G21 REGIONAL VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY

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HEALTH & WELLBEING PILLAR

CONTENTS

"The Choice is clear: we can better support volunteering or we can watch our communities die".
(Interview participant)

"An important message is that volunteering is about active communities, people getting involved and taking on responsibilities. We need to promote the idea that active communities are strong and connected communities. This concept works at a whole range of levels".
(Interview participant)

1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Volunteerism is a major part of the fabric of life in the G21 region. Volunteers have a role to play across all of the G21 Pillar Groups. Volunteers provide services which impact on every facet of society; from the cradle to the grave; across religious institutions, sporting groups, schools, Neighborhood Houses, community groups, Disaster Relief Agencies and more. The economic value of the volunteer input in the G21 region is $300 million per annum. The social value is incalculable. If volunteerism was to diminish, the effects would be noticed immediately across the G21region – not only in direct services - but in the quality of life for members of the G21 community.

Volunteerism is in the midst of a *major structural change*. Its form and context are taking on a radically new shape. How 21st century volunteers perceive their roles and how volunteering fits into their lives is vastly different to that of a generation ago. Volunteering is no longer seen as a long term commitment but a series of short term terms of service. Members of the community with high skill levels are seeking meaningful volunteer opportunities whilst at the same time Governments see volunteering as a means of up-skilling the unemployed. Agencies must cater for a range of "new types" of volunteers. Compounding this are new regulations, training and insurance issues that have turned, what was in essence, a simple concept into a complicated management and legal exercise for many volunteer involving organisations.

To address these trends we require a major shift in how agencies structure, support, resource and market volunteering. There needs to be a significant increase in funding to support adequate volunteering infrastructure, to market volunteering in new ways, to offer alternative models of volunteering and to minimise administrative and legislative burdens on community groups and organisations.

The G21 Regional Volunteering Strategy Project seeks to ensure a successful volunteerism future. It proposes a new Not- for-Profit Resource Centre for the G21 region. It suggests ways and means of equipping agencies to adapt in order to attract new types of volunteers and it calls for new and increased funding to achieve this.

Failure to invest in volunteering and therefore shift volunteering into this new 21st century paradigm will mean that in five to ten years, there will be a crisis in service delivery levels and the sustainability of community service organizations and groups throughout the region.

The economic and social loss to the quality of community life would be significant; creating a new type of community would be "less caring, less unified and less cohesive"[1].

This is not the future we seek for communities in the G21 region.

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[1]   Putnam, R Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society, Oxford University Press, (2002)

2 INTRODUCTION and CONTEXT

2.1 Project Overview

The G21-Geelong Region Alliance (G21) is the formal alliance of government, business and community organisations working together to improve the lives of people within the Geelong region across five municipalities: Colac–Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast.

G21 works as a forum to discuss regional issues across interest groups and municipalities resulting in better co-ordinated research, consultation and planning. G21 supports the delivery of projects that benefit the region across municipal boundaries and are a platform to speak with one voice to all levels of government.

All five of the G21 Local Governments engage volunteers directly and have services delivered to their residents and visitors that are reliant on a significant volunteer workforce.

The aim of the G21 Regional Volunteering Strategy Project was to incorporate research and stakeholder consultation in order to produce a Regional Volunteering Strategy, which will acknowledge and enhance the positive contribution of volunteering within the G21 region by assisting volunteer-involving organisations and other key stakeholders that support volunteering, to collaborate in the development of an effective, efficient, consistent and best practice approach across the region.

2.2 Project Goals

- Development of a volunteer profile for the G21 region.
- Analysis of current capacity, gaps and opportunities in volunteerism in the G21 region.
- Development of a Regional Volunteering Strategy

2.3 Key Stakeholders May 2011 Initial Workshop

In May 2011 G21 facilitated an initial workshop with key stakeholders in the region (the Stakeholder Workshop). The discussion data from the Stakeholder Workshop was drawn on to develop questions for the survey and the interviews. It is available as a separate document.

2.4 Interviews with key stakeholders

The following thirty one key stakeholders, identified by G21, were interviewed individually, via telephone or face to face.

TITLE/ROLE	ORGANISATION
Manager	BacLinks
Manager	Barwon Health
Principal	Barwon Valley School
CEO	Barwon Youth
CEO	Batforce
CEO and Volunteer Manager	Bellarine Community Health
Manager	Bethany
Various roles	City of Greater Geelong
CEO	Colac Otway Shire
Manager Careers and Employment	Deakin University
Manager Community Liaison	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Executive Officer	DoCare
Organisational Representatives	Country Fire Authority
CEO	Gateways
Organisational Representatives	Scouts Australia, Geelong Region
Community Partner Liaison Officer	Give Where You Live (Previously United Way)
Various roles	Golden Plains Shire Council
Volunteer Manager	Karingal

CEO	Leisure Networks
Organisational Representatives	Department of Health
Organisational Representatives	Department of Justice
Organisational Representatives	Country Fire Authority
CEO	G21 Geelong Region Alliance
Chair	G21 Geelong Region Alliance Health and Wellbeing Pillar Executive
District Governor, Service Clubs	Rotary
Coordinator	South Barwon Community Centre
Emergency Service Representatives	SES
Volunteer Manager	St Laurence
Community Development (VG Board Member)	Surf Coast
Organisational Representatives	Volunteering Geelong

In addition, the members of the Geelong Volunteer Managers Network were interviewed.

2.5   Volunteer Management Survey

A survey was also developed to gather key information regarding volunteer management practices in the G21 region. Survey forms were provided to community agencies via both hard copy and an online survey tool. 200 agencies responded.

The respondent agencies provide the following services to the G21 community:

- Community Development: 47 %;

- Social Services and Welfare: 29 %;

- Advice and Information: 23 %;

- Health and Medical: 20 %;

- Sport and Recreation: 19 %.

2.6 Statistical analysis of volunteering trends in the G21 region

Utilising data from G21, Department of Planning and Community Development, the five Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a detailed picture of volunteering within the region was identified. This is available as a separate report.

3 VALUE and IMPACTS OF VOLUNTEERING

Assessing the value and impact of volunteering is a fairly recent concept. Until recently, few countries have even considered the contribution of volunteering to their GDP, productivity and community life. A small number of communities and not-for profit organisations have attempted to calculate the social and economic value of volunteering.

"...it is important that we continue to invest in the tools that help us understand the significance and scale of volunteering. Like the nonprofit sector in general, volunteering is an often overlooked and under-appreciated force in our economy."[2]

In assessing the value and impact of volunteering in the G21 region, three elements must be considered:

1. The economic contribution of volunteering;

2. The value and the scope of the services provided by volunteering; and

3. The social capital created by volunteering.

3.1 Economic Contribution

In 1994, David Ross, a Canadian researcher suggested that the average wage rate could be used to calculate "the value of volunteer labour"[3]. In the United States, "The Independent Sector" (a network for not-for-profits)[4] provides an estimated hourly rate for use by voluntary agencies to calculate the volunteering. In the UK and Europe, the focus has been VIVA: The Volunteer Investment and Value Audit, published by the Institute for Volunteering Research. All of these use models that consider the amount of time volunteered, matches that time to equivalent paid work hours and applies a market wage. This produces a notional volunteer wage bill: "*what we would have to pay people to do the work of our volunteers*". Duncan Ironmonger, in Australia, has used a similar model in his "Valuing Volunteering" research for the state governments of

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[2]   Greg Baldwin: Is Volunteering Worth It? The Economics of Generosity, Huffington post, 5th April, 2012

[3]   How To Estimate The Economic Contribution of Volunteer Work, 1994

[4]   Calculating Volunteer Time, The Independent Sector: http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time

South Australia[5] and Queensland[6].

Of the 285 000 residents in the five LGAs of the G21region, 42,342 people volunteer[7]. This is approximately 22%of the population. A figure higher than the Australian average of 18%.

Table 1 Number of Volunteers in the G21 Local Government Authorities

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION	VOLUNTEERING	NOT VOLUNTEERING	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION VOLUNTEERING
Colac Otway	21,817	4,203	10,748	26%
Golden Plains	18,173	3,012	8,641	24%
Greater Geelong	216,000	29,673	116,180	19%
Queenscliffe	3,300	877	1,465	34%
Surf Coast	25,458	4,577	11,160	27%
Total	284,748	42,342	148,194	22.00%

The volunteers in the G21 region are contributing approximately 13 million hours *per annum* through an estimated 100,000 volunteer roles.[8] This is equivalent to the work of 6,600 f*ull time workers*. Based on the average wage for Greater Geelong[9], the cost of funding the work of the

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[5]   Ironmonger, D. S. & Queensland. Dept. of Communities. & University of Melbourne. Households Research Unit. The Economic Value of Volunteering in South Australia. (2003).

[6]   Ironmonger, D. S. & Queensland. Dept. of Communities. & University of Melbourne. Households Research Unit. The Economic Value of Volunteering in Queensland. (2008)

[7]   Based on ABS Statistics and Volunteering Geelong survey.

[8]   Based on ABS Statistics and Volunteering Geelong survey.

[9]   ABS: Regional Variations in Average Income, 2008-09

region's volunteers would be approximately three hundred million dollars per annum. This is an economic value of $1050 per resident across the G21 region. If these wage costs had to be paid, this would have a critical impact on the costs of services delivered. It would also impact on the level of Federal, State and Local government funding, as well as the philanthropic and community funding required delivering these services.

3.2 Value and Scope of Services Delivered

At the Stakeholders Workshop conducted in May 2011, the question was posed: What would happen if all of the volunteers in the region went on strike? The economic value outlined does not fully reflect the value and scope of services provided. The impact of such an event would be that our community would cease to function as it does; community services delivery, emergency services, health services, schools and early years services and a diverse range of sporting and community events and activities could not continue effectively and may become unsustainable. In certain sectors the impact would be life threatening to members of our community.

From the survey of agencies, 78 % of respondent agencies in the G21 region view volunteers as essential to the delivery of the services of the organisation. An equal number saw volunteers as "a way of engaging community in the organisation". Almost two-thirds of agencies (63 %) saw volunteers as a way of reaching the community. In the agency survey, only 16 % of agencies saw volunteers as a cost-saving measure; eight % as a way of raising funds. Over half of agencies (53 %) saw volunteers as an additional resource to getting things done and 43 % said engaging volunteers was the best way to operate.

The 42, 342 volunteers in the G21region provide support to:

- *over 1400 sports clubs;*

- *3000 plus individuals who receive meals and friendship through meals on wheels every day;*

- *Telephone Support Services including Lifeline who have 500,000 calls answered every year -one new call every minute;*

- *seven National Trust properties, Fort Queenscliffe, the Maritime Museum, the Bellarine*

Peninsula Railway and other tourist attractions in the region for tourists, schools and residents to explore, learn and enjoy;

- hospitals and hospital foundations such as the Barwon Health Foundation to raise money for medical equipment, approximately $1.2 million in 2011;

- Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association and the Surf Life Saving Clubs to protect boaters, swimmers, surfers and paddlers;

- service clubs (Lions, Apex, Rotary etc) which enhance Parks and Gardens, provide equipment to other agencies such as The Salvation Army, provide food parcels to the community and host and send exchange students;

- events such as Queenscliffe and Meredith Music Festivals, Geelong Multi Sport Festival, Torquay Hightide Festival which attract tourists and foster community;

- fighting fires, rescuing people, finding people, providing first aid and acting as community respondents in times of crisis;

- teaching children to read, serving in canteens, operating school councils and maintaining schools;

- people with disabilities, the elderly, people who are marginalised;

- camps, Scouts and Guides;

- religious communities;

- provide governance for community service organisations and community facilities.

3.3   Building Social Capital

Social capital includes:

1. Relationships with family, friends and peer groups that provide a sense of belonging in the here and now. It is essential for '*getting by*' in life;

2. Creating links with people outside our immediate circles, who can help us to broaden individual and community opportunities and horizons. It is good for 'getting ahead' in

life;

3. Building relationships between people with varying levels of power, essential for accessing support from formal institutions.

Scholars such as Putnam[10] have investigated the means by which these elements can be enhanced. They found that volunteerism is one of the most practical ways to generate substantial social capital in the community[11]. United Nations Volunteers (UNV) recognises volunteerism and volunteers are at the heart of social capital[12]. Social capital is created by bringing people together to act for the good of the community. Volunteering in the G21 region and across the globe, creates trust and results in a more cohesive and stable society.[13]

Volunteering builds community and social capital, and it needs leadership, high level recognition and strategic investment from the G21 region.

3.4 Value of Volunteering for the Individual Volunteer

Research indicates that volunteering provides direct health and socialisation benefits for individuals[14]. There exists a strong relationship between volunteering and health. For example, those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression than those who do not volunteer[15][16]. Volunteers who commit two or more hours per week exhibit positive health outcomes.[17] In addition, through volunteering individuals gain training, new skills and new confidence. Many individuals can attest to personal transformation through volunteering.[18]

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[10]   Putnam, R Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society (, Oxford University Press, (2002)

[11]   Putnam, Better Together: Restoring the American Community (2003)

[12]   Raad, Volunteerism, the Heart of Social Capital2003,

[13]   Dingle, A: Social capital and participation in everyday life. London & New York: Routledge. . (Ed.) (2001)

[14]   The Effects of Volunteering on the Volunteer, by John Wilson and Marc Musick (1999)

[15]   Gaining Health While Giving Back to the Community, Johns Hopkins (2004)

[16]   Edward V. Brown The Healing Power of Service

[17]   Health Benefits of Volunteering, from the Corporation for National and Community Service (2007)

[18]   Harris Interactive: Volunteering -Outcomes Study (2003) Boy Scouts of America

3.5   Current Infrastructure and resourcing

The current level of support for volunteer involvement across the G21 region is inadequate. The level of financial resources invested in resourcing volunteer infrastructure can be estimated to be less than 0.1 % of the value of volunteer time. This leaves a critically important sector, under resourced during a time of major change. Sectors engaging volunteers will be unable to adapt and respond appropriately. The outcome for the G21 region will be a volunteerism crisis in the next 5-10 years.

4 KEY VOLUNTEERISM ISSUES FOR THE G21 REGION

Five key volunteerism issues emerged from the May 2011 Stakeholder Workshop, Stakeholder Interviews and the Volunteer Management Survey:

1. Recruitment - 43.8% of agencies identified this as a major issue;

2. Resourcing - 41.4%;

3. Reward and retention - 36.6%;

4. Risk Issues - 24.1%;

5. Leadership - 23.3%.

The status quo of each is outlined in the next sections and responded to in the proposed strategies.

5 RECRUITMENT

We are facing a huge shortage of people wanting to volunteer; it is extremely difficult to get volunteers in the semi rural area. People (are) not prepared to give any time freely or the ones that would cannot because they are busy with other activities.[19]

Recruitment was seen as the most important issue for organisations in the region in the Volunteer Management Survey, with almost half of agencies nominating this as a major issue. The time taken, the energy required and the costs of recruiting a volunteer were seen as very high by both small and large organisations. The most significant challenges faced by organisations included effective marketing, volunteer management and legislative compliance.

There are seven key recruitment issues for the G21 region.

5.1 G21 Volunteers are older

We have many older volunteers but the time will come when they are no longer capable of doing the work. The next generation isn't coming through, taking an interest or being mentored[20]

The statistical research, interviews with stakeholders and Volunteer Management Survey all identified that there were many more older people volunteering in most of these five LGAs than the Australian and Victorian average. 11 % of agencies stated that this is one of their greatest challenges[21].

In Colac-Otway, Greater Geelong Golden Plains and Surf Coast, volunteers were clustered around the age of 35-54. This age demographic was both higher than the average age of non volunteers in the same communities and higher than the Australian average (25-44 years).

In Queenscliffe, volunteers were much older, being concentrated around the age group 55-74 years, while the non-volunteers were aged between 45 and 64 years.

The Volunteer Management Survey identified that 80% of the surveyed agencies have few or no

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[19]   Comment from the 2011 Volunteer Management Survey
[20]   Comment from the 2011 Volunteer Management Survey
[21]   2011 Volunteer Management Survey

one under 21 and 64 % had few or no-one in their twenties volunteering.

The age profile of the volunteers in the G21 region has significant implications. Older volunteers in the community (currently a third are older than 75) will, obviously, be reducing their participation. This has already started to have an impact and as this age group continues to disengage, volunteering in the G21 region will begin to unravel. Initially committees and boards will find it hard to attract people, then services will be reduced and some clubs, societies and organisations will cease to operate. It is envisaged that the loss of these older volunteers will peak by 2018.

The 45 to 65 year-old demographic are evaluating their time and their commitment to volunteering carefully. There is, anecdotally, a trend that suggests this generation are disengaging from long-term commitment in favour of short-term, project-based volunteering that meet their lifestyle requirements.

30 to 44 year-olds, while volunteering in large numbers, are focussing that volunteering in sport and education activities.

At the same time as these shifts, there will be increased demand for volunteers from an ageing population and the continuing delivery of key services by community groups.

5.2   Recruitment not attracting diverse populations

Look at the foundation you need to set up to support a positive volunteer experience for all demographics.[22]

While one third of organisations stated they wanted some culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) volunteers, 72 % of surveyed agencies said they had few or none. Only four agencies believed they had volunteers from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island (ATSI) background. In interviews agencies offered that there was no targeted recruitment to CALD or ATSI volunteers, few images of CALD or ATSI volunteers appeared in advertising, on websites, and it was rare to have a language other than English used in recruitment and training of volunteers. The potential to engage these populations in building the social capital of their communities is being

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[22]   Comment made in Stakeholder interview

diminished as a result.

66% of agencies have no tertiary students as volunteers despite the region having the main campus of Deakin University. 85 % of agencies involved no secondary students.

While one agency stated that most of its volunteers were people living with a disability, 72 % of agencies were not engaging people with a disability and had not identified the opportunity.

More females were doing unpaid work in the G21 region for 30 hours or above than the Australian and Victorian average. In addition 35.4 % of agencies had few or no male volunteers.

5.3 Lack of Strategic Recruitment

There is a need to strengthen coordinated, strategic regional focus to enhance long term volunteer recruitment & retention.[23]

No recruitment plan exists for the region. While a third of agencies have accessed Volunteering Geelong (an independent not-for-profit organisation that promotes and supports of volunteering) for volunteer assistance, most of the current recruitment processes in the G21 region are *ad hoc* and predominantly done by word of mouth. Volunteering Geelong has no mandate and insufficient resourcing to develop such a plan.

There is no resourcing for a structure to ensure present and future populations across the region are engaged in volunteering nor is there consideration for what human resource gaps exist currently or will manifest within the next decade.

5.4 Old Models in a New World

People are busier, working women, busy children with after school activities and less willing to commit to a set time to volunteer. They will help out for one off fundraising days but don't wish to be on committees.[24]

Many agencies are attempting to recruit volunteers today to work in a long standing "traditional" manner. Existing volunteers understand this framework and some cannot accept understand why others do not volunteer in the same way.

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23   Comment from the 2011 Volunteer Management Survey
24   Comment from the 2011 Volunteer Management Survey

However, the traditional model, is not attracting, or retaining volunteers. This is witnessed by the collapse of volunteering numbers in many traditional organisations such as the Country Women's Association (CWA), Red Cross Committees, Rotary and Lions Clubs. This experience is also being felt by other, smaller locally focused committees and groups who struggle to recruit and retain members.

New models for volunteerism are needed to attract new volunteers. These need to be genuinely new models and not a repackaging of existing volunteer jobs. For example, corporate volunteering is one of the fastest growing areas of volunteer engagement in Australia and internationally. Yet, 74% of agencies in the G21 region had few or no corporate volunteers because *"they don't fit what our agency offers"*.[25]

5.5   Volunteering in Rural Areas

Attracting volunteers in very small communities (is difficult) when there are a large number of community and sporting organisations all trying to attract the same people. Whole of community approach to a volunteer bank of people sourced out to smaller organisations according to business/organisations demands would be great.[26]

Many agencies reported concern for the future of their organisations with regard to volunteerism. In research from Western Australia this lack of numbers creates a "vicious cycle - because fewer volunteers means heavier workload and the thought of heavy workloads influences the ability to attract volunteers."[27]

The same report noted that "There appears to be a direct relationship between the perceived support community organisations receive from their local shire and the satisfaction levels of volunteers."[28]

5.6   Recruitment Messaging

Create a paradigm around volunteering that is about community engagement and capacity

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[25]   Comment from interview with agency representative

[26]   Comment from the 2011 Volunteer Management Survey

[27]   Spencer et al: Better Connections, Wheatbelt Volunteering Report, Volunteering Western Australia (2009)

[28]   Spencer et al: Better Connections, Wheatbelt Volunteering Report, Volunteering Western Australia (2009)

building, building stronger communities ...We believe that everyone has something to contribute, (We need to be) supporting people to get involved, (to be) active in ones community, supporting the volunteer process.[29]

Despite the importance of volunteers to community agencies, there was a significant lack of resources to develop adequate and targeted advertising for volunteers. As a result, most advertising for volunteers was ad hoc.

As noted earlier, two thirds of agencies did not access support from Volunteering Geelong. 87 % have not placed ads on Seek.com, a recruitment site and 79 % have not accessed the State government Volunteering Portal (an online community and information resource for Victorian volunteers and volunteering organisations). Only eight % utilise Facebook for volunteer recruitment despite 87 % of people aged 15 to 24 and 66 % of people aged between 28 and 40 being engaged on Facebook for an average of 20 hours per month.

Further, much of the actual messaging in volunteer advertising was assessed to be unclear, unattractive and uninteresting. Messages were largely not addressing the interests and desires of a new generation of potential volunteers.

5.7   "Compulsory Volunteering"

The interface with Centrelink volunteers (not Centrelink itself) and the expectations put on these individuals by Centrelink and then the volunteers being unwilling/sometimes unable to meet those expectations are real problems.[30]

Many volunteer involving groups struggled with the concept of engaging at the prospect of compulsory community-based voluntary work for unemployed people. The idea that some job seekers have to participate in compulsory unpaid work was not widely supported in the sector: "if these people have to do it, it's not volunteering".[31]

The costs and practicalities associated with engaging these volunteers also impacted upon the willingness and ability of agencies to access or accept volunteers on benefits.

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[29]   Stakeholder interview

[30]   Survey Response from Volunteering Survey 2011

[31]   Interview comment with Stakeholder agency

6 RESOURCING

The second most pressing issue for Volunteer involving organizations is how they will resource their volunteer engagement (41.4 % of agencies seeing this as a major issue). There were four concerns.

6.1   Volunteer Reimbursement

A major concern is the lack of funding to compensate costs incurred by volunteers etc for fuel, phone calls, time etc.[32]

We need access to resources - some folk won't volunteer because they can't carry costs.[33]

Many organisations in the G21 region are unable to reimburse volunteers for the costs they incur when they volunteer. In 2011, the Australian National Survey of Volunteering Issues found that the cost of volunteering had become the number one deterrent for volunteers[34].

That survey determined that almost half of volunteer respondents were reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, in full or in part, and a quarter had not. The remaining 25 % said they had not incurred out-of-pocket expenses.[35]

6.2   Transport Costs

"Mainly in the Surf Coast Shire (Winchelsea & District area) there is the transport issue, to, and from Geelong and Colac. Most transporting needs are provided by volunteers".[36]

"We have no resources for training or acknowledgement. How about free transport for volunteers? Some way of pay back".[37]

Transport in the G21 region impacts on volunteering. If petrol prices increase significantly in the next two to three years (caused by a falling Australian dollar and higher world oil prices), many

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[32]   Comment Volunteer Management Survey 2011

[33]   Comment Volunteer Management Survey 2011

[34]   Volunteering Australia: Insights from the National Survey of Volunteering Issues 2011

[35]   Volunteering Australia: Insights from the National Survey of Volunteering Issues 2011

[36]   Comment Volunteer Management Survey 2011

[37]   Comment Volunteer Management Survey 2011

agencies will find volunteers disengaging because of transport costs. Without adequate public transport back-up, volunteerism is placed at risk unless additional funding is found to pay for travel costs.

6.3   Resourcing for Training and Recruitment

Accessing more funding for supporting volunteer mentors and recruiting more volunteers would make all the difference.[38]

Agencies were concerned that funding for their programs was becoming harder to access. Fewer departments and trusts are funding core administration costs. These have to be self funded. Therefore there is little or no funding for training or recruitment of volunteers.

6.4   Volunteerism Infrastructure across the G21 region

There are two primary organisations providing services to volunteer involving agencies in the G21 region: Volunteering Geelong and BacLinks. Neither agency has a region wide mandate or funding to deliver to the entire region. Both agencies are underfunded in relation to the number of volunteers across the region.

Agencies stated they would like access to paid support to carry out key tasks and roles currently undertaken by volunteers: a salaried person to take up a range of activities that overwhelm volunteers. Such a person could support a number of local community groups.[39]

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[38]   Comment Volunteer Management Survey 2011
[39]   Comment Volunteer Management Survey 2011

7   REWARD AND RETENTION

We need to make sure that we are committed to providing adequate support, education and opportunities for volunteers.[40]

....to move the perception of volunteering to a dynamic and vital activity, which not only is altruistically rewarding but rewarding in a career path and skill development capacity.[41]

Over a third (36.3 %) of the respondents in the 2011 Volunteer Management Survey stated that one of their largest issues in volunteer engagement was their ability to retain their volunteers. This lack of retention reflects both a shift in the length of time volunteers commit and a shift in expectations of volunteers who are increasingly seeking a meaningful and useful experience in exchange for their time.

Agencies identified two key challenges: orientation and training; and recognition

7.1   Orientation and Training

In difficult times funds may dry up for volunteer training, hope that this is not the case as organisations need to be confident that their volunteer workforce is trained and well supported.[42]

Almost a quarter of agencies do not provide any formal training to volunteers. Of those agencies that do, many reported significant challenges in collating training needs data from their volunteers.

7.2   Appreciative recognition of volunteers.

The most common form of recognition within the region are Certificates of Service with 56.3 % of agencies providing this form of recognition. Less than half (43 %) participate in National Volunteer Week and only 13 % acknowledge International Volunteers Day.

This suggests that some volunteers receive no recognition at all.

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[40]   Volunteer management survey 2011 response
[41]   Volunteer management survey 2011 response
[42]   Volunteer management survey 2011 response

8 RISK MANAGEMENT

In a well managed volunteer program, appropriate supervision and safe working practices are established and volunteers are trained in these. Processes are established to ensure clients, agency and volunteers are protected. These would include risk assessments, policies and insurance coverage. 24 % of agencies indicated that Risk Management was one of their greatest concerns.

It is clear from survey responses and interviews that many volunteer involving agencies are conscious of the need to implement effective risk management strategies. A significant number are either unaware or unable to incorporate these processes. Less than half of all agencies have a policy that covers volunteer engagement (43 %). A quarter admitted they did not have such a policy and a third declined to answer the question. 38 % refer to the National Standards for volunteer involving organisations and 29 % do not. Fifty-nine % of agencies provide insurance cover for their volunteers. Only 8% do not provide such cover and, again, a third did not respond to the question.

Table 2 Key Risk Management Supports

PRACTICE	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE
Possess Volunteer Policy	43%	24%	33%
Refer to National Standards	38%	29%	33%
Provide insurance cover	59%	8%	33%

There were five concerns regarding risk management identified by stakeholders:

1. *Legal requirements seen as burdensome;*

2. *Volunteering not perceived as fun anymore because of risk management requirements;*

3. Lack of resourcing;

4. Lack of portability;

5. Insurance Issues.

8.1   Legal Requirements viewed as burdensome

The expectations and red tape is bogging down the functioning of volunteers. There is so much "risk aversion" that no one can do anything without 20 pieces of paper![43]

Some rules that are being introduced (such as registering a working bee) will restrict volunteers - the work will not get done.[44]

Compliance and risk issues were of major concern to all agencies, particularly smaller agencies who feared they were doing something wrong, noting that their resources and time were so limited that focusing on these issues with volunteers was simply not possible. The legal requirements, checks and insurance costs are seen as burdensome and difficult to implement.

Expectations by Federal, State and Local governments, funding bodies and volunteering peak bodies were seen as far too onerous. Organisations were concerned about the time and financial costs these burdens were exacting on their organisations. As a consequence some agencies were determining that continuing to engage volunteers was no longer viable for particular projects.

8.2   Volunteering Work not seen as "Fun" anymore

It has been difficult getting volunteers to accept that they are obliged to work with the same safety requirements as paid workers. Most of our group have the mind-set of doing a job as they would at home, improvising and taking risks. Some volunteers attempt to do jobs that they are not skilled at.[45]

There are expectations that volunteers will take on managerial roles on advisory/events committees in the face of increased complex legislative processes. Disputes and conflicts can

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[43]   2011 Volunteer management Survey response
[44]   2011 Volunteer management Survey response
[45]   2011 Volunteer management Survey response

mean the loss of a valuable volunteer as *"they are not paid to put up with that"*.[46]

It's hard getting people to commit to being on the Committee of Management. The responsibilities and the paperwork have become difficult.[47]

There were real concerns echoed in interviews that older volunteers were disengaging because of the rules and regulations and younger volunteers were being put off through the volunteer application process on hearing about the rules, regulations and requirements.

8.3   Lack of Resourcing

Agencies noted that there has been a significant increase in regulatory oversight in the past ten years with little additional resourcing. There was concern that changes in the Associations Acts may force the creation of new constitutions for volunteer involving agencies.

There was a desire for greater central resourcing with one Volunteer Management survey respondent stating that it "would be valuable if we had access to relevant documentation rather than everyone reinventing all the time".[48]

8.4   Lack of Portability

They say 'we have already done the police thing. Why the bleep do we have to do it again. Although most are much more polite than this but you can see it in their eyes. And I know some don't come back because they can't be (bothered) to do it all again.

Newly retired individuals seeking to pour themselves into volunteering, for example could go through the same process two, three , four or even five or seven times. [49]

There was considerable frustration identified at the lack of portability of volunteer vetting and checking processes. Effectively a volunteer needs to apply at each agency for a police check and each agency will undertake a separate reference check.

There were many questions raised as to why a central body could not vet all volunteers once

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[46]   2011 Volunteer management Survey response

[47]   2011 Volunteer management Survey response

[48]   2011 Volunteer management Survey response

[49]   Stakeholder survey response

every two to three years.

8.5 Insurance Issues

There is considerable concern within agencies regarding the cost and structure of insurance for their volunteers. Insurance coverage was seen as complicated and expensive. There were concerns that many insurance policies ceased to provide coverage for volunteers over the age of 75. It was noted that some volunteers were having insurance provided at multiple locations. There was also a fear that coverage provided may not be sufficient should a volunteer be injured whilst on duty.

9 LEADERSHIP

Providing adequate leadership for volunteering within the organisation was identified as a significant challenge within the G21 region. There were five issues identified linked to leadership.

9.1 Strategy for Volunteerism

Integration of volunteers into organisations' strategic plans appeared to be rare across the region. Only 10% of the agencies had an active strategy for volunteer engagement. For example, *"Yes, we see volunteers as part of community engagement strategy, in particular as part of a process of supporting citizenship with community participation"*.[50]

10 % had a very basic strategy. *"Want to do a more detailed strategy in the future"* and *"Not a very well documented strategy, though"*.

30 % had a strategy which had *never been implemented*.

50 % had no strategy for volunteerism at all: *"We have clear processes rather than a formal strategy. Processes include recruitment, orientation, recognition, and appreciation."*[51] and *"I suppose volunteering gets only a little bit of a look in."*

9.2 Management Support

Successful volunteer engagement means *"Boards of Management need to have a clear direction for volunteer involvement and ensure that volunteer activity is integrated formally into daily service delivery."*

9.3 Management of the Volunteers

"In 10 years time we want to see staff better supported to manage volunteers with better pay, better conditions and more realistic expectations; for example, Volunteer Managers should only Manage the same amount of people that paid staff are expected to manage."[52]

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[50]   2011 Volunteer management survey response
[51]   2011 Volunteer management survey response
[52]   2011 Volunteer Management Survey response

Research has shown that successful volunteer engagement is facilitated by an appropriately skilled and resourced person responsible for the volunteer management program. This person, paid or volunteer, develops an appropriate volunteer engagement strategy, which they have the authority to implement.

In the G21 region, 6% of agencies do not have a designated person to manage their program. In 56% of agencies, paid staff undertake volunteer coordination in some ways; and in 36% of agencies, it falls upon volunteers. In just 15 % of agencies, there is a paid volunteer coordinator where this is their sole role.

STRUCTURE	% OF AGENCIES
A paid employee who manages volunteers in addition to their primary role	27%
A number of paid staff across the organisation who coordinate volunteers	16%
A paid volunteer coordinator	15%
A volunteer coordinates the other volunteers	16%
A board or committee member is responsible	13%
A group of volunteers are responsible for coordinating the other volunteers	6%
Multiple volunteers are responsible for managing or coordinating groups of the other volunteers	1%
No one is responsible for coordinating our volunteers	2%
The volunteers are responsible for themselves	4%

Of interest is that 43 % of the full-time volunteer co-ordinators reported their salary to be lower compared to others holding a similar role. 89% of full-time paid volunteer coordinators earn less than $50,000 per annum compared with 51 % of the other employee types. *Volunteer Managers have massive responsibility and huge workloads but are paid a fraction of what they deserve and a fraction of what their corporate counterparts are paid. This is an issue for recruitment and*

retention of Volunteer Managers.[53] *Managers of Volunteers expressed that organisations need to recognise the role of Volunteer Manager as a senior position and remunerate accordingly.*[54]

85% of those managing volunteers in all forms have a degree ranging from nursing to engineering. In terms of qualifications for managing volunteers, however, most managers of volunteers are relying on their life experience and knowledge gained "on the job". A greater focus is required to ensure that appropriately skilled and qualified persons are given control of a $300 million dollar workforce.

Table 3 Qualifications of Managers of Volunteers

QUALIFICATIONS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
On the job	**56%**
Life experience	**52%**
Workshops on volunteer management	**42%**
Community development qualifications	**20%**
No specific training	**18%**
Human resources qualifications	**7%**
Diploma in Volunteering	**1%**

There appeared to be no correlation between qualifications and salary of those paid to manage Volunteers and the size of the workforce they were recruiting and managing.

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[53]   *2011 Volunteer Management Survey response*
[54]   *Volunteer Manager Network Discussion*

9.4 Measuring the Impact of Volunteering

An effective program has ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the impacts and outcomes of volunteer involvement within the organisation. Few of the volunteer programs in the G21 region are being effectively monitored and evaluated.

9.5 Document and Record Management

While many individual agencies possess good documentation and record keeping systems, some do not. For example 55 % of organisations have no database to record volunteer information.

For example, there is not a systematic record of all volunteers involved with emergency services across the region with each agency keeping their own records, again sometimes in multiple places: *an individual may be involved in their local CFA and SES groups. All records for those two organisations including any training completed by that volunteer are kept separately. In some cases, the volunteer may be required to undertake identical training courses with each of the two organisations*. [55]

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[55] Example provided in Stakeholder interview

10 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

These recommendations respond to the key issues raised during the Stakeholder Workshop, stakeholder interviews and online survey. They have been aligned with the key strategic directions established in the Australian Government's Volunteering Strategy - 2011.

10.1 Promote Greater Engagement of Young People in Volunteering

- Develop a Volunteer Studies course constructed and run by volunteers in every school in the G21 region for Year 5/6 and Year 10: an inspiring mixture of theory and practice.

10.2 Respond to Trends in Volunteering

- Create a Transition Team linked to the Not for Profit Resource Centre (Centre described below in 10.4) to work with organisations to develop new models of volunteering specific for the G21 region, especially in the more rural areas.

- Establish a "V Event Team": akin to a Temp Agency. Volunteers would register with the V Event Team, who would take all responsibility for recruitment checks and insurance, and place volunteers into major events across the G21 region. Agencies could apply to V Event Team for volunteers. Funding for the service would be obtained from a fee for agencies engaging such volunteers.   The V Event Team would be linked to the Not for Profit Resource Centre.

10.3 Harness Technology

- Expand utilisation of the Victorian Volunteering Portal by local agencies, by providing training to agencies, including stories about the Portal in Geelong media, and running competitions to reward agencies that use it well.

- Create a shared volunteer database that all volunteers can be linked into via their rates notice or social media profiles, making it easy to be identified and linked as a volunteer. This would be linked to the Portal with access to it by Volunteering Geelong, Give Where You Live and BacLinks.

10.4 Better Regulation and Risk Management

- Establish a Not-for-Profit Resource Centre in conjunction with Deakin University and to provide resources to not-for-profits, particularly small ones without paid employees. The Resource Centre could provide technological support (such as computers and internet); administrative support (such as photocopying); professional support (such as policy development assistance, legal advice); business support (such as Marketing, HR and IT). Volunteers, including University students, would to be engaged to deliver these key services. Corporate volunteers could also be engaged to provide leadership and support, contribute resources and provide professional advice.

- Link or incorporate the two existing Volunteer Organisations - Volunteering Geelong and BacLinks - into the Not-for-Profit Resource Centre.

- Encourage Volunteering Geelong and BacLinks to expand their services to cover the whole of the G21 region.

- Establish a G21 taskforce to identify areas of significant compliance burden for volunteer involving agencies with the aim of simplifying requirements. This taskforce to work in conjunction with the Office for the Community Sector, Our Communities, VCOSS and other key stakeholders to address this issue at a regional level.

- Each Local Council encourage and facilitate volunteer involving organisations in their LGA to incorporate volunteers into their policies and procedures as well as to provide generic organisational training.

- Create a Geelong V Card or Passport linked to either rate notices or social media profiles. Such a linking would make it easy to set up a passport on-line and verify the identity of the passport holder. Volunteers linked to this card would only have to undertake one police check, one reference check and one working-with-children check; these checks could be done centrally. Some key training could also be delivered centrally to volunteers and noted on their central record.

- G21 members to negotiate a standardised insurance cover for all volunteers working across the G21 region.

- G21 to lobby both State and Federal government to provide universal insurance cover for all volunteers.

- Each of the G21 Local Government Authorities to consider methods of ameliorating the cost of parking for volunteers on active duty in the region. This may include, for example, the provision of parking vouchers at a reduced price to not-for-profits in their area.

10.5   Strengthen Management and Training

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong be funded to develop or adapt a toolkit for leaders of volunteers with downloadable resources, largely making use of existing resources developed in other locations.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong and Baclinks to hold a G21 Regional Volunteering Forum every two years, focussed on a range of audiences involved in volunteering.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Baclinks be funded to expand the provision of generic resources available on-line to assist them to incorporate corporate volunteers.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong to identify ways to establish good volunteer management knowledge for the 85 % of volunteer leaders who are not full-time employed managers of volunteers.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong to roll out Leading with Standards project, a good volunteer management practice program to 25 % of not-for-profits in the G21 region by 2017.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong in conjunction with the Volunteering Portal implement a strategy to better co-ordinate the record keeping of Emergency Service volunteers across the region to ensure full coverage in an emergency or disaster and that all key players can access information about all volunteers.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong to coordinate and combine some emergency service training courses across CFA, SES Surf life saving and

ambulance services.

- Nominate V Event Team (see above at paragraph 10.2) to be the co-ordinating body and establish protocols to manage spontaneous volunteers in the event of an emergency or disaster in the region

- Introduce a specific accredited Volunteer Management course through Deakin University.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre to work with Deakin University and Gordon Institute of TAFE to introduce a volunteer management component into key courses e.g. Social Work, Nursing, Sport.

10.6 Strengthen Relationships and Advocacy

- G21 and member councils to actively lobby for a dramatic expansion of funding to adequately and properly support volunteerism infrastructure in the G21 region.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre, BacLinks and Volunteering Geelong to be provided with a funding formula which recognises the value of volunteering labour across the region and the resourcing required to sustain and build it.

10.7 Recognise and Value Volunteering

- G21, The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong and Baclinks to foster the use of a new language around volunteering such as "Community Participation" and "Community Involvement" to assist individuals and organisations to re-conceptualise volunteering.

- All local governments to commit to volunteerism as a key community participation and community infrastructure strategy, including funding of BacLinks and Volunteering Geelong.

- Develop a region-wide volunteer recognition program; for example, a G21 Volunteer Card to enable discounts or a Volunteer Passport.

10.8   Improve Information About Volunteering

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre to create and provide a standard template for G21 and member authorities to identify the value and impacts of volunteering in each LGA and the G21 region as a whole. These figures to be reported as part of the overall financial and social reporting for G21.

- Agencies be assisted to identify and measure the three impacts of volunteering

- The V Event Team to develop a team of volunteer representatives who will market volunteering to the community, with presentations at schools, university classes, and university orientation week.

- The Not for Profit Resource Centre and/or Volunteering Geelong and Baclinks to Provide information on social media, for local agencies to market volunteering.

- Fund an annual media campaign, linked to Volunteer Week, which will include creative social media strategy, plus newspaper and TV advertisements highlighting the value of volunteering and the different options and opportunities available to members of the community.

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- Golden Plains Shire
- Bethany Community Services
- Bellarine Community Health
- City of Greater Geelong
- Barwon Health
- Surf Coast Shire
- Batforce

- Give Where You Live

- Country Fire Authority

- Department of Human Services

- G21 Geelong Region Alliance

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