WESTERN AUSTRALIAN EMERGENCY SERVICES
VOLUNTEER SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY
2016-2024

TOGETHER WE CAN
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEER SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2016-2024
Volunteer Bush Fire Service.
Vision

Resilient communities that work together to build capability and capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies
Mission
To create a sustainable volunteer emergency services workforce in Western Australia by increasing the:
Recruitment of volunteers and broadening the membership diversity and
Retention rates of volunteers and improving their experience across a diverse range of roles
Aim

Volunteers and key stakeholders work collaboratively to develop and support a vibrant and sustainable volunteer emergency services workforce
Shared Values
Safe and resilient communities
Working collaboratively
Mutual respect
Diversity and inclusivity
Safety and innovation
Local knowledge
Research and evidence based planning
Leadership and integrity
Over the next eight years we will be working hard to improve volunteers’ experience by focusing on the following five main issues when we develop resources and activities:

**Time** – time is precious. We will work to create more efficient volunteer administration and processes

**Training** – we will work to make training more accessible and flexible

**Costs** – we will work to reduce volunteers’ out of pocket expenses

**Recognition** – we will engage and collaborate more with volunteers and value local knowledge and experience

**People** – we will help to develop strong and competent leaders from a diverse range of community members
Affiliated Emergency Services
Volunteers and Programs

In this Strategy the definition of an emergency services volunteer is:
Any volunteer member who gives his or her time to actively respond to an emergency, support an emergency response or conduct emergency, disaster and hazard mitigation, awareness and education activities that are affiliated with the Acts of emergency management.

Volunteer work affiliated with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services is with the:
- Volunteer Marine Rescue Services
- State Emergency Service
- Volunteer Bush Fire Service
- Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services
- Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service

Additional volunteer roles and activities include:
- Supporting the Fire and Emergency Services Education and Heritage Centre
- Vintage appliance restoration
- Participating in urban search and rescue with equine and canine support
- Mapping
- Community engagement programs
- Community relations and information
- Statewide Operational Response Division (SWORD)
Commissioner’s Message –
The Way Forward

In Western Australia, volunteers collectively provide more than 300 million hours of community service each year in support of 5,000 volunteer organisations. Emergency services volunteering illustrates this support from community, relying on over 27,000 volunteers to respond to emergencies and disasters.

Emergency services volunteers are critical in helping Western Australian communities prepare, defend and recover from fire, flood, storm, cyclone, and various searches and rescues. My thanks go to the men and women who voluntarily provide more than 95 per cent of WA’s emergency response personnel and attend more than 7,500 incidents every year. Their service contributes significantly to the enduring economic, social, environmental, and cultural resilience of local communities.

The Western Australian Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Strategy 2016-2024 underpins DFES’ reform program which seeks to be better coordinated and more efficiently resourced to manage its responsibilities and future challenges. This strategy focuses on the critical resources of volunteers and brings a renewed commitment to all Western Australians to ensure this workforce is sustainable and capable of taking on any future challenge.

This strategy’s key objective is to improve volunteer recruitment and retention. It will be subject to ongoing review and amendment to ensure it addresses relevant issues facing volunteers and those who develop and support them. This includes addressing reduced volunteer memberships, low diversity and reshaping the overall recruitment process.

Significant issues around the level of commitment and training to achieve optimum safety and competency will also be addressed, along with the unpredictable nature of deployment, and the potential impact on volunteer employers and families. These challenges and more will be addressed through work to improve the volunteer workforce’s sustainability and rethink existing volunteering conventions. Support and encouragement will be given to emergency service volunteer brigades, groups and units (BGUs) to embrace changes and increase their capacity at the local level. This will support the Government’s agenda to create safe and resilient communities through shared responsibility. Working to achieve this will also cultivate diversity and innovation which underpins the Western Australian Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Strategy 2016-2024.

Doing nothing is not an option. The well-researched trends presented in this strategy for the future of emergency services volunteering are unequivocal and demand change. Investing in volunteering is a crucial contribution to the community and to ensuring Western Australia’s capacity to respond successfully to disasters and emergencies in the coming decade. We must work together to deliver on this strategy. Success will require a concerted effort from DFES, Local Government, volunteers, communities and the Western Australian Government.

WAYNE GREGSON APM
COMMISSIONER
Increasing community involvement in local emergency services volunteering will help build community resilience.

Volunteers Support Community Awareness and Education Programs.
Why We Need a Volunteer Sustainability Strategy

A Common Focus
This strategy outlines our commitment to supporting our volunteers now and into the future by identifying the many factors, issues and stakeholders that impact, promote and influence the recruitment and retention of members in this workforce. The strategy will guide our investment in programs and resources to ensure we engage and retain all volunteers who help us protect Western Australian communities.

Such an overarching plan provides opportunity for information sharing and collaboration to drive a common objective for DFES and emergency service volunteers. Achieving this will require new initiatives to broaden membership diversity, involve local communities and continue to improve volunteers’ experience across a diverse range of roles. Such activities transcend the work of Federal, State and Local Government; the community, and the not-for-profit and corporate sectors. Working together will ensure consistent, efficient and effective change through shared innovation.

Key challenges
This strategy considers the annual turnover of volunteers and the net decline in total membership numbers in recent years. This dynamic will continue to drive our research and consultation to determine its triggers and remediation. Evidence already suggests that more extreme weather events, urban sprawl, reduced members’ spare time, and an ageing population have, and will continue to, put pressure on volunteer numbers, capacity and availability.

This has emphasised six key challenges:
- The significant number of older volunteer members and the challenges of succession planning
- Relatively low membership of culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) citizens, females and youth
- Population reduction in some remote and regional areas
- People’s approach to volunteering and the amount of time they have to give has changed
- The need for more community involvement in local volunteer emergency services
- The need for more community participation in local disaster risk mitigation and preparation

Involvement from local communities, in assuming more responsibility for local emergency risk and for local volunteer membership, has implications for current and future emergency response capabilities. The barriers to this involvement have been identified by market research which highlights general public views on emergency services volunteering:
- A volunteer’s work is always dangerous, dirty and requires physical strength
- The high, unsustainable expectation on volunteer attendance, participation and training
- Belief there is limited value for emergency services training and skills in education and work pathways
- Assumptions around the type of people suited to emergency services volunteering
- Expectation that Government should and will provide emergency response and community safety
- That some BGUs have exclusive relationships in their local communities
Why We Need a Volunteer Sustainability Strategy

These factors may impact efforts to attract, recruit and retain emergency services volunteers. Changing community perceptions of volunteering for emergency services is a key outcome of this strategy. National research has also identified five key issues that may impede the length of time a person may remain as a volunteer in the emergency services:

- The amount of time a person must give to being a volunteer
- Inconsistent and inflexible training opportunities
- Ongoing out of pocket expenses
- Not feeling valued or recognised for their work
- The types of people that lead and manage volunteer teams

This strategy seeks to resolve these issues and increase support and flexibility for volunteers by DFES and other key stakeholders such as local government, business and volunteer associations. This will include building links between BGUs and their local communities so that more residents become involved and actively support their local emergency services.

Key Opportunities

Volunteering in Australia provides by far the biggest workforce. For every dollar invested in volunteering, four dollars and fifty cents worth of value is returned to the community. Western Australians are strong supporters of volunteering. It is a cost effective method of building and supporting local communities, and invests in building relationships and local responsibility.

Encouraging community engagement with local emergency services will provide additional resources and support to BGUs. This potentially reduces the pressure on local emergency service volunteers and may improve volunteer retention rates. Additional community involvement can reduce the amount of time registered volunteers must give, reduce their personal costs and gives greater recognition and support for their work.
Why We Need a Volunteer Sustainability Strategy

Further, it involves a wider range of community members in local emergency services mitigation and response. Addressing the issues that affect the attraction, recruitment and retention of emergency services volunteers positively impacts community protection and safety.

Emergency services volunteers are pivotal to a community’s capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster. In building community awareness and support for emergency services we support communities to develop their resilience to disasters.

This strategy will build partnerships and relationships. It will gather evidence, create opportunities and resources, and drive change. As Western Australia continues to grow and develop, our emergency services volunteer workforce will be connected, supported, ready and future-proofed.

Volunteering in Australia provides by far the biggest workforce. For every dollar invested in volunteering, four dollars and fifty cents worth of value is returned to the community.
Achieving a sustainable emergency services volunteer workforce by 2024 requires the timely implementation of projects and resources to enable change and deliver outcomes. To do this, our work to increase retention and recruitment will be staged over two, four-year horizons.

In 2015, DFES conducted a volunteer engagement workshop attended by more than 60 stakeholders, including volunteers and their associations, local government, the education sector, research institutes and DFES staff. Together, this group helped prioritise the work focus for Horizons 1 and 2. The complete list of actions and outcomes is included as an appendix.

**HORIZON 1 (2016-2020)**
will focus on researching and understanding the experiences of volunteers. This information, in conjunction with DFES’ strategic objectives, will help prioritise our activities and set the best outcomes for local communities. Building volunteer advocacy within government and the community in the next four years will also be a key focus. This will facilitate access to a broader set of resources from a wider set of stakeholders, thereby increasing the potential for achieving future sustainable change.

**HORIZON 2 (2020 – 2024)**
will focus on achieving ‘next steps’ uncovered in Horizon 1. Horizon 2 will review programs and activities, maximise opportunities and maintain relationships built during the first four years.

The Western Australian Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Strategy – Horizon 1 and 2 – will drive the following activities to increase recruitment and diversity of volunteers and to improve retention rates and volunteer experiences.
Improving Volunteer Recruitment  
– Increase the number of volunteers and broaden the diversity of members

A recent study into volunteering in Western Australia revealed 80 per cent of people volunteer in some capacity.

This includes emergency services volunteers, motivated to help and give something back to their community. People also volunteer for personal benefit – to meet new people and learn new skills. These are human qualities that help build local relationships and networks; the basis of community resilience.

The broader community is clearly willing to volunteer – to help improve their communities and to build their own sense of belonging. Why then is affiliated emergency services volunteering experiencing a reduction in membership, when we know there is great appetite for volunteering in general?

The reasons for this are complex. Firstly, we must appreciate that some communities are experiencing population loss thereby reducing the number of new people available to join. However, we also know that the community’s view of emergency services volunteering is changing. Many people have less time to commit to ongoing volunteer memberships, training and deployment. Social media platforms provide other sources of information during a disaster which can encourage spontaneous or self-activated volunteering during a crisis.

Finally, research shows that the majority of new members are recruited via pre-existing relationships within the BGU which can create exclusive teams. These issues combined can reduce a community’s awareness of their local BGU’s as volunteer recruitment (and retention) is inextricably linked to a BGU’s relationship with its local community. The broader the recruitment ‘reach’ the more awareness a local community may have of their volunteer emergency services. This is likely to improve recruitment possibilities and BGU support.

This strategy advocates new approaches to recruitment, such as capacity to support spontaneous volunteering, in order to access untapped community members – especially those from minority groups. A broader membership will in turn create more resilient communities as well as sustainable and rewarding volunteer BGUs.

Evidence already suggests that more extreme weather events, urban sprawl, reduced members’ spare time, and an ageing population have, and will continue to, put pressure on volunteer numbers, capacity and availability.
Volunteer Recruitment Priorities

Over the next eight years, emergency services volunteer recruitment will prioritise activities and projects to:

**Raise the profile of emergency services volunteering in WA**

Working with key stakeholders, we will focus on building alliances with emergency services volunteer associations, engage regional areas, ensure research and findings inform our planning and increase internal advocacy for volunteers. Key external engagement will involve the education, corporate and not-for-profit sectors.

Raising the profile of volunteering will also build BGUs' capacity to engage with their local community and foster relationships. Concerted effort will be placed on increasing volunteers' understanding about the benefits of building strong and supportive partnerships in their local area.

Less than three per cent of the emergency services volunteer workforce is Aboriginal, less than five percent have a disability or special need, seven per cent are from a non-English speaking background and 26 per cent are female. Considerable work is required to increase diversity in order to build a wider volunteer recruitment base for our BGUs.

Evidence suggests that most BGUs are not maximising volunteer potential within their local community. This can be difficult to do and requires ongoing effort. However, low level engagement with the local community can potentially limit their recruitment pool, volunteer participation and diversity and thereby, the sustainability of their teams.

Raising and sustaining the profile of emergency services volunteering in local communities should be a long-term recruitment priority underpinning all local volunteer activities.

DFES will also advocate for increased resources, networks and support from local government, schools and businesses – via membership or by supporting local volunteer BGUs through sponsorship, fundraising, donation of materials, marketing and participation in BGU events and activities.

**Develop resources to attract and recruit volunteers**

Raising the profile and number of volunteers in the community requires targeted and evidence-based resources to support recruitment and raise awareness. Potential resources include marketing materials such as booklets and pamphlets and online recruitment tools such as a website, LinkedIn, Twitter or a Facebook page.

Strategies such as embedding support personnel in regional areas and providing assistance for funding applications and advice about engaging with local government, people from diverse backgrounds, schools and other local businesses are other activities that will be supported by DFES.

“Emergency services volunteers are critical in helping Western Australian communities prepare, defend and recover from fire, flood, storm, cyclone, and in various searches and rescues.”
Volunteer Recruitment Priorities

Potential resources and the capacity to deliver these already exist within DFES, local communities, local government and the private sector. This strategy aims to cultivate the capacity for volunteers and those who support them to identify and engage these resources more effectively in order to increase and sustain volunteer recruitment.

Increase community involvement with local volunteer emergency services
Increasing community involvement in local emergency services volunteering will help build community resilience and help reduce the impact of loss and trauma following a disaster or emergency on local communities.

As well as supporting the work of local volunteers, DFES will engage internal and external stakeholders, such as DFES district and regional offices and local government to increase the recognition and support for volunteers at the local level. Stakeholder support may also come from schools, local organisations such as Lions, Rotary and Probus clubs and local government community programs. Sustainable volunteer recruitment relies on accessing a variety of local community groups and providing an inclusive volunteer experience.

Sustaining a vibrant and engaged volunteer workforce requires collaboration, consultation and commitment to create change.
Juvenile and Family Fire Awareness Program.
Recruitment

STRATEGY OBJECTIVE
CREATE A SUSTAINABLE VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES WORKFORCE

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY
Increase the recruitment of volunteers and broaden the membership diversity

RECRUITMENT PRIORITIES
Communication, Community Enterprise, Regional Focus
- Raise the profile of emergency services volunteering in WA
- Develop resources to attract and recruit volunteers
- Increase community involvement with local volunteer emergency services
RECRUITMENT ACTIONS

Horizon 1
2016-2020

Opportunities, Research, Innovation
- Engage emergency services organisations and Local Government
- Develop recruitment through the education industry
- Incorporate research and findings
- Improve volunteer records
- Create a volunteer sustainability working group
- Seek initiatives to improve volunteer recruitment with a regional focus
- Develop local volunteer capacity to engage local communities more broadly
- Develop social and digital media resources to market volunteerism

Horizon 2
2020-2024

Implementation, Partnerships, Evaluation
- Review and strengthen external partnerships
- Continue to champion widespread volunteer advocacy
- Ensure all services have a training pathway
- Continue to create a regional focus on resourcing
- Continue to prioritise membership diversity
- Seek new opportunities to develop the volunteer on-line environment as a key engagement business tool
- Continuously improve volunteer administration and governance
- Ensure volunteering is embedded into the education industry
- Ensure resources reflect evaluations and inquiries

RECRUITMENT OUTCOMES

Diversity, Local Hazard Advocacy, Community Connections
- Broad and well established community membership and support for volunteering
- Targeted evidence-based resources are used to attract and recruit volunteers
- Strong collaborative work with key internal and external stakeholders
- Embedded recognition and transferability of volunteer training and qualifications
Improving Volunteer Retention – Increase the retention rates of volunteers and improve their experience across a diverse range of roles

Western Australians embrace volunteering. It’s in our nature to give people a hand and give help where it is needed. On average 2,600 Western Australians join the volunteer emergency services sector every year. In that same year we may receive up to 2,900 resignations. This impacts the ongoing sustainability of our emergency services volunteer workforce. Every resignation is a cost that must be incurred again to train and support a new volunteer. Every resignation is a loss of experience, skill and good will.

There are several reasons why people leave their BGU. Evidence suggests that many volunteers move away from the area and don’t generally join another team. We know the five key factors affecting the retention of Australian emergency service volunteers as time, costs, leadership, training and recognition. Resigned members have revealed that some level of disengagement, not feeling valued or irreconcilable issues with their release from work to respond to an emergency as reasons that provoked their resignation.

These are issues that can be resolved or reduced. Each volunteer brings a selfless intention to support their community and every effort must be made to develop, support and retain them as building blocks to local community resilience.

Effective, inclusive and strong leadership must continue to be shaped and maintained if volunteers are to remain in the emergency services volunteer sector. DFES and other key stakeholders must advocate and sustain capacity for BGUs to attract people from a wider demographic and encourage members to transfer their membership if they move away. We must ensure that minority groups, new Australians and emerging communities are not only encouraged to join, but that the culture within the BGU is positive and inclusive so that they stay. And we must encourage the flexibility of BGU activities so that members may manage their volunteering, work and family commitments more effectively. Over the next eight years we will work with volunteers to identify and develop specific training and resources to help them actively engage their communities and existing members. We will continue to explore reasons for resignations and current experiences to inform our planning and resourcing.

Sharing evidence, products and ideas will provide the best opportunity to develop, grow and protect Western Australia’s emergency services volunteers
Volunteer Retention Priorities

Over the next eight years emergency services volunteer retention initiatives will prioritise activities and projects to:

**Continue to develop a supportive culture for volunteers**

Building and sustaining support for volunteers is vital – a volunteer who feels supported, valued and engaged will likely stay as a volunteer and be more proactive as a member or join another team if they move away. This model requires support by all stakeholders – the local BGU team, the local government and community, DFES and the State Government.

Support for volunteer retention affects how local BGUs attract, connect and encourage new members to join and participate in a safe, professional and effective environment. To achieve this, existing volunteers need to attract, include and engage a greater diversity of members from throughout the community.

DFES and local government must also invest in developing internal advocacy for volunteers by embracing an inclusive volunteer engagement agenda that seeks to listen, involve and respond. This strategy encourages innovation and partnerships to build opportunity. The most important resource required for this is time – time to engage, time to listen and understand, time to plan and implement, and time to review and change.

Western Australian volunteers provide a massive support resource for the State. There are also competing volunteer organisations that seek ongoing community support from local members.
Volunteer Retention Priorities

If emergency services volunteers do not feel supported or valued, we risk further resignations or losing them to another volunteer organisation. Listening to volunteers must be supported by the will and capacity to change and improve their experiences. This includes emotional and physical wellbeing and continued availability and flexibility around key resources such as training, administration and community engagement activities.

Increase local volunteer leadership competency
Our emergency services volunteer leaders do an exceptional job. On top of their personal commitments, they volunteer to protect their local community and they manage our local emergency services teams. Some of these activities include administration, deployment, fund raising, local mitigation, and community awareness, training, and recruitment activities.

Our BGU leaders also cultivate relationships to build a cohesive and effective team. Encouraging local leadership to drive diversity inclusivity, and flexibility supports and builds long term change and community resilience.

Increasing local volunteer leadership competency will provide leaders with the tools and strategies to delegate and manage their workload more effectively, to actively engage with their members, identify and resolve attitudes and behaviours that may threaten ongoing retention outcomes, maximise local opportunities and embrace change. Ongoing training and resources will develop our volunteer emergency services leaders, and is the key to increasing the retention rates of our State’s emergency services volunteers.

Drive an efficient and effective capability model for volunteer training, recognition and support
The third focus area envelops the above two retention drivers by creating an inclusive volunteer retention model and includes the three overarching issues affecting volunteers – training, recognition and support.

This capability model will be developed to provide both internal and external service providers the opportunity to conduct their business within a wider framework. They will be empowered to consider the broader implications and benefits of their business decisions on emergency services volunteering, and the most efficient and practical use of resources that compliments community resilience.

The ‘revolving door’ effect – whereby volunteers join, are trained and prepared and then resign within five years is not an efficient use of resources and limits the accumulation of experience and skill in volunteer teams. All areas of business must work towards the same outcomes and drive common goals.

Raising the profile of volunteering will also build BGU’s capacity to engage with their local community and foster relationships

"
Fire and Emergency Services Education and Heritage Centre Open Day Volunteers featuring the Fire and Emergency Services Band and volunteers from the USAR team.
Retention

**STRATEGY OBJECTIVE**
CREATE A SUSTAINABLE VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES WORKFORCE

**RETENTION STRATEGY**
Increase the retention rate of emergency services volunteers and improve their experience across a diverse range of roles

**RETENTION PRIORITIES**
Communication, Community Enterprise, Regional Focus
- Continue to develop a supportive culture for volunteers
- Increase local volunteer leadership competency
- Drive an efficient and effective capability model for volunteer training, recognition and support
RETENTION ACTIONS

Horizon 1
2016-2020

Opportunities, Research, Innovation

• Create a volunteer induction package
• Ensure training is accessible, timely and addresses evidenced based needs
• Increase the relevance of DFES policy and doctrine for volunteers
• Improve volunteer records
• Improve volunteer administration
• Ensure volunteers work in a safe environment
• Improve the volunteer online environment
• Gather volunteer experiences and views on an ongoing basis
• Create evidenced based, targeted resources

Horizon 2
2020-2024

Implementation, Partnerships, Evaluation

• Continue to review and develop volunteering opportunities
• Continue to seek feedback and improve volunteer safety and wellbeing
• Continue to develop a broad diversity membership model
• Continuously seek new ways to recognise and validate volunteers
• Continue to identify and address issues affecting volunteer deployment and availability
• Continue to drive the importance of local community capacity and support
• Continue to seek the experiences of volunteers to inform planning
• Continue to increase DFES’ regional capacity to engage and support local volunteers

RETENTION OUTCOMES

Diversity, Local Hazard Advocacy, Community Connections

• Reduced volunteer resignations
• Volunteers feel safe, valued and supported
• Volunteers feel empowered and are competent to engage their local communities
• Emergency Services volunteer teams are managed by capable leaders
• There is an overall increase in volunteer numbers from diverse backgrounds
How Will We Measure Success?

It is important that initiatives are measured both qualitatively and quantitatively to ensure that resources and activities are effective.

This requires understanding of the perceptions and experiences of volunteers and stakeholders and measuring any changes in the strategic outcomes.

This strategy is implementing new business initiatives as well as improvements to existing activities and processes in the emergency services volunteer sector. Therefore it is important that we measure and track change; and adapt the strategy if required. Through evidence gathering we will monitor and evaluate both recruitment and retention activities through the following criteria:

Measuring the Improvement in Volunteer Recruitment

- Range of age and gender of volunteers across all services
- Range of cultural diversity amongst emergency services volunteers, per region, per service
- Range of volunteer roles and activities within each service
- Increased number of projects and partnerships with stakeholders – within metropolitan, regional and remote areas
- Range of community volunteer support activities – within metropolitan, regional and remote areas
- Level of community disaster resilience – within metropolitan, remote and regional areas
- Stakeholder perception of DFES engagement, collaboration, planning and decision making
- Community and employer perceptions of emergency services volunteers

Measuring the Improvement of Volunteer Retention

- Duration of emergency services volunteer participation per service, per region and demographic
- Volunteers’ perception of their service and leadership
- Volunteers’ perception of volunteering experiences – per service and region
- Volunteers’ confidence in safety, health and wellbeing – per service and region
- Percentage of emergency services volunteers engaged in formal training and development – per service and region
- Volunteer satisfaction with training and development – per service and region
- Effectiveness of targeted resources and programs implemented – per service and region
- Evaluation of program outcomes

“Emergency services volunteers are motivated to help and give something back to their community.”
Implementing the Strategy

Volunteer surveys, research resources and programs are already being developed and implemented to increase our understanding of evolving issues in emergency services volunteering.

The volunteer web site is being redeveloped, and DFES is contacting every volunteer after their first year of membership to offer them the opportunity to provide detailed feedback about their induction, training, support and engagement. A resource kit has been developed to assist volunteers and their employers to develop a ‘volunteering during work hours’ work place agreement.

The Fire and Emergency Services Academy has also created the Leadership Fundamentals program that will be imbedded into each emergency services training pathway. This program is based on the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre’s inclusive emergency services program, to provide local BGU leaders with additional strategies to lead and manage their teams.

To support recruitment diversity, the junior cadet BGU-based and school-based programs are being reviewed and updated to increase their effectiveness.

Ongoing dialogue and prioritising volunteers’ issues will be sustained via a steering committee comprising key internal and external stakeholders. This committee will drive the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Strategy Implementation Plan and set priorities.

This work is predominantly project based and will require specific funding and resources to develop, implement and evaluate activities. Resources to implement these projects will be sourced from:

- ‘Business as usual’ programs within existing resources via branch and directorate annual planning within DFES
- New DFES internal funding opportunities subject to the corporate business case application and approval process
- Application for external State and National funding opportunities
- Seeking opportunities from corporate sponsorship and grants
- Partnerships and collaboration

Volunteer Marine Rescue Service during a search and rescue deployment.
Our Research and Consultation

A cross-section of Western Australian emergency services volunteers, associations and key stakeholders were consulted to capture and identify their experiences, ideas and concerns within this strategy.

DFES is grateful for the input from the following volunteers, volunteer associations’ executive and advisory committees of the Volunteer Marine Rescue Service, State Emergency Service, Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades and Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services.

This strategy has also considered feedback, advice and findings from The Department of Premier and Cabinet, The Department of Fire and Emergency Services, The Office of the Auditor General, Emergency Management Australia, State Emergency Management Committee, Local Government, Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council, Australian Red Cross (WA), Volunteering WA and results from DFES’ volunteer exit and new members’ surveys, volunteer engagement survey, and community youth and employers’ focus groups.

The implementation and effectiveness of this strategy relies on emergency services volunteers’ ability to improve engagement with their members and local communities. Central to this is their capacity to embrace diversity, non-traditional emergency services roles and, most importantly, flexibility around members’ availability. This will help boost emergency services volunteering in the community and increase volunteering and preparation at the local level.

Working within the overarching DFES Strategic Plan 2016-2028 reform agenda, this strategy will embrace innovation and new approaches, undertake genuine consultation and inclusion of volunteers, the community and other key stakeholders, and create greater transparency with regard to decision making, accountability and governance.
Every Stakeholder is Important

Sustaining a vibrant and engaged volunteer workforce requires collaboration, consultation and commitment to create change.

This is the basis upon which we will conduct our work and our interaction with all of our stakeholders, both internal and external to DFES. Sharing evidence, products and ideas will provide the best opportunity to develop, grow and protect Western Australia’s emergency services volunteers.

To deliver this strategy, DFES commits to:

- Continuing to seek the opinions and experiences of volunteers and their associations
- Involving the community
- Working effectively and efficiently to ensure timely outcomes
- Engaging stakeholders and developing partnerships
- Carrying out research to inform decisions
- Developing evidence-based resources
- Supporting and including all emergency services volunteers across the State
- Evaluating and reviewing our work to identify challenges, successes and opportunities
- Receiving input from key stakeholders
- Determining funding opportunities to undertake specific projects
- Being an enabler of projects and programs

Urban Search and Rescue volunteer training.
Sustaining Volunteering – Through Managing Risks

DFES is a future-focused innovative organisation. As the lead hazard management agency for natural hazards and disasters in Western Australia, DFES must identify and mitigate risks that threaten its response and preparation capability on behalf of the community and State Government.

Ensuring there is an ongoing reliable and capable cohort of volunteers also requires ongoing attention and commitment from DFES and a range of external stakeholders.

If the issues presented in this strategy are not addressed there may be risks to community safety throughout Western Australia. The core risks are:

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<th>RISK</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCE</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing low volunteer membership diversity</td>
<td>Low local community involvement, representation and support</td>
<td>Reduced community resilience and sustained reliance on Government for emergency and disaster response and mitigation</td>
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<td>Continued decline in volunteer recruitment</td>
<td>Reduced response and prevention capability</td>
<td>Reduced community resilience and capacity to prevent loss and injury. Longer and more expensive recovery operations</td>
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<td>Reduced volunteer retention rates</td>
<td>High turnover of personnel and costly recruitment and training</td>
<td>Need for resources to be directed to recruiting and training volunteers rather than supporting and sustaining their involvement. Reduced community resilience through loss of local hazard and emergency experience and knowledge</td>
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<td>Low external stakeholder involvement</td>
<td>Continued reliance on DFES to identify and manage volunteer workforce sustainability</td>
<td>Reduced community resilience because of reduced capacity to improve on volunteer recruitment and retention issues</td>
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<td>Limited internal collaboration and support for volunteers</td>
<td>Reduced access to resources and subject matter expertise</td>
<td>Minimal change and improvement to identified issues</td>
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<td>Limited access to resources to drive innovation</td>
<td>Low evidence of change and engagement around identified issues</td>
<td>Continued reduction in volunteer members, low diversity and low community involvement – unchanged community resilience and capacity to protect communities</td>
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## STRATEGY 1. INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND BROADEN THE MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY

### FOCUS AREA 1.1 COLLABORATE WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO RAISE WA’S EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEER PROFILE

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<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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| 1.1.1 Volunteer Associations and Volunteer Advisory Committees (VACs) are more engaged and collaborative around volunteer planning. | 1.1.1.1 Collaborate with the Volunteer Advisory Committees to determine a common approach to volunteer recruitment and retention  
1.1.1.2 Work with emergency services volunteer associations to implement consistent volunteer objectives  
1.1.1.3 Create opportunities for the volunteer associations to support and promote change in emergency services volunteering |
| 1.1.2 Findings and recommendations from research, inquiries and reports are incorporated into WA’s emergency services volunteer planning and review | 1.1.2.1 Incorporate the endorsed recommendations of the 2015 Auditor General’s report on volunteering into DFES and VACs approach to volunteering  
1.1.2.2 Ensure national research, findings and discussion around emergency services volunteering is included in WA’s future planning and support for volunteers  
1.1.2.3 Relevant State and National frameworks (such as the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2011*, *Framework for Engaging Diverse Volunteers 2014* and the *National Emergency Management Volunteer Action Plan 2012*) are considered in volunteer planning to increase outcomes, national comparable data and opportunities for funding |
| 1.1.3 DFES corporate and career personnel are more engaged with volunteers and include volunteer needs and issues in all associated planning | 1.1.3.1 Develop an embedding strategy to ensure the successful role out of this Strategy’s actions and the achievement of its outcomes  
1.1.3.2 Undertake an organisational audit of DFES interaction with and support for volunteers  
1.1.3.3 Actively seek and integrate volunteer feedback into corporate planning and programs  
1.1.3.4 DFES’ *Working Effectively with Emergency Services Volunteers* (WEESV) program is offered to a wider range DFES personnel  
1.1.3.5 Develop a Volunteer Sustainability Steering Committee to ensure dialogue and action around all volunteer business requirements  
1.1.3.6 DFES regional offices are supported to work more collaboratively and effectively with their Local Government and BGUs  
1.1.3.7 Work with DFES business areas to embed consideration of volunteers in planning, resourcing and change initiatives  
1.1.3.8 Address the reliability of volunteer membership records  
1.1.3.9 Establish new recruitment profiles to satisfy legislative compliance  
1.1.3.10 Ensure appropriate policy, procedures, structures and systems are in place to support recruitment activities – both existing and proposed |
## STRATEGY 1. INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND BROADEN THE MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY

### FOCUS AREA 1.1 COLLABORATE WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO RAISE WA’S EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEER PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4 Private and corporate sector volunteering opportunities are integrated into emergency services volunteer deployment, support and local community engagement</td>
<td>1.1.4.1 Foster alliances with the corporate sector to promote support of emergency services volunteering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.4.2 Develop a collaborative corporate volunteering model with the corporate sector that supports both operational and non-operational volunteer activities</td>
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<td>1.1.4.3 Formalise DFES policy and procedures to engage corporate volunteering</td>
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<td>1.1.4.4 Promote corporate volunteering in DFES as a resource to support communities to implement mitigation and volunteering at the local level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.5 There is an increase in Local Government involvement and support for emergency services volunteering in their regions</td>
<td>1.1.5.1 Develop stronger and consistent partnerships with Local Government throughout WA to provide opportunities to support local volunteer recruitment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.5.2 Engage WA Local Government Association (WALGA) to support and promote emergency services volunteering</td>
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<td>1.1.5.3 Action outcomes of the emergency services Legislative Review</td>
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<td>1.1.5.4 Facilitate local BGUs to work with their Local Government to collaborate around engaging the community in volunteering and hazard risk</td>
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<td>1.1.5.5 Ensure resources are available for BGUs to engage their local government office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.6 The education industry is engaged to increase the profile and inclusion of emergency services volunteering, skills and opportunities in secondary and tertiary institutions</td>
<td>1.1.6.1 Collaborate with the education industry to increase the profile and inclusion of emergency services volunteering,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.6.2 Develop capacity for formal recognition of emergency services volunteering in academic qualifications</td>
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<td>1.1.6.3 Foster project partnerships with universities, colleges and TAFES to provide volunteer research</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.1.6.4 Enable qualifications acquired outside of emergency services to be recognised by DFES/Local Government</td>
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<td>1.1.6.5 Evaluate the school based cadet and youth programs to ensure content and qualifications are aligned with education industry outcomes and maximise youth transfer into volunteering</td>
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<td>1.1.6.6 Work with DFES regional offices and volunteer associations to develop BGUs relationships with local schools</td>
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<td>1.1.6.7 Progress opportunities to have emergency services cadets implemented throughout WA especially in the Pilbara and Kimberley</td>
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<td>1.1.6.8 Work with DFES Community Engagement Directorate to include learning around emergency services volunteering in early childhood education</td>
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</table>
## Volunteer Sustainability Strategy Outcomes and Actions

### STRATEGY 1. INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND BROADEN THE MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.7 Improved employer support for emergency services volunteering</td>
<td>1.1.7.1 Improve DFES access to volunteer employer contact details to enable greater engagement&lt;br&gt;1.1.7.2 Investigate the environment of employers of emergency services volunteers to determine their issues and requirements&lt;br&gt;1.1.7.3 Develop ‘employer rights and responsibilities resources’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.8 Key not-for-profit organisations are engaged in promoting emergency management volunteering</td>
<td>1.1.8.1 Consult key not-for-profit organisations around the development of the Strategy&lt;br&gt;1.1.8.2 Develop DFES policy and procedures for spontaneous volunteering&lt;br&gt;1.1.8.3 Consult key not-for-profit organisations to identify collaborative opportunities to increase emergency services volunteering&lt;br&gt;1.1.8.4 Establish formal mechanisms to engage not-for-profit sector bodies to provide advice for and promotion of emergency services volunteers in the workplace&lt;br&gt;1.1.8.5 Engage with the not-for-profit sector on DFES corporate and spontaneous volunteering policies&lt;br&gt;1.1.8.6 Consult other volunteer organisations during planning to identify a broad range of ideas and initiatives to improve our volunteers’ experiences and support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FOCUS AREA 1.2 BUILD DFES’ AS WELL AS BRIGADES’, UNITS’ AND GROUPS’ (BGUS) CAPACITY TO ATTRACT AND RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 A more diverse range of people are engaged in emergency services volunteering</td>
<td>1.2.1.1 Ensure the Volunteer Leadership Program contains engagement around multiculturalism, gender bias, youth and people with disability&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.2 Develop a comprehensive volunteer induction package&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.3 Offer a Work Place Trainer and Assessor capability for volunteers&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.4 Ensure that volunteer recruitment planning is underpinned by research and evidence&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.5 Ensure volunteer engagement resources reflect new roles and audiences&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.6 Ensure volunteering is included in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.7 Review the BGU based juniors’ program to ensure it is supported to encourage local youth recruitment&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.8 Create materials which promote and support volunteer diversity&lt;br&gt;1.2.1.9 Ensure the volunteer mentoring program is up to date, supported, promoted and evaluated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## STRATEGY 1. INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND BROADEN THE MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY

### FOCUS AREA 1.2 BUILD DFES’ AS WELL AS BRIGADES’, UNITS’ AND GROUPS’ (BGUS) CAPACITY TO ATTRACT AND RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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</table>
| 1.2.2 Emergency services volunteering has a contemporary, powerful and inclusive image | 1.2.2.1 Create a new generic slogan/strapline for DFES volunteer sector  
1.2.2.2 Enhance and make available online volunteer attraction and recruitment resources  
1.2.2.3 Optimise corporate communications opportunities to showcase volunteers  
1.2.2.4 Establish formal mechanisms for people from diverse backgrounds to participate and contribute to attraction and recruitment initiatives |
| 1.2.3 A diverse range of non-operational volunteer roles are well established and wide spread in local BGUs | 1.2.3.1 Review the maximum number of members permitted in a BGU and amend as required to allow for additional activities and increased members  
1.2.3.2 Develop an ‘expanded role’ framework to identify and promote non-traditional roles  
1.2.3.2 Training Pathways are created for non-operational response roles  
1.2.3.4 Seek endorsement from the organisational leadership, VACs and volunteer associations of the proposed non-operational roles in BGUs  
1.2.3.5 Implement DFES’ Digital Media Strategy to build volunteer capacity in such activities as local volunteer Facebook, website and blog curators and moderators  
1.2.3.6 Ensure targeted activities are implemented to attract a wider range of volunteers |
| 1.2.4 Marketing resources are developed that are targeted and contemporary | 1.2.4.1 Redevelop the DFES volunteer webpages for the public to promote diversity and new roles in emergency services volunteering  
1.2.4.2 Update all volunteer engagement resources and formats to reflect new roles and target audiences  
1.2.4.3 Offer volunteer resources in various formats to support market needs  
1.2.4.4 Optimise social networking and digital communication for marketing and recruitment activities  
1.2.4.5 Redevelop the DFES volunteer portal in accordance with the DFES Digital Media Strategy and the Corporate Business Case 2015  
1.2.4.6 Develop and implement a business/governance model for the ongoing management and currency of information on the volunteer portal |
Appendix
Volunteer Sustainability Strategy Outcomes and Actions

### STRATEGY 1. INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND BROADEN THE MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| 1.2.5 Training and resources are implemented more efficiently and effectively | 1.2.5.1 Volunteers are engaged in a relevant Pathway  
1.2.5.2 Develop e-learning resources for volunteers where appropriate to reduce ‘training time’  
1.2.5.3 Track the timeliness of new volunteers’ training Pathway to ensure qualifications and competencies are achieved in a reasonable timeframe  
1.2.5.4 Implement the Volunteer Identity Card  
1.2.5.5 Promote the wider transferability of volunteer training to work and/or education  
1.2.5.6 Develop capacity for volunteer training to be implemented in the regions |

| 1.2.6 More volunteers are engaged from the metropolitan area to support State wide emergencies | 1.2.6.1 Increase engagement of community members from WA metropolitan areas to support State wide involvement of volunteers in emergencies via the State Wide Operational Response Division (SWORD)  
1.2.6.2 Develop capacity for the SWORD to support secondary and tertiary student volunteer participation |

### FOCUS AREA 1.3 INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERING WITHIN A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FRAMEWORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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</table>
| 1.3.1 Local communities and their BGUs work together to increase community resilience | 1.3.1.1 Build the sharing responsibility agenda into volunteer planning and partnerships and ensure it is part of all volunteer training and induction  
1.3.1.2 Support and encourage DFES programs and resources that work directly with communities to improve disaster preparedness, response and risk perception including the:  
  - *Bushfire Ready, Resilient Communities* programs and the proposed Volunteer Media Training Program  
1.3.1.3 Develop resources for local BGUs to promote a shared responsibility  
1.3.1.4 Develop targeted programs and campaigns that communicate emergency services volunteering to local communities  
1.3.1.5 Develop programs and resources for volunteers in collaboration with volunteers |
## Appendix
Volunteer Sustainability Strategy Outcomes and Actions

### STRATEGY 1. INCREASE THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS AND BROADEN THE MEMBERSHIP DIVERSITY

**FOCUS AREA 1.3 INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERING WITHIN A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FRAMEWORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1.3.2 Local Government, schools, businesses and organisations increase their support for and promotion of emergency services volunteering | 1.3.2.1 Develop diversified roles for brigades, units and groups to provide greater opportunity from local community members, businesses and Local Government  
1.3.2.2 Nurture BGUs capacity to drive this agenda in their local communities  
1.3.2.3 Ensure resources and information are available for local employers of volunteers |
| 1.3.3 More volunteers educate their communities around natural disasters and make them more risk aware and prepared | 1.3.3.1 Develop volunteers’ capacity to improve community resilience and involve the community by developing:  
- a volunteer community education Pathway program  
- DFES social networking and digital communications strategies for local volunteers to use as a local communicative tool |

Volunteers support the Department’s Public Information Role – Community Liaison Unit during a major incident.
## STRATEGY 2. INCREASE THE RETENTION RATES AND THE QUALITY OF THEIR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS

### FOCUS AREA 2.1 BUILD DFES’ CULTURE AND CAPACITY TO SUPPORT AND RETAIN VOLUNTEERS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 DFES culture is recognised for its strong emergency services volunteer advocacy</td>
<td>2.1.1.1 Ensure the Strategy undergoes an embedding program to ensure widespread understanding and action around volunteer value and support of DFES participation and role in the Volunteer Sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.1.2 Ensure DFES policy and procedures values and supports volunteer interests</td>
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<td>2.1.1.3 Continue to evaluate volunteer experiences and leadership</td>
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<td>2.1.1.4 Continue to develop DFES capacity to actively support and contribute to the VACs</td>
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<td>2.1.1.5 Ensure DFES creates a culture which validates and respects volunteering</td>
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<td>2.1.1.6 Ensure DFES promotes a culture of informed decision making around volunteer issues</td>
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<td>2.1.1.7 Ensure that the DFES staff induction package includes the significance and value of volunteers and how corporate staff will engage them</td>
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<td>2.1.1.8 Develop DFES regional offices’ capacity to better engage and support their local BGUs</td>
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<td>2.1.1.9 Provide resources to support and implement volunteer programs and initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Volunteers feel valued, supported and recognised for all the work they do including non-operational activities</td>
<td>2.1.2.1 Develop policy and doctrine to specifically support an emergency services volunteer overarching induction package</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.1.2.2 Examine innovative ways to recognise and acknowledge the efforts of volunteers</td>
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<td>2.1.2.3 Implement DFES Safety Management System for volunteers</td>
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<td>2.1.2.4 Encourage DFES and Local Governments to participate in volunteer recognition activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.2.5 Identify, develop and promote additional qualification and training opportunities for targeted volunteer groups via Pathways</td>
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<td>2.1.2.6 Develop a volunteer membership benefits program</td>
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<td>2.1.2.7 Implement the Volunteer Fuel Card Scheme</td>
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<td>2.1.2.8 Implement the Volunteer Hardship Program</td>
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<td>2.1.2.9 Regularly seek volunteer feedback on their experiences and opinions in order to guide planning and review</td>
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<td>2.1.2.10 Ensure the redevelopment of the volunteer portal creates an engaging two-way communicative environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.2.11 Ensure volunteer training and resourcing is timely</td>
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### STRATEGY 2. INCREASE THE RETENTION RATES AND THE QUALITY OF THEIR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS

#### FOCUS AREA 2.1 BUILD DFES’ CULTURE AND CAPACITY TO SUPPORT AND RETAIN VOLUNTEERS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Implement more efficient and effective volunteer administrative processes</td>
<td>2.1.3.1 Redevelop the volunteer portal to provide online recruitment, administration, training and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.3.2 Improve volunteer record keeping</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.1.3.3 Ensure the portal redevelopment prioritises fast and efficient administration</td>
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<td>2.1.3.4 Facilitate inter-service recognition of emergency services competencies</td>
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<td>2.1.3.5 Implement the Single Sign On program to reduce volunteer login requirements</td>
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<td>2.1.3.6 Improve volunteer record management</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.1.3.7 Continue to seek feedback and improve our procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 Volunteers are consistently engaged in feedback and consultation</td>
<td>2.1.4.1 Improve the working relationship with Local Government, DFES regional offices and local BGUs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.1.4.2 Provide capacity for volunteers to communicate amongst each other</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.1.4.3 Implement ‘my first year as an emergency services volunteer’ post induction survey as an ongoing volunteer engagement measure</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.1.4.4 Develop mechanisms for seeking and actioning feedback from volunteers, including those who have resigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5 Volunteers are supported to change roles and activities to extend their volunteering participation</td>
<td>2.1.5.1 Develop resources that can be individualised for BGUs to attract and retain local volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.5.2 Improve capacity to contact ex-volunteers to increase exit survey results and comparative data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.5.3 Develop comprehensive legislation and doctrine that addresses shortfalls in volunteer policy and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.1.5.4 Develop capacity for BGUs to ‘reutilise’ volunteers who wish to change roles within their BGU or the emergency services in order to retain their knowledge and experience in the sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STRATEGY 2. INCREASE THE RETENTION RATES AND THE QUALITY OF THEIR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS

#### FOCUS AREA 2.2 BUILD EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP CULTURE TO BETTER SUPPORT AND INVOLVE THEIR MEMBERS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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</table>
| 2.2.1 Emergency services volunteer BGUs have strong, capable and compassionate leaders | 2.2.1.1 Develop internal promotional material that markets an emergency services volunteer image of a supportive and inclusive culture  
2.2.1.2 Develop a broad range of resources to build and change volunteer leadership  
2.2.1.3 Ensure the Volunteer Leadership Program includes learning to develop volunteer leaders’ capacity to create inclusive and supportive teams  
2.2.1.4 Ensure DFES regional offices foster local volunteer leaders that build inclusivity with their members  
2.2.1.5 Ensure an easy to access and efficient process for volunteer grievance |
| 2.2.2 Volunteer leadership promotes a culture of health and safety amongst members | 2.2.2.1 Develop ‘Fit for Duty’ policy and procedures for volunteers  
2.2.2.2 Promote health and safety into the volunteer workforce as a priority for all  
2.2.2.3 Create capacity to develop specific work, health and safety campaigns to target volunteer issues as they arise  
2.2.2.4 Ensure volunteer leaders understand the process and procedures around health and safety  
2.2.2.5 Develop specific volunteer templates to assist them in reporting and mitigating risks and injury |
| 2.2.3 Volunteer leadership encourages local community involvement to support BGU activities | 2.2.3.1 Existing programs and resources are reviewed to ensure volunteer leaders can engage support from their local community as needed  
2.2.3.2 Develop DFES regional office capacity to work with local BGU leadership to engage with their local communities |
### Appendix
Volunteer Sustainability Strategy Outcomes and Actions

#### STRATEGY 2. INCREASE THE RETENTION RATES AND THE QUALITY OF THEIR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS

2.3 DETERMINE THE FISCAL AND CAPABILITY COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH VOLUNTEER TURNOVER TO IMPROVE RESOURCE PLANNING

<table>
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<tr>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| 2.3.1 Improved understanding of the costs of recruitment and training of volunteers | 2.3.1.1 Quantify and qualify the:  
  • fiscal costs and  
  • the service delivery impact of premature volunteer exits  
  2.3.1.2 Undertake evidence-based review of high cost and loss issues around volunteer longevity in emergency services  
  2.3.1.3 Establish projects and partnerships to determine the true costs associated with recruiting new volunteers and their leaving within 3 years |
| 2.3.2 Resources are directed to volunteer recruitment and retention activities to increase cost effectiveness of volunteer training | 2.3.2.1 Implement evidence-based adjustments to expenditure and support to volunteers  
  2.3.2.2 Undertake evidence-based review of the risks associated with volunteer exits  
  2.3.2.3 Educate stakeholders on the costs of unwanted volunteer attrition |
Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services unit training.
Building Volunteer Sustainability

**STRATEGY OUTCOMES**

- Engage Stakeholders
- Volunteers experience increased engagement and support
- Evidence gathering
- Volunteers access more resources
- Increase capacity to support volunteers and key stakeholders
- Local communities are more involved

**BUSINESS PROCESSES**

- Horizon 1
References

Department of Fire and Emergency Services, 2014. Attracting Volunteers Top Line Findings, Metrix, WA.


Department of Fire and Emergency Services 2012. DFES Community Engagement Framework, Western Australian Government.


Department of Fire and Emergency Services 2012. DFES Strategic Plan 2016-2028, Western Australian Government.


Volunteering WA, 2014. The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering to Western Australia. Institute of Project Management, WA.


**DFES Surveys and workshops**

Volunteer Sustainability Strategy Engagement Workshop – 2015

Volunteer Engagement Survey, 2013

Volunteer Exit Survey, 2012 ongoing

Your First Year as a Volunteer, 2015 ongoing
Building regional capability with collaborative training – Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and Volunteer Bush Fire Service.