

# Volunteers: your community's superpower

Agricultural Societies Council of NSW State  
Conference 2021

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**FRRR**

Foundation for Rural  
Regional Renewal

The only national foundation  
specifically focused on ensuring  
social and economic strength  
in remote, rural and regional & areas  
of Australia, aligning government, philanthropic and  
community purposes and investments.

# Volunteers play a vital role in the social fabric of many remote, rural and regional communities.



*“The energy and enthusiasm of volunteers’ play are a big part in Mount Pleasant Natural Resource Centre’s success with nearly 60 active volunteers currently involved with the centre”*

# Volunteering – a changing landscape

## Before 2020

- 42% of adult population volunteered
- 4 out of 5 people volunteer at home or in their local community
- Volunteering rate was declining
- Contributed hours by volunteers was declining

## 2020

### **2019/20 Bushfires**

- Increase in actual and future intent to volunteer

### **COVID-19**

- 50% decline in participation
- Volunteering hours declined by two thirds

## 2021 and beyond

- Some areas have had an influx of volunteers, others a dramatic reduction
- Increased demand for support
- Volunteers are stretched
- Community demographic is changing dramatically
- Challenging to re-engage and re-activate participation
- **Those that are volunteering are doing an amazing job of responding, adapting, supporting and rebuilding**

# Opportunity to re-imagine, adapt and re-invigorate volunteering to meet the future aspirations of our communities



# Understand

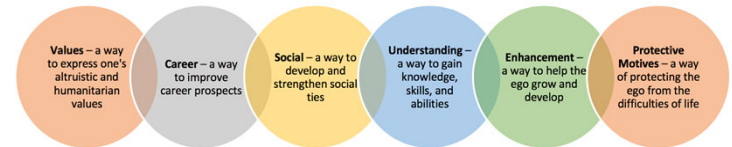
**What motivates volunteers?**

**Who are you looking to attract?**

**What might be barriers to participation?**

## Tactics

- Ask yourself! And your current volunteers
- Run an engagement activity with your community to learn e.g. community 'volunteer' fair, market stall, community survey, community volunteer pledge campaign
- Work with other organisations to collectively gather and share insights about different volunteer groups
- Map it out, understand characteristics/drivers/capacities



Volunteering motivations (VolPro)

Response	2019		COVID	
	Volunteers %	Non-Volunteers %	Volunteers %	Non-Volunteers %
Limited time	41.1	32.3	23.3	22.2
Work commitments	37.0	25.6	19.9	17.3
Family commitments	33.8	18.3	27.2	15.9
General health	15.7	17.8	14.4	18.7
Preference for paid work	13.9	14.8	11.6	11.5
No available volunteering	13.7	7.6	9.8	13.3
Travel	13.0	9.0	15.4	5.8
Concern about level of commitment / work involved	12.8	11.9	10.4	8.2
Don't know where to go / lack of information	12.5	15.1	9.9	10.0
Age	11.5	15.4	7.3	12.5

Barriers to volunteering in Victoria (top 10)

# Adapt - volunteering 'types'

**Formal** Program that uses volunteer involvement in the delivery of services.

**Non-formal** volunteering in largely in unfunded, less structured settings.

**Governance** volunteer as board members or on management committees

**Social Action** have an interest and passion for bringing about defined changes

**Project** Volunteers have specific timeframes and skills available.

**Task** Volunteers are responsible for a one-off task or single ongoing task

**Corporate** Volunteers from businesses contribute their time unskilled/skilled

**Pro bono** Skilled support through deploying core business activities at \$0

**Micro volunteering** combines small actions by many people to create impacts

**Online** Doing any of the above remotely





## Attract/Recruit

- Invest in your **volunteering ‘infrastructure’**
- Keep an **up-to-date list of volunteering opportunities** available
- **Share opportunities** in targeted ways
- Consider what needs to be **done locally** and what doesn’t
- **Drive a community wide conversation about volunteering**





## Retain and Sustain

- **Appreciate** volunteers regularly.
- **Communicate** the impact
- **Leverage technology**
- Manage volunteer **burnout**
- Revisit volunteer **motivations**
- Ensure they have access to the **resources** they need to do their job
- Consider **format, time and frequency** of gathering in person
- Encourage **social connectedness**
- Build **skills** and provide opportunities for **progression**



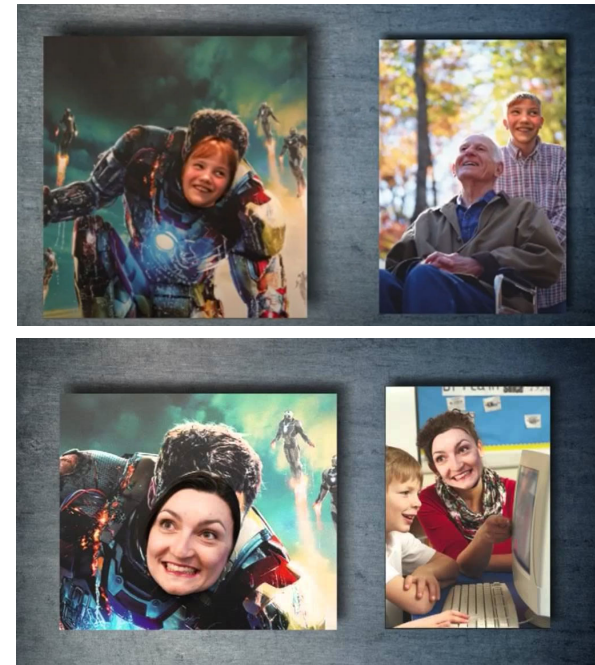
# Volunteer Burnout

- Build a culture of volunteer wellbeing and care
- Put clear volunteer onboarding system in place
- Define roles and terms for volunteer positions
- Adopt a transparent process for reviewing roles and responsibilities regularly
- Map volunteer engagement as a community
- Training and Support for organisers
- Online resources for spotting burnout



# Unlock your community superpower!

- Volunteering Australia / Volunteering NSW
- WeVolunteer - Community Recovery Volunteers
- Online/remote/microvolunteering recruitment platforms
- Volunteer opportunities via ProBono Australia
- ACNC guide to Donating and Volunteering
- Volunteering opportunities via Rural Aid
- Go Volunteer
- Our Community: Management Help Sheets
- Re-starting your volunteer activities guide – animation
- Wild Apricot – volunteerism resources
- VolunteeringHub
- VolunteerPro – Tobi Johnson



A very creative campaign around volunteering superheroes from Zagreb! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZUz19a3-fk>



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# FRRR NSW Grants Available...

## Future Drought Fund: Networks to Build Drought Resilience

- ▶ National, 2 rounds, Round 1 closes - Monday 5 July, three streams: up to \$20k, \$20-50k, \$50-150k,
- ▶ Communities who are vulnerable to drought regardless of their current drought status, resilience building focus,

## Volunteer Emergency Services Fund

- ▶ Emergency services and first responder NFPs within LGAs with a bushfire disaster declaration from Sept 2019 – April 2020
- ▶ Closes 7 July, up to \$25k

## Strengthening Rural Communities

- ▶ National, open all the time, ongoing program
- ▶ Broad criteria, designed for grassroots organisations & remote/rural communities, three streams: \$10k, up to \$25k

## Tackling Tough Times Together

- ▶ National, final two grant rounds to run over next 12 months
- ▶ Broad criteria but must support drought recovery, three streams: up to \$20k, up to \$60k, up to \$150k