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# COORDINATING VOLUNTEERS LEARNERS GUIDE

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**Implementing  
Volunteering  
Reimagined in  
your Unit.**

This Workbook is designed to provide Unit Commanders and Volunteer Coordinators with information and preparation activities relevant to recruiting, leading, managing and retaining all Volunteer types. Unit Volunteers, Spontaneous Volunteers, Community Action Team Volunteers and Corporate Volunteers.



## Acknowledgements

This Induction Facilitator Guide has been developed by members of the NSW State Emergency Service.

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# INTRODUCTION + WELCOME

## Welcome

Welcome to the NSW State Emergency Service **Coordinating Volunteers Workshop**.

### WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

#### The aims of this workshop are:

- ✓ To up-skill Unit Commanders and train the Unit Volunteer Coordinator in what is required to fill the role.
- ✓ To provide practical tools and planning assistance for the implementation of Volunteering Reimagined at Unit Level – recruiting, leading and managing and retaining all volunteer types.
- ✓ To further inspire and engage participants in the Volunteering Reimagined message, providing opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of its relevance to other long term strategic goals.

## What you will need to complete this course



**Your own copy of this Workbook.**  
**Before starting this course, ensure you have completed:**

#### Pre-Course Work:

- Read the Volunteering Reimagined Support Pack in its entirety
- Read the Membership Procedures for all Categories of Volunteering
- Complete the online pre-course Preparation Quiz
- Join the Workshop Facebook group and submit your pre-course goals and questions

#### Note:

Activities that you will undertake during the workshop are included here in this workbook, these can be used to assist you in gathering input and upskilling your Volunteers.

## Why People Volunteer



**Mia Degoumois**



NSW SES  
Packsaddle Unit

Use your QR Code reader  
to watch the video.



**Jack Frost**



Murwillumbah  
Unit Controller

Use your QR Code reader  
to watch the video.

# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## Social Media



The Rise of  
Social Media

Use your QR Code reader  
to watch the video.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### After completing this topic, you should be able to:

- ✓ To up-skill Unit Commanders and train the Unit Volunteer Coordinator in what is required to fill the role.
- ✓ Explore what is needed through analysis of relevant information.
- ✓ Understand ways to source and approach new volunteers.
- ✓ Map a plan for recruitment.

## Exploring Why and How People Volunteer

Australian communities have always rallied to **respond to threats and help each other** in times of disaster and emergency. Communities respond as individuals, households, and informal and formal groups to help themselves and others when a disaster occurs.

Australian communities also benefit from a substantial, formal emergency management capability and capacity. The number of volunteers who regularly contribute their time and skills as members of Emergency Management Organisations (EMOs) in Australia has been estimated at more than 500,000. This substantial volunteer workforce is engaged in a wide range of activities relating to disaster prevention, preparation, response, and recovery and its vital work benefits urban, regional, rural and remote communities across the country.

Experience and research repeatedly shows the most common response of communities to disaster is to become more cohesive than normal, working together through informal and formal networks and

groups to overcome challenges, meet local needs and help themselves and those around them.

**In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, there is a strong tendency for people to self-organise into emergent groups that are created 'on the fly' to meet self-identified needs. This is often coordinated using social media outside what would be considered normal response arrangements.**

The landscape of volunteering in Australia and internationally has changed. Large-scale socioeconomic changes, along with advances in technology have recast the conditions in which people volunteer in the 21st Century.

**As a result, emergency managers can expect to engage with a much wider and more diverse range of volunteers than in the past.**

At the same time, there is also growing recognition of the valuable resources and capacities within local communities and the broader public that can contribute to overall disaster prevention, preparation, response and recovery.

With disaster risk increasing worldwide due to population growth, urban development and climate change, it is likely that non-traditional volunteers will

provide much of the additional surge capacity required to respond to more frequent emergencies and disasters in the future.

This changing landscape challenges existing volunteer models and strategies to manage emergencies. It also presents new opportunities to strengthen emergency management capability and capacity, while building community resilience.

The flexibility of the Volunteering Reimagined model and the addition of new membership categories, positions the NSW SES to take full advantage of these new opportunities.

*Understanding that people want to volunteer differently and have different motivations is an important first step to engaging with this more diverse range of volunteers.*

**Click on QR Code top of this page.**





# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT

## Exploring why and how people volunteer (Continued)

Let's use our volunteer categories to explore some of the motivations to volunteer:

Unit Volunteer	CAT Volunteer	Spontaneous Volunteer	Corporate Volunteer
A desire to give back to their community, learn new skills or utilise existing skills. Begin a pathway to a career in EM and be seen as a positive role model in the community. A desire to make friends and connections and be part of a team.	A desire to build safety for their family and neighbours, protect property, minimise disruptions to the local community and join forces to support one another during an emergency.	A desire to serve and protect their local community when it is under threat, to set aside time for events with a significant impact to the community and to support the NSW SES with greater surge capacity.	A desire to use their vocational skills to give back to the community, utilise their volunteering leave and/or to experience volunteering with their work team.

In the main, volunteers in Emergency Management (EM) are looking to play a part in responding to threats to their community and are motivated by a strong desire to help others.

Altruistic – (A selfless concern for the wellbeing of others) motivated by a desire to help others, to give back to the community.

This is of course a generalisation of the overall motivation of EM volunteers and it will be important to explore more specific motivations when you engage with new volunteers.

Asking people directly “**what has motivated you to volunteer with us?**” will help develop a picture of why people are volunteering in your area and give you a feel for what the volunteer is seeking to achieve.

We also recognise that there are a small percentage of people who volunteer with the motive to exploit (people, resources or power) and this is an understandable concern. From a risk management perspective, the overall risk

associated with these individuals is low due to the rarity of their involvement and the likelihood of these people being identified through our supervision and work processes. (E.g. Working in teams provides visibility of their actions and by providing supervision and oversight of work undertaken – any negative intentions or activities are more likely to be uncovered).

Think about your own motivations for volunteering, what changes have you seen in relation to how and why people volunteer?



### DISCUSS THIS

Note your teams' thoughts on butcher's paper.

- How do you feel about the various options for people to volunteer with NSW SES?
- What are your concerns about each of the volunteering categories?

- How would you describe the benefits of the various volunteering options?

## Volunteering Options with NSW SES

There are four Categories of Volunteering which provide a range of options for engaging with the NSW SES. These are Unit Volunteer, Community Action Team Volunteer, Spontaneous Volunteer and Corporate Volunteer.

These categories of volunteering provide much greater flexibility in terms of how people can get involved as volunteers and as such must be well understood by Commanders and Volunteer Coordinators.

The Volunteering Reimagined Support Pack provides significant detail on the range of categories, including case studies to demonstrate different use options.



# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## ACTIVITY: 1.1 Matching Volunteers

### Matching volunteers to appropriate membership categories.

Read the following member profiles and write which membership category you believe to be most appropriate based on the information provided. Provide a brief note on why for each.



Duration  
Approximately  
30 minutes

- Jaimie has been an NSW SES volunteer in the past for 8 years and is qualified in numerous NSW SES skills. She has just had a baby and can only come to meeting sporadically. She is not able to provide set availability because it varies based on what is happening with her family at the time. She wants to stay involved and will help out whenever she can.

Membership Category: .....

Why? .....

- Jo a member of your unit says that her employer has asked her to find out how they can help NSW SES and suggests that they use their 'volunteer leave' day with the local NSW SES Unit. They are a landscaping business so generally when the weather is bad they are not able to work to full capacity in their normal jobs. They want to do something that supports the existing volunteers or helps the community prepare for bad weather and have signed a memorandum of understanding with the NSW SES.

Membership Category: .....

Why? .....

- Bill is an IT expert, he loves his computer and is constantly on social media – he is a friend of one of the current Unit Volunteers. During major events Bill volunteers by posting updates and photos on your Unit Facebook page, providing responses to questions from residents in the area. He also posts pictures and relevant local info he sees. His posts are very professional and accurate. Without Bill your Unit doesn't currently have effective capacity to monitor and produce communications for the Unit Facebook page.

Membership Category: .....

Why? .....



# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## ACTIVITY: 1.1 Matching Volunteers *(continued)*

### Matching volunteers to appropriate membership categories.

Read the following member profiles and write which membership category you believe to be most appropriate based on the information provided. Provide a brief note on why for each.



**Duration**  
Approximately  
30 minutes

4. Waleed is the President of a local community group who has come to see you. He tells you that the group is very self-sufficient and normally handles any problems themselves but they are wanting to make plans for times where they are isolated by floodwaters for extended periods. He says they need some help with understanding who to contact for various kinds of assistance and generally to make their plans for periods of isolation more robust.

Membership Category: .....

Why? .....

5. James has arrived at your Unit headquarters in the immediate aftermath of a severe storm, he has seen images of the area following the storm and wants to help get debris off the roads and from around properties. He says that a lot of people on Facebook are saying they can't get to where they need to be due to all the trees down. He works for a 'Tree Services' company as a tree lopper and has extensive experience using a chainsaw and working with trees. He has qualifications in Chainsaw Operation which his employer has copies of.

Membership Category: .....

Why? .....

6. Chang is a qualified builder, with 18 years' experience in the trade. She has heard that NSW SES is looking for people to help out during storms and wants to get involved. Chang has five children and her husband also works in the building trade as a roofer. Chang can come to meetings, but does not have a lot of time for training particularly on weekends as her children play sport.

Membership Category: .....

Why? .....

# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## Unit Volunteers



NSW SES Storm and  
Flood Volunteers

Use your QR Code reader  
to watch the video.

7. Amy wants to join the army and she has come in to the Unit during an event. She says she wants to join and learn skills that will help her when she eventually joins the army. She works nights as an auditor for a hotel chain, so she can't generally make it to Unit meeting unless she gets time off work. She is available during the day and has weekends off. She says that she is really keen to help out as much as possible.

Membership Category: .....

Why? .....

8. Beverley attends your Unit Information night, looking to become a member. She tells you that she 'just wants to help the community' by doing something useful when it is flooding or there is a storm. She says she does not want to do a lot of training or be outside doing a field type role. She would really just like to come in and handle catering for the crew when they are busy working.

Membership Category: .....

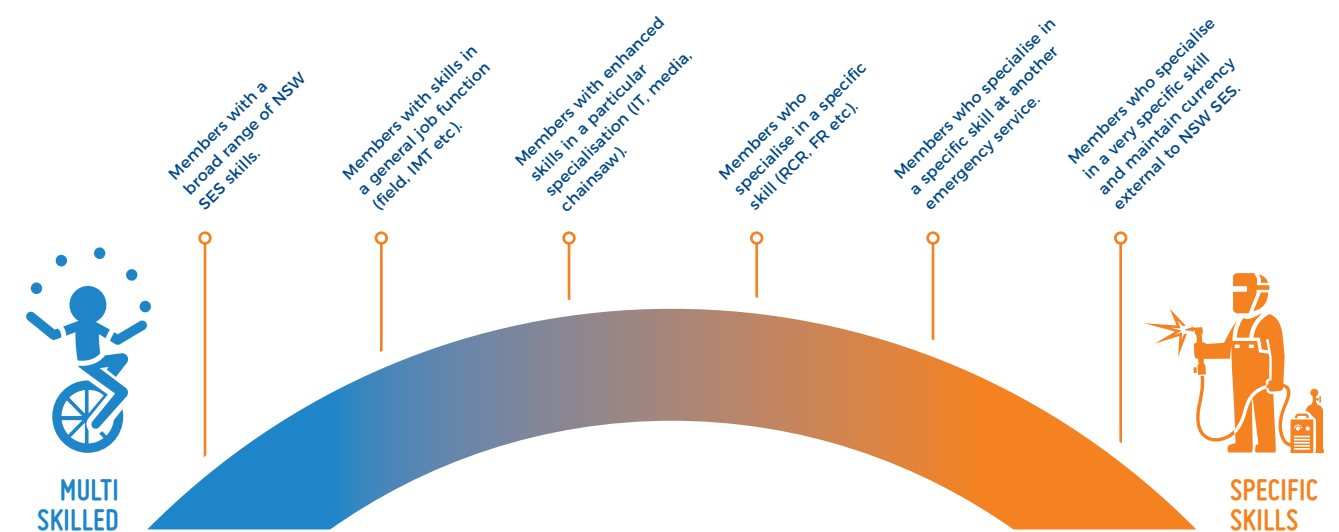
Why? .....

## Categories of Volunteering

### Unit Volunteer

"A Unit volunteer is a volunteer who maintains an ongoing commitment to the service and contributes to the functioning of an SES Unit. The NSW SES supports members with varying levels of **availability** and **commitment** within a flexible volunteering spectrum."

A hallmark of the Unit Volunteer category is the increased flexibility providing options and including members who attend training every week, to those who maintain their skills and only attend when required.





# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## CAT Volunteers



What is a Community Action Team?

Use your QR Code reader to watch the video.

## Categories of Volunteering

The spectrum is broad to encourage a diverse volunteer workforce with the skills and experience required to meet community needs.

The key words to keep in mind are:

- **Currency**
- **Capability**
- **Contribution**
- **Training**

Think about the value that the member can add when we are operational, ask yourself critical questions to ensure you are not bias in your application of the procedures.



### REMEMBER THIS

*A member who turns up to meeting night every week is no more or less valuable than a member who meets their commitment in other ways.*

## Critical Questions to ask yourself:

What can this member contribute to the functioning of this Unit? (There are many ways to contribute, does what they do help the unit function in some capacity?)

What **capability** does this member have which is relevant to the functioning of the Unit? (Think about times outside of operations too, day-to-day functioning is relevant.)

How will the member keep their capabilities **current**? (Do they work in the field their capabilities relate to, do they have a lot of experience,

and do they use their skills elsewhere?)

What **training** do they need/require? (Remember this does not need to be delivered by the NSW SES, are they undertaking relevant training elsewhere?)

## Community Action Team (CAT) Volunteers

A CAT is an innovative way to harness the willingness of local volunteers who are keen to prepare their community against local threats.

CATs come in all different shapes and sizes, with different objectives and purposes.

CATs can be identified by a geographic area in a similar way to how units are responsible for an entire or part of a Local Government Area.

CATs are an extension of our service delivery with the community but are often community owned and driven.

Different communities will have different motivations for starting a CAT and we should assist and encourage the community to own the process.

For Implementation, think about:

- What is the local risk and how will the risk be mitigated by establishing a CAT?
- Are there any groups in your area who assist your unit during operations or day-to-day?
- Do you have any communities which become isolated in your Unit footprint, could we build capability by providing training or equipment?

Review the case studies in your support pack for more ideas.

## Spontaneous Volunteers

Spontaneous volunteers are members of the community who volunteer to assist with finite projects/jobs/roles, usually during an operational event. They do not need to have an ongoing commitment to the service.

These types of volunteers will often self-organise and present 'spontaneously' during operations to offer their assistance – for these occasions, it is essential to plan ahead and identify suitable volunteering opportunities in advance. In this way we can quickly provide suitable opportunities to help and avoid turning people away.

We should always seek to ensure volunteers have a positive experience with the NSW SES.

Another option for utilising Spontaneous Volunteers is to pro-actively seek out groups, organisations and individuals (prior to operations) and pre-plan how these people could assist during events providing surge capacity.

Establishing networks within the community is the first priority – this is key to anticipating where spontaneous volunteers could be needed or utilised. Your networks will assist you to gather intelligence about what is happening on the ground with the affected communities.

'The word on the street' so to speak is very important. While the operational focus is on the response, the situation is constantly evolving. New needs are emerging, people are starting to take in the damage – this is the time when people start asking for help and offers of assistance from the public are coming in.

# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## Corporate Volunteers



Evolution Mining Parkes and Condobolin

Use your QR Code reader to watch the video.

We need to be connected with the sentiment of the affected community – as such Volunteer Coordinators need to ensure they regularly 'check in' with their networks about how the situation is progressing. You need to be a problem solver and schedule time to access your networks during operations.



### IMPORTANT NOTE:

*Sentiment - A thought, feeling or idea based on a feeling about a situation or way of thinking about something.*

## Some examples of proactive recruitment tasks include:

- Pre plan and anticipate needs; review existing planning and operational information relevant to your unit.
- Develop job roles; use the templates provided to detail what is needed, before you need it.
- During events – ensure public communication is established and ongoing, encourage two way communication, recruit for roles as early as possible, activate networks, seek intel on community impacts and sentiment on a regular basis (scheduled) – check in with community Facebook pages, check feedback and comments on your Unit Facebook page, speak with crews as they return from jobs, get out and undertake reconnaissance on site, watch news broadcasts, speak with people you know in the community, ask for feedback about what is needed. Spontaneous Volunteer

Coordinators should also actively develop their NSW SES network as they are a great source of what is needed and what may be missing or problematic.

- Consider having a team of Community Connectors who feed info back to the Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinator from their perspective. Utilise these people to push information to the community.

- It may be that it is not strictly within the NSW SES role to assist with the particular issue of concern, but if we find a need we can seek to meet it by utilising our capacity to call upon our network of Spontaneous Volunteers to help.

- The support pack provides four Sample Role Descriptions to get you started.

- Remember: Planning ahead and identifying a range of opportunities is essential, this assists to ensure that the Unit Volunteer Coordinator is prepared and able to focus on operations and positions us to provide meaningful work and opportunities to assist

- Turning away Spontaneous Volunteers because we do not have time to involve them is not ideal.

- We can also ask for Spontaneous Volunteers when we need assistance – think outside the box. If you have a gap there may be someone in your community willing to fill it.

A few examples; Unit needs assistance:

- From community members to report on river heights and conditions.
- With identifying road access at 'X' location.

- To support NSW Police with an urgent, large scale search of local bushland.
- From community members with specialist or local knowledge.
- Delivering something, moving something, repairing something.



### REMEMBER THIS

*Another key point to remember is;*

*Do not assume that Spontaneous Volunteers will only have minimal relevant skills or only provide general duties type assistance. Spontaneous volunteers may have specialist skills to offer, ask questions and do not assume.*

## Identifying Recruitment Needs

The first step of recruitment is: **to define what needs to be done.**

We do this by creating a role description, which outlines TASKS and associated SKILLS AND TRAINING.

Most Units have clear role descriptions for positions such as: Unit Commander, Admin Coordinator, Rescue Coordinator, Team Leaders, etc.

**These have been created by grouping a set of tasks together** – then mapping the skills/knowledge and training required to execute the tasks.

**Key Statement:** Using this process, we can scale roles up and down



# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT

in size and also match people to roles by either looking at the tasks involved or the skills and knowledge needed.

We can develop a picture of our recruitment needs using a number of methods:

- Analysing our operational requirements.
- Considering all the non-essential but 'nice to have' assistance we would like.
- Analysing and investigating what the community needs and has to offer.

## Analysing Operational Requirements

This is an existing process that Unit Commanders undertake on a regular basis. In simple terms this is about looking at the work we need to do during operations and then ensuring that we have the personnel and resources to meet those needs.

It is likely that you already have a good understanding of the Units Operational needs, with the key change being more options around how you meet those needs.

## Considering 'nice to have' Assistance

Traditionally many Units have not had the luxury of planning for or even thinking about any non-essential 'nice to have' skills or services we could offer.

The addition of opportunities for people to offer shorter term assistance with less commitment or obligation opens up the possibility of considering additional skills or services we would like.

Having the capacity to delegate tasks to volunteers from the community can be a good option to free up Unit Volunteers and even Commanders for more specialist tasks.

Think about things like; maintaining vehicles and boats, servicing equipment, administrative work, maintenance tasks at the Unit, community engagement assistance – the possibilities are huge.

## Considering Community Driven Assistance

Again, the volunteering opportunities available to us, open up a new channel for meeting the immediate and future needs of the community. Spontaneous Volunteers in particular are well

placed to meet those operational needs that come up 'on the fly' as an event evolves and progresses.

While traditional recruitment generally occurs **prior** to operations, proactive recruitment of Spontaneous Volunteers can also happen **during** operations to meet emerging needs.

To achieve this, Volunteer Coordinators need to be connected with; what is happening on the 'front line' so to speak. Considering; is there anything missing in the response, how are people feeling, what do they need now? This connectedness with immediate and emerging needs can only occur with good intelligence and information.

More broadly we can investigate what the community needs and has to offer by building networks and working closely with Community Engagement representatives.

Community Engagement teams have been working in this space for some time, conducting activities such as community input sessions and holding meetings to gather feedback from affected communities. The aim should be to establish needs and capabilities, then to work on providing solutions.

## Where is your unit placed in understanding these recruitment needs?

Circle the most appropriate word to describe your capability.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS	Beginning	Developing	Complete	Proficient
NON-ESSENTIAL/ NICE TO HAVE	Beginning	Developing	Complete	Proficient
COMMUNITY NEEDS AND CAPABILITIES	Beginning	Developing	Complete	Proficient

To ensure you have a clear picture of your units recruitment needs, consider which area requires more investigation based on this self-assessment. Add some tasks to your action plan to help you plan what needs to happen next.

# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## ACTIVITY: 1.2 Existing Groups

Work in your groups and share your lists of existing groups.

Gather ideas and expand your own lists using the ideas of your peers. Pick a top five, write them on your butchers paper and present back to the larger group.



Duration  
Approximately  
10 minutes

## Sourcing and Approaching New Volunteers

Consider where volunteers can be sourced and where they are needed.

What groups or individuals have skills/infrastructure/leadership we can leverage?

We can start the process of recruiting volunteers by looking at existing groups and leveraging their skills, abilities, leadership, communication systems, networks and infrastructure.

## Recruitment Options

There are many recruitment options available and the one that you choose should be matched to:

**WHO:** The person you are seeking (Who might they be, what part of your Community might they be from, what industry could they work in, how much time do they have available, what ways can they volunteer – which Category of Volunteering might apply).

**WHAT:** The role that is available (What tasks are required, what skills and knowledge do they need, how much training is involved).

Exploring **WHO** and **WHAT** will lead you to decide **HOW** to best recruit

Recruitment Options include:

- **NSW Volunteering Portal:** Use the online portal to advertise specific roles in the same way you would advertise for a paid job. Use the template in the Support Pack to create job descriptions.
- **Newspaper:** Traditional newspaper advertisements and stories can be effective. Use the template from the support pack to define the role and see the media release in the Support Pack.
- **Call to Action:** Engaging social media content can be used as a call to action and placed on Community Facebook pages or the Unit Facebook page. Think about using a video message for impact. Recruitment graphics and marketing material can be downloaded from NSW SES Brand Online.
- **Personal Approach:** Means planning and making an approach to an individual or organisation. Examples include: Council, Lions Club, Religious Groups. Consider the options for a personal approach. Ideally you will speak with the decision maker of the organisation. Another option could be to speak at a staff meeting, gaining a larger audience and creating wider interest.
- **Speaking Engagements:** These provide a broad audience to deliver your recruitment message. Business networking events, staff meetings, Chamber of Commerce, toast masters – any group that invites guest speakers is a potential audience.
- **Networking:** Attend networking events and speak with participants about recruitment. (Business women's network, chamber of commerce, Country Women's Association, young entrepreneurs groups, co working groups.)
- **Information Stalls:** Public demonstrations/information stalls, these are your traditional info stalls, with the addition of the demonstration or skill training session idea. Run a 'how to maintain your chainsaw session' at a local park or 'how to use a ladder safely'.
- **Information Nights:** Traditional recruitment nights held at Unit or Town Hall type locations. Be sure to include all categories of volunteering. Brochures and promotional materials can be downloaded from NSW SES Brand Online.
- **Personal Referrals:** Friends and family are a great source of skills and experience. Asking friends and family to be involved is an individual choice with many benefits.
- **School Engagements:** Information sessions at childcare centres or schools. Children take home the message to their families – school staff are also engaged.
- **Cadet Program:** If you have a Cadet Program running in your area this can be a great way to recruit new members.





# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT

## Recruitment Preparation

Making your recruitment approach to discuss volunteering with the NSW SES will require you to prepare and plan your communication. It will be important for you to have a clear and concise explanation of who the NSW SES is and what it is you are asking of this person or their organisation.

There are varying levels of awareness among the community as to our role and purpose, so you will need to understand and explain things such as:

- Our Vision and Mission.
- Our Flood, Storm and Tsunami combat role.
- What work the Unit you represent undertakes.
- Our approach to engaging with volunteers and the opportunities to get involved.
- Where to find more information.

### NSW SES Brand and the Messaging of Volunteering Reimagined

Mission, Vision, our Values; These messages set the scene in peoples' minds about what we do and what is important to us. They evoke a feeling about the organisations intentions and form the basis for how we conduct ourselves in our work.

There are varying levels of understanding and awareness among the community as to our role and purpose as combat agency for flood, storm and tsunami. Our ability to quickly and clearly convey who we are and what we do will be an essential element for success.

Using these brand statements and descriptors provides the public with

a consistent message across the country which we can then make more meaningful to our unique communities by layering on further local information.

Volunteering Reimagined underpins the change in focus to a more open and accepting culture by providing more flexible and broad opportunities for involvement. It is essential to understand how to utilise the built-in flexibility to harness more capacity during preparation, response and recovery operations.

Preparation in relation to the NSW SES brand and messaging of Volunteering Reimagined includes incorporating these themes and messages into your communication.

### CONSIDER:

*How will I explain who the NSW SES is and what we do?*

*How will I explain the changes Volunteering Reimagined has introduced or talk about the opportunities it has created for greater community involvement?*

### Involve the Unit in Mapping Your Plan

Involving Unit Volunteers in mapping and developing your recruitment plan is an important part of preparation. Ideally all members at your unit will understand:

- The recruitment needs of the Unit (operational, nice to have, community focussed).
- What recruitment options will work based on the needs identified.
- How to talk with people about recruitment (messaging).
- Systems and protocols aimed at successful recruitment (buddying new members, providing

hospitality, communicating effectively).

A great way to involve Unit Volunteers, is to practice 'the approach or presentations' you will use for recruitment, on the Unit! Gathering feedback and input from a range of members will help refine your presentation and give members some ownership of the message.

### SOME IDEAS FOR INVOLVING UNIT VOLUNTEERS INCLUDE:

*Deliver presentations which you develop, for speaking engagements to the Unit on meeting night. Ask members to provide feedback on the presentation, which will help you to refine it.*

*Ask members to be involved in creating content for social media, they could talk about why they enjoy being in the NSW SES or what opportunities are available. See who may be interested in creating a short video about their experiences. It is quick and easy to create short videos on your Unit iPhone and edit using the iMovie app on your phone or computer. Check Brand Online for titles and branding tools.*

*Encourage all members to learn the Vision, Mission and Values. Make it the entry code to your Unit meeting night or develop a light-hearted game to encourage everyone to learn it.*

*Seek the input of your Unit Management Team and trainers or assessors on any specific areas of expertise that they have. Involve trainers for example in developing your Role Descriptions.*

*Form a project team of interested members, create a list of tasks/ action items and work with the team to get all aspects completed.*

# TOPIC 1 RECRUITMENT



## QUICK CHECK

*Having completed this topic, are you able to:*

- Understand why people volunteer and the different options available
- Explore what is needed through analysis of relevant information
- Understand ways to source and approach new volunteers
- Map a plan for recruitment

## Recruitment Action Items

**Your Name:** .....

*Use this page to note down any specific actions you have identified you will take in relation to Recruitment at your Unit. Some questions and statements are provided as a prompt.*

**Our Unit could benefit from**

**new Unit Volunteers.**

Does my Unit membership reflect the diversity of my community? Some groups we could seek to engage include:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Spontaneous Volunteers specifically could help us with: (think operationally and day-to-day)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



# TOPIC 1

## RECRUITMENT

The recruitment options we would like to explore further include:

This list details the tasks we need to undertake to prepare for recruitment: Action Items.




### QUICK CHECK

*Tick the corresponding box once you have completed these topics. Please see your facilitators if you would like more information on any of the topics listed here.*

Motivations and Options

Options to Recruit and Approaches

Needs Analysis and Information Sources

Planning Steps

# TOPIC 2

## LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

This topic is aimed at developing your understanding of:

- ✓ Onboarding new members and relevant processes.
- ✓ Training requirements and options.
- ✓ Volunteer experience – new volunteers.
- ✓ Communication considerations.
- ✓ Briefing and deployment.
- ✓ Delegating and referral networks.
- ✓ Volunteer experience – operations.

### Processes for Onboarding

Our Membership Procedures are the first point of reference in relation to onboarding new volunteers of all types. In addition to the specific Membership Procedures your Volunteering Reimagined Support pack provides numerous complimentary information sources including:

- Copies of relevant forms

(Spontaneous/Corporate Volunteering Fitness to Volunteer form, Activation of Corporate Volunteers form, Volunteer Coordinator Site Orientation checklist, Spontaneous Volunteer Onsite Orientation information sheet).

- Process Maps detailing how to onboard and activate each different volunteer type.
- Process Maps detailing registration and exit of Spontaneous Volunteers.

- Case Studies detailing how the range of volunteer types have been utilised and how communities have benefitted from their involvement.
- Media release templates.
- Frequently Asked Questions.
- Human Resources Bulletins which outline what internal documents all volunteers are subject to (E.g. Code of Conduct, WHS Policy, CISP Policy) and what legislation is relevant (E.g. SES Act 1989, WHS Act 2011, ICAC Act 1988).



### ACTIVITY: 2.1 Process List

Using the documents provided (Membership Procedure and Volunteering Reimagined Support Pack) make a list outlining the process for onboarding and exiting a Spontaneous Volunteer who has come in to assist with writing social media content for the day.

**TIP:** write all the steps in the process you can think of first, then number them to get the sequence right. Use the space provided below for your list.



**Duration**  
Approximately  
30 minutes

Start on Page 18 »



# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

## Training Requirements and Options

NSW SES provides relevant training based on the roles that members undertake. We deliver training linked to Nationally Accredited Qualifications and Statements of Attainment and other non-endorsed training based on various skill and knowledge requirements.

For members who hold a position which requires specific training, this will be outlined in the relevant training package. An example would be, Road Crash Rescue Operator.

In the main our approach to training Unit Volunteers will remain consistent with our current practices.

For Spontaneous Volunteers and Community Action Teams we will need a more flexible approach, being responsive to the specific needs of the task being undertaken and the capability of the member.

Training FAQs from the Volunteering Reimagined Support Pack will assist in understanding what has changed and what remains in place.

### Induction Training

Induction training covers the information we deliver to members at the beginning of their engagement as a volunteer.

Induction training for Community Action Teams (CATs) will need to be tailored to meet the objectives of the CAT based on the tasks they will undertake and the capabilities of the volunteers.

Training developed for CATs could be a mix of informal customised training delivered at their location and involvement in formal NSW SES courses (where relevant to their role).

### FOR EXAMPLE:

*A Community Action Team based in West Riverton has been formed with the following objectives:*

- *To assist the community in that location with the provision of weather and safety information.*
- *To help community members prepare their properties for flooding.*
- *To facilitate working relationships between community members and the NSW SES.*

*CAT members are long term residents with substantial experience of flooding in their area.*

*Training for this CAT could include: Informal Induction training covering the role of the NSW SES, weather warnings and their features, how to prepare for flooding, what is in a home emergency kit. Formal courses aren't as relevant for this group given the scope of the CAT.*

### Induction Training - CATs

Consider also that involving CAT members in occasional Unit Training nights may be a good strategy in terms of team integration and retention. Extending an invitation to attend training can be a great way to assist CAT and Unit Volunteers to get to know each other and form working relationships.

### Induction Training - Spontaneous Volunteers

As Spontaneous Volunteers will work with NSW SES for finite projects or tasks, training requirements will need to be more flexible and responsive to the task and member capability at the time. Having said that there are some key pieces of information which should be communicated when providing an Induction to these members.

- The context of the operation (factual overview and what they might encounter).
- The NSW SESs role in the operation.
- The Spontaneous Volunteers role in the operation including boundaries and limitations.
- Hours of work.
- Command, control and communication (who is in charge and how this works).
- Self-care and available ongoing support (CISP).
- Workplace health and safety considerations and duty of care.
- Policies the volunteer will be expected to adhere to (e.g. TARPS).



*review what training materials currently exist to support this type of Induction training. Gathering this material together will assist you to quickly roll out Induction training when the time comes. For example, the Fundamentals Training Package contains good reference material for the points listed above.*

### Role Specific Training - Spontaneous Volunteers and CAT Members

With a huge array of possibilities in terms of the roles and tasks that Spontaneous Volunteers and CAT Members can undertake – role specific training options are many and varied.

The process of developing Role Descriptions will provide structure to the decisions you will make

# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT



around training. To develop the training requirements which fit with each job role, you will consider:

- The skills and knowledge required for the task/job/role.
- The safety considerations and environment in which activities will occur.

The unknown factor at this point, will be the capabilities, skills and experience the Volunteer already has.

### Role Specific Training - Spontaneous Volunteers and CAT Members

After documenting these points (skills and knowledge and safety and environment factors) on the Role Description, the focus is then a risk management approach to what training is required to meet these capabilities.

A Risk Management Approach means considering any hazards that could be created in the absence of training, then looking at the

likelihood and consequence of these eventuating.

**The level and type of training you choose to implement will be your risk mitigation strategy. Our obligation to provide supervision will also mitigate risk to some degree.**

You will need to think about the timeliness and duration of any training solution you provide, as particularly in the case of Spontaneous Volunteers the Operation is likely to be underway.

Where the training needed to mitigate risk to an acceptable level is extensive – it may be that a decision has to been made to have the task or role performed by a more skilled, experienced or trained member.

Unit Trainers and experienced volunteers are a good resource to assist with considering the various factors which come into play when determining training requirements.

### CONSIDERING ...

*all this in conjunction with Volunteer Capability.*

At this point we should again acknowledge that any planning we undertake around training prior to engaging with volunteers in person; will not take into consideration their existing capability.

Understanding that new volunteers come to us with a huge variety of skills and experience is important because this will contribute also to the individuals' expectation around how they are utilised.

While there is some opportunity for skill capture on our Expression of Interest (EOI) and Application forms; opening up a conversation with new Volunteers about their existing capability and how this can be matched to an available role will form part of the early assessment process.



## ACTIVITY: 2.2 New Volunteer

*Facilitators on each table will act as a new volunteer, they will provide the team with a printed version of their EOI listing some skills and the team will then be required to build on that information by having a conversation about what the new volunteer can do and has to offer. The team should come up with a recommendation of how to/if needed to assess the skills they have identified.*



## Options for Providing Training

There are numerous options available to provide training. As a rule, use any existing NSW SES training material as the first option (if it is suited to the situation).

Consider the following list of options when determining what best suits the situation:

- NSW SES Training Material: Learner guides, handouts, online training, diagrams etc. These are primary sources of information and should be used as the first option, if they are appropriate to the situation.
- Demonstration of the task: Have a skilled member provide a demonstration of how to perform the task, noting what the steps are, safety considerations and

indicators of success. Ask new volunteers to demonstrate the task as a way to satisfy yourself that they understand what they are being asked to do.

- Safe Work Method Statement: Provide new volunteers with a SWMS if one exists. Procedures, processes or even a list of steps to complete a task can be substituted for a SWMS. These are often provided in hard copy so that they can be referred to.





# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

- Manufacturer Product Guides and Online Demonstrations: Where tasks involve the use of equipment there may be a relevant product guide or online video demonstration you could use to provide training or instruction. Some examples can be found at <https://www.stihl.com.au/how-to-videos.aspx> These how to guides cover many of the common maintenance and cleaning tasks required for chainsaws.
- Buddy with Experienced Member: set up a coaching relationship between new members and experienced members. This is a great way to impart skills and knowledge and cover off on the supervision element at the same time.
- Talk through the task, then provide reference material: if the task is fairly simple, it may be that talking through what is required and then providing notes based on that briefing may be sufficient.



## IMPORTANT NOTE:

*Resist the temptation to over-train people, typically when using Spontaneous Volunteers time is of the essence. Balancing safety, supervision and getting the job done can be tricky but achievable if you follow the considerations outlined here. Remember to take a risk management approach and avoid being excessively risk averse. Some level of risk is inherent in many of the tasks we perform – awareness of potential hazards is in itself a mitigating factor, so ensure people are aware of hazards and what to do as a baseline.*

## Volunteer Experience – New Members

NSW SES aims to provide all volunteers with a positive experience. Early on in our volunteering journey it is especially important that our experiences are enjoyable. During this phase, there are a number of key times where we can put specific plans in place to support new members.

### 1). Welcome and First Impressions

Creating a positive first impression is a great start to building a relationship and it can be as easy as: acknowledging people, welcoming them and offering your assistance.

*“Hi, thanks for coming in today, I’m Chris – what’s your name? Come with me and I’ll help get you started.”*

Smiling, shaking hands, introducing yourself, asking and remembering peoples name – it is these simple things that make people feel special. Be the first to say hello and make introductions to others in the group.

Think about how you could make things easy for new volunteers when they first arrive:

- Signage can be helpful in directing people where to wait or what to do.
- Have a tea/coffee/cold drink station set up so people can help themselves.
- Have some seating available.
- Have forms or any admin tasks they need to do ready to reduce wait times.

### 2). Introductions

A good little formula for

introductions is to take something you know about the person and include this when introducing them to others.

*“Jim, this is Sandy – Sandy has come in to help us with catering today” “Jim is a big fan of cakes so that’s a sure way to keep him happy”*

This gives Jim something more to comment on and often opens up an avenue of conversation for both parties.

Remember peoples’ names! When being introduced to someone, a good little trick is to say the persons’ name back to them, it helps the name stick in your mind.

*“Hi I’m Jim, what’s your name”  
“I’m Sandy, nice to meet you Jim”*

Think about who the new member will primarily be working with and be sure to make the relevant introductions.

### 3). Buddying

As you won’t be able to work with every individual who starts with the Unit, buddying these new members with another member will be an important strategy.

When you buddy new members, try to consider who would be best placed to do this by thinking through:

- What the new member will be doing, who can help them learn about this role/skill?
- Is there a current member who has similar interests or social groups?
- Which members have good people skills, who enjoys engaging and looking after others?

Once you have chosen someone, have a talk with that person and

# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT



make sure they agree to be involved. Provide them with a handover of any relevant information you know about the new member and let them know to keep you in the loop regarding their progress.

### 4). Hospitality; Familiarisation with premises, people and processes

Basic hospitality involves getting new members quickly up to speed and making sure they are familiar with:

- **The Premises:** Where are toilets, tea and coffee, change rooms, car parking, notice boards, equipment etc.?
- **The People:** Introductions to Leadership reps and other members.
- **Process:** Sign on and off, safety and risk assessment, PPE etc.



## IMPORTANT NOTE:

*These four points are especially important early on. We want members to feel welcome and at ease in their new surroundings so take that extra care to make the first impression a good one. We were all the new volunteer at some point and it makes all the difference when people understand that and do what they can to be inclusive and welcoming.*

## Briefing, Deployment and De-briefing

### Briefing

NSW SES uses the SMEAC format

for briefings. **SMEAC** stands for:

- **Situation**
- **Mission**
- **Execution**
- **Admin and Logistics**
- **Command, Control, Communication and Confirmation**

SMEAC provides structure and sequence to the delivery of briefing communications. By using SMEAC we ensure a clear, concise message is communicated and that we receive confirmation of understanding from those receiving the briefing.

Refer to your SMEAC Handout for further details and explanatory notes.

We should be using SMEAC at all times when we brief teams and individuals during Operations. Spontaneous Volunteers along with CAT Volunteers will also benefit from this structure and clarity in communication.

### Briefing Spontaneous Volunteers

With consideration to the different level of organisational knowledge that Spontaneous Volunteers generally come with, it would be beneficial to include some additional specific information for these briefings, such as:

- The context of the Operation (factual overview and what they might encounter).
- The NSW SESs role in the Operation.
- The Spontaneous Volunteers role in the Operation including boundaries and limitations.
- Hours of work.
- Command, control and

communication (who is in charge and how this works).

- Self-care and available ongoing support (CISP).
- Workplace health and safety considerations and duty of care.
- Policies the volunteer will be expected to adhere to (e.g. TARPS).

(These topics are listed for reference during the Induction of new volunteers also, the SMEAC briefing when they are being deployed is a good opportunity to re-iterate these topics.)

A thorough explanation of boundaries and limitations is especially important for spontaneous volunteers as a risk mitigation strategy.

## Deployment

### Supervision

When deploying Spontaneous Volunteers we must ensure that supervision is provided as a risk mitigation strategy. Supervision can be provided in a number of ways including:

- One-on-one – buddying.
- Team Leader and team of Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Team Leader and multiple teams of Spontaneous Volunteers (for example when Spontaneous Volunteer teams work with known leadership representatives from an affiliated organisation).
- Spontaneous Volunteer working within a team of Unit Volunteers.

The level of supervision that is appropriate will depend on the task the spontaneous volunteer is being asked to complete and the level of previous experience they have. Regardless, it is important to buddy the spontaneous volunteer



# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

with someone who is more experienced, either with the task or the fundamental principles of the NSW SES.

This ensures that they have someone to go to if they have questions about the task, their role or working with affected people.

Some of the reasons that spontaneous volunteers may require additional supervision include:

- Spontaneous volunteers may have no previous volunteering experience.
- Spontaneous volunteers have a range of unique motivations which should be monitored in terms of risk management.
- Spontaneous volunteers are often registered and screened rapidly and little may be known about their skills and character. This could mean they are under-utilised as much as over-utilised.

A priority consideration for deployment of Spontaneous Volunteers is to utilise these volunteers in public spaces, in this way reducing the risks associated with being in private homes.

## Supervision and Safety Management

When supervising Spontaneous Volunteers your priority should be on safety management with reference to these points:

- Ensure the person is aware of the relevant safety issues.
- Ask questions to check their understanding of how to respond to safety issues.
- Monitor safe work practices through observation.
- Appoint or delegate someone to monitor safety in your absence.
- Discuss safety management in AAR.

## Staging Areas and Logistics (food, shelter, equipment)

Some situations will require you to host volunteers at a staging area which may be separate from your local unit headquarters. What is required will depend on a number of variables including; the number of people being hosted, the duration of the event, what is required to be run from that site.

Handout: Things to Consider when selecting a staging area and planning logistics.

Activity: Participants to discuss handout and add any other considerations they can come up with. Personalise the list and make it relevant for your local area.

## Debriefing

We currently use the After Action Review format to conduct our debriefing and this process continues to be relevant and effective for all categories of volunteering.

The AAR Process provides opportunities to reflect on experience and identify challenges, improvements and successes.

During the AAR is also a good time to mention the support available such as CISP which volunteers may wish to access as a result of their experience.

It is vital to give spontaneous volunteers the opportunity to debrief at the end of each shift as well as at the end of their deployment.

This allows them to reflect on what went well and what could be improved upon and gives us valuable information. It is also an opportunity for the volunteers to discuss any situations they found challenging and request help or guidance.

During the debriefing ensure that you mention and refer any volunteer who requires support due to their experience to the relevant network, e.g. CISP

## Communication Strategies

Our operational communication plans need to take into consideration how we address some of the characteristics of new volunteer types; updates will be required to your existing plans based on how people may now expect to engage with us.

Spontaneous Volunteers need to know about opportunities and how to prepare themselves, they will closely monitor and engage in communication during events to find ways to help and afterwards will appreciate recognition and options for volunteering again in the future.

Community Action Teams will provide an avenue of communication and what they require will also need to be considered and integrated into the Units Operational plans.

**Communication before, during and after events about what we are doing and what we have done will become more important given the new variety of volunteer types and the ways they interact with us.**

## Before the Event

We need to communicate what we anticipate happening and start communicating about what help we may envisage a need for. Outside of operational times is when we should aim to prepare people with information about what the NSW SES does, how they can assist themselves and how to volunteer. As an event becomes more likely or imminent communication plans should be activated and we should start thinking about proactively

# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT



engaging the community in our messaging.

Traditionally much of our time and effort prior to an impending event is spent preparing ourselves and our Unit for response. Extending this focus to how we can have the community commence preparations alongside us is a hallmark of success in the new volunteering landscape.

Activating our Community Networks should occur if possible before the event.

## During the Event

During the event – We need to start communicating more about our response efforts. Research shows that Spontaneous Volunteer groups often form out of a perceived need for something that is not currently being addressed. Being clear about what we are doing helps to stem misconceptions and reduce duplication of effort.

During the event we also need to communicate about what volunteering opportunities are available.

Monitor social media communications to identify any:

- Operational needs which are not being reported through traditional channels.
- Community networking that is happening.
- Issues being raised by the community.

## After the Event

we need to recognise the efforts of the community and those who volunteered with the NSW SES.



**Social Media Revolution**

Use your QR Code reader to watch the video.

## Delegating

Delegation allows you to make the best use of your time and skills, and it helps other people in the team grow and develop to reach their full potential in the organization.

Delegation does require initial effort from you to clearly define the outcomes sought and provide any training or information required.

It can sometimes seem easier to just 'do it yourself' but resist this temptation if you can identify that the task could be done by others, it will provide them with meaningful work or opportunities to learn and provides you with time to engage in higher priority work.

We all know that as managers, we should not micromanage. However, this does not mean we must abdicate control altogether. In delegating effectively, we have to find the sometimes-difficult balance between giving enough space for people to use their abilities to best effect, while still monitoring and supporting closely enough to ensure that the job is done correctly and effectively.

## In NSW SES we use SMEAC to Delegate

Using SMEAC ensures that a goal is outlined as well as clear channels of communication.

The flexibility of SMEAC allows you to provide the amount of information required in relation to execution, based on the skills/knowledge of the person you are working with.

For example: This is the Situation and the Mission, how you go about this is up to you, with these constraints.

When delegating ensure that you follow these steps:

## HOW

- Define the outcomes sought and detail any required process or procedures to be followed.
- Create a brief SMEAC.
- Match the task with a person who has relevant capability and approach them to take on the task.
- Deliver SMEAC briefing
- Check in, supervise or monitor as appropriate.
- Follow up at the completion of work and debrief performance against the outcomes sought.

## Delegating to CATs

CATs will be delegated a range of tasks and roles and it is important that these are very clearly articulated in the agreement made between the CAT and the Unit.

It is ideal if CATs retain a strong sense of ownership around the tasks and roles that are assigned to them, so it will be important to ensure that we extend that ownership to them while providing leadership and guidance. Ensure you have two way communication with your CAT so that they can also identify work or assistance required from the Unit.

Reporting systems and methods to capture the results achieved by CATs will be a good way to measure the success of the delegation arrangements.

## Delegating to Spontaneous Volunteers

Spontaneous Volunteers can be a great source of expertise and a good resource to delegate to. If when you are operational you find something that could be delegated to an expert, consider working this back into your future recruitment plans for Spontaneous Volunteers.





# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

## Referral Network

Think about when you might need to utilise the expertise of our referral network.

Community Action Team volunteers and Spontaneous volunteers may

not have had previous exposure or understanding of the sometimes distressing situations which can arise (from injuries, to suffering and potentially death) as part of our work.

While we will brief all Volunteers of this potential before deploying

them, what they imagine and the reality of their experience will often be different and there is potential for emotional distress or suffering.

Knowing who to refer members to will assist them to access support in a timely manner.

## ACTIVITY: 2.3 Brainstorm

Brainstorm all available NSW SES referral services.

**NOTE:** Psychological First Aid Definition: A humane supportive response to a fellow human being who is suffering and may need support. (It is not: Debriefing, Counselling and Diagnosing – these are tasks for professionals.)



**Duration**  
Approximately  
10 minutes

## Volunteer Experience – Operations

We have discussed a range of ways that we can contribute to a positive volunteer experience such as:

- Effective briefing using SMEAC format
- Clear job roles
- Supervision
- Training

No matter how comprehensive

our preparation and execution of all of this may be, it has to be acknowledged that during time critical operational conditions – interpersonal conflict can occur. Our ability to quickly identify and effectively diffuse these situations will ensure everyone retains a focus on our Operational priorities.

## ACTIVITY: 2.4 Case Studies

Read the following case studies and answer the questions provided as a group.

- What would you do in this situation?
- What would you consider before taking action?
- What outcome are you hoping to achieve?



**Duration**  
Approximately  
10 minutes

1. Charlie is a volunteer who is a real no fuss kind of guy. He is very direct and to the point in his communication. Muhammad is a Spontaneous Volunteer and part of a team being led by Charlie in preparing properties at risk of flooding. Muhammad comes to you complaining that Charlie is rude and he does not want to work with him.

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# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

2. Sally is a highly skilled Spontaneous Volunteer working in the Operations room assisting to develop public communications. CAT member Macy is working on Social Media communications and you notice her rolling her eyes every time Sally provides some input on what could be included in Facebook communications.

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3. Casey and Mei are partners who have come in to assist as Spontaneous Volunteers. They are working with three others in a team doing sandbagging. Casey and Mei are arguing with each other and their anger is escalating. They are criticising each other and starting to swear and be aggressive. Others in the team are looking uncomfortable.

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4. A group of Spontaneous Volunteers are working together in the kitchen preparing food for field teams. Jason (a young chef) has been allocated the role of Team Leader, however Barbara (an older experienced home cook) refuses to follow his directions. Barbara is giving orders to other members of the kitchen team and you can clearly see the atmosphere is tense (although no one has raised the issue).

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## QUICK CHECK

Having completed this topic, do you have the necessary insights to commence planning implementation activities around:

- Onboard new members using relevant processes
- Training requirements and options
- Volunteer experience – new volunteers
- Communication strategies
- Briefing and deployment
- Delegating and referral networks
- Volunteer experience – operations



# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

## Leadership and Management Action Items

Your Name: .....

Use this page to note down any specific actions you have identified that you will take in relation to Leadership and Management at your Unit. Questions and statements are provided as a prompt.

The following team members have expertise which could help our Unit in planning leadership and management strategies (training, briefing, local referral networks).

.....

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To create or update our communication strategy, we will: (refer to your Units Incident Action Plan (IAP))

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Common field and operational tasks we could write Generic SMEAC templates for include:

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# TOPIC 2 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

When managing interpersonal conflict I will try to:

.....

.....

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.....

.....

## Leadership and Management: Action Items




### QUICK CHECK

Tick the corresponding box once you have completed these topics. Please see your facilitators if you would like more information on any of the topics listed here.

☐

Delegating  
and Networks

☐

Training

☐

Volunteer  
Experience

☐

Communication

☐

Briefing and  
Deployment

☐

Onboarding



# TOPIC 3 RETENTION

# TOPIC 3 RETENTION

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this topic, you should have an understanding of:

- ✓ The concept of Retention
- ✓ Benefits of volunteering with NSW SES
- ✓ Unit Volunteer specific retention ideas
- ✓ CAT Volunteer specific retention ideas
- ✓ Spontaneous Volunteer specific retention ideas

### Retention: Defining the Concept

Unlike the other topics 'retention' is an outcome, not a task. In other words, you can take specific steps to recruit, lead and manage volunteers, but retaining them is a culmination of activities occurring throughout the timeline of their involvement.

Retention is the end result of a well-organized, welcoming, and meaningful volunteer engagement



**REMEMBER THIS**  
*Retention is when a volunteer remains with you, for the period of time to which they committed when beginning service.*

– the cumulative effect of doing all the elements of volunteer recruitment and leadership and management effectively.

In this way retention is an individual measure. It may also be a recruitment goal, since you will need to bring on board volunteers who are willing and able to commit for whatever time you have determined is your minimum need.

It also matters which volunteers you retain. If you have a revolving door through which the newest or most well-trained volunteers leave faster than you can replace them, there is a problem which needs to be identified and addressed.

There are many things you can do to retain volunteers, use this simple process to re-focus on ensuring a positive experience for all volunteers, including you:

#### Volunteer Experience Process

When supervising Spontaneous Volunteers your priority should be on safety management with reference to these points:

- Provide genuine hospitality.
- Understand members motivation and interests.



**REFER HANDOUT**  
*We will explore ways we can contribute to this process and some of the activities that will help you address each point.*

- Provide opportunities to help the community.
- Recognise efforts - say thank you and express gratitude.
- Maintain an ongoing connection through experiences and dialogue.

### What Benefits can you offer Potential Volunteers?

NSW SES is just one of many organizations competing for volunteers. What makes us a special or attractive organisation for the volunteer?



## ACTIVITY: 3.1 Team Brainstorm

Working in teams, brainstorm on butchers paper, as many benefits of volunteering with NSW SES as you can.

**TIP:** Think about some of the motivations people have for joining and use these to generate benefits to match.



**Duration**  
Approximately  
10 minutes

During the Induction topic we explored the importance of getting to know our volunteers and understand their motivations and interests. This concept is re-iterated in our Volunteer Experience Process.

This information is so valuable because it positions you to then match benefits and experiences which will be meaningful and rewarding.

Scheduling in time and ways to achieve the benefits individuals seek with NSW SES will ensure you have a good chance at positively influencing retention.

Some common themes regarding the BENEFITS of volunteering with NSW SES include:

- Establishing friendships and opportunities to socialise.
- Developing skills, knowledge and capabilities.
- Being recognised by the community for service, pride of service.
- Training opportunities, personal development and growth.
- Social interaction
- Feeling of self-worth and achievement

### Unit Volunteer Specific Retention Ideas

#### Understanding, Promoting and Implementing Volunteering Reimagined

The Volunteering Reimagined journey is one of change and evolution. We have new opportunities to engage with more volunteers and the chance to stop and evaluate what we do and why we do it.

Our Unit Volunteers should feel confident and comfortable about their place in the service and there are a number of ways we can work towards this goal.

Before we ask people to embrace something new, they will need to be provided with opportunities to understand WHY the changes are beneficial and develop a picture of how they will be impacted.

When these things are understood a level of comfort and engagement can develop.

Since the launch of Volunteering Reimagined in September 2017 there has been a broad array of communication aimed at supporting this engagement.

Some examples include:

- The Volunteering Reimagined support pack.
- Numerous communication pieces on the Facebook NSW SES Members Communication Group.
- Articles in Member Connect and on EOS.
- Unit presentations and workshops
- Presentations at various forums such as Controllers Conferences and Transformation Workshops.

Helping your existing membership see the benefits, understand why the changes have been made and their place in the new landscape is essential for success.

Take advantage of the material that is available and become an advocate for change.

Remember also that Unit Volunteers now have the ability to engage with NSW SES more flexibly. While the level of time and commitment required will be closely related to the Roles volunteers undertake we can in most circumstances be less rigid and prescriptive in our approach to Capability, Commitment, Currency and Training.



# TOPIC 3 RETENTION

## Re-imagining Unit Volunteer Engagement

Taking the time to stop and evaluate what we do and why we do it is a beneficial process and ensures that we don't just do things – because that is the way we have always done it.

The introduction of more capacity for flexibility allows us some opportunities to change things up for our Unit Volunteers; if there are clear benefits for doing so and the requirements of Currency, Capability, Contribution and Training are being met.

### Challenge yourself and your leadership team to consider these questions:

- Do we have a good understanding of all our Unit Volunteers interests and motivations?
- What traditions and routines are important to our Members and why?
- How can we balance a range of commitment levels while meeting our capability requirements?
- How can we complement and enhance our Unit Volunteers skills by involving Spontaneous Volunteers and Community Action Teams?
- What is the goal of our meeting night? And what improvements could be made?
- How could we incorporate more opportunities to integrate, connect and engage the community in our work?
- Review the Volunteer Experience Process and create a Volunteer Engagement Plan. Do this by noting the ways you will address each step of the process at your Unit?

Use the evaluation you have done and the insights you have achieved to make improvements.

## Meeting Nights

Seeking some feedback from your team members is a good place to start. Seek feedback in a setting where you can rely on their candid reply. Engage with a range of members as some people may feel happy and heard while others are having a different experience.

Balancing the information/ compliance aspect, with training, team building and socialising can take some time to perfect. This weighting of priorities when members come together for a meeting/training night will need to be very responsive to each Units unique circumstances.

### For example:

An Accredited Road Crash Rescue Unit will likely have a formal scheduled approach to meeting their SRB training requirements and may include this topic for discussion/training each meeting night.

Another Unit develops their training calendar three monthly and shares the delivery among the experienced members at the Unit. They have the training calendar on the wall and don't discuss it during meeting apart from each quarter when it is developed.

Consider the members of your Unit and review the following points to find ways to make meeting nights more engaging.

- Socialising is a great part of meeting night, it is a priority to include opportunities for people to engage with each other.
- Scheduling time in for acknowledging achievements,

talking through jobs that were memorable, having a tea/coffee break, sharing a meal, having a BBQ for example.

- If you have a larger unit and not all members know each-other, have an activity where you talk to at least one person you do not know and introduce yourself.
- Socialising and team building activities assist Unit Volunteers to develop their relationships with the members of their NSW SES team. Win – Win.
- Providing opportunities for all members have input and be heard.
- Run the activity – What makes you happy at NSW SES? What do you enjoy about being a volunteer with the NSW SES? Think about how you can incorporate the kinds of things that people enjoy and make them happy into the Units activities.

Work collaboratively with Community Engagement volunteers and staff to recruit, lead/manage and retain CATs.

Your Unit and Zone Community Engagement representatives are a fantastic partner and resource to engage in the implementation of Volunteering Reimagined.

Your Community Engagement team will have community connections and be well placed to work with you to plan and implement strategies particularly around recruitment of CATs and Spontaneous Volunteers.

## Spontaneous Volunteer Specific Retention Ideas

- Plan for Spontaneous Volunteer Involvement.
- Create Role Descriptions.

# TOPIC 3 RETENTION



- Respond to offers of assistance – provide opportunities, re-direct or decline.
- Communicate early and often about what is happening, what we are doing and what opportunities are available to engage with us.
- Follow the Volunteer Experience steps for New Members.
- Explore their motivation and interests.
- Explore their skill sets and what they have to offer.
- Resolve interpersonal conflict quickly and effectively.
- Demonstrate that we value their contribution through our actions
- Brief and de-brief.
- Consider holding an AAR with Spontaneous Volunteers at a later time to get specific information from their perspective. Time for reflection can assist people to gain insights, which can then be useful to make improvements for next time.
- Set and manage expectations.
- Follow the Volunteer Experience Process:
  - Provide genuine hospitality.
  - Understand motivations and interests.
  - Provide opportunities to help the community.
  - Recognise efforts – thank you and expressions of gratitude.
  - Maintain and ongoing connection through experiences and dialogue.
- Advise of future or additional opportunities.
- Integrate into composite teams.
- Use opportunities to educate and

inform about the NSW SES role.

- Invite them to join the Unit or discuss ways their skills could be utilised in the Unit.
- Certificates of appreciation.
- Thank you BBQ post event (1 – 2 months later).
- Anniversary BBQ if appropriate.
- Invite Spontaneous Volunteers to come together and contribute to the writing or review of Unit Spontaneous Volunteer Plans.

## Community Action Team Specific Retention Ideas

- Document CAT role and responsibilities so that these are clear (reduces the possibility of misunderstandings and issues when we are working together).
- Provide relevant training and opportunities to develop skills.
- Create a communication plan, outlining what you will communicate and when. Schedule time to talk and listen to your CAT. Create a partnership approach to dialogue.
- Invite CAT members to the Unit and make them welcome to come along and join in with relevant opportunities.
- Follow the Volunteer Experience steps for New Members.
- Explore their motivation and interests, looking for opportunities for engagement.
- Explore their skill sets and what they have to offer.
- Resolve interpersonal conflict quickly.
- Demonstrate that we value their contribution through our actions.

- Brief and de-brief.
- Set and manage expectations.
- Follow the Volunteer Experience Process:
  - Provide genuine hospitality.
  - Understand motivations and interests.
  - Provide opportunities to help the community.
  - Recognise efforts – thank you and expressions of gratitude.
  - Maintain and ongoing connection through experiences and dialogue.
- Advise of future or additional opportunities (training, professional development, competitions, NSW SES events).
- Integrate into composite teams.
- Use opportunities to educate and inform about the NSW SES role.
- Invite to Unit events such as presentations or get-togethers such as social occasions.
- Go to them – find opportunities to engage with CATs at their location, rather than only at the Unit (demonstrating a partnership approach to engagement).
- Keep the Unit updated and informed about what the CAT is doing, including activations.
- Look for opportunities to recognise the work of CATs (e.g. awards, nominations for recognition).





# TOPIC 3 RETENTION

## Retention Action Items

Your Name: .....

Use this page to note down any specific actions you have identified that you will take in relation to Retention at your Unit.  
Some questions and statements are provided as a prompt.

Retention is when a volunteer remains with you, for the period of time to which they committed when beginning service. What does this mean to you?

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Some ideas to make meeting night fun and more inclusive were:

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Do your existing members understand the changes of Volunteering Reimagined, including why they are beneficial and how they are personally impacted? What will you do?

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# TOPIC 3 RETENTION

The thing I am most excited to try to improve our Retention capability is: *(think about all volunteer types).*

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## Retention: Action Items

Create a Volunteer Engagement Plan using the Volunteer Experience Process.

Review the goals and format of your Unit Meeting night using the prompts provided.

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**QUICK  
CHECK**

*Tick the corresponding box once you have completed these topics. Please see your facilitators if you would like more information on any of the topics listed here.*

☐

Concept Definition &  
NSW SES Benefits

☐

Unit Volunteer  
Retention

☐

Spontaneous  
Volunteer Retention

☐

Community Action  
Team Retention



# HANDOUT



**Thank you for taking the time to complete this workbook and the workshop program.**

We trust this workbook will be a useful resource to you as you implement Volunteering Reimagined and position your Unit to take advantage of the opportunities it provides.

Please reach out to the Volunteering Reimagined Team using the following contact details, if you would like further assistance.

E: [experience@nsw.ses.gov.au](mailto:experience@nsw.ses.gov.au)

Facebook Group: NSW SES Volunteer Experience

## Designing your Unit Recruitment Plan

The first step of recruitment is to define what needs to be done. We do this by creating a role description, which outlines TASKS and associated SKILLS and TRAINING. Most Units have clear role descriptions for positions such as: Unit Commander, Admin Officer, Rescue Officer, Team Leaders, etc.

These have been created by grouping a set of tasks together – then mapping the skills/knowledge and training required to execute the tasks. Using this process, we can scale roles up and down in size and also match people to roles by either looking at the tasks involved or the skills and knowledge needed.

Here is an example:

Role: Community Connector	
Tasks or Duties	Skills/Knowledge/Training
Gather event related information	NSW SES information sources (BOM, Sit Reps)
Create simple community messaging	Ability to create a simple word document and summarise important/relevant content
Make contact with the community	Knowledge of community meeting places
Provide Information to Community	Ability to start conversations and provide clear effective messaging. Know who to go to
Gather Community feedback	Ability to take note of relevant feedback and disseminate to relevant contacts. Active listening

### By taking the time to consider:

- What tasks need to be done to meet the Units Operational Needs and
- What tasks could enhance our service to the Community.

### We can then:

- Group tasks together into roles.
- Match tasks with skills/knowledge/training requirements.
- Scale roles up or down in size to suit the resourcing we have available.

### In undertaking this process,

it is expected that you will see opportunities to involve volunteers in different ways, for example:

- Creating roles for short term or location specific tasks and recruiting Spontaneous or CAT Team Volunteers.





Use the table on the below to start making a list of tasks which need to be completed in order to meet your Units Operational Needs. Start by documenting tasks that are not currently assigned to a particular role, are problematic to fill or you don't currently have resourcing for.

[illegible]

Use the Role Matrix create one Role based on the tasks you have identified in the Task Table. Aim to group together 5 Tasks for the role you create. **An example is provided to get you started.**

Role	Tasks	Skill/Knowledge/Training
Community Connector	Gather event related information	NSW SES information sources (BOM, Sit Reps)
	Create simple community messaging	Ability to create a simple word document and summarise important/relevant content
	Make contact with the community	Knowledge of community engagement points
	Provide Information to Community	Ability to start conversations and provide clear effective messaging
	Gather Community feedback	Ability to take note of relevant feedback and disseminate to relevant contacts
Who will they work with?	Social Media Officer, Public Information Officer, IMT, the Community.	
Key Skill Areas	Summarising, research, customer service, note taking.	
Uniform/PPE considerations	NSW SES Hat and shirt or vest. Appropriate footwear for the location.	

Role	Tasks	Skill/Knowledge/Training

*This simple process provides a way to create roles based on tasks you have identified for your Unit. Scale roles up or down in size to suit the resourcing you have available. Use this Role Matrix format to input existing Roles (e.g. Unit Commander) as this will assist you to delegate tasks out when you are busy or when suitably skilled people are available to assist you.*



# HANDOUT

## Highlights: Designing your Unit Recruitment Plan

### Keep it Simple:

Use the basic template, add information you feel is relevant, tailor and customise what is required to your unique Unit and Community.

### Recruitment starts with;

Defining what needs to be done.

### Take time to consider:

- What tasks need to be done to meet the Units Operational Needs, and
- What tasks could enhance our service to the Community.

### Next:

- Group tasks together into roles.
- Match tasks with skills/knowledge/training requirements.
- Scale roles up or down in size to suit the resourcing we have available.

### In undertaking this process;

It is expected that you will see opportunities to involve volunteers in different ways. As Unit Volunteers, Community Action Team Volunteers, Spontaneous Volunteers and Corporate Volunteers.

### Scaling roles up or down in size;

Allows you to be flexible in your approach to resourcing. An example could be; splitting one Full Time Role into two Part Time Roles.

### Use your Task List to engage volunteers in meaningful work:

A list of tasks (not allocated to a specific role) with general/simple, skill/knowledge/training requirements can be a useful resource to provide opportunities for involvement. For example, volunteers could be engaged in these tasks rather than sitting and waiting for deployment.

### Use Task Lists to Delegate:

A task list is invaluable when it comes to delegating. It can be particularly hard to think of what needs to be done when you are in a high stress or very busy position yourself during operations. The pre-prepared task list provides a good guide for these busy times, allowing you to share the workload while staying productive yourself.

The Task List and Role Matrix will allow you to match volunteers to roles by either looking at the tasks involved or the skills and knowledge needed.

Run the Unit Meeting Activity to involve your unit. The more perspectives, the more well-rounded your picture of the potential recruitment needs will be. This is something you could also invite your local CAT to attend.



# HANDOUT

## Recruitment Options List

### 1. ONLINE PORTAL:

Use the online portal to advertise specific roles. Use the template in the Support Pack to create job descriptions.

### 2. NEWSPAPER:

Traditional newspaper advertisements still work. Design a role and advertise in digital or paper newspapers. Use a Media Release from the Support Pack or write a story to create interest about what your Unit is doing and the assistance they need.

### 3. CALL TO ACTION:

Social media call to action can be placed on Community Facebook pages or the Unit Facebook page as an example.

### 4. PERSONAL APPROACH:

Personal approach means planning and making an approach to an individual or organisation. Examples include; Council, Lions Club, Religious Groups. Consider the options for a personal approach. Ideally you will speak with the decision maker of the organisation. Another option could be to speak at a staff meeting, gaining a larger audience and creating wider interest.

### 5. SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:

Speaking engagements provide a broad audience to deliver your recruitment message. Business networking events, staff meetings, Chamber of Commerce, toast masters – any group that invites guest speakers is a potential audience. You could also target a specific audience with skills suitable to the role you are recruiting.

### 6. NETWORKING:

Attend networking events and speak with participants about recruitment. (Local networking events – Business women's network, chamber of commerce, country women's association, young entrepreneurs groups, co working groups.)

### 7. INFORMATION STALLS:

Public demonstrations/info stalls – these are your traditional info stalls, with the addition of the demonstration or skill training session idea. Run a 'how to maintain your chainsaw session' at a local park or 'how to use a ladder safely'. Consider who you are looking for and review the stall you create to ensure it projects the correct message.

### 8. INFORMATION NIGHTS:

Traditional recruitment nights held at Unit or Town Hall type locations. These will need to be updated to reflect the new Categories of Volunteering.

### 9. PERSONAL REFERRALS:

Friends and family are a great source of skills and experience. Asking friends and family to be involved is an individual choice with many benefits.

### 10. SCHOOL ENGAGEMENTS:

Info sessions at childcare or schools, children take home the message to their families – school staff are also engaged.

### 11. CADET PROGRAM:

If you have a cadet program running in your area this can be a great way to recruit new members.





# HANDOUT

**Role 1:** .....

Role: Community Connector	
Tasks or Duties	Skills/Knowledge/Training
Gather event related information	NSW SES information sources (BOM, Sit Reps)
Create simple community messaging	Ability to create a simple word document and summarise important/relevant content
Make contact with the community	Knowledge of community engagement points
Provide Information to Community	Ability to start conversations and provide clear effective messaging
Gather Community feedback	Ability to take note of relevant feedback and disseminate to relevant contacts

**Role 2:** .....

Role: Social Media Officer	
Tasks or Duties	Skills/Knowledge/Training
Gather event related information	NSW SES information sources (BOM, Sit Reps)
Create simple community messaging	Ability to create a simple, clear posts and summarise important/relevant content
Navigate and post on a range of Social Media	Knowledge of community engagement points on Social Media
Monitor Community feedback	Ability to take note of relevant feedback and disseminate to relevant contacts
Respond to posts from the Community on behalf of the Unit	Ability provide clear effective messaging



# HANDOUT

**Role 3:** .....

Role: Catering Assistant	
Tasks or Duties	Skills/Knowledge/Training
Follow the directions of the Catering Officer	Following instructions, team work.
Prepare and serve food	Food hygiene, cooking skills, waiter skills
Maintain clean kitchen and dining areas	Food hygiene, cleaning skills
Undertake shopping and stock control	Stock control, stock rotation
Store food safely	Understanding of food hygiene principles

**Role 4:** .....

Role: General Hand assisting Storm Teams	
Tasks or Duties	Skills/Knowledge/Training
Prepare and load equipment into vehicles	Physical fitness, knowledge of tools/equipment and their purpose
Work safely in storm affected environments	WH&S, common storm related hazard
Follow instructions	Teamwork, communication skills
Prepare tarps and ropes	Tying knots
Store and maintain equipment	Equipment maintenance (chainsaws, ropes, lighting, generators etc)



# HANDOUT

## Staging Area Considerations

### Things to consider when selecting a staging area and planning logistics:

1. The number of people being hosted at the site.
2. The amenities needed to accommodate this number of people.
3. What will be happening at the staging area.
4. The safety of the site in terms of impacts from the event being dealt with.
5. The infrastructure required – seating, heating, cooling, technology (computers, internet, electricity supply, screens, projectors, phones, phone signal availability).
6. Catering services available onsite or nearby.
7. Parking for the number of people attending.
8. Security of the site.
9. Cost.
10. Availability of the site and for how long. Any relevant time or use restrictions.

Identify three facilities in your area which have potential as a Staging Area and note them below:

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# HANDOUT



## Thank You Volunteers



Sydney residents  
thank NSW SES  
volunteers  
.....  
Use your QR Code reader  
to watch the video.

## Volunteer Experience Process and the Art of Saying Thank You

There are many things you can do to retain volunteers, the Volunteer Experience Process provides five key steps to re-focus you on ensuring a positive experience for all volunteers, including you! Under each step you will see a list of things you can do to contribute to it.

### Volunteer Experience Process

#### 1. Provide genuine hospitality

*We achieve this in many ways including:*

- Planning how we will greet and onboard new volunteers
- Being the first to say hello when someone arrives
- Introducing yourself and others
- Showing new volunteers where the amenities are
- Offering our assistance proactively
- Making an effort to remember names
- Expressing your gratitude and valuing the contribution of others through your actions

#### 2. Understand members motivation and interests

*We achieve this by:*

- Asking questions
  - “What motivated you to volunteer with us?”
  - “What are you interested in achieving with the NSW SES?”
  - “Can you share what you are most interested in contributing to NSW SES?”
- Listening to the stories and information members share about themselves
- Spending time with members in a range of settings
- Be proactive in getting to know members

#### 3. Provide Opportunities to help the community

*Ways to achieve this include:*

- Undertaking preparation and planning around volunteering opportunities
- Developing Role Descriptions to assist people in accessing relevant opportunities
- Consider and develop a broad range of tasks and roles
- Share the workload
- Buddy new and experienced members
- Promote ways that people can get involved



There are many things you can do to retain volunteers, the Volunteer Experience Process provides five key steps to re-focus you on ensuring a positive experience for all volunteers, including you! Under each step you will see a list of things you can do to contribute to it.

## Volunteer Experience Process

#### 4. Recognise Efforts – thank you and expressions of gratitude

We achieve this in many ways including:

- Saying 'thank you' in person
- Acknowledging individual contributions during After Action Reviews
- Writing a note or email saying thank you
- Nominating members for awards or recognition
- Noticing when members do something great
- Expressing gratitude when you feel it

## 5. Maintain an ongoing connection through experiences and dialogue

- Taking the time to plan socialising and team building activities
- Creating experiences – training, team building, get togethers, meals and occasions.
- Maintaining communication – using a range of channels; in person, over the phone, by email, through Social Media
- Keeping members up to date with relevant information
- Being proactive in catching up with people, making time to talk
- Family Friendly

It is two simple words and they may generally be enough but it is nice to express your gratitude in more detail sometimes. In fact research has found that expressing gratitude improves wellbeing for those giving as well as receiving.

Add to your next Thank You with some extra information.

- Use the person's name.
- Say thank you.
- Describe what they have done
- Describe how it made you feel.
- Explain difference it has made for you or why you appreciate what they have done.
- Say thanks again.

*"Jim, thank you for helping me clean the shed today.  
I felt so glad to have the help, it would have been a really big job by myself".*

[illegible]

