

Future of Work Institute – Curtin Business School
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND LAW

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Recruitment and Retention Toolkit for Emergency Volunteer Leaders

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A global university | Western Australia | Dubai | Malaysia | Mauritius | Singapore

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Collaborators and Sponsors

The slide features a grid of 16 headshots of individuals, likely collaborators or sponsors, arranged in four rows and four columns. To the right of the headshots are logos for several organizations:

- Government of Western Australia
- DFES (Department of Fire & Emergency Services) - FOR A SAFER STATE
- Western Australia (blue and orange circular logo)
- W.A. Fire & Rescue
- Western Australia (green and red circular logo)
- WE SERVE (yellow circular logo with a bird)
- bushfire&natural HAZARDS CRC
- The University of Western Australia
- Curtin University - FUTURE OF WORK INSTITUTE

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Our Background

- Organisational psychology:
 - Psychology applied to work (and volunteer) settings
- Inform management practice at the 'coal-face'
- "What makes people 'tick'?"
- "What makes **volunteers** tick?"

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Mission 1 - Find answers to these questions:

What does it take to become an emergency services volunteer?



Recruitment



Retention

What keeps emergency services volunteers coming back for more?

What makes emergency services volunteers happy?



Wellbeing



Diversity

How do we encourage more people to volunteer for emergency services?

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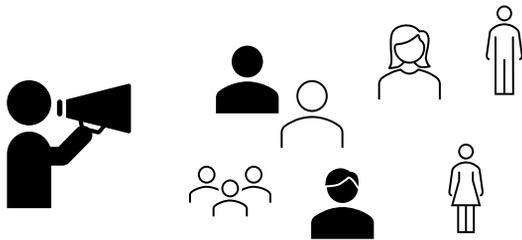
Mission 2 - Translate those answers into resources

Target Audiences

1. BGU Volunteer leaders – all services (**change practices**)
2. BGU Volunteers (**learning and development**)
3. District Officers (**distribution**)

Features

- User-friendly
- Relevant to emergency services volunteering
 - Case studies



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Real-World Case Studies

Here are some examples of how BGUs have provided training support to their new volunteers:

Fremantle VMR

Practices theoretical, observational and hands-on training. They assess volunteers multiple times before they are given the chance to do a supervised solo task.

Mundaring Shire BFB

Ensures training is representative of what the volunteers will actually encounter. In addition to theoretical training, this brigade stresses the importance of observational learning, with new volunteers learning from senior volunteers whilst out on call-outs.

Walpole SES

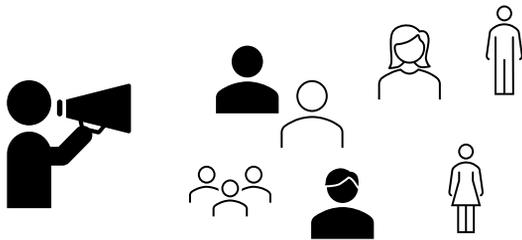
Facilitates learning opportunities within their BGU early on, which consolidates with formal DFES training in the following weeks.

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Mission 2 - Translate those answers into resources

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Features

- User-friendly
- Relevant to emergency services volunteering
 - Case studies
- Practical
 - Step-by-step guides
 - **Tipsheets**
 - **Guidelines**
 - **Editable templates**



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Step-By-Step

What is involved in onboarding volunteers?

1. Registering your new volunteers.

2. Inducting your new volunteers.

3. Supporting your new volunteers.

4. Training your new volunteers.

5. Engaging your new volunteers.

Here is a good example of how to register a new volunteer

Here is an example of how NOT to register a volunteer

Sarah was very interested in volunteering as a firefighter so she went to her nearest brigade to register.

John has always been very interested in volunteering.

When Sarah showed up, the leader showed her around the unit and told her what it means to be a firefighter.

When John visited his nearest BGU, they told him a bit about the role, but did not tell him how to join.

Sarah was given registration forms to fill out, which were processed within 30 days after she handed it in.

John did not feel very wanted, but he asked for the registration forms and proceeded to fill them out.

Because of this, Sarah felt very welcomed and that she was taken seriously by the brigade.

When John handed in his paperwork to the BGU, his registration papers were not processed for 3 months.

After she was registered, she received a Confirmation of Registration (COR).

In that 3 months, John was asked to come to BGU meetings but he could not train with others or go out on call-outs as he was not formally registered.

By receiving her COR, Sarah felt confident and informed as to what she needed to do next.

In the end, John left the BGU because he did not feel valued as a new volunteer.

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Practical Tip Sheets

Tip Sheet 4: Interviewing Volunteers

Structuring the interview

- 1) Start by introducing yourself and your position,
 - a. Thank the prospective volunteer for their interest and making the time.
 - b. Tell the applicant the purpose of the interview and how long it is expected to take.
 - c. Let them know there will be a chance to ask questions at the end.
- 2) Start with an easy, open question as an ice-breaker
 - a. E.g. "How did you hear about this opportunity?"
- 3) Move onto the main interview questions. These should cover 3-5 topics (e.g. teamwork, coping under pressure), with one or two questions per topic.
- 4) Finish by letting them know what the next steps in the process are for them and give them an opportunity to ask questions.

Adjusting Your Leadership and Management Style

In an emergency...

- Critical decisions need to be made quickly by knowledgeable and experienced people
- The outcomes can mean life or death

Around your BGU on a casual night...

- Decisions are less critical or time sensitive
- Receiving additional input from volunteers may be beneficial (see Including and Involving Volunteers).

Preventing conflict from impacting BGU functioning



- Be aware of the common causes of conflict and address any that may be an issue at your BGU. Discuss these with your volunteers as they arise.
- Foster open and safe communication between all volunteers
- Try to keep BGU and personal lives as separate as possible.
- Step in early to de-escalate potential interpersonal conflicts.

Appeal to a common goal

When volunteer personalities are clashing or conflicting goals seem to be causing trouble, it may be useful to remind volunteers why they are volunteering in the first place. Remind them why they are there and why they joined to start with, whether that was to help the community, learn new skills, or to protect their local area. Find something that resonates with both people and help them to see that they have a common goal to work towards.

Make more resources available

When conflict is caused by competition for resources, it can help to make more resources available or to redistribute resources if at all possible. This may mean getting creative in finding alternative resources or prioritizing resource allocation.

Restructure teams

Alter the physical environment

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Practical Guidelines

Telling/directing

What it looks like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions made by the leader • Roles and tasks defined and closely supervised by the leader • Mainly one-way communication • Quicker decision-making • Less creativity
When to use it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the leader is the expert • Team is inexperienced • No margin for error • Time is short

Participating/supporting

What it looks like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team are involved in routine decision-making • Leader facilitates decisions (but still has the final say) • More two-way communication • Slower decision-making • More creativity
When to use it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an issue is complex and you could benefit from additional knowledge and ideas • Decisions are task-focused and not critical • There is no time pressure

Guidelines for providing constructive feedback:

Focus on specific behaviours that can be changed

Keep feedback impersonal (don't target individuals)

Focus on what to improve and how to improve it

Turn feedback into a conversation, rather than imposing it on someone

Focus on specific behaviours that can be changed

✓

- "I noticed that some corners were being cut at this point in the exercise. Make sure that when we do x, we are following this procedure: xyz"

✗

- "The whole exercise was really messy. You need to make sure you're doing things the right way"

Keep feedback impersonal

✓

- "X was an issue in the team today"
- "We need to work on x"

✗

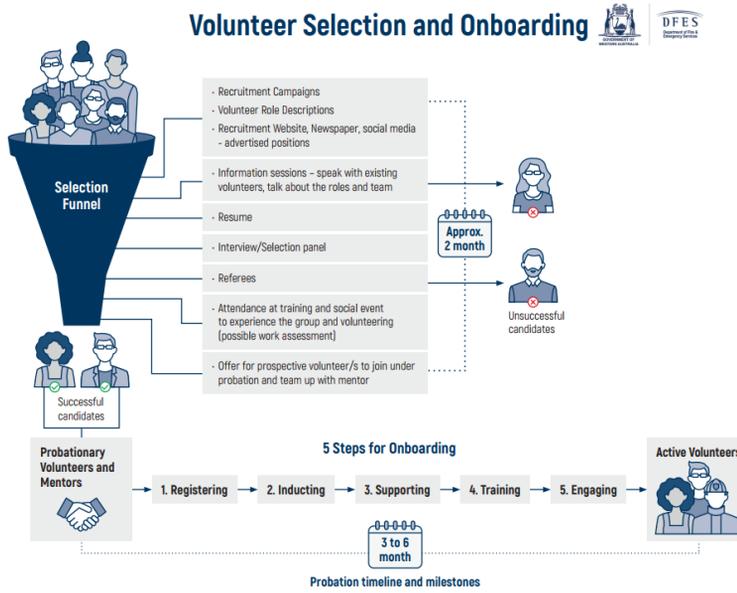
- "The whole exercise was really messy. You need to make sure you're doing things the right way"

Focus on what to improve and how to improve it

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Practical Guidelines

Volunteer Selection and Onboarding



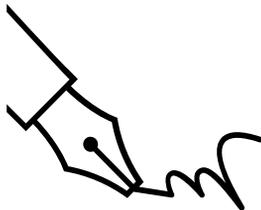
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Editable Templates

Expectations

Use this section to lay out the expectations that the BGU has for their volunteers. This includes (and is not limited to);

- Expected number of hours to commit for training
- Expected number of call-outs to respond to, etc.



Roster Information (if applicable)

Include information on;

- How the roster system works
 - ▶ How they can enter their time preferences
- How often they can expect to be on duty once they have completed their induction
- Also include team allocation information (if necessary here)

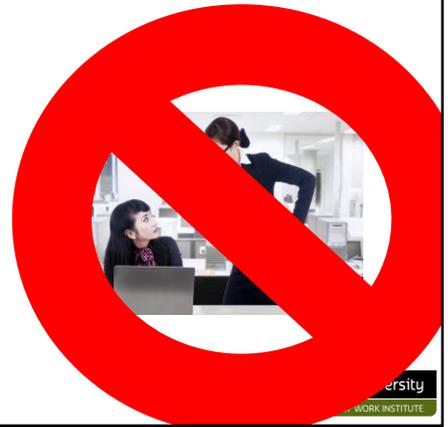
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Guiding Philosophy

Provide support,



NOT
Directives!



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Our Approach

- Step 1 – Understand the basics (psychological theory)
- Step 2 – Review literature
- Step 3 – Agree on a definition and boundaries

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Our Approach

- Step 4 – Stakeholder consultation
 - Volunteers
 - BGU Leaders
 - District Officers
 - Associations

- Step 5 – Synthesis
- Step 6 – First Draft

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Our Approach

- Step 4 – Stakeholder consultation
 - Volunteers
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- Step 5 – Synthesis
- Step 6 – First Draft
- Step 7 – Consultation

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Our Approach

- Step 8 – Production
- Step 9 – Distribution, communication, and training



ROLE

Why do we need to recruit?
What skills do we need?
Who will suit the role?

RECRUIT

Plan to recruit
Promote opportunities
Select by interviewing

ONBOARD

Knowledge to communicate
Skills to share
Attitudes to foster
Behaviours to promote

MOTIVATE

Autonomy to be supported
Competence to be strengthened
Belonging to be encouraged

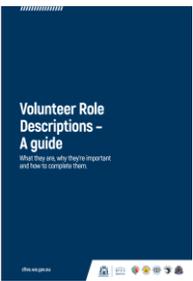




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Resources Available









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Resources in the Works - The Volunteer Recruitment Messaging Toolkit

Manage volunteer expectations when recruiting



"I really appreciate the great mateship that I have formed here."



Insert logo here **State Emergency Service (SES):**
Sign up and be a volunteer!

SES volunteers play a significant role in helping to keep communities safe. SES volunteers serve their respective local communities on a voluntary basis by undertaking both operational and non-operational roles.

Benefits of volunteering:

- Meeting new people
- Being part of a team
- Learning new skills (including Nationally Accredited Training)
- Helping the community during emergencies

Volunteer roles available:

Volunteers can take up roles based on their abilities and interests. There are many different roles to choose from:

- Community safety and education
- Communications
- Search and rescue
- Temporary repairs to buildings and homes
- First aid
- Logistics
- Welfare
- Administration
- Social and digital media
- Unit marketing and public relations

What will I have to do?

- Attend regular training nights once per week
- Attend one weekend for training every 2 months
- Attend call outs when you are available
- Follow instructions given by your team leader
- Be part of the team!

Unit contact information:

- Unit Name: XXXX
- Phone: XXXX
- Email: XXXX
- Facebook: XXXX

Insert logo here For more information Contact XXXX Website: XXXX



Resources in the Works - Volunteer Succession Management



FOR A SAFER STATE

