This was the most commonly raised element in a preferred future for emergency volunteering. Yet currently there is relatively little training available in Australia for people who are not directly associated with an EMO, which might support such community-wide preparation and mobilisation. This a gap, and an opportunity, that warrants some attention and consideration.

Examples where such training is available in other countries include in New Zealand, where community preparedness training is provided that educates community members in, not only personal and household preparedness, but also ways to be involved in the wider response<sup>5</sup>, supporting emergency responders, and "working with community in a coordinated way".<sup>6</sup> Another, and different, example is the Community Emergency Response Team program in the United States, which "trains people to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in their communities", in teams as well as individually [44, p.1552].

There are some Australian examples also of training developed to prepare a wider range of people to be involved in emergency management in more diverse ways. These include New South Wales SES training of Community Action Teams under its Volunteering Reimagined initiative [45], and a project by the Australian Red Cross, also in New South Wales, to "recruit and train community based agencies to increase the Red Cross surge capacity and build community

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://getprepared.nz/personal-preparedness/course/>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://featherstoncommunity.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Wairarapa-A4-Mar-2016-Course-Flyer-1.pdf>



resilience".<sup>7</sup> Other examples include local government programs in community resilience leadership [e.g. 46], and Volunteering Queensland's Disaster Resilience Leadership project.<sup>8</sup> However, much of this training is project-based and funded through short-term grant programs; hence do not have ongoing funding. As such, this remains an area where further opportunity exists to support and enable emergency volunteering that has value for communities beyond that affiliated with emergency services, and to build community resilience through the development of more widely available, and ongoing, community preparedness training.

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<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Pages/emergency-management/Funding-Programs/emergency-volunteer/support-scheme-2015-17.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://emergencyvolunteering.com.au/qld/projects/disaster-resilience-leadership-project>



## APPROACH

Community sector views on the emergency volunteering landscape were elicited primarily through an online survey comprising eight main open-ended questions (see Appendix 1 – Survey questions). The survey was administered using the Qualtrics survey platform (<https://www.qualtrics.com>). It was open from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018. 46 responses were received. In addition, two interviews conducted with similar questions in late 2017 and early 2018 as part of initial interviews for the *Adapting the sector* study involved community sector representatives and are included in this report.

## SAMPLE

Table 1 provides an overview of research participant's organisational category and jurisdictional area. Community-based EM (emergency management) groups represented included seven emergency planning/preparedness and recovery groups. The 12 local community organisations involved included neighbourhood houses, community associations and community-based service centres. The seven health and social services organisations were larger not-for-profits servicing communities across a range of locations. In addition, representatives from six peak bodies and other representative groups/networks participated, as did four representatives of faith-based community service organisations. The seven not-for-profit support EMOs included established and newer organisations with recurring roles in providing emergency response or recovery support to a range of communities. The six local government representatives were staff working closely with the community sector in predominantly community development roles.

	Local/ municipal	Regional	State/ territory	National/ international	TOTAL
<b>Community-based EM (CBEM)</b>	6	1	0	0	<b>7</b>
<b>Community organisations (Cmtly Org)</b>	9	2	0	0	<b>12</b>
<b>Health &amp; social services (H&amp;S Services)</b>	0	2	4	1	<b>7</b>
<b>Peaks, representative groups, networks (Peak)</b>	0	0	5	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Faith-based organisations (Faith-based)</b>	0	1	3	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Not-for-profit support EMOs (Sppt EMO)</b>	0	0	4	3	<b>7</b>
<b>Local government (LG)</b>	6	0	0	0	<b>6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>48</b>

TABLE 1: COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANT AFFILIATIONS BY ORGANISATIONAL TYPE AND JURISDICTIONAL AREA

All but six participants were associated with Volunteer-Involving Organisations. Those organisations that did not engage volunteers included three peaks/representative groups/networks, two local governments and one health and social services organisation. 16 participants were located in Victoria; nine in New South Wales; eight in Queensland; seven in South Australia; five in Western



Australia, two in Tasmania and one in the Northern Territory. For brevity, research participants are collectively described hereafter as 'community sector participants'.

More information about the research methodology used for this study is included in Appendix 2.

## **STUDY LIMITATIONS**

The findings reported here should not be interpreted as representative of views from the wider community sector. Rather, they constitute insights from experienced community sector participants who are involved in planning with their communities to better prepare, respond and/or recover from emergencies.

As this study is a part of a sector-wide environmental scan, there is not a sufficient number of participants to discern anything but the most significant differences in views between participants from the seven organisational categories listed in Table 1, nor between different jurisdictional settings.



## FINDINGS

Findings are organised here by the main questions asked of participants. Key differences in responses are described where most significant, but in keeping with the purpose of a sector-wide environmental scan, emphasis is placed on broad issues and themes shared across participants' responses.

Participant quotes used in this report, unless otherwise stated, reflect most respondents' experiences. To protect anonymity, participants are identified only by their (abbreviated) organisational category from Table 1 (on page 19) and a unique ID number, e.g. [H&S services, P-11]. Three participants chose not to be quoted in the report, but their responses were included in the analysis.

### WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE IN THE LAST 5-10 YEARS?

Changes in the volunteering landscape over the last 5-10 years are described here as changes in the external environment beyond the emergency management and community sectors (using the STEEP framework: Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic, and Political) and changes in the internal environment within these sectors (see summary in Table 2).

External environment
<b>Social change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Changing nature of volunteering</b>, particularly rise of short-term volunteering, lower tolerance for training and administration requirements, rise in spontaneous and informal, self-organised emergency volunteering.</li> <li>• <b>Increasing individualism and social expectations</b> have impacted people's willingness to volunteer and amplified the demands and expectations on the emergency management workforce.</li> </ul>
<b>Technological change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adoption of new digital technology &amp; social media use</b> have fundamentally changed the way organisations interact with and manage volunteers.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Decrease in government funding</b> for CSOs and for public service delivery has left CSOs and their volunteers striving to meet greater government and community expectations and needs with diminishing resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No significant past environmental change was highlighted (but impacts of future environmental change were raised).</li> </ul>
<b>Political change</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Growing regulatory &amp; compliance demands on Volunteer-Involving CSOs.</b></li> </ul>
Internal environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professionalisation of volunteering</b>, combined with growing government compliance and bureaucratic processes, has significantly increased administrative and training demands on volunteers and CSOs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rise in partnerships and closer relationships</b> between Volunteer-Involving CSOs and EMOs in emergency management.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Un-resourced rise in expectations of CSOs in emergency management</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mounting acceptance of spontaneous, self-organised &amp; informal volunteering</b></li> </ul>

TABLE 2: EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT CHANGES IMPACTING EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING, RAISED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS



## External environment

### Social change

Two areas dominated community sector participant's descriptions of social change that has impacted volunteering in CSOs: the changing nature of volunteering and increasing individualism and social expectations of emergency management and of volunteers.

#### *Changing nature of volunteering*

The changing nature of volunteering, i.e. how people volunteer, was the strongest theme in participant descriptions of what has changed in the volunteering landscape (see also Appendix 3, Table 9). In particular, participants noted fewer people were opting for long-term roles. Furthermore, while most people who volunteer continue to do so for altruistic reasons, participants also noted that other reasons have become increasingly important, such as accessing work opportunities, increasing social connectedness, and meeting 'mutual obligation' requirements for receiving government benefits.

Another aspect of the changing nature of volunteering noted by some participants, was people placing higher priority on roles that directly impact on a cause they care about and seeking greater personal fulfilment or reward from their volunteering. Related to this, people have less tolerance for training and administration requirements in volunteering roles. The rise of spontaneous and informal, self-organised volunteering was clearly recognised as a significant way that shifts in volunteering have manifest in the context of emergency management:

*The nature of volunteering is changing. People don't volunteer for extended periods of time and we're seeing that in the spontaneous volunteer thing. People just want to be able to turn out after an event, but they don't necessarily want to have the ongoing formal relationship of having to show up to a weekly training [CBEM, P-47].*

#### *Increasing individualism and societal expectations*

Several participants, particularly those representing support EMOs, described rising individualism in Australian society, and increasing social expectations of emergency management and of volunteers. They explained how expectations that government or 'someone else' will provide have risen while neighbourliness and sense of community have decreased. This has impacted people's willingness to volunteer and amplifies the demands and expectations on the emergency management workforce – paid and volunteer – from communities:

*Changing societal expectations lead to reduced self-awareness and responsibility amongst consumers. Linked with increased disaster impact levels and frequency, the impact is on the surge capacity in EM organisations. This is only in part matched by increased volunteer numbers and resourcing. It is not ameliorated by mining down deeper into a volunteer pool where individuals have lower commitment and participation capacity [Sppt EMO, P-2].*



*I believe that the community as a whole has higher expectations of those who volunteer. Gone are the days of gratitude for acts of good will, as we are now in a time of increased litigation, a decreasing sense of community and increased individualism and capitalism - people would prefer to pay a stranger for assistance than ask their neighbour. And correspondingly people expect that any assistance rendered from a uniformed emergency services personnel will be of an exceptionally (and sometimes unattainably) high standard [Sppt EMO, P-23].*

### Technological change

The impact of the rise of new technology on the volunteering landscape is far-reaching, and was clearly described by a number of participants as having fundamentally changed the way organisations interact with and manage volunteers:

*Technology would be the most significant change in the volunteering landscape. The way we organise, communicate and engage volunteers has fundamentally shifted. [Peak, P-37]*

### Economic change

The second strongest theme revealed in participants' descriptions of changes in the emergency volunteering landscape was a decrease in government funding for community sector organisations and for public service delivery. Decreasing resources for public service delivery has resulted in greater dependency on CSOs and their volunteers to deliver community services. Meanwhile, declining funds for CSOs means they are left striving to meet greater government and community expectations and needs with diminishing resources:

*The community sector, dominated by women, continues to be expected to volunteer and seldom is this contribution funded in service agreements [Cmty Org, P-20].*

*The range and complexity of issues dealt with by volunteer groups has increased. [...] As public sector resources have been scaled back, volunteer organisations moved to fill a void [Cmty Org, P-46].*

### Environmental change

Participants did not raise any significant environmental change that has impacted the emergency volunteering landscape in the past. However, environmental change, particularly climate change, was raised by numerous participants as a key issue that would impact on the future landscape (see page 42.)

### Political change (including regulatory, legal)

The growth of government legislation, regulation and compliance requirements for CSOs and Volunteer-Involving Organisations (e.g. Police and Working with Children Checks, Occupational Health and Safety etc) was another strong theme in participant's responses. They explained that, while the intent behind this was positive, it had nonetheless increased regulatory and administrative



demands on both CSOs and volunteers. This was linked by some to growing risk aversion in government:

*The obligations and requirements for volunteer deployment have become more stringent, my opinion being that this is due to an increased aversion to risk by governments, including local governments [Sppt EMO, P-6].*

### Internal environment

Changes within the emergency management and community sectors that have impacted on emergency volunteering strongly reflect the influence of the changing external environment. Four key areas of internal, sector change identified by participants were: the professionalisation of volunteering; rise in partnerships and closer relationships between CSOs and EMOs; rising, but unresourced, expectations of CSOs in emergency management, and; mounting acceptance of spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering.

#### Professionalisation of volunteering

Growing professionalisation of volunteering leading to higher organisational expectations of volunteer skills was a strong theme in participant descriptions of internal sector change:

*The volunteering landscape has become increasingly professionalized over the past few years. The need for volunteers to possess or develop higher skill sets in risk assessment and mitigation, community development, communications and public relations, child safety and formal or informal training delivery has increased and continues to do so [Sppt EMO, P-23].*

It was widely recognised that, combined with growing government compliance requirements and ever more rigid, bureaucratic processes in some organisations, this has significantly increased administrative and training demands on volunteers:

*Much more stringent requirements (as society/culture changes and has higher expectations) - for our own volunteers we require a police check, multiple documents completed, training and ongoing upskilling [Faith-based, P-8].*

Some participants felt this was driving people away from volunteering with formal organisations, and restricting who organisations are able to call on to assist during times of emergency:

*Volunteer training requirements are greater than what they were 20 years ago. While this is good it can lead to people staying away from voluntary roles due to time constraints. In the past many EM volunteer members would activate in a large-scale emergency even if they were no longer active, this isn't possible anymore [Cmtv Org, P-22].*

*Overburdensome policy which limits/prohibits volunteers from responding to authentic community need as it emerges [Sppt EMO, P-23].*



### Rise in partnerships and closer relationships between CSOs and EMOs

Some participants described a positive shift towards closer relationships between Volunteer-Involving CSOs and EMOs, particularly in recovery:

*In regard to using volunteer groups for relief and recovery services: Council has moved to formal arrangements and understandings around role clarity and capacity and capability of these groups to deliver relief and recovery services. This has made agencies more aware of relief and recovery [...] It has also improved relief and recovery services to people affected by emergencies [LG, P-40].*

Participants referred to numerous cases of new or strengthened partnerships between CSOs and EMOs, involving both small, community-based groups as well as larger not-for-profits:

*I have developed good contacts and links with agencies and departments [CBEM, P-42].*

*We have partnered with [EMOs and a university] to deliver a program [that] increases the resilience of [our target] community [H&S Services, P-9].*

### Un-resourced rise in expectations of CSOs in emergency management

Alongside closer relationships developing between CSOs and EMOs, expectations of CSOs in emergency management have also risen. In line with the decrease in government funding for community sector organisations and for public service delivery already identified, these expectations are largely un-resourced, leaving CSO staff and volunteers over-burdened, and CSOs struggling to balance the workload and cost of emergency management related services with their core community welfare services:

*I was essentially volunteering for a FT role in addition to my 'day job', this had (negative) impacts on the role I was actually paid to do ... as there were no resources available for back-filling my position [Cmtv Org, P-4].*

*As paid staff and volunteers, we are volunteering more and more to attend conferences, speak on panels, answer surveys and develop programs that make an important contribution to emergency management goals [Cmtv Org, P-20].*

However, some still felt that the contribution of CSOs to emergency management, particularly the contribution of volunteers in community development roles to building community resilience, were not well-recognised:

*[State government agency] and local government do not always recognise the contribution of our volunteers working in a community development capacity to enhance the goals of the NSDR [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience] [Cmtv Org, P-20].*



### Acceptance of spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering

Finally, several participants acknowledged growing acceptance, be it reluctant or enthusiastic, of the involvement of spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteers:

*There is a growing recognition of the importance [of] volunteers taking part in recovery. I think this has occurred in part because of political and other pressures and partly in recognition that it is rightful that people affected by disasters should want to contribute and are able to make a significant contribution [Sppt EMO, P-7].*

*While the effective responders are trained and accredited within the established structures and methods (AIIMS), in recent years some voices have advocated that non-accredited and non-EM or skills trained and self-deploying individuals and organisations [...] should be given freedom to participate [Sppt EMO, P-2].*



## WHAT ARE THE KEY EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING ISSUES TODAY?

The key emergency volunteering issues identified by community sector participants are all dealing, to greater or lesser degrees, with impacts of the external and internal environment changes that have, and continue to, reshape the volunteering landscape (see summary in Table 3). As one participant especially emphasised, policies and practices in organisations have not kept pace with the change:

*Volunteering as we have experienced in the past several decades has shifted radically already. Our policies have not caught up with that and our practices even less so. These are underlying issues that inform every form of volunteer engagement including emergency volunteering [Peak, P-32].*

Issue	Description
<b>Volunteer sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining volunteer numbers</li> <li>• Rising burdens &amp; expectations on volunteers</li> <li>• Ageing volunteer workforce and difficulty recruiting younger volunteers</li> <li>• Greater competition for volunteers' time</li> <li>• Difficulty maintaining volunteers' motivation and training outside of emergency activations</li> </ul>
<b>Disconnect between EM and community sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paternalistic, top-down culture in EM sector restricts more collaborative and inclusive arrangements and relationships</li> <li>• Compounded by bureaucracy, professionalisation and high government staff turnover</li> </ul>
<b>Implications of spontaneous and informal emergency volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge of managing risks associated with engaging untrained and unknown volunteers</li> <li>• A need to better enable benefits of community participation</li> <li>• Planning &amp; arrangements for this volunteering is currently inadequate</li> </ul>
<b>Gap between expectations &amp; capacity, resourcing of CSOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capacity in community sector for emergency management</li> <li>• Workloads, fatigue &amp; stress can be high</li> <li>• CSOs can struggle to support volunteers &amp; staff in EM contexts</li> <li>• Staff &amp; volunteers can be directly impacted by emergency event</li> </ul>

TABLE 3: KEY EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING ISSUES RAISED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

### Volunteer sustainability

Sustainability of their organisation's volunteer workforce in the face of the changing external and internal environments was a core issue raised by participants (see Appendix 3, Table 10). Numerous participants were concerned about the implications of declining volunteer numbers, the rising burden on remaining volunteers, an ageing volunteer workforce, difficulty recruiting younger volunteers, and growing competition for volunteers, particularly those willing to engage in roles with higher training and administrative requirements:



The competition for volunteers (just within the emergency management (EM) sector, leaving aside the community sector) is intense; many volunteer in several roles (e.g. in RFS, Red Cross, and with their local Neighbourhood Centre or Family Support Service). There is already a 'shortage' of volunteers state-wide. This is not a sustainable model [Cmty Org, P-4].

Maintaining volunteer motivation and skills for emergency management roles given the sporadic nature of emergency volunteering was also difficult for smaller CSOs particularly. All these issues were more severe in smaller communities.

### **Emergency management-community sector disconnect**

Despite some participants identifying a rise in partnerships and closer relationships between CSOs and EMOs, many participants also described disconnect between the emergency management and community sectors, particularly for community-based emergency management:

*Groups focused on improving impacts for animals and animal owners during emergencies tend to be run by volunteers and work outside of formal emergency response systems. This creates many problems, including how the work of these groups can be integrated into emergency management structures [CBEM, P-39].*

*There needs to be a more holistic view of roles and responsibilities for the preparation and recovery phases. During an event, apart from neighbourly support and personal survival, there is not a role for community-based emergency management [CBEM, P-25].*

They explained that there was still limited consultation and engagement between the emergency management and community sectors, and that a paternalistic, top-down culture in emergency management was restricting more collaborative and inclusive arrangements and relationships that could improve emergency management outcomes for communities. Government bureaucracy, professionalisation of the emergency management sector, and high government staff turn-over were identified by some participants as compounding factors contributing to this disconnect; particularly for smaller, community-based organisations (see Appendix 3, Table 11).

### **Implications of Spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering**

Another key issue front and centre in the minds of many community sector participants was the implications of the rise of spontaneous, self-organised and informal emergency volunteering (see also Appendix 3, Table 12). Several participants, mostly from larger organisations, highlighted risks associated with engaging untrained and unknown volunteers during emergency events:

*These voices [that advocate for participation of non-EM trained volunteers] come from a focus on the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer (skill log book, etc.) but fail to understand that in disaster areas responders can die and/or their actions can adversely impact on the impacted people within the disaster area because those responders lack PFA training, accreditation and context [Sppt EMO, P-2].*



Other participants, predominantly from smaller-scale, community organisations and community-based EM groups, emphasised the benefits of enabling community members to participate in emergency management. They described, for example, the imperative of community 'ownership', the advantage of tapping into skills, labour and leadership within communities, building community resilience, and promoting knowledge of emergency management:

*We need to be responding to this changing part of society and going, "Yes, you can get out and help and you can be a participant in getting the community back on its feet". And I know that that's an incredibly complex thing to deal with [...] but the emergency management sector needs to think about viewing that as a resource and as something that they can work with to get the job done and get the community back up on its feet [CBEM, P-47].*

Despite this difference in perspective between larger support organisations and smaller community-based groups, there was general agreement across these groups that planning and arrangements for spontaneous volunteering and community responses to emergencies and disasters at organisational and sector/jurisdictional levels are currently inadequate for both managing risks and enabling benefits of this volunteering.

### **Expectation-capacity gap**

The final issue highlighted by participants was a gap between expectations and aspirations of CSOs to help their communities before, during and after an emergency event, and their capacity and resources to do this (see Appendix 3, Table 13). Limits to capacity included access to funding, human resources, and levels of organisational planning and preparedness in CSOs.

As one participant explained, emergency volunteering is still conceived in relatively narrow terms, leaving smaller CSOs with little to no access to funds and other resources to support their contributions to emergency management:

*Emergency volunteering is still generally perceived (certainly in NSW) as involving either the formal Emergency Services (e.g. SES, RFS) or recognised Disaster Welfare Services (such as Health, FACS, or even Salvos & Red Cross). There is no recognition in the formal arrangements as they currently stand for spontaneous volunteers, local community groups, local community sector organisations and so on. Naturally, all these get involved in recovery, and in supporting the community for the long-haul, anyway; that's what resilient communities do. But there is no recognition or resources to 'support the supporters' - and this inevitably takes a toll on the individuals and organisations involved [Cmtv Org, P-4].*

As a result of this expectation-capacity gap, staff and volunteers in CSOs face high workloads, fatigue and stress. CSOs can also struggle to provide the social, psychological and mental health support they know their volunteers and staff need during emergency activations. Adding to this, in rural and regional areas staff and volunteers could be personally impacted by emergency events, further restricting the capacity of CSOs to assist communities.



## WHAT ARE ORGANISATIONS DOING IN RESPONSE TO THESE ISSUES AND CHANGES?

Participants described a range of current activities by CSOs and local governments to address key emergency volunteering issues (see Table 4).

Volunteering issues	Key areas of activity
<b>Volunteer sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlining and simplifying processes and paperwork</li> <li>• Developing and maintaining new technological enablers for volunteer engagement and management</li> <li>• Creating avenues for volunteers to be more involved in decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency management-community sector disconnect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking greater recognition and representation of CSOs and communities in EM planning</li> <li>• Pursuing stronger partnerships with EMOs to deliver effective community engagement and preparedness programs</li> </ul>
<b>Implications of spontaneous, self-organised &amp; informal volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building informal, community capacity in EM (particularly CBEM &amp; other local community groups).</li> <li>• Building organisational capacity to manage spontaneous volunteers (but is little perceived role for SVs in larger organisations with high training needs).</li> </ul>
<b>Expectation-capacity gap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building emergency volunteer capacity, e.g. training.</li> <li>• Monitoring staff and volunteer workloads and exposure to trauma.</li> <li>• Lobbying government for greater recognition and funding of CSOs in emergency management.</li> <li>• Managing expectations of volunteer services.</li> </ul>

TABLE 4: KEY AREAS OF ACTIVITY BEING UNDERTAKEN BY CSOS TO ADDRESS EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING ISSUES

### Volunteer sustainability

Where funding is available, some CSOs are working to improve volunteer recruitment, support services and training through streamlining and simplifying processes and paperwork as much as possible:

*We use a flexible membership model that genuinely recognises people's existing skills and experience. We have deliberately shunned a rigid training/trade model in favour of common-sense recognition of prior learning [Sppt EMO, P-7].*

*All policy and procedure is designed as a skeleton framework - to provide minimum parameters on which a local community can build supplementary practises relevant to their strengths & circumstances. This avoids overwhelming volunteers with stifling policies/procedures. We design all program management and policy/ procedure to minimise administrative burden on volunteers and maximise empowerment [Sppt EMO, P-23].*

A key avenue for this is developing and maintaining new technological enablers for volunteer engagement and management, such as volunteer databases and new communications technology:

*...the main challenges were the amount of administration tasks, which was needed to manage volunteers. So we are hoping now to use a new software, where all recruitment, administrative tasks would be done through a new a*



software for volunteer management and that should be a very easy and straightforward process to recruit and communicate with a big number of volunteers [H&S Services, P-48].

With and without technology, many CSOs are prioritising volunteer involvement in decision-making and the design of policies and processes impacting on them:

*we are trying to bring a range of volunteers from different parts of the community together to see what they think they need to know and to work out then how to provide it [CBEM, P-17].*

### **Emergency management-community sector disconnect**

Many participants described efforts to lobby for greater recognition and representation of CSOs and communities in emergency management planning:

*We are now starting to push for volunteer organisations such as neighbourhood houses to be formally recognised by [state government department] as important stakeholders in successful emergency management [Cmtv Org, P-20].*

*We continue to advocate with the authorities and agencies for improved awareness by them of the potential benefits from engaging community-based organisations. This requires that they learn to trust us to know what is best for our community [CBEM, P-25].*

Many CSOs are also pursuing stronger partnerships with EMOs to deliver effective community engagement and community preparedness programs:

*Working more closely with the [EMOs] & local [service providers] about what resources [we] could supply them with to help educate animal owners about emergency preparedness [CBEM, P-39].*

*Engage with Local Council, SES, Red Cross and other agencies to increase knowledge and skills within the community [Cmtv Org, P-46].*

### **Implications of spontaneous, self-organised & informal volunteering**

Regarding spontaneous, informal and unorganised emergency volunteering within communities, CBEM groups and other local community organisations are active in enabling, and raising community capacity to be involved:

*The project has used volunteers and has made contact with volunteer groups in the community. The various activities have awakened the need to be prepared for emergencies by being unified as a community [CBEM, P-17].*

*I think in an emergency context community groups have an important role to play in 2 distinct areas:*

- Reducing dependency: By generating and enabling community relief/recovery discussions and planning [our group] has created an evidenced based platform for our community to have a greater ownership of their risks, strengths and needs. [...] and is reducing the dependency on formal support agencies in the event of a high impact emergency.



- Sharing the workload: [our group] shares responsibility for supporting community safety by procuring funding for, organising and managing emergency planning information sessions thus reducing the onus on [the fire service] and Red Cross to generate such events [CBEM, P-35].

Larger organisations, particularly those with high training requirements, saw little space for spontaneous volunteers in their organisations:

*We actively avoid accepting general community volunteers and members of self-deploying organisations not accredited [Sppt EMO, P-2].*

*Most councils do not allow spontaneous volunteers due to such issues as character, honesty, family violence, people who want to take advantage of vulnerable people [LG, P-29].*

However, a few participants did report activities underway to build capacity of their organisation to directly engage spontaneous volunteers:

*We are building the IT infrastructure to harness the value of spontaneous volunteers [Sppt EMO, P-7].*

*I am actually working on a project proposal at the moment to develop a model for managing spontaneous volunteers [LG, P-18].*

### **Expectation-capacity gap**

Regarding the expectation-capacity gap and its impacts, participants outlined efforts to build CSO capacity through staff and volunteer training:

*We are trying to work out how to "arm" volunteers. What do they need to know in order to be helpful in a time of community crisis [CBEM, P-17]?*

There is also a focus on monitoring staff and volunteer workloads and exposure to trauma:

*When staff ask for permission to respond in the immediate aftermath, we encourage them to limit this time so that they are not burnt out when they are needed to provide the ongoing recovery support [Faith-based, P-3].*

Many of the participants' organisations are also active in lobbying government for greater recognition of the role the community sector plays in emergency management, and for greater funding to support its involvement:

*[Our network] continues to strongly advocate for 'Shared Resourcing' to go hand-in-hand with 'Shared Responsibility' [Cmty Org, P-4].*

Another area of activity is communication to manage expectations of volunteering and volunteer services amongst communities and clients:

*We ensure our clients (particularly our aged and frail clients) know what to expect from us during and after disaster [Faith-based, P-3].*

### **Who is leading to way?**

Some participants found it difficult to identify organisations that were doing well in adapting to the changing landscape of volunteering. Seven participants either provided no answer to this question or could not identify examples:



*I am not aware of any agency that currently fits that description. Many organisations attempt to manage volunteers in this space well, however these are sporadic events with little ongoing support. We have been attempting to improve the system for over 15 years now and the pace of it has been unsatisfactory [Peak, P-32].*

Of those that did answer, participants identified a range of organisations in the community and emergency management sectors, including community organisations, CBEM groups, primary response EMOs, support EMOs, community sector peak bodies, local governments and research institutions (see Appendix 3, Table 14).



## WHAT WILL THE 2030 EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING LANDSCAPE LOOK LIKE IF CURRENT ISSUES AND TRENDS CONTINUE?

Not all participants described the most likely future for emergency volunteering if current trends and issues continue (e.g. the 'baseline future', see [10]). Some chose to describe their preferences for the future or what needs to change. Amongst the 38 participants that did describe a baseline future, there was some divergence in views, but a dominant, and primarily negative, picture still emerged (see summary in Table 5).

Baseline future for emergency volunteering	Description
<b>Formal volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced capacity of CSOs to assist due to lack of government policy &amp; funding</li> <li>Shortage of volunteers, overburdened volunteers</li> <li>Professionalisation, increased regulation &amp; compliance, and litigation deterring more people from choosing to volunteer</li> <li>Increased cost for government to deliver emergency management services</li> <li>Increased public expectations on government, decline in community resilience</li> </ul>
<b>Spontaneous, self-organised &amp; informal volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More spontaneous, self-organised, and informal emergency volunteering occurring</li> <li>Formal EM system struggling to embrace SVs and integrate informal community response</li> </ul>

TABLE 5: BASELINE FUTURE FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING, ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

### Formal emergency volunteering

Regarding formal emergency volunteering with organisations, one of the strongest themes was that lack of government policy and funding to support CSOs would reduce the capacity or willingness of CSOs to assist (see Appendix 3, Table 15). Several participants emphasised that this would lead to adverse outcomes for communities and even risk to life:

*Without organisations (funded), managing volunteers in emergency situations won't occur and the recovery will be impacted [Sppt EMO, P-24].*

Many participants foresaw a shortage of suitable volunteers and increased competition for volunteer's time, leading to committed volunteers being overburdened. Several specified that the trends of professionalisation, increasing regulation and compliance requirements, as well as litigation would deter more and more people from choosing to volunteer. One participant felt that mutual obligation requirements to receive government benefits would lead to more compelled volunteering:

*Centrelink recipients will be the volunteer workforce - indentured labour [Cmty Org, P-31].*

Several participants felt this situation would, in turn, increase the cost for governments to provide a paid emergency response and recovery workforce. Some participants also felt that this would lead to greater public expectations on



government to deliver emergency management services, resulting in communities becoming less resilient and more reliant on government:

*The sector will become increasingly professionalised, costing the government millions of dollars more than it currently does and the community will disconnect from responsibility and hold government to account for every emergency [Sppt EMO, P-24].*

By contrast, however, a few participants foresaw little change in emergency management processes and volunteerism in the future:

*The continuation of current practices, including state-based EM response and recovery, the SEMP [State Emergency Management Plan] and AIIMS [Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System] methods. The use of volunteers both with directly relevant skills and EM training/accreditation will continue effective capability to respond and support recovery even with expected increased event intensity in line with climate change [Sppt EMO, P-2].*

### **Spontaneous, self-organised & informal volunteering**

Two key themes emerged regarding the likely future for spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering (see Appendix 3, Table 16). Many participants saw the above shifts leading to more spontaneous, self-organised and informal volunteering taking place, with people circumventing formal organisations rather than choosing not to be involved. There were mixed views about whether this would have positive or negative impacts for communities and organisations, however. Some participants felt that the emergency management sector would struggle to embrace spontaneous volunteers or integrate informal community responses with formal systems:

*I think that as formal emergency services are increasingly centralised, we will see a rise in informal emergency volunteering as a response to loss of local input into regional planning. This will be beneficial if and only if, communities are able to upskill in understanding how to work effectively alongside formal services. The alternative is that communities will feel they have to manage risks "despite" formal services, and this in turn raises risks of personal safety and poorer mental health outcomes in the aftermath of a serious event [CBEM, P-30].*



## WHAT DOES A PREFERRED FUTURE FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING LOOK LIKE?

The picture of a preferred future for emergency volunteering presented collectively by community sector participants had five core, common elements (see Table 6). Within this picture, there were some differences in the elements emphasised by representatives of smaller, community-based groups and those with larger organisations, especially support EMOs.

Core elements in a preferred future for emergency volunteering
1. People prepared, trained & mobilised community-wide, not just within EMOs
2. Collaborative & community centred EM culture & service delivery models
3. Connected, resilient communities empowered to drive EM
4. Community sector organisation & volunteer contributions to EM recognised and resourced
5. Accessible, flexible, rewarding formal volunteering that is inclusive & valued.

TABLE 6: CORE ELEMENT OF A PREFERRED FUTURE FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING (FROM MOST TO LEAST MENTIONS), ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

### 1. People prepared, trained & mobilised community wide, not just within EMOs

The strongest theme in participants descriptions of a preferred future was having people prepared and trained to participate in emergency management widely across Australian communities and organisations. This theme was emphasised across representatives of all categories of CSOs included in the survey. Participants indicated that everyone could be an emergency volunteer with some preparation and training beforehand, and that having local people trained to participate and represent communities had significant benefits:

*That an emergency volunteer does not just have to be part of an emergency service [Cmty Org, P-27].*

*Prepared, trained and ready to go group of locals who can be called on to assist with any emergency response, from a community perspective, to provide sound advice about how to communicate and best understand local needs [CBEM, P-42]*

One participant felt that, in a preferred future, emergency management knowledge would be 'mainstreamed' and taught to all citizens, leading to a more informed volunteer base, irrespective of whether people had been trained by an EMO:

*Ideally, emergency management processes and procedure would become mainstream learning and knowledge in schools, workplaces and community groups in "peacetime" as well as during danger periods. That way, a more informed volunteer base would be available [Sppt EMO, P-10].*

Several participants described people being pre-trained to step-up as spontaneous volunteers, as well as people trained to manage these volunteers:



In an ideal world people would be screened and signed up prior to events so that they have undertaken adequate training and are able to assist in practical ways without adverse effects [Faith-based, P-8].

We all know that someone has to be chosen to manage spontaneous volunteers and it is a big job. So, I would expect that there would be more consultation happening and a clear understanding and people in positions that are trained and ready for these things to happen [H&S Services, P-48].

## **2. Collaborative & community centred emergency management**

A second strong theme in responses, especially amongst participants representing organisations not already well-integrated with emergency management arrangements, was a collaborative and community-centred culture and service delivery models in the emergency management sector. Several participants described greater and wider partnerships, particularly between emergency management and community sector stakeholders:

*That the Emergency Management space recognises a wide and varied range of partners [Cmty Org, P-27].*

*Genuine partnerships - long-term trusting relationships across the 'boundaries' of types of organisations and sectors. We recognise that we all have a shared interest in a more prepared and resilient community; that both the Emergency Management sector and Community Services sector each have their own skillsets, expertise and experience, and that both are to be valued [Cmty Org, P-4].*

*A change of language to 'emergency participation' would be helpful. I think seeing the response as 'whole of community', which includes volunteers but also includes a whole range of other stakeholders [Faith-based, P-3].*

## **3. Connected, resilient communities empowered to drive emergency management**

Many participants, particularly those associated with smaller, community-based groups, envisioned communities having capacity and power to drive emergency management planning and decision-making. They described characteristics and capacities of resilient communities, such as having strong social networks, a sense of community-mindedness and adequate support infrastructure to reduce disadvantage and increase social cohesion:

*Governments pay all citizens a living wage, which means that people experience less pressure to just survive and consider volunteering as their way of giving back to the community and improving their own sense of purpose and meaning. Communities are more resilient and engaged as a result of the increase in volunteering [...] benefits ripple out to include people who are now less lonely, less isolated, have improved mental health [LG, P-18].*

*A community with networks and a spirit of co-operation will deal with a variety of problems [CBEM, P-17].*



The second aspect was empowerment of communities to shape emergency management decisions that affect them and to design processes that best fit local community contexts:

*Community with the power to design, plan and orchestrate their own EM strategy and responses, including budgetary control [Cmtv Org, P-22].*

*That community led emergency management groups and initiatives will not only share equal responsibility for community safety but also share equal power in local planning, decision making, funding opportunities access to meaningful training [CBEM, P-30].*

*Throw away the cookie cutter and let communities design their own response and recovery capacity and determine what that will look like and how it will function [Cmtv Org, P-22]*

#### **4. CSO & volunteer contributions to emergency management are recognised and resourced**

Several participants from all organisational categories envisaged a future where CSOs have high capacity to contribute to emergency management, with adequate funding and human resources:

*Some rationalisation and sharing of resources across both EM & CS sectors is critical to long-term sustainability of the current model [Cmtv Org, P-4].*

*In terms of education and preparedness, we believe the established trusted relationship is key, so increasing the capacity of the community services and health sector would be a valuable alternative [H&S Services, P-21].*

#### **5. Formal volunteering is accessible, flexible, rewarding, inclusive & valued**

A vibrant, sustainable volunteer based was another key element in the preferred future envisioned by community sector participants. They described more flexible formal emergency volunteering accessible to a more diverse range of people:

*Inclusive group of volunteers that have access to a flexible and locally delivered training program [...] Volunteers that can float in and out of the system as their families and work commitments allow [LG, P-5].*

*Modern, diverse volunteer workforce [Peak, P-1].*

They also described streamlined processes and rewarding experiences for volunteers and a strong volunteer culture in organisations where volunteers were highly valued and supported:

*Provide volunteers with streamlined and industry-best training and protection so that they may continue to experience the rewards of volunteering [Sppt EMO, P-23].*

*While volunteering should not be about ‘what’s in it for me’, people should be able to see a satisfying and rewarding reason to volunteer [Sppt EMO, P-10].*

*A culture that really puts volunteers at the heart of the organisation, where they are supported by paid staff and not the other way around [Peak, P-37].*



## WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO MOVE TOWARDS THIS FUTURE?

*That's a big question [Faith-based, P-3].*

Participants' views on what most needs to happen to move towards a preferred future for emergency volunteering were quite consistent. The priority areas of activity highlighted fell into seven broad categories (see Table 7). These are arranged in the Table below from most to least mentions. This table also shows where participant responses indicate responsibility for these actions

primarily (✓) and secondarily (✓) seen to rest; with governments, the emergency management sector (and its organisations), and/or the community sector (and its organisations).

Given the importance of articulating and prioritising actions to move towards a preferred future for emergency volunteering, participant's responses to this question are also included in some considerable detail in Appendix 4.

Priority action areas	Governments	EM sector	Community sector
1. Foster wider & deeper collaboration and coordination between EMOs and CSOs	✓	✓	✓
2. Build CSO capacity in EM through funding, human resourcing and training	✓	✓	✓
3. Empower and build capacity in communities for EM	✓	✓	✓
4. Advocate for, promote, and value volunteers & volunteering	✓	✓	✓
5. Establish strong change leadership	✓	✓	✓
6. Build evidence of what works and share learning to improve practice		✓	✓
7. Harness new technologies to improve volunteer management and engagement		✓	✓

TABLE 7: PRIORITY ACTION AREAS TO MOVE TOWARDS A PREFERRED FUTURE FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING (FROM MOST TO LEAST MENTIONS) AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THEM, BASED ON RESPONSES FROM COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

### 1. Foster wider & deeper collaboration and coordination

The action area emphasised by the highest number of community sector participants was fostering wider and deeper collaboration and coordination between EMOs and CSOs. Some of the suggested ways to implement this included (see also examples in Appendix 4):

- partnerships as a condition in government grants;



- involvement of a wider range of parties and voices in emergency management planning, particularly community-based groups;
- leveraging off existing community sector networks;
- clarifying roles and capacities of wider emergency management stakeholders, including community sector organisations; and
- involving local governments more deeply in preparedness and planning.

Some participants also highlighted a need for streamlining and consolidating emergency management arrangements and centralising communication channels.

## 2. Build CSO capacity in EM

The second strongest theme in participant responses was building the capacity of community sector organisations to contribute to emergency management through greater and better distributed funding, human resourcing, and training. It was identified by representatives associated with all organisational categories. Increased government funding, and wider distribution of funding for emergency management was emphasised. Implementation suggestions included:

- Dedicated funding streams for CBEM;
- Greater government funding for emergency management functions undertaken by community sector organisations;
- Access to emergency management training for CSO staff and volunteers;
- Additional volunteer management training, e.g. centralised provision of training for not-for-profits; and
- Hiring of skilled volunteer managers by CSOs.

## 3. Empower and build EM capacity in communities

Empowering communities to shape and lead emergency management and building community capacity to participate in emergency management was the third priority action area identified. It was emphasised by representatives of community-based groups more than those associated with larger, and more formal organisations. Suggested ways to achieve this included:

- government funding of more community spaces;
- developing formal arrangements for community involvement, e.g. through incorporated networks of community-based groups;
- actively seek out female and CALD community leaders to participate in EM planning;
- all organisations working with community in emergency management adopting the [Core Humanitarian Standards](#)<sup>9</sup>;
- placing emergency management functions under community development, or increasing community development functions within emergency management (e.g. in local government);
- community training in emergency management (e.g. not hazard or emergency service specific); and

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>



- emergency management sector sharing knowledge with CBEM and community groups.

#### **4. Advocate for, promote and value volunteers**

The fourth priority action area – advocating for, promoting and valuing volunteers and volunteering – was primarily presented as a responsibility that governments needed to take up more strongly. It was particularly emphasised by representatives of support EMOs and peaks and other representative groups and networks. In general, participants did not identify specific ways to advance this action area other than to identify it as needing greater attention, awareness and government support.

#### **5. Establish strong change leadership**

Responsibility for the fifth priority action area – establishing strong leadership for change – was also presented as resting primarily with governments. It was identified by participants from across the range of organisational categories included in the survey. It was commonly linked to issues of government funding. Some suggested priorities included:

- Governments engaging with VIOs to develop stronger systems for involving and supporting volunteers;
- Governments agreeing on common guidelines for more equitable funding distribution;
- The need for a strong peak body to lead adaptation to the changing volunteering landscape (presumably in the emergency management sector);
- Boards and senior executives creating strong cultures of volunteerism in organisations, backed by strategy and financing.

#### **6. Build evidence & share learning to improve practice**

The sixth priority action area concerned the need for building evidence of what works, sharing learning more widely, and using this to improve practice.

Examples of suggested actions include building an evidence base of the impact of community-based emergency management approaches, and research to underpin new approaches in areas such as episodic volunteering and engaging more diverse volunteers. At the same time, one participant also emphasised the need to retain knowledge to avoid 'reinventing the wheel':

*...the propensity to forget, for newcomers to 're-invent the wheel' so as to lose functionality already embedded in the established systems. ...Ensure corporate knowledge is retained and refreshed as generations hand over to successors [Sppt EMO, P-2].*

#### **7. Harness new technologies**

The final priority action area was harnessing new technologies to improve volunteer management and engagement. Examples of suggested activities included using new platforms like Rosterfy (<https://rosterfy.com/>) to enable more flexible volunteering and using social media more effectively to attract a wider range of people to volunteering.



## WHAT UNCERTAIN OR UNPREDICTABLE FACTORS COULD SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING?

Oh dear! Forecasting is uncertain! [Cmty Org, P-19]

Sources of future uncertainty and unpredictability and their impacts are extremely difficult to identify. As one participant highlighted, there are many shifting forces beyond the emergency and community sectors that may shape the future in, as yet, unknown ways:

*We are poor at understanding future. The best-case scenarios are based on available data that is projected into the future with little understanding how human behaviours change in adaptation to emerging socio-economic trends. We have little understanding how the emerging and bulging group of people who will retire from active full-time work will adapt to time rich life with desire to engage. Similar concern is in regard to the nature of economy that is shaping attitudes of young people who will be entering the workforce in next decade or so. The shifting culture of work - career changes, shorter contracts, casualisation of workforces, gig economy, entrepreneurial class etc - are all factors that will shape and inform individuals and communities in their choices of volunteer engagement [Peak, P-32].*

Nonetheless, many community sector participants identified several external forces of change they felt were likely to shape the future volunteering landscape (see summary in Table 8). Many of the forces identified reflected continuations of current trends.

External forces of uncertainty & unpredictability in the future	
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing population</li> <li>• Rise of individualism, decline in social cohesion &amp; community mindedness</li> <li>• Rise of informal, self-organised collective action</li> </ul>
<b>Technological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliability of communications and energy technology</li> <li>• Impact of new technologies, i.e. drones</li> <li>• Social media disruption</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shifting culture and structure of work</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change &amp; event frequency, severity, duration</li> <li>• Drought</li> </ul>
<b>Political (incl. regulatory &amp; legal)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political leadership change &amp; policy uncertainty</li> <li>• Unpredictable legal implications of risk</li> </ul>

TABLE 8: EXTERNAL FORCES OF UNCERTAINTY & UNPREDICTABILITY IN THE FUTURE, ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

Regarding social factors, impacts of an ageing population, and a rise in individualism, and decline in social cohesion and community mindedness were highlighted (see Appendix 3, Table 17). A third social force of uncertainty identified concerned the impacts of rising preferences and capacity for informal, self-organised collective action undertaken outside of formal organisations, and lower tolerance for bureaucracy.

Three technological uncertainties were also identified (see Appendix 3, Table 18). They were the unreliability of communications technology in rural areas, the impact of new emergency management technologies (i.e. drones), and social



media disruption. The shifting culture and structure of work, described in the quote above, was the key economic uncertainty raised. Regarding environmental factors, climate change was strongly highlighted, including the impact of increasing event frequency, severity and duration. A few participants also raised the impact of prolonged drought on rural communities. Politics was considered a major source of future uncertainty, particularly implications of political leadership changes and policy uncertainty, including effects of policy changes in other sectors impacting on volunteering. Alongside this, a few participants identified unpredictable legal implications of risk.

## CONCLUSION

CSOs are at the heart of communities, and over decades have developed well-established networks. This rich engagement developed over time, means organisations are well placed to support volunteers and provide essential services to communities before, during and after a crisis. CSOs have a long track record working in the community and with volunteers, they are the community and have trust; connections; diversity; and local knowledge.

In a preferred future, community sector participants described CSOs that are sufficiently funded to develop programs around emergency preparation, response and recovery. The sector's contribution is valued; CSOs are financially supported to enable staff and volunteers to complete emergency management tasks at the same time as delivering their core functions. Moreover, during recovery CSOs are resourced to support communities over the long-term.

Emergency volunteering 2030 is just around the corner. This next decade opens opportunities to develop governance structures and support and recognition for the role of CSOs, which can provide confidence for communities and volunteers in the emergency management space.

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## APPENDIX 1 – KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1.** Please tell us a little bit about your organisation/s by describing its interest, involvement or role in emergency management.
- 2.** Thinking back over the last 5-10 years, what if anything has changed in the volunteering landscape for your organisation/s and why do you think this change has happened?
- 3a** What do you see are the key issues today regarding emergency volunteering – volunteering that supports communities before, during or after emergencies – for your organisation/s?
- 3b.** What if anything is your organisation/s planning or doing in response to these issues and changes?
- 4.** If the issues and changes that you have described in the previous questions remain unchanged, what do you think the situation for emergency volunteering is most likely to look like by 2030?
- 5.** Imagine an alternative, preferred future situation for emergency volunteering by 2030. Can you describe what this looks like?
- 6.** What most needs to happen to move towards this future and who needs to do it?
- 7.** Describe any organisations or initiatives in the community sector or beyond that you think are doing a particularly good job of grappling with the changing volunteering landscape and other related issues?
- 8.** Is there anything you consider to be particularly uncertain or unpredictable when thinking about factors that could shape the future of emergency volunteering? (e.g. social, technological, environmental, economic, or political factors)



## APPENDIX 2 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology was used to produce the findings in this report. This allowed participants' diverse perspectives of the current and future landscapes of emergency volunteering to be elicited without the researchers imposing predetermined assumptions or restrictions on their responses.

An online survey is not a common data collection method in a qualitative study where predominantly open-ended questioning is required. The use of interview or focus group techniques is far more common. However, for this study an open-ended question survey was chosen for three reasons [see also 47, 48]:

- 1) although qualitative in nature, the data being sought was quite structured (i.e. the same set of questions was being asked across different participant groups);
- 2) given this study was part of a wider environmental scan rather than comprising an in-depth case study, there was limited need for the use of additional probing questions, which is a key benefit of interviewing as a data collection method, and;
- 3) The use of a self-administered survey is less time-consuming (for both researcher and participant) and therefore less costly for the research project compared to interviewing. Interviewing is more in-depth and intensive in both data collection and analysis phases, and thus is used when depth of knowledge is especially prioritised in a study.

### Data collection

In line with the qualitative methodology, the sampling strategy used to select participants was purposive. Purposive sampling involves seeking out key informants, who are people with specific knowledge or experience relevant to understanding the phenomenon under investigation [49]. Purposive sampling was used because the aim of the study was to seek views specifically from key informants from the community sector who have direct experience with emergency volunteering, rather than representing the views of the community sector more widely (and where a random sampling strategy would be better suited). Again, a purposive sampling strategy is unusual for survey-based research.

As purposive sampling was used, participation in the survey was not anonymous. The method used to identify key informants involved using contacts in community sector networks to circulate information about the study and the type of participant being sought, and to allow participants to self-select on that basis.

Information was distributed through multiple networks:

- Key points of distribution for Victoria and Western Australia were the Councils of Social Services in each of those states (VCOSS and WACOSS respectively). The VCOSS distribution also included organisations in New South Wales and the Northern Territory.
- In South Australia the State Recovery Centre provided a list of approximately 20 key community groups involved in recovery.



- In Queensland, Volunteer Queensland similarly provided a list of 10 key community groups.
- The survey was also publicised through the website of the Council for Social Services in Tasmania; and through e-newsletters of Volunteering South Australia and Northern Territory (VSA&NT), and the Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association's (ANHCA).

After self-nominating to participate in the survey, participants were sent a list of the survey's 8 main questions in an invitation email, so the questions could be read and considered before accessing the survey via a unique link.

## Data analysis

Data were thematically analysed using NVivo qualitative analysis software [50, 51]. Thematic analysis is a continuous iterative process. The categories arise from the data and this means unanticipated ideas and issues can emerge [52, p.88]. NVivo does not interpret any data; the important feature of the software is the ability to manage a great volume of qualitative data. Thematic analysis involved coding segments of data for content that related to the research questions, as well as for other, emergent themes raised by participants [53, p.96]. Coded data was progressively organised into categories as themes emerged across participant responses. Broader, cross-cutting themes not defined by specific research questions were also identified.

## APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL FINDINGS TABLES

**TABLE 9: CHANGING NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING, THEMES RAISED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS**

Changing nature of volunteering themes	Example quotes
<b>Growth in short-term volunteering &amp; greater competition for time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... people want more bite-sized options to volunteer [H&amp;S services, P-11].</li> <li>Increased shift to episodic and event-based volunteering with periods of high interest and long tail of low interests in between [Peak, P-32].</li> <li>People are becoming time poor with conflicting priorities and very busy lifestyles and sustained regular volunteering commitments can be difficult for people to maintain [Cmty Org, P-23].</li> </ul>
<b>Growth in other reasons to volunteer in addition to altruism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While the majority of people volunteer 'to help the community', many seek other benefits such as to decrease social isolation and as a pathway to employment [LG, P-15].</li> <li>The biggest change in volunteering over the last 10 years as far as I know is that people undertake volunteer roles because they have to fulfil some government requirement in return for benefits [Peak, P-36].</li> </ul>
<b>Higher priority on volunteering impact, and personal fulfilment/reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[A change in recent years has been] Volunteers want more fulfilling engagement and want to see the time they contribute to be of value and see a result [Sppt EMO, P-24].</li> <li>Volunteers who are prepared to devote effort and commitment to training and becoming engaged with the organisation are very valuable. A disturbing modern trend is for people to seek personal validation and accolades for little effort – 'every player wins a prize'. As an active operational organisation, we dissuade people who come with this belief [Sppt EMO, P-10].</li> </ul>
<b>Lower tolerance for training/administrative requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a more of a want to get on with the volunteering; choosing not to go to organisations or roles which require a longer period of training [Cmty Org, P-12].</li> </ul>
<b>Rise of spontaneous, informal and self-organised emergency volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The nature of volunteering is changing. People don't volunteer for extended periods of time and we're seeing that in the spontaneous volunteer thing. People just want to be able to turn out after an event, but they don't necessarily want to have the ongoing formal relationship of having to show up to a weekly training [CBEM, P-47].</li> </ul>



**TABLE 10:** VOLUNTEER SUSTAINABILITY, THEMES RAISED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

Volunteer sustainability themes	Example quotes
<b>Declining volunteer numbers and rising burden on remaining volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>In a small community like ours there is a huge expectation on a small group of volunteers to do a lot of work and this has led to volunteer burn out [Cmty Org, P-31].</i></li> <li><i>Number and capacities of volunteers vary across the communities in my LGA [Cmty Org, P-46].</i></li> </ul>
<b>Ageing volunteer workforce and difficulty recruiting younger volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Getting younger people involved is increasingly difficult as the 'gig' economy involves 24/7 availability [Cmty Org, P-19].</i></li> <li><i>Recruitment of younger members has become a problem as our membership ages [H&amp;S Services, P-11].</i></li> <li><i>Volunteer participation is limited to older people and we struggle to engage the young [CBEM, P-25].</i></li> </ul>
<b>Greater competition for volunteers' time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The competition for volunteers (just within the emergency management (EM) sector, leaving aside the community sector) is intense; many volunteer in several roles (e.g. in RFS, Red Cross, and with their local Neighbourhood Centre or Family Support Service). There is already a 'shortage' of volunteers state-wide. This is not a sustainable model [Cmty Org, P-4].</i></li> </ul>
<b>Maintaining volunteers' motivation and training outside of emergency activations is difficult</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Maintaining relevance and motivation in the absence of a serious event. Being creative about how to value volunteer contributions [CBEM, P-35].</i></li> <li><i>The majority of my work happens either during or after an event. We have no shortage of offers for help when and after an event happens, it is less easy to get people to sign up for something and gain training just in case [Cmty Org, P-12].</i></li> </ul>



**TABLE 11: COMMUNITY SECTOR-EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DISCONNECT, COMPOUNDING FACTORS RAISED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS**

Compounding factors	Example quotes
<b>Culture in EM sector restricts more collaborative and inclusive arrangements and relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...power roles within SES (men), lack of communication skills and awareness, lack of understanding of remote regional communities' needs [Cmty Org, P-31].</li> <li>• I think entrenched attitudes, vested interests and an 'old guard' unwilling to innovate are the greatest challenges to this sector at present [Sppt EMO, P-7].</li> <li>• Emergency services can hold contempt for community participants. The fire services organisations can be very unpleasant and dismissive, not inclusive, almost competitive. Some community volunteers would just think "Why bother?" [Cmty Org, P-20].</li> <li>• ...internal politics amongst groups, over dominating personalities that want to run everything instead of being inclusive [Cmty Org, P-22].</li> </ul>
<b>Disconnect compounded by bureaucracy, professionalisation and high government staff turnover</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustration with bureaucracy. We have been back and forth through departments to get the CBEM committed to and being actioned for the last 2 years. ...Changes in staffing in the agencies, so that now all the people in the local area in leadership roles for the [fire authority] etc did not experience the [...] fire and therefore do not really understand [CBEM, P-42].</li> <li>• I think that's a challenge too in that people are pretty put off by the bureaucracy and the nature of dealing with government organisations, even though that's what has to happen in order to get the support that's coming from governments [CBEM, P-47].</li> <li>• Corporate memory is an issue over time, particularly with staff turnover in Councils, State Government and EM services [Cmty Org, P-19].</li> <li>• With professionalisation comes a disconnect between the leadership and the community and they might not even live in the community they work in [Cmty Org, P-22].</li> </ul>



**TABLE 12:** SPONTANEOUS, SELF-ORGANISED AND INFORMAL VOLUNTEERING ISSUES, THEMES RAISED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

Spontaneous, self-organised & informal volunteering themes	Example quotes
<b>Managing risks associated with engaging untrained and unknown volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of the key issues is the problem of having credible volunteers. In the case of an emergency there may be a number of people who will come forward to help, but we could be dealing with children and vulnerable people. All of our volunteers have police checks and WWCs [Cmtv Org, P-14].</li> <li>One key issue that arises during an emergency is an organisation's response to spontaneous volunteers - the people that want to give a hand immediately. There are high risks associated with the engagement (and decline) of spontaneous volunteers - to the organisation, person/s affected by the emergency and the individual's own health and safety [LG, P-15].</li> </ul>
<b>Enabling benefits of community participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locals will always self-organise - anyone in a position to help make that happen in a way which is harnessed and acceptable to the bureaucracy running the show are on the right track [Cmtv Org, P-12].</li> <li>We need to engage with a broader demographic, and further develop our potential future role in 'recovery' activities, providing a more informed community response. Rather than relying on 'top down' management by the authorities and agencies [CBEM, P-25].</li> </ul>
<b>Inadequate planning &amp; arrangements for this volunteering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no architecture in place to harness spontaneous volunteers [Sppt EMO, P-7].</li> <li>Spontaneous volunteering poses a range of challenges that many agencies are not prepared for and many have not thought through the issues around recruitment and screening of volunteers who offer services after an emergency [Peak, P-13].</li> <li>Somebody wants to volunteer but the systems aren't able to deal with them. Then that volunteer gets a negative experience. They go, "Well, nobody ever contacted me. I didn't get used. I wanted to help but they couldn't get their act together to use me" [CBEM, P-47].</li> </ul>



**TABLE 13:** EXPECTATION-CAPACITY GAP, THEMES RAISED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

Expectation-capacity gap themes	Example quotes
<b>Limited capacity in community sector for emergency management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community organisations vary greatly in level of preparedness and planning in relation to emergencies. For many, there is not a lot of policy and procedures in place, even for staff to follow [Peak, P-13].</li> <li>[A key issue is] Funding allocated to enable organisation such as ours to assist [Sppt EMO, P-24].</li> <li>So the key issues are mainly around capacity - is this something that is added onto their [volunteer] role - in which case many feel they have limited capacity (time, knowledge, expertise etc...) or is it something that can be integrated into current role and capacity [H&amp;S Services, P-21].</li> <li>Capacity and capability of individual councils versus expectations. Many small councils simply don't have the capacity to meet [expectations] [LG, P-40].</li> </ul>
<b>High workloads, fatigue &amp; stress can be high</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our group is very small, and the workload for members can be very heavy. ...we don't have procedures or support structures in place to help deal with the stresses of the work that we do or have many people to assist with some of the tasks [CBEM, P-39].</li> </ul>
<b>CSOs can struggle to support volunteers &amp; staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many volunteer groups don't have access or formal structures around self-care and mental health support/de-briefing, which is vital for all involved in emergency volunteering, particularly for those involved in providing personal support over a sustained long period. It is worth noting that much of this support is given through informal mechanisms such as craft groups, cuppa and chat groups, playgroups which are run by volunteers [Cmty Org, P-27].</li> </ul>
<b>Staff &amp; volunteers can be directly impacted by emergency event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having available staff to support victims, as we are in a regional area our staff could also be victims themselves [H&amp;S Services, P-11].</li> <li>...in a rural area council staff normally reside in the area, they too can be personally affected by the emergency [LG, P-40].</li> </ul>



**TABLE 14:** ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS THAT ARE LEADING IN ADAPTING TO THE CHANGING VOLUNTEER LANDSCAPE, IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

Category	Example quotes
<b>Community organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Houses are at the coal face of daily volunteering skills development [Cmtv Org, P-20].</li> <li>I think that some of the smaller communities local volunteering work seems more immune to wider changes in society [CBEM, P-30].</li> </ul>
<b>CBEM groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>...Lismore Helping Hands ... Dungog Community Services [Cmtv Org, P-4].</li> </ul>
<b>Primary response EMOs</b>	<p><b>Local EM volunteers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a community-led emergency management context, grassroots like local... Brigades and SES units have been very good at adapting to and embracing initiatives like ours [CBEM, P-35].</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the QFES strategy has started to offer a strong example of an alternative future [Peak, P-37].</li> <li>SES and CFS are the only two who do this well they have a long history [Sppt EMO, P-24].</li> <li>Generally, the NSW SES are brilliant at handling change within a volunteering landscape - they recently implemented volunteering re-imagined here in NSW [H&amp;S Services, P-9].</li> <li>EMV and DELWP are attempting to engage with the community through their research, community-based activity and support for local groups [CBEM, P-25].</li> </ul>
<b>Support EMOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surf Life Saving ...Every volunteer in the organisation seems to feel valued and purports a great sense of belonging. Their organisational energy is infectious! [Sppt EMO, P-23]</li> <li>SAVEM [South Australia Veterinary Emergency Management] is doing a great job to recruit and train volunteer vets to assist injured animals during emergencies [CBEM, P-39].</li> <li>I think it was Red Cross who put out a great toolkit regarding engaging spontaneous volunteers [LG, P-15].</li> </ul>
<b>Peaks &amp; other representative groups &amp; networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VCOSS [Victoria Council of Social Services] - working to drive capacity building and policy [H&amp;S Services, P-21].</li> <li>Volunteering peaks are a good start [Peak, P-37].</li> </ul>
<b>Local governments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government is trying to encourage local communities to determine their own course of action [LG, P-5].</li> <li>Local Councils are responsive and closer to community than other levels of government. There are lots of emergency teams and volunteer officers doing great work in this space [LG, P-18].</li> </ul>
<b>Research institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research from RMIT, Bushfire &amp; Natural Hazards CRC and AIDR are great resources [LG, P-28].</li> </ul>



**TABLE 15:** BASELINE FUTURE FOR FORMAL EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING, ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

Baseline future for formal volunteering	Example quotes
<b>Reduced capacity of CSOs to assist due to lack of government policy &amp; funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I think by 2030 we could be heading for a crisis unless a lot more resourcing is put into the response and recovery sectors [LG, P-18].</i></li> <li><i>Without organisations (funded), managing volunteers in emergency situations won't occur and the recovery will be impacted [Sppt EMO, P-24].</i></li> <li><i>If we are unable to resolve the issue of inadequate support and infrastructure [...] then the program will completely fold. The consequences of this are that [our target community] will once again be severely disadvantaged with respect to emergency preparedness. [...] lives will be at risk [H&amp;S Services, P-9].</i></li> </ul>
<b>Shortage of volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The workload being left to a very small group of dedicated volunteers [LG, P-5].</i></li> <li><i>Harder to find suitable volunteers that can make the training &amp; service time commitment, due to competition with other organisations for volunteer hours [H&amp;S Services, P-43].</i></li> </ul>
<b>Professionalisation, increased regulation &amp; compliance, and litigation deterring more people from choosing to volunteer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If everyone who is volunteering needs to have their police check and WWC, then we may be restrictive in how many people are able to volunteer [Cmtv Org, P-14].</i></li> <li><i>I think that if the issues of over-governing and decreasing funding continue, we will see a steep decline in volunteerism - particularly in segments of the community where community cohesion is not strong [Sppt EMO, P-23].</i></li> <li><i>With the increase in the litigious nature of society, I believe that by 2030 considerably less community members would be willing to put their time, health, energy and life on the line [CBEM, P-25].</i></li> </ul>
<b>Increased cost for government to deliver emergency management services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The sector will become increasingly professionalised, costing the government millions of dollars more than it currently does and the community will disconnect from responsibility and hold government to account for every emergency [Sppt EMO, P-24].</i></li> <li><i>Organisations and other response agencies reputation will be at risk by others who believe they are not doing enough or not responding in the correct manner [LG, P-15].</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>It may be that in 2030 there are more paid helpers [Faith-based, P-33].</i></li> </ul> </li> <li><i>The business model we currently have will deplete resources (taxpayer system) as the accumulative effect of events is taking toll on social, economic, environmental and built environment infrastructure. Managing disasters as 'events' does not make much sense in the hyper connected economy [Peak, P-32].</i></li> </ul>
<b>Increased public expectations on government, decline in community resilience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>...If a steep decline in emergency volunteerism was to occur as a result of over-regulation and under-training, State Governments would swiftly find themselves in a position where the onus will come back on them to provide a ratified emergency workforce [Sppt EMO, P-23].</i></li> <li><i>I think that the pendulum will swing, and the community will become more reliant and less resilient [Cmtv Org, P-20].</i></li> </ul>



**TABLE 16:** BASELINE FUTURE FOR SPONTANEOUS, SELF-ORGANISED AND INFORMAL EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING, ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

<b>Baseline future for spontaneous, self-organised &amp; informal volunteering</b>	<b>Example quotes</b>
<b>More spontaneous, self-organised, and informal emergency volunteering occurring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people are less inclined to want to work in with traditional government structures and so, therefore, they might be disinclined to actually want to work with the SES, but they prefer this sort of community 'we're just going to get stuck in and do it' [CBEM, P-47].</li> <li>• People will become disillusioned with the constraints and stop volunteering their assistance and undertake unstructured and uncoordinated actions they believe will assist with emergency response [Sppt EMO, P-6].</li> <li>• It also seems likely that spontaneous volunteer groups will continue to emerge to meet the gaps in emergency management for animals, with all the problems and issues this brings [CBEM, P-39].</li> <li>• People will be at risk. So, the people that opt to help (without training, coordination, supervision or instruction), and the people that need the help (often vulnerable people who can be exploited) [LG, P-15].</li> </ul>
<b>Formal EM system would struggle to embrace SVs and integrate informal community response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see cultures of organisations looking down on volunteers, and doing more active obstruction [Peak, P-37].</li> <li>• Spontaneous volunteers are likely to be poorly managed for some time. At best this will result in duplicated and wasted effort. In some instances, they may do harm or be injured [Sppt EMO, P-7].</li> <li>• The lack of respect for spontaneous volunteers will continue to grow [Cmty Org, P-12].</li> <li>• We will still see community and community capacity not recognised in the EM continuum and there will be conflict and disconnect between the formal EM structure and the wider community [Cmty Org, P-23].</li> </ul>



**TABLE 17:** SOCIAL FORCES OF FUTURE UNCERTAINTY AND UNPREDICTABILITY FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING, ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

<b>Social forces of future uncertainty &amp; unpredictability</b>	<b>Example quotes</b>
<b>Ageing population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The aging population means an ever-expanding number of potential volunteers, many of who are looking for challenging volunteering opportunities and emergencies are one potential area for their involvement. The challenge will be to recruit and prepare suitable volunteers who can assist community services [Peak, P-13].</li> <li>We have little understanding how the emerging and bulging group of people who will retire from active full-time work will adapt to time rich life with desire to engage [Peak, P-32].</li> </ul>
<b>Rise of individualism, decline in social cohesion &amp; community mindedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A culture of individualism within Western society is also an uncertainty which could shape the future of volunteerism [H&amp;S Services, P-9].</li> <li>Where there is a growing gulf between social or cultural classes in the one neighbourhood, there is the danger of growing conflict and animosity. This animosity freezes off people's interest in volunteering because they fear the mis-known [CBEM, P-17].</li> <li>Willingness of younger people to volunteer [H&amp;S Services, P-26].</li> </ul>
<b>Rise of informal, self-organised collective action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The changing nature of society and our relationship with government and perceived authority. [...] I've had conversations with people about the fact that people are less inclined to want to work in with traditional government structures and so they might be disinclined to actually want to work with the SES, but they prefer this sort of community – 'We're just going to get stuck in and do it'. I think that's maybe something that could be a challenge going forward as well. And even in the recovery space, I think that's a challenge too in that people are pretty put off by the bureaucracy and the nature of dealing with government organisations, even though that's what has to happen in order to get the support that's coming from governments. [CBEM, P-47]</li> </ul>



**TABLE 18:** OTHER EXTERNAL FORCES OF FUTURE UNCERTAINTY AND UNPREDICTABILITY FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING, ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTICIPANTS

Social forces of future uncertainty & unpredictability	Example quotes
<b>TECHNOLOGICAL</b>	
<b>Reliability of communications technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to know the phone/comms won't go out. We don't trust that after the events of the last few years. All of that unpredictability will make it hard to get volunteers to respond [Faith-based, P-3].</li> </ul>
<b>Impact of new technologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The emerging drone technologies and their potential uses - the impact of drone use on traditional volunteer roles [H&amp;S Services, P-21].</li> </ul>
<b>Social media disruption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media has potential for disruption regarding spontaneous volunteering which could overwhelm unprepared organisations [Peak, P-13].</li> <li>Social media - what will be the risk and how can it be reduced [Cmty Org, P-14].</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	
<b>Shifting culture &amp; structure of work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The shifting culture of work (career changes, shorter contracts, casualisation of workforces, gig economy, entrepreneurial class etc.) are all factors that will shape and inform individuals and communities in their choices of volunteer engagement [Peak, P-32].</li> </ul>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>	
<b>Climate change &amp; increased event frequency, severity, duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We know that extreme weather events will be more often and higher impact, but we can't predict what or when [Faith-based, P-3].</li> <li>Climate - will we see more environmental emergencies, will they be more 'extreme', or will they be different [LG, P-15]?</li> </ul>
<b>Drought</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased drought and pressure on rural and regional areas</li> </ul>
<b>POLITICAL</b>	
<b>Political leadership change &amp; policy uncertainty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Politics - with changing leaders there are different views and with that comes funding changes/cuts [LG, P-15].</li> <li>Political - policy and funding determine outcomes. And sometimes policies in one area ripple out and affect other areas. E.g. job insecurity, low wage growth combined with cost of housing and general living mean that there is more financial stress which leads to less volunteering [LG, P-18].</li> </ul>
<b>Legal implications of risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal implications of risk remain unpredictable [Peak, P-37]</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4: EXAMPLES OF PRIORITY ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

### 1. Foster wider & deeper collaboration and coordination between EMOs and CSOs

- When emergency planning and grants require community, ES [emergency services], business and government to partner in achieving goals, then we will progress [Cmtv Org, P-20].
- A broader prospective and greater inclusion of community volunteer-based groups (Lions, Rotary, Meals on Wheels) in the EM space [Cmtv Org, P-27].
- Clear identification of the role of the community services and health sector - particularly understanding current value and balance with capacity... Clear identification of those who can partner and assist ... and increase in understanding and capacity. More genuine shared responsibility across the sector [H&S Services, P-21].
- Co-ordinated one stop communication for all, where the emergency services can work together, facilitated by the Federal Government [H&S Services, P-11].
- Streamline the number of departments dealing with emergencies - I am on the periphery of the sector and do not understand why there are so many different departments who are obviously overlapping in their work [Cmtv Org, P-12].

### 2. Build CSO capacity in EM through funding, human resourcing and training

- Equal quality of and access to EM and 'understanding the regulatory environment' training. Dedicated community group funding streams that are not vulnerable to populist election-based funding cycles. Establishing formal reporting mechanisms to ensure quality control and shared accountability alongside share responsibility [CBEM, P-35].
- Appropriate training and support for organisations to develop their volunteers into having transferable skills. What is needed is more resources, more funding to enable everyone to be proactive [Cmtv Org, P-14].
- Training and other support to agencies to develop resilience plans, internal policies and procedures, including a focus on the role of volunteers. There needs to be further awareness raising about the need for this and it needs to be funded (preferably by the Natural Disaster Resilience Program but without the requirement for matching funds; this rules out any community organisation being able to take it on) [Peak, P-13].
- Possibly the central coordination of all volunteer training for a range of NGO volunteers. For example, leadership training would be a requirement by many NGOs [Faith-based, P-33].

### 3. Build community capacity and empower community in EM

- People need to have the opportunity to belong to community networks. Some resourcing, like local government providing open space and meeting areas, is needed to secure this kind of living. It is an undeveloped part of a lived democracy [CBEM, P-17].
- Ensure autonomy through incorporation or a like method with groups of incorporated, volunteer, community led organisations across the state working together to develop a community response, particularly to recovery and planning [Cmty Org, P-22].
- Local government should facilitate the development of sub community identification at both a structural and cultural level. This should follow the training and exposure of community members to create informed and experienced people who develop these strategic plans. The results of this work then need to be published to the community and others [CBEM, P-25].
- For [CBEM] groups with limited emergency experience it is difficult to set evidence-based standards and to have the knowledge needed to establish important strategic goals. The wider EM sector has a role to play in reaching out to these groups, sharing knowledge and having a better internal understanding of the potential values of these groups in mitigating risk, educating communities and ensuring that local needs are met [CBEM, P-30].
- Emergency management sits under community development. 50% of planning committees are community women who work and volunteer in the community sector, not just the ES sector [Cmty Org, P-20].

### 4. Advocate for, promote, and value volunteers & volunteering

- I think better recognition of all NGO's and their volunteers from State Government would help [Faith-based, P-33].
- I believe too many public bodies enjoy the input and organisation of volunteers whilst avoiding endorsement, support and nurture of these people and bodies [Sppt EMO, P-6].
- We have a volunteering culture - we will help our neighbour out and that needs to be presented from the highest level [CBEM, P-30].
- Communities need to build awareness of volunteer efforts in their local region and be encouraged to develop and ethos of gratitude. When the storm is blowing and you're dry inside someone else has willingly put their hand up to get out there and help with no expectation of reward. That is incredible!! And I don't think the broader community recognises this near enough [Sppt EMO, P-23].

## 5. Establish strong change leadership

- Good leadership by government with appropriate funding is required - federal, state & local government [Sppt, P-10].
- That governments at all levels formally engage with volunteer organisations to create a strong system to utilise volunteer skills and willingness to mitigate emergencies and foster focussed outlets for this low-cost resource [Sppt EMO, P-6].
- Governments - Federal & State - need to agree common guidelines for more equitable distribution of available resources [Cmtv Org, P-4].
- In the absence of a peak body providing real leadership and ensuring collaboration it will be up to individual organisations to adapt to the changing realities in this space [Sppt EMO, P-7].
- We need to see political willpower to legislate for change ... We need to see Boards and senior executives set a culture of expectation that supports volunteers and volunteering. For as much bottom-up effort that volunteers provide, it is not without strong leadership and representation by those that influence strategy, culture and the finances [Peak, P-37]

## 6. Build evidence of what works, share learning, improve practice

- Longitudinal evidence base on the efficacy, appropriateness and adaptability of community led emergency management initiatives [CBEM, P-35].
- Things like (gender, ethnic inclusion etc.), strategies to support more episodic volunteering, considering financial reimbursements and the legal implications of risk remain unpredictable. Of course, these are nothing but surmountable, with strong research and staying in touch with one's constituency [Peak, P-37].

## 7. Harness new technologies to improve volunteer management and engagement

- Technology for volunteer management is an unspoken asset. New-generation platforms like Rosterfy<sup>10</sup> have the potential to provide for episodic volunteer management unlike conventional approaches [Peak, P-37].
- We need to get up to speed with our use of social media. This will assist attracting differing demographics [CBEM, P-25].

<sup>10</sup> See <https://rosterfy.com/>