

'THE COMMUNITY'S MOST VALUABLE [HIDDEN] ASSET-' VOLUNTEERING IN AUSTRALIA

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**‘the community’s most valuable [hidden]
asset –’
Volunteering in Australia**

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Final report prepared for the Department of Family and Community Services.

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Executive Summary

- Volunteers play an important role in aged care, early childhood development, in restoring and maintaining the natural environment, community development and ultimately, in fostering democratic, social and political participation. Volunteering is also a pathway to employment and a method of contributing to the community.
- Changing methods of government service delivery (funder/provider split, outsourcing, competitive tendering) have contributed to increased demand for volunteers.
- First-ever, systematic projections to the years 2011 and 2021 show a trend towards increased participation in volunteering but it is difficult to assess whether this will be sufficient to meet demand. There is a need for better numerical information on the demand for volunteers.
- Volunteering is a reciprocal arrangement. All the research shows that volunteers indirectly benefit from assisting others.
- The advantages derived from volunteering form the basis of the motivation to volunteer. Without the incentive of payment, managing volunteers resolves itself into a question of providing opportunities attractive to volunteers. In the future this is likely to include appropriate working conditions, support and training.
- Key current issues in volunteering are the significance of free choice, payment for volunteer activity and what to do about assistance provided informally.
- Qualitative research into community attitudes showed that the potential danger in compelling volunteering (under the principle of mutual obligation) was a perception of ‘degradation’ of voluntary work.
- The focus group participants felt that the value of volunteering to the community was neither fully recognised nor acknowledged. There is support for the International Year of the Volunteer as a method of educating the community about the unseen contribution of volunteers.
- The costs of volunteering and uncertainty surrounding insurance cover for volunteers were mentioned as barriers to volunteering, especially in regional and rural settings.

Part I: Research on Volunteering

1 The Significance of Volunteering in the Present Context

Suddenly volunteers are in the spotlight. The key role of the 47 000 volunteers in presenting the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games provided a wonderful opportunity to promote the benefits and achievements of volunteering. During the Games the contribution of the volunteers was praised in the local and international media and represented the greatest mobilisation of volunteers since World War II. The kudos and recognition received by the Olympic volunteers, such as the ticker-tape parade, had many non-participants wishing that they too had volunteered.

While Australia has a well-developed tradition of volunteering, the importance of the non-profit sector is not widely acknowledged (Lyons et al., 1999). Research on volunteers and the dimensions of the voluntary and non-profit sector is far more extensive overseas, particularly in the United States, United Kingdom and Europe. It is apparent the nature of volunteering differs between nations, depending upon the history and culture of volunteering. For example, in the United State, Canada and the United Kingdom, there has been detailed research on the relationship between volunteering, membership of voluntary associations and the philanthropic giving to charities (Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1992, 1996; Hall et al., 1998; Davis Smith, 1998).

Volunteering has been taken as an important index of civil society, or as an indicator of the social health and connectedness of communities

The report includes a review of the literature on current developments in volunteering, the state of volunteering in Australia, projections of future volunteer supply and a summary of the focus group discussions with volunteers and non-volunteers.

1.1 Policy Settings

Recently, volunteering has become an important part of the social policy agenda at the Federal and State Government level and is situated in discussions around economic and social participation. The Federal Government has described volunteering in the following terms:

In volunteering people gain vital skills, experience and confidence. This combined with [the] social participation ... , including establishing valuable networks, in many cases results in ongoing employment (Media release, Minister for Family and Community Services, 17 November 2000).

The government's support and interest in volunteering extends across portfolios. For example, there are volunteer programs in the Australian Tax Office where trained '*Tax Help*' volunteers assist people to complete their return; in emergency services; in overseas development through AusAID; in community radio stations; in museums and galleries; and in indigenous communities through the *Volunteers for Indigenous Communities Foundation*.

The policy focus on volunteering is linked to recent developments in welfare reform and discussions about economic and social participation. A number of commentators have expressed scepticism about the increased reliance on volunteering. Eva Cox has argued that there are disadvantages to the promotion of volunteering as a potential 'cure-all for health and social problems' (Cox, 2000: 140). The President of Volunteering Australia, John May, also advises caution in response to the interest in volunteering with a warning that volunteering should not be 'colonised and refashioned to become simply another strategy for doing more with less' (May, 1999: 10).

1.2 Demand for Volunteers

A number of policy developments have combined to place greater emphasis on volunteers and would be expected to seriously increase the demand for volunteer labour.

Home visiting and early intervention

Given the increasing awareness of the significance of the first three years of a child's life in influencing education, earnings and criminality in later life, a variety of early childhood intervention programs have been developed. These rely heavily on volunteers. *Good Beginnings* initially funded by a development grant from the Minister for Community Services is now an incorporated company, encompassing a volunteer home visiting and parenting program, men's programs and community development projects. The volunteer home visitor provides emotional support, reassurance, companionship and practical support to the 'at risk' (Cant, 2000). *Home Start* is a preventative program to support families having difficulties with children aged five years and under. Once again volunteer home visitors are linked with families to provide support. The Cottage Family Centre, established in 1981 provides community based services to families with children aged up to five years who have been abused or neglected. The program was designed to address problems such as lack of parenting skills and knowledge of child development, isolation of new families, inability to access community supports. Families were contacted or visited weekly for one year by a trained volunteer, who provided emotional support, parent education and referrals to community services. After the first year, visits were phased out over a period of three years. An expansion of volunteer home visiting activities is currently taking place in New South Wales and Queensland under the *Families First* community services strategies.

Developments in aged care

Since the end of 1970s there has been a progressive shift away from residential care of the aged, for example in nursing homes or hospitals, and toward care of the aged in their own homes with ancillary services where needed. Under this policy, recourse to residential care is viewed as an option of last resort. In a parallel development, time spent in hospital beds has been more strictly rationed. Average length of stay in Australian hospitals is now around four days per patient, almost half what it was only a decade ago (AIHW, 1994; 1996). Data from the Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (ABS, 1993; AIHW, 1997: 253) show that the overwhelming majority of people requiring ongoing support as a result of moderate, profound or severe handicap or chronic illness do not receive formal support. With shorter stays in hospitals, discharged patients often require care at home for short periods. Some require this

support to be ongoing. Both groups may receive assistance from a variety of sources, including informal family caregivers, primary health care services (particularly General Practitioners), publicly funded Home and Community Care (HACC) Services, dedicated hospital-based post-acute care services, and private agencies. Many of these programs rely heavily on volunteers. The *Meals on Wheels* program is perhaps the best known program relying on voluntary work, but volunteers have also been used to meet the need for domestic services, such as cleaning and shopping, as well as in visitor programs to reduce social isolation and provide opportunities for social contact.

Environmental groups

Government at all levels has been making use of volunteers in environmental regeneration programs. Prominent examples are *Landcare*, which organises volunteer labour to restore environmental degraded sites and local council sponsored *Bushcare* schemes, which draw on volunteer labour in regenerating native flora. Under the Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust, money from the first tranche of the privatisation of Telstra has been heavily directed to supporting these volunteer environmental organisations.

Community development schemes

Recently there have been more concerted attempts to use government facilities to foster voluntary participation in building a community. The refurbishment of a disused child care centre in Clarendon, Tasmania is an example of a federally funded project of this type. The School in Community is an example of a State Government initiative. The Federal Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy notes that committed volunteers play a key role in providing much-needed community services and revitalising 'communities where community stability and strength has diminished' (Department of Family and Community Services, 2000b: 3). The Department has provided funding for a National Volunteers Skills Development Initiative to strengthen volunteer capacity in the community and assist volunteers to build transferable and marketable skills. Pathway to employment

Pathway to employment

The Federal Government announced the Voluntary Work Initiative (VWI) in the 1996-1997 Budget. The main objective of this program is to encourage unemployed people in receipt of a benefit to participate in voluntary work as part of meeting their activity test requirements. VWI also assists organisations in attracting and recruiting volunteers by providing a pool of potential participants. Involvement in VWI is intended to assist people to become more job-ready through skill development, enhanced self-esteem and greater involvement in their community. Participants in VWI undertake 32 hours of voluntary work per fortnight with community organisations that are approved by Centrelink. Volunteering Australia secures a commitment to a minimum set of standards including appropriate insurance cover and not-for-profit status.

Since 1997, Volunteering Australia has delivered a referral and placement service for volunteers under VWI through its national network of Volunteer Referral Centres (Hembury, 1998). VWI participants are placed with organisations practicing volunteer management, in a volunteer position that matches their skills, interests and needs,

receive recognition of the skills gained during the placement. In November 2000, the Minister for Family and Community Services announced a partnership with the community sector to post volunteering vacancies on the Volunteering Australia website.

Mutual obligation

The package of directions for welfare reform recently released by the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Jocelyn Newman, emphasised the concept of mutual obligation. This concept represents a shift in ideology of welfare provision from entitlement to one emphasising the obligations of provider *and* recipient. In practice, this new conception offers recipients the prospect of acting in a 'volunteer' capacity to meet their obligations to society. Volunteer organisations have expressed anxiety that this conception relies on the assumption that those unable to find paid work should participate in society through unpaid work, an assumption that displays little understanding of the 'ethic of volunteering'. For example, Eva Cox argues that the term 'volunteering' becomes devalued when volunteering is involved in the 'coercive push on those receiving government payments to repay the taxpayer as part of 'mutual obligation'' (Cox, 2000: 142). However, whatever the attitude to the philosophy of mutual obligation, it generates a requirement for more 'voluntary' activity, contributing to the factors expanding the demand for volunteers.

1.3 International Year of the Volunteer

The year 2001 has been chosen as International Year of the Volunteer around the world. This is a significant step for the profile of volunteers in Australia with government resources committed to the promotion of volunteering. The President of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) recently suggested that the year be used to make volunteering the most important social movement of the new millennium. He describes volunteering in a global context as addressing a broad range of structural and personal needs.

Volunteering is an effective way help solve serious human, social and environmental problems, ... to deliver services, to provide individualised attention, to engage with those most in need of help,... to improve the quality of life in our communities ... to enable people to live healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives ... and a way for people to gain knowledge, learn new skills, build new social connections, reaffirm their value to others. (Allen, 2000: 32)

In Australia, the International Year of the Volunteer will be marked by a celebration of volunteer effort in every area of the community; civic participation, arts, heritage, tourism, environment, sport and recreation, emergency services, community services and disabilities. The IYV is supported by a media campaign which will present a diverse image of volunteers and volunteering. The objectives of the IYV are to:

Recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution that volunteers make to a strong, cohesive Australian society; to have community, business, the media and government work together to build an Australian society that

encourages and nurtures a culture of volunteering; and, to support Australian communities in their engagement in valuable and productive voluntary activities. (Department of Family and Community Services, 2000)

The Department of Family and Community Services is coordinating the Commonwealth Government's contribution to the Year and providing grants to voluntary organisations. In addition, a book of volunteer stories has been released to celebrate the achievements of Australian volunteers (Noble and Dick, 2000) and volunteers can submit stories of their experience on the internet (www.facs.gov.au).

1.4 Dollar Value of Volunteering

Recent studies of the level of volunteer activity in Australia indicate that volunteers contribute significantly to the economy (Industry Commission, 1995; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996; Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), 1996; Ironmonger, 1998, 2000). It has been suggested that the value and volume of volunteer contribution should be included in the national accounts published quarterly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Ironmonger, 1998, 2000). Failure to recognise the economic value of volunteer work to the Australian economy has implications for evaluating policy alternatives and the social recognition of volunteer effort.

Economists have suggested several methods of valuing volunteer activity which produce different results. One method involves measuring the replacement cost of the volunteer outputs at market prices of comparable goods and services. Another method suggested would value the opportunity cost of time spent in volunteer activity at a comparable market wage (Ironmonger, 1998, 2000). Both of these methods utilise a broad interpretation of volunteer activity, including formal volunteering through organisations, and informal volunteer activity in other households (Ironmonger, 2000).

Ironmonger uses Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use data to estimate the volume of volunteer work in a similar way to ascribing a value to unpaid household work. While it is difficult to put a dollar value on volunteer activity, Ironmonger estimated the gross value of volunteering activity to be \$41 billion in 1997 using a dollar value of \$17.10 per hour (Ironmonger, 2000). This amount includes both labour and capital costs, that is the use of volunteers vehicles and running costs in the value of volunteer time.

Other estimates, based on different estimates of time and different valuation assumptions, produce lower estimates. Noble and Rogers (1998) use a simple method of multiplying volunteer hours worked by a set dollar value, for example, \$12 per hour. They estimate that volunteering contributes about \$5.2 million to the Australian economy each year. Brown (1999) also uses this costing method but suggests that estimations of the value of volunteer activity should include a broader spectrum of costs and benefits associated with volunteering. These include measuring the value of volunteering to recipients in various terms, including satisfaction, and the opportunity cost in terms of time that could have been spent in other ways. However, Ironmonger (2000) comments that there is no method available to provide a dollar value for the personal satisfaction, skills and social benefits gained by volunteers through their

involvement in volunteering. To date, the most defensible estimate of the dollar value of volunteering in Australia is Ironmonger's estimate.

The economic value of volunteering is a prominent issue in Europe, where a Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) has been implemented. The VIVA uses the replacement cost approach to analyse and measure activities, matching them to paid work and assigning a 'shadow wage'. The 'shadow wage' represents the amount that an organisation would have to pay to employ people to do the work of volunteers. The VIVA quantifies and compares the investment that organisations make in their volunteers by valuing volunteer inputs (resources) in relation to the outputs (value of volunteer time). A study using the VIVA found that volunteers are cost effective in terms of the payback on expenditure (Gaskin, 1999).

1.5 Debates about Social Capital and Civil Society

Discussions about social capital and civil society draw attention to the view that communities are not merely areas bounded by lines drawn on a map. Perhaps more important than the physical capital represented by community infrastructure, such as child care centres, playgrounds and parks, is what has come to be known as 'social capital'. Social capital arises from networks of reciprocity and mutual support, based on trust (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993, Cox, 1995). Social capital is the tendency for spontaneous sociability: a capacity to form new associations. It involves what de Tocqueville called 'self-interest properly understood', where an individual acts for the benefit of others, often at personal cost, in the general expectation that this kindness will be returned at some undefined time in the future. Social capital is based on 'trust': the willingness to take risks, confident that others ('strangers') mean no harm and will respond as expected. This trust is rooted in informal social controls and norms of behaviour that do not require the backing of legal sanctions. There is a sense of shared ownership in pooled community resources and a greater sense of collective efficacy.

The benefits that flow from communities with high levels of social capital are direct and indirect. Persons living in communities with highly developed social capital are less isolated (e.g. they can rely on their neighbours). They are less fearful about their personal security, they have a stronger sense of self-efficacy because they are connected to networks of others who will be sympathetic and supportive. They are less susceptible to feelings of inadequacy, extreme anxiety and depression. The social processes and networks of social capital provide linkages between people in the community and enable them to be more effective in business, politics and a wide range of social activities. At an international level, the World Bank argues that a certain level of social capital and cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and develop sustainably (<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital>).

Robert Putnam situated social capital in discussions about civic society and participation in public life and, ultimately in the institutions ensuring durable democratic rule (Putnam, 1993, 1996). The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) also has this view, stating that volunteering is an 'expression of active participation in the civic life of a democratic society' (ACOSS, 1996: 5). The term civil society describes a model of society as a triangle with government, community/family and the market, or business in balance (Cox, 1997). The term civil society is often used in association with social capital to describe the importance of

social networks and community participation in connecting individuals and encouraging shared experiences, values and ambitions. Social capital has been discussed as a contributing to a healthy and vibrant civil society (Onyx and Leonard, 2000).

There are some indications that the level of social capital is declining in the United States (Putnam, 1995, 1996; Goss, 1999) and Australia (Cox, 2000), although not all commentators agree (Paxton, 1999). Hughes, Bellamy and Black (1999: 5) report that the World Values Surveys conducted in Australia in 1983 and 1995 have shown a decline in social trust, and a declining involvement in voluntary organisations. Proposed causes of the decline in social capital include the movement of women into the labour force, high residential mobility, time pressure, changes to the structure of the economy and the privatisation of leisure time (Putnam, 1995, 1996). All these changes reduce the likelihood that people will volunteer.

Social capital and volunteering

Various commentators have described volunteering as equivalent to the 'core of social capital' (Onyx and Leonard, 2000: 113), while others comment that there is no universal relationship (Cox, 1997). Cox notes that the linkages between social capital and volunteers arise from Putnam's claim that a major source of social capital is volunteer activities in community groups (Putnam, 1993; Cox, 2000). Volunteering is closely associated with social capital: it increases the 'connectedness' between people; it stimulates social capital; it is an indicator of the level of social investment by people in their community and also an indicator of a cohesive society and the strength of social capital (Baum et al., 1999). The language used in literature on social capital has resonances with the volunteering experience – social connection, reciprocity, trust, goodwill, the importance of community and individual agency (Onyx and Leonard, 2000). In short, the concepts of social capital and civil society are based on activities and relationships beyond voluntary work.

Volunteering has been described as:

A series of communal processes. It enables people who do not know one another to meet, fosters a feeling of belonging, encourages common interests to mushroom, and creates a chain of commitments (Ascoli and Cnaan, 1997: 300).

It is important to note that volunteering takes place in a social context – with friends, family, clients and fellow volunteers. Volunteers in the focus groups agreed that one of the main benefits of involvement in voluntary activity is the social contact and networks. Research has shown that volunteers are more integrated into the community and more likely to be involved in a range of social, sporting, community groups and civic activities as well as volunteering (Wilson and Musick, 1998; Baum et al., 1999, Onyx and Leonard, 2000). These findings seem to indicate that people who are involved in voluntary work with an organisation may also participate in informal helping networks in their neighbourhood and community. Community involvement in the form of volunteering is discussed as a mechanism for achieving *social inclusion* and it has:

A space and a place for every citizen – regardless of their gender, age, background, race, religion, knowledge or skills – everyone can make a contribution and in the process learn and personally benefit from the experience. (May, 1999: 11)

A recent Australian study on volunteering and social capital in five New South Wales communities identified a series of factors influencing the level of social capital (Onyx and Bullen, 1997, 2000). These factors include: participation within the community; neighbourhood, family, friends and work connections; feelings of trust and safety; tolerance of diversity; sociability and value of life. Onyx and Bullen (1997) found that social capital and cohesion was higher in rural areas than in the cities. It seems valid that social networks will be stronger in relatively ‘closed communities’ where face-to-face contact is frequent, there are small numbers of residents and few strangers. However, there is an argument that a key element of social capital is contact with strangers and the capacity to overcome differences and embrace diversity (Hughes, Bellamy and Black, 1999).

2 Defining and Measuring Volunteers and Volunteering

Volunteering is notoriously difficult to define, and it is generally agreed that the terms 'volunteer' and 'volunteering' lack clear and consistent definition (Cnaan and Amroffell, 1994; Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth, 1996; Ascoli and Cnaan, 1997; Paull, 1999). In many cases, volunteering is discussed as if its meaning is universally understood and agreed. Cnaan and Amroffell note that many studies 'treat volunteers as a unidimensional commodity ... tending to lump categories of volunteers together into large aggregates that do not illuminate important differences in patterns of volunteering populations' (Cnaan and Amroffell, 1994: 338).

The difficulty in defining volunteering is that volunteering may mean different things to different people. It may include caring for family and friends, or regular unpaid work with an organisation, or membership of a voluntary organisation. The term volunteer is not used consistently in the academic literature to describe people who contribute to the community in varying ways through the donation of their time and services. For example, volunteers may include people campaigning on behalf of political parties.

The heterogeneous nature of volunteer activities may be a complicating factor in seeking a stable definition of volunteering. Volunteering can include community development, sporting activities, community care, theatre, emergency services, environmental activism and many other diverse activities. Volunteering can be undertaken on an individual basis, in groups or by corporations. The confusion over the definition of volunteering may account for the lack of recognition of the services provided by volunteers. In the focus groups, participants did not identify themselves as volunteers, nor did they think of all the services they provide as voluntary activity. The attention and publicity received by the volunteers at the Sydney Olympics has raised community awareness of the contribution of volunteers to Australian society but has not necessarily made self-identification of voluntary work more obvious.

The nature of volunteering is continually evolving and expanding in response to the needs of communities and the policy pressures of government (Ellis, 1997). Most, if not all definitions insist that voluntary work is done by choice and without any form of remuneration. However, recent developments in the United States indicate that volunteers receiving payment beyond living allowance and expenses may still be regarded as volunteers (Ellis, 1997). Another tension evident in the Australian voluntary sector is whether mandated voluntary work, in the form of mutual obligation should be considered volunteering. These developments challenge any fixed notion of what volunteering is, and what a volunteer does and suggest that the meanings of volunteering need to be dynamic, mobile and capable of development.

A review of the international literature indicates that volunteering can be defined very broadly or narrowly. The primary areas of tension in defining voluntary activity are the inclusion of informal helping activities and the requirement that the involvement in voluntary activity be freely chosen. The following definitions demonstrate the varied nature of volunteering and the difficulties in fixing a coherent and applicable definition to a vast range of behaviours and activities.

To volunteer is to choose to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one's basic obligations. (Ellis and Noyes, 1990)

Unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial or friendship obligations. (Wilson and Musick, 1997: 694)

Any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment. (Davis Smith, 1998).

In Australia, there is less contention about the definition of volunteers and volunteering. The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines a volunteer as 'someone who willingly gave unpaid help, in the form of time, service or skills through an organisation or group' (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996). The Australian Council of Social Service defined volunteering as:

Work done of one's own free will, which provides a service to the community and is done without monetary reward, excluding out of pocket expenses (ACOSS, 1996: 5).

For the purposes of the ACOSS and ABS surveys, these definitions of volunteering and volunteers appear to exclude informal unpaid work done to help one's friends, family and neighbours. Informal volunteering is regarded as a legitimate voluntary activity but was not measured in these surveys.

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering in the following terms:

Formal volunteering is an activity that takes place in not for profit organisations or projects and is of benefit to the community and undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion; for no financial payment; and in designated volunteer positions only (Cordingley, 2000, www.volunteeringaustralia.org).

The definition of volunteering formulated by Volunteering Australia is fashioned to eliminate confusion between voluntary activity and unpaid work. It specifies that voluntary work occurs in non-profit organisations rather than in commercial settings. The statement that volunteering occurs only in designated volunteer positions is intended to avoid confusion between volunteers and paid staff. This definition excludes community service orders for offenders, student work experience, domestic duties and work undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances. Volunteering Australian does not regard these activities as volunteering because they are performed to fulfil an obligation and are not a matter of free choice on the part of the individual. These activities, while of benefit to the community, should instead be described as unpaid work (Cordingley, 2000).

Complicating the definition of volunteering is discussion in many texts about the principles, philosophy and practices of volunteering. These principles are used to delineate the role that volunteers play in complementing paid staff. The principles of volunteering are explored further in the section on best practice in volunteer management.

For example, in 1990, the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) adopted a Universal Declaration on Volunteering that was modelled on the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. IAVE is an international body promoting volunteering as a solution of human and social problems and to the development of bridges of understanding among people of all nations. The Declaration describes the nature of the relationship between volunteers, organisations and the recipients of volunteer services and comments that:

Volunteering is based on personal motivation and choices, freely undertaken; ... and volunteers offer services without remuneration to others by mutual effort or by belonging to a voluntary organisation in a spirit of partnership. (International Association for Volunteer Effort, www.iave.org)

2.1 Dimensions of Volunteering

Several studies have suggested that volunteering is used in a generalised and ambiguous fashion to describe any type of unpaid work (Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth, 1996). They conducted a content analysis of volunteering in more than 300 articles to identify common themes and determine the key dimensions of volunteering. These dimensions were used to develop a framework whereby a particular activity may be classed as voluntary and a person performing this activity can be appropriately categorised as a volunteer. A person is more likely to be seen as a volunteer where there is a high net cost to their voluntary involvement (Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth, 1996). A limitation of this approach is that it excludes some activities that may be regarded as volunteering such as membership of voluntary associations and sporting groups, and a broader range of activities linked to the development of social capital (Lyons, Wijkstrom and Clary, 1998).

The four key dimensions of volunteering determined by Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth are: the extent to which participation is freely chosen; the extent of remuneration; the extent to which the activity is structured; and the relationship of the participant to the intended beneficiary (Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth, 1996). In addition, Ascoli and Cnaan argue that voluntary activity should be an 'action of deliberated (as opposed to spontaneous) nature' (Ascoli and Cnaan, 1997: 300).

Free choice

Volunteering, by its very nature involves the ability to freely choose to become involved in an activity without coercion. Recently, there has been debate about whether undertaking a voluntary activity because of government obligation can be classed as 'volunteering'. These questions are very pertinent in the current debate at the Federal Government level about mutual obligation and the economic and social participation of persons in receipt of welfare from the state.

Those voluntary activities that have been undertaken because of compulsion (mandated community service for offenders), or obligation (student work experience, mutual obligation) are not presently regarded as volunteering. While there is an understandable reluctance to describe persons who are providing restitution to the state for their offences as volunteers, Ellis (1997) comments that in the United States a significant percentage of people referred to community service by the courts continue to be active as volunteers. Involvement in voluntary activity through compulsion by government does not fit the commonly accepted definition of volunteering, but these types of activities may be a pathway to future voluntary involvement.

Participants in the focus groups strongly agreed that volunteering is not about coercion or obligation to become involved in a particular activity. However, those participants who became involved in volunteering through the Voluntary Work Initiative emphatically described their activities as voluntary, regardless how they began their participation.

Remuneration

Volunteering is commonly understood as a situation where the volunteer expects no payment and any payment should be only to reimburse a volunteer for expenses. In the focus groups, the reimbursement of expenses incurred while volunteering is an important issue, particularly in rural and regional areas where petrol costs were high. The reimbursement of expenses 'enables people of all income levels to give their time without changing the volunteered nature of the work' (Ellis, 1997: 29). However, some volunteers do receive remuneration in the form of a stipend or small living allowance, such as Australian Volunteers Abroad. While these volunteers receiving payment greater than their expenses do not fit the definition of volunteers, Paull argues that the provision of a living allowance is often below the market value of a person's skills, and it represents 'the creation of an opportunity to volunteer' (Paull, 1999: 26). The phenomenon of paid volunteers is further explored in Section 7.

Structure of volunteering: formal or informal

Formal volunteering occurs through a structured body such as a non-profit or community organisation. By contrast, it is difficult to measure the breadth of informal volunteering in a consistent way. It is unclear which personal relationships should be included as part of informal volunteering, for example, family and close friends, or only neighbours and unrelated persons. Few surveys have explored informal volunteering by asking respondents about the incidence of helping neighbours with car or home repairs, babysitting, home visiting and other caring activities. Several focus group participants did not self-identify as volunteers in relation to their informal activities, suggesting potential difficulties in measuring the scope of informal volunteering.

As an example, the 1997 United Kingdom National Survey of Volunteering questionnaire did not use terminology like 'volunteering' and 'voluntary work' in order to encourage respondents to answer in terms of their own perceptions of volunteering (Davis Smith, 1998). This approach was intended to allow respondents to recognise their volunteer contribution across a range of contexts, including helping activities and to capture the extent of formal and informal volunteering in the United Kingdom.

However, some commentators argue that a number of informal helping activities should not be included as informal volunteering. Brown (1999) argues that there are two issues which may impose limits on the inclusion of informal helping activities in the definition of volunteer activity. Firstly, personal responsibility means that some tasks are expected behaviour, for example 'braking for pedestrians and raising one's children' (Brown, 1999: 13). These activities are expected by the community and should not be regarded as voluntary activity. Secondly, personal relationships can imply reciprocity, such as baby-sitting a neighbour's children. Brown argues that:

Informal networks of bartered favours and safety nets are an important part of the social fabric, but they differ from volunteer labour freely given. (Brown, 1999: 13)

The inclusion of these types of informal helping activities within the definition of voluntary activity has the capacity to significantly affect the size and scope of measured volunteering.

Intended beneficiaries

Volunteers can help strangers, friends, family or themselves. Paull (1999) questions whether it is possible to include oneself as an indirect beneficiary of volunteer activity. Based on the focus group discussions, it is possible to argue that the volunteer is a beneficiary of the voluntary activity, with many volunteers reporting increased self-esteem, confidence and high levels of enjoyment from their involvement.

Discussion

It is apparent that there is a wide range of practical situations which confound any standard definition of volunteering, such as mutual obligation, stipended volunteering and mandated community service. This discussion of volunteering in practice suggests that a definition of volunteering is required that can move beyond fixed elements such as free choice and lack of remuneration and adapt to different situations of voluntary activity.

One way to address this issue is by approaching the question of whether an activity is voluntary from the perspective of the beneficiary of the services. The definitions analysed here are generated from an individual perspective. It may be possible to include these situations as volunteering if they are addressed from the perspective of benefit and the view point of the recipient of the services whether it be an organisation or an individual. Ellis argues that the definition of volunteering could be simplified if framed in the following terms:

If an organisation benefits from the time and talents of people in the community who serve without having to go on the payroll, then these workers are volunteers. (Ellis, 1997: 30)

This may be an argument for broadening the definition of volunteering to include activities that generate social capital and contribute to the common good and connectedness of communities (Onyx and Leonard, 2000: 122).

2.2 Measuring Volunteering

The lack of definitional clarity of volunteering poses significant difficulties in terms of measuring and comparing levels and areas of volunteering across different countries, and within Australia (Lyons, Wijkstrom and Clary, 1998; Paull, 1999). Using a narrow definition, perhaps one-fifth of the population are volunteers, and using a broader definition, perhaps four-fifths of the population will be counted as volunteers.

A pertinent illustration of the nature of the problem of the role of definitions in the measurement of volunteering may be seen in the article by Peter Lynn (1997). Lynn reviews the use of surveys in investigating the size and nature of volunteering in the United Kingdom. Since the 1970s, 11 major surveys of voluntary activity have been conducted and have produced significantly different results. The surveys used different definitions of volunteering, voluntary work and voluntary activity to describe the subject of interest. The surveys varied in relation to sample selection, data collection, formal and informal volunteering, whether the activity was unpaid, and the intended beneficiaries of the activity.

Lyons, Wijkstrom and Clary (1998) conduct a similar experiment comparing definitions and measurement of volunteering in eight cross-national and country specific surveys. These surveys (including Australia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, European Union) had major differences in the scope and object of the survey and methodology. Most surveys excluded informal volunteering and defined volunteering in limited terms

The significant problems with researching volunteering include defining voluntary activity in consistent terms, and the methods of questioning individuals about their involvement in volunteering. Lynn (1997) reports on two questioning techniques which may produce different responses about a respondent's voluntary activity. One method is to ask the respondent questions about a range of activities and then determine at the coding stage whether these activities were voluntary; the other method provides the respondent with a definition of voluntary activity and asks them to describe their involvement in any activities that may fit this definition. Both methods illustrate the difficulties inherent in applying definitions of volunteering to an activity

Lynn (1997) suggests that research into voluntary activity could be improved by developing a cohesive definition of volunteering and survey standards on questioning and sampling techniques. Lyons, Wijkstrom and Clary (1998) confirm that volunteering has different meanings in different societies at different point in time. In order to measure and compare the extent of volunteering at a national level, it is necessary to develop standardised questions, examples of voluntary activities which can then be classed into broad or narrow definitions of volunteering. It is suggested that the term 'volunteer' and its variants should be eliminated at the data collection stage of the research due to the lack of definitional clarity (Lyons, Wijkstrom and Clary, 1998: 53).

2.3 Cross-cultural issues

The concept of volunteering is culturally specific and may have different meanings in different cultural contexts. People from indigenous and NESB backgrounds may have

a different understanding of volunteering; the majority of volunteering in their communities takes place on an informal basis through family and kinship structures (Martin, 1999). There was not scope in the focus groups to sufficiently explore the definitions of volunteering among people from different cultures. However, there were several people from NESB backgrounds in the focus groups who reported that volunteering was something that had always existed in their ethno-specific community and occurred on an informal basis.

3 Who Volunteers in Australia and What Do They Do?

Commentators disagree about whether there has been an increase or decrease in the supply of volunteer labour in Australia (ACOSS, 1996; Jamrozik, 1996; Lyons and Fabiansson, 1998; Lyons and Hocking, 2000; Pusey, 2000). At an international level, demand for volunteers is exceeding supply (Hedley and Davis Smith, 1992; Ascoli and Cnaan, 1997). It has been suggested that while participation in volunteering has declined, there has been an increase in the average hours worked (Lyons and Fabiansson, 1998). Over the last 15 years, there has been a decline in volunteering and membership of non-profit organisations such as churches, service clubs, trade unions, political parties and youth groups (Lyons et al., 1999). Possible factors influencing the level of volunteer participation include the ageing population, changing structures of employment, longer and more flexible working hours, increased numbers of women in the workforce and the family, more flexible employment means that people will have less time available to devote to volunteer activity (ACOSS, 1996; Lyons and Fabiansson, 1998; Baum et al., 1999; Lyons and Hocking, 2000; Pusey, 2000). Another significant factor is the growing number of organisations that rely on volunteers to deliver their services.

A recent paper suggests that the future demand for, and supply of volunteers will rely on a number of dynamic socio-economic and demographic factors. These factors include the ageing of the population, the trend toward early retirement, decline in the number of women having children, a declining rural population and the number of people undertaking tertiary education (Zappala, 2000).

The issue of volunteer supply is closely associated with motivation and how people become involved in voluntary activity. Lyons and Hocking have identified a number of common pathways to volunteering, including involvement in children's education and recreation; out of necessity in rural and regional areas and through a commitment to public service (Lyons and Hocking, 2000).

A detailed investigation of the projected supply of volunteers in 2011 and 2021 is the subject of Section 9 of this report.

The majority of volunteers in Australia are involved in sport and recreation, welfare and community, education, training and youth development and religion. These fields also constitute the greatest number of hours worked by volunteers (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996).

The most common activities that volunteers perform are fundraising, management and committee work, food preparation, teaching, administration, transport, organisation and provision of information.

In the survey, volunteers described the key benefits of volunteering as personal satisfaction, social contact, helping others and the community and learning new skills.

Most volunteers had been involved in voluntary work for more than 10 years, and the length of involvement differed according to the age of the participant. The majority of volunteers participated in one organisation.

3.1 Social Characteristics of Volunteers

The review of international and Australian literature on volunteering found that the key determinants of involvement in voluntary activity are educational levels, occupational status, socio-economic status, income and religion (Davis Smith, 1992; Cnaan and Amroffell, 1994; Knapp, Koutsogeorgopoulou and Davis Smith, 1995; ACOSS, 1996; Warburton, Le Brocque and Rosenman, 1998; NSW Committee on Ageing, 1999). Research from the United States reports that involvement in voluntary activity is more likely among individuals with high levels of 'human capital' (Wilson and Musick, 1997). Horton Smith (1994) notes that involvement in volunteering is linked to the 'dominant status' of the individual, where identifiers of dominant status include male, white, middle class, good health, high income, full time employment, high occupational and educational prestige. Participation in voluntary activity is also associated with parental and family involvement (Janoski and Wilson, 1995; Janoski, Musick and Wilson, 1998) and stage of the life cycle as discussed in Section 4 on volunteer motivation. While there has been little research on the impact of race and ethnicity on volunteering, one report found that there are different pathways to volunteering for people of different social and cultural backgrounds (Musick, Wilson and Bynum Jr., 2000). At an international level, the key characteristics of involvement in voluntary activity are educational status and religion.

It is important to note that few people seek out voluntary work independently, volunteering occurs within a social context and is a form of collective behaviour. Some commentators have suggested that finding a job and becoming involved in volunteering are analogous in the sense that social connections are an important pathway to volunteer activity (Musick, Wilson and Bynum Jr., 2000). This is supported by the analysis of volunteering in Australia where the majority of volunteers began their involvement because they were asked to, or knew someone who was involved (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996).

The reason why individuals with higher educational status have a greater volunteer involvement is not clear. Evans and Kelley (2000) suggest that educated people may have altruistic attitudes which lead them to voluntary activity; or they are highly skilled people who are in demand as volunteers. It is possible, that the highly educated may be placed in a more rewarding volunteer role in a formal organisation (Wilson and Musick, 1999).

Religious participation is a strong predictor of involvement in voluntary activity. Some writers suggest that commitment to religious belief is associated with ideology about charity and helping others through volunteering (Warburton, Le Brocque and Rosenman, 1998; Evans and Kelley, 2000). Research from the United States found that the connection between church involvement and volunteering is formed at an early age and generally continues over the life course (Wilson and Janoski, 1995).

In Australia, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that the profile of volunteers in Australia is female, aged 35 - 44 years and from higher socio-economic groups (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996). However, the ageing of the population and changes to the structure of the labour market and work arrangements will have a significant impact on who volunteers (Pusey, 2000, Warburton and Mutch, 2000).

These issues are discussed in greater detail in the section on projections of volunteering.

3.2 Barriers to Volunteering

Reimbursement of expenses, lack of adequate support, supervision, training, insurance, problems with transport, tensions between volunteers and paid staff and uncertainty about insurance coverage (Noble and Rogers, 1998; NSW Committee on the Ageing, 1999; Noble, 2000) are all listed as barriers to participation in voluntary activity. Most organisations utilising volunteer labour use best practice management techniques to minimise the impact of these barriers. The negative elements of volunteering were discussed in depth in the focus group report.

4 Volunteer Motivation

People are motivated to volunteer for a range of complex and varied reasons. Volunteers are not an homogenous group of people, and as seen in the fieldwork for this project, there are many different pathways leading to an involvement in voluntary work. The focus group discussions identified several different pathways: unemployment, retirement, a change in personal circumstances such as illness, death of a loved one, or children leaving home.

4.1 Why is Motivation Important?

The question of motive influences volunteer participation and commitment. Volunteer motivation directly affects the activity levels and retention rates of volunteers. Several studies have found that a key element of long-term volunteer retention is satisfaction in their role, and recognition for their contribution. Volunteers have reported negative experiences of volunteering where their motivations and expectations were not met (ACOSS, 1996). The costs and benefits of volunteer involvement are a significant factor affecting an individual's motivation to participate in voluntary work. Noble and Rogers (1998) argue that people will only become involved in volunteering where the benefits outweigh the costs. As found in the focus groups, there are great benefits to volunteering: personal satisfaction, social contact, helping people, contributing to the community and developing skills. However, the volunteer involvement may have personal and financial costs such as out-of-pocket expenses, using own vehicle, stress and burnout. In order to maintain a consistent volunteer workforce, volunteer managers need to understand individual motivation and balance the impact of the costs of volunteer involvement. The negative aspects of volunteering are explored further in the focus group report.

4.2 Volunteer Satisfaction, Motivation and Management

Volunteer motivation and satisfaction can be maximised by matching volunteers to a position involving challenging work, skill development and recognition (Noble and Rogers, 1998; Lucas and Williams, 2000). Volunteer managers and coordinators play an important role in managing volunteer's role within an organisation. Knowing why people become involved in volunteering and what they hope to gain from their involvement is crucial in matching the knowledge, interests and skills to the needs of the organisation. McCurley and Lynch argue that volunteer motivation is important to the organisation because a motivated volunteer is a person 'who wants to do the job that needs to be done in the spirit and within the guidelines of the organisation' (McCurley and Lynch, 1998: 139).

It is important to recognise that volunteer motivation is constantly changing. Volunteers may develop new ambitions of what they want to achieve with their volunteer effort, may be looking to develop new skills (McCurley and Lynch, 1998; Vanstien, 2000). Metzger et al. (1997) suggest that the quality of a volunteer's work life is crucial for maintaining motivation. Little research has been conducted on the possible indicators of volunteer well-being and quality of work life, such as organisational support, job satisfaction, autonomy and stress (Metzger et al., 1997; Dollard et al., 1999). The literature on volunteer motivation suggests that volunteer managers need to be responsive to the motivations and needs of their volunteers and to avoid a negative impact on volunteer retention and recruitment.

4.3 Altruism or Self interest?

The literature on volunteering has a focus on the ongoing debate about altruism, or helping others as the primary motive for volunteering (Horton Smith, 1982; Baldock, 1990; Pearce, 1993; Bales, 1996). This debate has a philosophical, sociological and psychological focus and has explored the question of whether an act is altruistic if the participant receives a reciprocal, although unintended benefit (Baldock, 1990: 88).

Recent research suggests that altruism is part of a combination of motives which lead a person into voluntary work (Baldock, 1990; Rosenberg-Russell, 1995; McCurley and Lynch, 1998; Noble and Rogers, 1998; Warbuton and Mutch, 2000). On the question of motive, Baldock suggests that:

Volunteers themselves invoke altruism as part of an accepted vocabulary of motives, partly because the ideology of volunteerism assumes the need for altruism, partly because no other motives can be admitted to. (Baldock, 1990: 103)

The notion of altruism as the most acceptable motive for engaging in voluntary activity was seen in the focus group discussions. Younger volunteers who were participating in voluntary work to gain skills, experience and to make contacts described their motives as 'less honourable' than others.

Volunteers receive extrinsic and intrinsic rewards from their involvement in volunteer work (Wilson and Musick, 1999). While it is now recognised that altruism is not the primary motivation for volunteering, there have been attempts to categorise motives. Volunteer motives may be classed as either altruistic, involving the desire to help others and serve the community; or instrumental, which are based on self-interest and involve skill development, social contact, and preparing for employment (Mesch et al., 1998). However, most writers now assume that the distinction between the motivations of altruism and self-interest in volunteering is difficult to determine and no longer relevant (Brown, 1999).

In a recent study of 4 000 Adelaide residents, the most commonly cited reasons for becoming involved in volunteering were, in order of preference: to help people; to gain a sense of satisfaction; to meet people; to improve conditions in society; to increase skills; to pass the time; and to improve chances of gaining paid employment (Baum et al., 1999: 16).

Volunteer management texts describe the process of motivation in the following terms:

Motivating volunteers ... [is] about creating a volunteer experience which allows an individual to meet his or her motivational needs in ways that are productive for the organisation in ways that are productive for the organisation and satisfying for the individual. (McCurley and Lynch, 1998: 140)

In the last 10 years, volunteering has been discussed in terms of reciprocity and partnerships between the organisation and the volunteer (Noble and Rogers, 1998).

Volunteering is understood as a two-way process where the volunteer provides a service and in turn receives personal satisfaction and other benefits. Thinking about volunteering as a reciprocal arrangement requires volunteers to understand their own motivations for volunteering and acknowledge the benefits gained from the volunteering experience (Rosenberg-Russell, 1995). Discussions with volunteers during the fieldwork phase of this project confirmed that volunteers are ‘active learners who are seeking reciprocal benefits’ from their experience (Dollard et al., 1999).

4.4 Life Cycle Factors

As seen in the fieldwork, motivation to volunteer may change according to age and stage of the life cycle. Older volunteers in the focus groups reported that their motivations were to use their time in an effective manner to make a difference to society. By contrast, younger volunteers may be motivated to volunteer to develop marketable skills, gain work experience and make useful contacts. Parents with young children become involved in voluntary work through their child’s schooling and involvement in sport. Women may be investigating opportunities for paid work after child-rearing and men may be seeking a change of career (Rosenberg-Russell, 1995).

Other matters affecting an individual’s motivation to volunteer include employment status, family status, time available, location and experience.

4.5 Measuring Volunteer Motivation

There is a large body of literature, mostly from the United States, on assessing and measuring volunteer motivation. Much of this work seeks to understand why people spend their free time performing unpaid work for the benefit of strangers. In addressing this question, a functionalist approach was taken which proposes that people undertake voluntary work to satisfy important social and psychological goals, and different individuals may be involved in similar volunteer activities to achieve different goals. Functionalist theory proposes that people initially make a choice to volunteer based on their personal motivations and that they remain motivated if they feel their work has valuable outcomes (Clary and Snyder, 1993, 1999; Clary, Snyder and Stukas, 1996; Clary et al, 1998; Lucas and Williams, 2000).

Based on this functional approach, six categories of motivational functions have been identified to assist in understanding and measuring the motivations of volunteers. These functions have been articulated in an index form known as the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) which has been used as a scale for measuring volunteer motivation (Clary and Snyder, 1993, 1999; Clary, Snyder and Stukas, 1996; Clary et al, 1998; Lucas and Williams, 2000). The authors of the VFI acknowledge that understanding volunteer motives is crucial to volunteer recruitment and retention. The VFI scales have limited applicability as predictors of volunteer behaviour (Clary, Snyder and Stukas, 1996).

The motivational functions include the following.

- Values: volunteering provides an opportunity to ‘express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others’. A sample item on the VFI of this function is ‘I feel it is important to help others’.

- Understanding: volunteering provides an opportunity to ‘permit new learning experiences and the chance to exercise knowledge, skills and abilities that might otherwise go unpractised’. A sample item on the VFI of this function is ‘volunteering lets me learn through direct, hands-on experience’.
- Enhancement: volunteering provides an opportunity to ‘obtain satisfactions related to personal growth and self esteem’. A sample item on the VFI of this function is ‘volunteering makes me feel better about myself’.
- Career: participation in volunteering provides an opportunity to obtain ‘career-related benefits’. A sample item on the VFI of this function is ‘volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place I would like to work’.
- Social: volunteering provides an opportunity ‘to be with one’s friends or to engage in an activity viewed favourable by important others’. A sample item on the VFI of this function is ‘people I know share an interest in community service’.
- Protective: volunteering provides an opportunity to ‘reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address one’s own personal problems’. A sample item on the VFI of this function is ‘volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles’. (Clary et al., 1998; Clary and Snyder, 1999)

The Volunteer Function Inventory was used to research motivations of participants in the Volunteers in Policing program (Lucas and Williams, 2000). The research found a positive relationship between volunteer motivation and satisfaction, and suggested that a higher retention rate can be achieved by meeting the motivational needs of volunteers.

In the 1995 survey of voluntary work conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the majority of volunteers were motivated by a desire to help others and the community. Other significant motivations, or reasons to volunteer, included personal or family involvement, personal satisfaction, to do something worthwhile and social contact (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996).

5 Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

The issues of volunteer recruitment and retention are closely associated with the individual motivation to volunteer. Organisations have reported that it is becoming more difficult to recruit volunteers and develop a reliable and consistent volunteer. In response to the problem of volunteer supply there have been a number of studies in the United States that attempted to locate the pool from which voluntary workers can be most effectively recruited (Wilson and Musick, 1999: 244).

5.1 Recruitment

In Australia, there are few quantitative data available on the determinants of participation in volunteering – by gender, age, and ethnicity. Some analysis of volunteering by age groups is included in the section on projections of volunteer supply. A United Kingdom study found a number of barriers to involving people from under-represented groups (such as young and older people, unemployed, disabled and ethnic groups) in volunteering. They were deterred by the image and culture of volunteering which was perceived to be a predominantly white, middle class activity, and some groups could not afford the financial cost of volunteering. The report recommends that potential methods for recruiting volunteers from these groups should involve targeted recruitment strategies, reimbursement of all expenses, and a campaign to highlight the positive benefits of volunteering (National Centre for Volunteering, 1996). Martin (1999) suggests that since a large number of community organisations service the needs of people from different cultural backgrounds, these organisations should target specific recruitment efforts at particular ethnic groups.

A diverse volunteer workforce is beneficial for the organisation because of the range of perspectives and opinions. The NSW Committee on Ageing (1999) suggests that organisations wanting to recruit older volunteers offer targeted promotion and recruitment strategies, greater flexibility in volunteer opportunities and improved support for older volunteers. Young people can be encouraged to participate in community action through an involvement in decision-making, projects utilising their skills and knowledge, and a recognition of their place as equal members of society (Handshin, 2000).

The current perceived shortage of volunteers means that organisations must promote themselves as flexible, dynamic and good places to work in order to attract volunteers. People are motivated to become involved in voluntary work for many different reasons, and organisations should be mindful of varying needs and expectations. When recruiting, organisations need to understand volunteer motivation and ‘sell’ the benefits of volunteering to the public in order to attract volunteers. Organisations should recognise that:

Volunteers will give their time only if they are motivated to do so. This means that recruitment is not a process of persuading people to do something they didn’t want to do. Rather, it should be seen as the process of showing people they can do something they already want to do. (McCurlley and Lynch, 1998: 57)

The authors of the Volunteer Function Inventory, discussed in Section 4 suggest that organisations should target recruitment based on an understanding of the motivations of current volunteers, and attempt to find new volunteers that match the current motivational profile (Clary, Snyder and Stukas, 1996: 503).

Discussion of recruitment and selection in the volunteer management literature recommends that organisations recruit volunteers in the same way they would paid employees. Volunteer management handbooks suggest that recruitment and selection of volunteers should be a formal process involving job descriptions, duty statements, selective interviewing, checking references, screening potential volunteers, probationary periods and a comprehensive orientation to the organisation (Connors, 1995; McCurley and Lynch, 1996, 1998; Noble and Rogers, 1998). However some prospective volunteers may be deterred if the entry process is too formal. Organisations need to be flexible in terms of the time commitment required from volunteers and recognise that volunteers have multiple responsibilities.

5.2 Retention

In the current environment of increased competition, accountability and pressure on voluntary and community organisations, it is extremely important that organisations develop and maintain a stable and long-term volunteer workforce. Many organisations find it difficult to recruit volunteers, and attrition is then a serious matter. The turnover of volunteers is costly for the organisation in terms of lost labour, time taken to recruit and train new volunteers and may affect the confidence of paid staff in volunteers (Mesch et al., 1998).

Volunteers are more likely to remain with an organisation for a longer period where the experience fulfils their motivations (Metzer et al., 1997; McCurley and Lynch, 1998; Dollard et al., 1999; Mesch et al., 1998). A qualitative study in the United Kingdom on volunteer motivations and experiences found three main reasons for ceasing volunteer activity: over-commitment; disenchantment; and changes in personal circumstances (Thomas and Finch, 1990). An American study on the retention of stipended volunteers in AmeriCorps and found that retention depended on 'instrumental' factors such as career motivation, education, self-esteem and location rather than altruism and meaningfulness of work (Mesch et al., 1999).

The long-term retention of volunteers also impacts positively on volunteer motivation; a study has shown that volunteers who become part of an organisation are more satisfied with their role (Dollard et al., 1999). Best practice in volunteer management suggests that organisations should involve volunteers in decision-making processes and the strategic direction of the organisation. The maintenance of a consistent volunteer workforce will enhance job satisfaction, the quality of work life for volunteers and reduce the incidence of stress and burnout (Metzer et al., 1997; Dollard et al., 1999).

Factors affecting retention

Volunteer management handbooks describe the key to the retention of volunteers as a process of meeting individual motivational needs and managing volunteers (McCurley and Lynch, 1998; Noble and Rogers, 1998). Effective and responsive volunteer management is closely linked to the long-term retention of committed volunteers. Reasons for the high turnover of volunteers in an organisation may include

dissatisfaction with the volunteer role, stress, need for clear job descriptions, lack of recognition, poor management policies and practices (Metzer et al., 1997). The volunteer manager plays a key role in ensuring that the motivational needs and expectations of volunteers are met by placing volunteers in position where their interests, knowledge and skills can be effectively utilised (Lucas and Williams, 2000; Steer, 2000).

As discussed, the decision to become involved in voluntary work is dependent on a range of factors, including personal circumstances. It then follows that changes in individual circumstances such as health, family obligations, employment, less free time, may also explain why people cease their involvement in volunteering. The work of most volunteers is discretionary in nature and when circumstances change, discretionary activities are more likely to be abandoned than other tasks (Wilson and Musick, 1999: 247).

Maximising retention

The factors that contribute to the retention of volunteers include: rewards and recognition, job satisfaction, effective volunteer management, training and understanding volunteer motivation. Volunteer managers play a key role in maximising retention and building a workforce of committed volunteers through ensuring that volunteer expectations and motivations are congruent with their volunteer experience. There are number of volunteer management handbooks which discuss best practice methods of increasing volunteer retention. For example, McCurley and Lynch argue that volunteers will stay with an organisation where ‘they enjoy a sense of connectedness, a sense of uniqueness and a sense of power or effectiveness’ (McCurley and Lynch, 1998: 142).

Volunteers need to be acknowledged and appreciated for their contributions to the organisation. Volunteers are more likely to continue their association with an organisation if their efforts are well rewarded. Rewards can be intrinsic such as job satisfaction, belief in the organisation, or extrinsic such as skill development and formal recognition. McCurley and Lynch describe rewarding volunteers with a ‘motivational paycheck for the valuable contributions they make’ (McCurley and Lynch, 1998: 140). In addition, Steer (2000) notes that volunteers will continue to offer their services to organisations where their contribution is recognised and they respect what the organisation aims to achieve. Volunteers who have made a conscious decision to give up their free time to perform voluntary activities, and believe that they can make a difference may become disillusioned if they feel that their contributions are not appreciated (Wilson and Musick, 1999). The focus groups stressed that it is important for organisations utilising volunteer effort to appropriately acknowledge and reward volunteers for their contributions.

The volunteer management handbooks provide information on methods for the informal and formal recognition of volunteers (Peach and Murrell, 1995; McCurley and Lynch, 1996, 1998; Noble and Rogers, 1998). Formal rewards include awards, certificates, plaques and ceremonies to honour the volunteers contribution to the organisation. Informal recognition and rewards form the basis of good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers, by thanking volunteers for their effort. Recognition should occur frequently and consistently, in a variety of forms, it should be individualised, and be appropriate to the achievement. McCurley and Lynch

(1998) suggest that since volunteers have different motivations, they should be recognised in a manner consistent with that motivation.

Volunteers are more likely to continue with an organisation if they receive training, and particularly if that training and their skills are recognised by other volunteer organisations and by potential employers through an accreditation process (ACOSS, 1996; Dollard et al., 1999).

A UK study on the determinants of volunteering found that individuals who were motivated by the need to meet people or make friends had the highest probability of volunteering regularly (Knapp et al., 1995). The authors suggested that one way for organisations to maximise retention is to emphasise the social aspects of volunteer participation by ensuring that volunteers have regular interaction with staff, clients and other volunteers.

6 Volunteer Management

Over the last two decades, volunteer management has developed into a career and an industry. Volunteer management has developed in response to the increasing demand, and competition for volunteers, the changing expectations of volunteers of their volunteer role and the recognition that management practices are required to maximise the time and skills of volunteers. Volunteering has now evolved into a vocation where volunteers can realise their ambitions, make a significant contribution to the community and develop skills that they may use in paid employment. The effective management of volunteers is a reciprocal arrangement: the organisation benefits because the volunteers are motivated to work, and become loyal to the organisation because their services are recognised and rewarded; and the volunteer receives training, contacts and a sense of satisfaction from their achievements.

Much of the volunteer management literature has been modelled on human resource management practices of paid employees. The movement toward 'best practice' involves empowering volunteers with the knowledge to maximise the benefits from their volunteer effort. By using best practice in management, volunteer organisations seek to attract and retain volunteers and develop their loyalty to the organisation.

The issue of volunteer management is crucial to the successful recruitment and retention of volunteers. Surveys in the United Kingdom have found that a large percentage of volunteers report dissatisfaction with the organisation of their voluntary work (Davis Smith, 1998). Volunteers will not continue their association with an organisation if their experience is not satisfying and fulfilling (Noble and Rogers, 1998; Noble, 2000). Respondents in the ACOSS study of volunteers reported negative experiences in cases of poor management and support and where their expectations were not met (ACOSS, 1996).

6.1 What is Volunteer Management?

Volunteer management regulates the relationship, roles and responsibilities between volunteers, the organisation, paid staff and recipients of the services. In organisations with a large volunteer workforce, a volunteer manager or coordinator implements management practices. Volunteers should be involved at every level of the organisation, on boards of management, planning and in decision-making processes (Noble, 2000). Noble and Rogers state that:

Effective management involves understanding the concept of volunteering and the issues involved, and ensuring volunteer expectations, personal attributes and skills are matched to organisational requirements in a way that is mutually beneficial. (Noble and Rogers, 1998: 19)

Essentially, managing volunteers is way for the organisation to make effective use of volunteer resources, and maximise the benefits of volunteer involvement in the organisation. This often requires a significant investment on the part of the organisation in terms of resources, training and support.

There has been some research in Australia about the factors that guarantee 'quality of work life' for volunteers (Metzer et al., 1997, Dollard et al., 1999). Effective

management of volunteers through appropriate training and support mechanisms will decrease the incidence of volunteer stress and burnout, and result in greater retention.

6.2 Best Practice

The literature on volunteer management in Australia, the United States and Great Britain is quite similar and is usually presented as a handbook for volunteer organisations and managers (Connors, 1995; McCurley and Lynch, 1996, 1998; National Centre for Volunteering, 1998; Noble and Rogers, 1998). These handbooks generally provide sample documents such as mission statements, job descriptions, feedback forms and so on. There are also a large number of online resources for volunteer management such as www.rivernetwork.org/volunteer.

Best practice in volunteer management should include as a minimum: a set of agreed standards and conditions for involvement in voluntary work, and management of volunteers. ACOSS (1996) argues that there should also be accreditation of voluntary work and management. Volunteering Australia, the peak body for volunteering in Australia is currently updating their best practice standards which incorporate the key elements of volunteer management and involve a process of continuous improvement with a view to gaining accreditation. Any best practice standards should be flexible and responsive to the dynamic nature of voluntary work.

An organisation's volunteer policy is a position statement about how and why an organisation involves volunteers. It should provide detail of the organisation's approach and commitment to volunteers and assist the organisation in getting the most out of its volunteers. The policy should set out a definition of volunteering, the role of volunteers within the organisation and volunteer entitlements and responsibilities (Noble and Rogers, 1998: 58-63). The policy can include statements on the following:

- the relationship between paid staff and volunteers;
- management structures;
- volunteer supervision and monitoring;
- orientation and induction;
- equal opportunity;
- sexual harassment;
- grievance and disciplinary procedures;
- protocols for reimbursement of expenses;
- occupational health and safety
- insurance;
- recruitment and screening of volunteers;
- confidentiality and privacy protocols; and

- evaluation and review.

The role of volunteer manager within an organisation involves responsibility for the organisation, support, and management of volunteers and volunteer programs. The volunteer manager is often responsible for recruitment, training, monitoring and support of volunteers across a range of areas. The volunteer manager undertakes a broad 'socialising and regulatory role, promoting a workplace culture that observes the principles of volunteering and upholds the specific goals and philosophy of the organisation' (Hallahan, 2000: 16).

In addition, Volunteering Australia has provided a statement on the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and organisations as a method of best practice management to guide organisations involving volunteers (see also Aged Care and Housing Group, 1998; www.volunteeringaustralia.org). The rights of volunteers recognise that volunteers are not covered by workplace agreement or industrial awards. Broadly, they include the right to work in a healthy and safe environment, to be adequately covered by insurance, to be engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation, to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses, to have a job description and agreed working hours, to be provided with sufficient orientation and training, and so on (www.volunteeringaustralia.org).

Volunteering Australia suggests that organisations utilising volunteer labour owe a duty of care to volunteers to provide a safe, healthy and supportive work environment. The elements of the duty of care match the rights of volunteers and focus on acknowledging the efforts of volunteers, treating volunteers like valuable team members and distinguishing between the roles of volunteers and paid staff (www.volunteeringaustralia.org).

The role of volunteers in the delivery of community and welfare services, and the importance of effective volunteer management has been recognised at a Federal Government level (Industry Commission, 1995). The Industry Commission report into community welfare organisation recommended that when setting prices on community services, the government should take into account the 'training, coordination and indemnification of volunteers involved in service delivery' (Recommendation 5.1, Industry Commission, 1995: 142). The move toward accreditation of best practice standards by Volunteering Australia will serve to promote the benefits of using volunteer management techniques to maximise volunteer effort.

7 Trends in Volunteering in Australia and Overseas

The increased reliance on volunteers is a common trend in most Western countries (Gaskin and Davis Smith, 1995; Ascoli and Cnaan, 1997), and in many cases, volunteering has become a core part of human service organisations, and integral to service provision. Developments in the nature, organisation and practice of volunteering include external and structural factors impacting on the operation of voluntary organisations such as corporatisation, business and community partnerships and increased outsourcing of services. These factors affect the role of volunteers in the community and have led to and professionalisation of the volunteer role and increased demand for volunteers.

7.1 Corporatisation

The community and voluntary sector, also known as the third sector has always played a significant role in the provision and delivery to the community of welfare services, such as community care and labour market programs (Carson, 2000). During the 1990s, the governments at Federal and State levels have shifted the responsibility for direct service delivery of many welfare-type services to the community sector (ACOSS, 1996; Jamrozik, 1996; Brennan, 1998; May, 1999; Cox, 2000; Warburton and Mutch, 2000). The developments are claimed to deliver benefits in the area of efficient and effective service delivery and increased accountability (Carson, 2000) and the operation of welfare organisations within a commercial framework (House of Representatives, 1998; Nevile, 1999). These organisations are operating in a competitive environment characterised by tenders, brokerage of services and contracts and as a consequence, community organisations are becoming more reliant on the contributions of volunteers. Noble and Rogers (1998) comment that the competitive tendering and contracting of community services and programs may place pressure on organisations to present proposals at low prices at the expense of paid workers, and increased reliance on, and competition for volunteers (Warburton and Mutch, 2000).

In the United Kingdom, the voluntary sector has increasingly been seen as:

An effective mechanism for achieving different political and social objectives – not only the effective and efficient delivery of welfare services, but also for encouraging active citizenship and enabling social inclusion. (Russell and Scott, 1997: 60)

The implications of corporatisation of the community and voluntary sector are an increasing demand for volunteers, increased accountability and reporting requirements, increased competition for funding, and pressure to ensure that services provided by volunteers meet the needs of the community (Russell and Scott, 1997; Paull, 2000). The costs of this model of community service provision include focusing of resources on managing contractual responsibilities, time spent preparing tenders, and loss of expertise in organisations due to short-term employment contracts (Carson, 2000).

7.2 Professionalisation

The competitive market that community and voluntary organisations are operating in has had a significant impact on volunteers and their contributions. The *Volunteering in Australia* (ACOSS, 1996) report indicated that there is a trend toward professionalising the voluntary sector. Voluntary organisations are increasingly utilising human resource management techniques to maximise the contribution of their volunteer workforce (Carson, 2000). The professional development of volunteer organisations and volunteers is a recognition of the volunteer contribution as significant and comparable to the contributions of paid workers.

The role of a volunteer in a formal organisation increasingly resembles the world of paid employment. Many organisations with a significant volunteer workforce have a volunteer manager or coordinator, systems and procedures for managing volunteer recruitment, training, feedback and supervision. In Australia, as in other countries, the position of volunteer coordinator/manager has developed into a career role. In recognition of the contribution and responsibility of volunteer managers, there are training courses in volunteer management (Rosenberg-Russell, 1995; Russell and Scott 1997; Noble and Rogers, 1998; Paull, 2000). The position of volunteer manager has developed into a distinct career role and there are Australian institutions providing diploma-level training courses in volunteer management.

This trend toward formalisation of the volunteer role enhances the quality of work for volunteers. Volunteering Australia has developed best practice standards for managing volunteers where volunteer roles and responsibilities are defined through duty statements and specifications, training and organisational support is provided. Some writers note that effective volunteer management will minimise the level of job dissatisfaction, stress and burnout experienced by volunteers (Metzer et al., 1997; Dollard et al., 1999). A study on the impact of 'contract culture' on volunteers in the United Kingdom found that the increased formalisation of the volunteer role enhanced the status and value of volunteer work and generated greater satisfaction (Russell and Scott, 1997). However, there is the possibility that increased formalisation of the volunteer role will actually decrease volunteer satisfaction and deter potential volunteers (Gay, 2000).

This formalisation of volunteering is a two-way street, with both organisations and volunteers expecting high standards from their involvement. Volunteering as a reciprocal arrangement means that volunteers working for an organisation can expect rostered shifts, regular training and development, and in return, the organisation gains a committed, long-term volunteer workforce.

7.3 Paid Volunteers

Some volunteers on overseas aid and national service programs (for example, Australian Volunteers Abroad, AmeriCorps USA, Volunteers in Service to America, Peace Corps) engage freely in formal volunteering but receive some remuneration which is below the economic cost of their involvement (Mesch et al., 1998). The payment of volunteers for their involvement is excluded from the definitions of volunteering.

Russell and Scott (1997) suggest that the payment of volunteers may become more widespread in a competitive environment where organisations need to retain skilled

volunteers. They report on previous research in the United Kingdom that found that payment of volunteers was a way of ensuring continuity and stability in the volunteer workforce and as a reward. Volunteers in the focus groups reacted negatively to the notion of payment other than to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses.

7.4 Student Volunteers

Student volunteering is a key part of university learning in the United States. Rewards to encourage volunteering among the student population include credit for academic courses, tuition stipends and work experience. There has been little use of university students as volunteers in Australia to date. In the current climate of increased demand for volunteers, Esmond (2000) argues that they have 'untapped potential' as a future source of volunteers.

Previous research on the motivation of university students to become involved in volunteering found that financial and time pressures were a deterrent but that volunteering held definite benefits (Esmond, 2000). Esmond reports on a study at Curtin University in Western Australia which found that university students would be motivated to volunteer by the allocation of academic credit points for voluntary work, the provision of work experience and career references and where they were involved in interesting and relevant work.

7.5 Targeting Older People

The progressive ageing of the population is recognised as a serious issue for many western governments and Australia in particular (Pearson, 1996; OECD, 1999; Department of Health and Aged Care, 1999; House of Representatives, 2000). The impact of population ageing on economic growth, government spending on health care, social security and national savings is expected to be realised when the baby-boom generation moves into retirement. There is a high incidence of early retirement (voluntary or through retrenchment) among males aged over 45 years. This pool of retired people and increased demand for volunteers has prompted an interest in older persons as a potential source of volunteer labour. Recent Australian research has found that older people are more likely to be 'highly committed' volunteers and work in a voluntary capacity about six hours a week (Lyons and Hocking, 2000).

Older adults are viewed by governments and voluntary organisations as a 'rich resource' for volunteering (Warburton, 1997; Pusey, 2000). The United States and United Kingdom have a range of policies and programs designed to encourage and support older people as volunteers, such as the Retired and Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparents, and Retired and Active for Charity (REACH) (Warburton, 1997; Warburton, Le Brocque and Rosenman 1998, Baldock, 1999). Several Australia states have adopted RSVP programs to encourage the expanding retired population to volunteer. The recent House of Representatives report on mature workers and unemployment recognised involvement in volunteering as a way to maintain links with the community, use skills and build self-confidence (House of Representatives, 2000). In addition, participants in the focus groups expressed the view that more older people should be involved in volunteering.

The NSW Council on Ageing articulates the benefits of voluntary involvement for older people. Research suggests that participation in volunteering is a positive experience for older people. It enhances self-esteem and reinforces connection to the

community, alleviates loneliness and provides social networks (Davis Smith, 1992; Wheeler, Gorey and Greenblatt, 1998; NSW Council on Ageing, 1999; Battaglia and Metzger, 2000). In addition, studies in the United States and the United Kingdom have found that older volunteers are more likely to stay with an organisation than younger volunteers. Older volunteers, then represent a stable and reliable source of voluntary labour for organisations (Davis Smith, 1992; Tschirhart, 1998).

Older volunteers may be attracted to volunteer for organisations that will acknowledge and benefit from their skills and experience. The NSW Council on Ageing recommends targeting recruitment and promotion strategies specifically to meet the needs and aspirations of older people through flexibility in volunteer positions and organisational support. Potential older volunteers may be deterred if the pathway to volunteering appears too formal and demanding (NSW Council on Ageing, 1999). Baldock recommends the development of 'senior-specific' volunteer programs (such as RSVP) and organisations as one method of encouraging older people to participate in voluntary work (Baldock, 1999).

However, policies aimed at encouraging the involvement of older people in voluntary work should not create the expectation that they must volunteer (Warburton, 1997, NSW Council on Ageing, 1999). While older people may have more time available once retired and no longer have child-rearing responsibilities, it should not be assumed that they will automatically wish to volunteer (Warburton, 1997; Evans and Kelley, 2000). Many older people may already participate in informal volunteering through caring arrangements or neighbourhood or club activity (Warburton, Le Brocque and Rosenman, 1998).

7.6 Internet Volunteering

The recent launch of the International Year of the Volunteer recognised the potential of the Internet and the World Wide Web to enhance the breadth and expansion of volunteering (Newman, 2000). The Minister for Family and Community Services announced the development of a website where organisations can advertise volunteer opportunities to the community.¹ There are similar sites around the world² which match volunteers to projects meeting their skills, knowledge and interests. As an example, a 'Time Bank' and accompanying media campaign were launched in February 2000 where people can donate time online, and are then matched to volunteer opportunities.³ A further exciting development is 'virtual volunteering' where it is possible to provide technical (e.g. answering questions by email) and direct service in the form of teaching and support activities (Ellis, 1997).

7.7 Corporate Volunteering

Corporate volunteering is linked to discussions about social capital, civic participation and partnerships between business, government and the community. Corporate

¹ The site will be similar to <http://www.volunteer.com.au/>.

² For example: <http://www.serviceleader.org/vv/index.html>; <http://www.thesite.org.uk/do-it/>; <http://evolunteer.co.uk/index.php3>.

³ www.timebank.org.uk

volunteering takes two forms: one through employer supported volunteer programs and two, through corporate citizenship. The role of business in society is changing and is increasingly positioned as a 'corporate citizen' with a key role to play in contributing to the development of healthy and active communities (Murphy and Thomas, 2000).

Corporate volunteering programs help companies 'demonstrate their citizenship and sense of corporate responsibility' and improve the quality of the workforce (Wild, 1993: 7). Companies recognise the connection between the health and profitability of their business and the health and well-being of the community in which they carry out their commercial activities. In the United States in particular, corporate volunteering is more established through a series of Corporate Volunteer Councils which are a coalition of companies that have active employee volunteer programs (Wild, 1993). A recent study of these programs reported that they enhance the corporation's standing in the community; in addition employees develop community networks, management and leadership skills that can be used in the workplace and benefit the organisation (Surdyk and Diddams, 1999).

Employer-supported volunteer programs are an arrangement where the company supports the volunteer effort of employees by allowing them to volunteer time with an approved organisation. In Australia, employer-supported volunteering is a relatively new initiative. As an example, the Westpac Bank operates a corporate staff volunteering program where staff are given paid time off work for volunteering activities. There are also rewards and incentives and a matching gift program whereby the bank matches the contributions of its staff. Westpac notes that one-third of its staff are actively involved in their local community as volunteers.

7.8 Partnerships

The increasing discussion about 'partnerships' is linked to the emergence of social capital and civil society on the social policy agenda. The relationship between community sector agencies and the government have changed as a consequence of developments in service provision and delivery as detailed in Section 7 (Carson, 2000). The development of partnerships and the focus of competitive tendering and creating a market in community services has involved a shift of government from 'rower to steerer' through devolving the operations of service provision to a range of community agencies (Carson, 2000).

The Federal Government has recognised that business has a key role in relation to community development through employment, training and support of citizens. For example, in the area of employment and labour market programs, the Labor Government established Area Consultative Committees as a communication channel to the government from business and the community. The Committees operate to:

Provide a social coalition between the Commonwealth Government, business and local communities to build stronger communities and generate opportunities for jobs, business success, and regional economic growth.
(www.acc.gov.au)

At a broader level, the government has established Prime Minister's Community Business Partnerships (www.partnership.zip.com.au) to promote active collaboration between the community and business sectors to 'achieve mutual goals, develop creative solutions to local and regional problems and most importantly, to strengthen community ties'. In relation to volunteering, May suggests that the role of government is to 'facilitate and support the conditions in which volunteers and volunteering can flourish' (May, 1999: 11).

The United Kingdom Government has developed a Compact with the community and voluntary sector which explicitly recognises the contribution of volunteers to the 'development of a democratic, socially inclusive society' (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/acu/compact). The Compact includes a statement on shared principles, undertakings on the part of government to support the independence of the sector; a code of good practice for funding; consultation protocols for policy development; and undertakings on the part of the voluntary and community sector to adhere to high standards of accountability and performance in service delivery (Home Office, 1998).

The development of partnerships and a corporate role in volunteering are in the early stages in Australia and it is unclear how far they will develop, and how business will engage with the community. The recent Government announcement on welfare reform stated that 'business has a vital role to play in creating opportunities for participation and in ensuring that disadvantaged people have fair access to those opportunities' (Department of Family and Community Services, 2000a). The trend toward corporate volunteering imposes mutual obligation on the part of the corporate sector to contribute to the development of communities where they operate. However, it appears that business may not wish to engage in the 'social coalition' if it requires more extended involvement in the community sector such as the provision of welfare. In a recent article, the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Chamber of Commerce stated that 'business was willing to assist those in need but ... draws the line at the notion that the provision of welfare ought in any way be an obligation on business' (Metherell, 2000).

7.9 Discussion

There is an increased level of interest in volunteering at all levels of Australian government. Policymakers are coming to recognise that volunteering is a key form of economic and social participation, crucial to community development, important in building social capital, and maintaining a civil society with strong democratic institutions. Volunteering also offers opportunities for partnerships between government, the business sector and the community. 2001 will be celebrated as the International Year of the Volunteer. The best estimate of the current economic value of volunteering in Australia is \$41 billion.

Developments in how governments deliver their services has generated an increased demand for volunteers, particularly in the areas of health and aged care, home visiting, community services, and the environment. The Federal Government has formally acknowledged that the experience and skills gained through participation in voluntary activity may form a pathway to paid employment through the Voluntary Work Initiative program and the principle of mutual obligation.

According to literature, volunteers typically are well-educated, in full time employment, have above average income and often have religious affiliations. There is a controversy about whether, in the future, there will be sufficient volunteers to meet demand. Part 2 of this report uses the best available information to address the question of whether the supply of hours of voluntary work will grow or shrink.

Defining volunteering is a contentious matter. The lack of clarity in the definition of voluntary work has bedevilled discussion and planning. What is volunteering – freely given time and labour in formal organisations? There are tensions and boundary problems. Is volunteering still volunteering without the element of free choice? Is it volunteering if some payment is made? Is helping your frail neighbour and other informal helping activities volunteering? The answer to these questions impacts on the measurement of the number of volunteers and the quantity of voluntary activity in Australia.

Since volunteers are not compelled to contribute their time and labour, the issue of the motivation to volunteer has become central. Understanding the motives of volunteers is the only means through which managers of organisations can hope to achieve success in their stated endeavours. All around the world, the issue of volunteer motivation impacts strongly on the successful recruitment and retention of volunteers. Managers are faced daily with the problem of how to interest people in volunteering, and how to maintain their interest. In Part 3, we present the results of our own qualitative research into the motives of volunteers and non-volunteers.

A key element of effective volunteer management is the commitment of resources to the provision of training, support and appropriate working conditions. The peak volunteering organisations are turning their attention to developing methods for the accreditation of best practice standards for the management of volunteers. In the future, there will be increasing emphasis on the good management of voluntary organisations.

Moreover, the nature of volunteering is changing rapidly. Voluntary organisations are becoming more professional. The role of business organisations in volunteering is shifting. Corporations are being urged to form partnerships with community organisations under a government initiative. Some organisations encourage staff members to volunteer through matching financial contributions and allowing employees to complete these activities during work time.

The demand for volunteers is growing worldwide. So is the trend toward strictly separating the roles of funder and provider in community services, leading to government outsourcing and funding by competitive tender. In other countries, there is a tradition of thinking about ‘the third sector’ and non-profit organisations are better able to respond to changing conditions. Although Australia has a large non-profit sector, it is fragmentary and the links with Federal Government have been underdeveloped. The present government is seeking to strengthen these links through various initiatives aimed at promoting volunteering and involving for-profit organisations. The research literature on volunteering is similarly growing but not yet widely established. This report brings together the existing information and contributes original research on the supply of volunteers and subjective experience of volunteering.

Part II: Projections of Volunteer Supply

8 Projections

Given the rising demand for volunteers it has become important to have some method of estimating whether the supply of volunteers in the future will be adequate for the demand. Unfortunately, at the time this report was prepared, there had been only one dedicated survey of volunteering conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1996). Broadly speaking, there are two possible sources of changes in the supply of volunteers, first, the changing age structure of the Australian population and secondly trends in the propensity to volunteer among various groups. In what follows, the contribution of each of these sources is examined by developing a scenario for the future based on a set of key assumptions.

8.1 The Effect of the Changing Age Structure of Australia (Assuming Unchanging Age Specific Propensities to Volunteer)

Drawing on information about fertility, mortality and net migration, it is possible for demographers to make relatively accurate projections of the likely age composition of the Australian population in the next few decades. The ABS (2000) has generated and published three main series of population projections. Each projection is based on different assumptions about the numbers of future births and deaths and future levels of net migration. Series I and III represent 'high' and 'low' projections respectively, while Series II represents a 'medium' projection. The following analysis (Table 1) is based on Series II. The assumptions underpinning this particular projection are:

- the total fertility rate will drop from 1.75 to 1.6 between 1999 and 2008 and then remain constant for the remainder of the projection period;
- the rate of improvement in life expectancy remains at 0.30 per year (males) and 0.33 per year (females) for first five years then declines until 2051; and
- a net overseas migration gain of 90 000 from 2001-02.

A relatively short-term forecast for the coming decades has been projected using these assumptions. In addition, a longer-term projection for the second decade of the new century has been developed.

Figure 1 illustrates the projected change in the age composition of the Australian population over the period between 1995, the year of the first official survey of volunteers, and 2011. The age groups are arranged vertically and the numbers of male and females are displayed along the horizontal axis. The darker shading represents the population numbers in 1995. The lighter shading represents the projected population in the various age categories in the year 2011.

Over the coming decade the proportion of the population aged less than 45 years of age will decline, whereas those aged 55 years and above will increase. The most dramatic change is the percentage increase in the proportion of the population above 54 years of age. Between 1995 and 2011, the proportion aged 55 to 64 years increased most rapidly (38 per cent), while those aged 65 years or more increased by 20

per cent. The decline in proportion of the population aged less than 45 years is less dramatic but still very marked. The three youngest age groups all decline, as a proportion of the population by between one-tenth and one-sixth over this time period. The group aged 45 to 54 years remains a relatively constant proportion of the population over this period.

Figure 1: Projected Age Distribution of the Population by Age Group and Sex, 2011

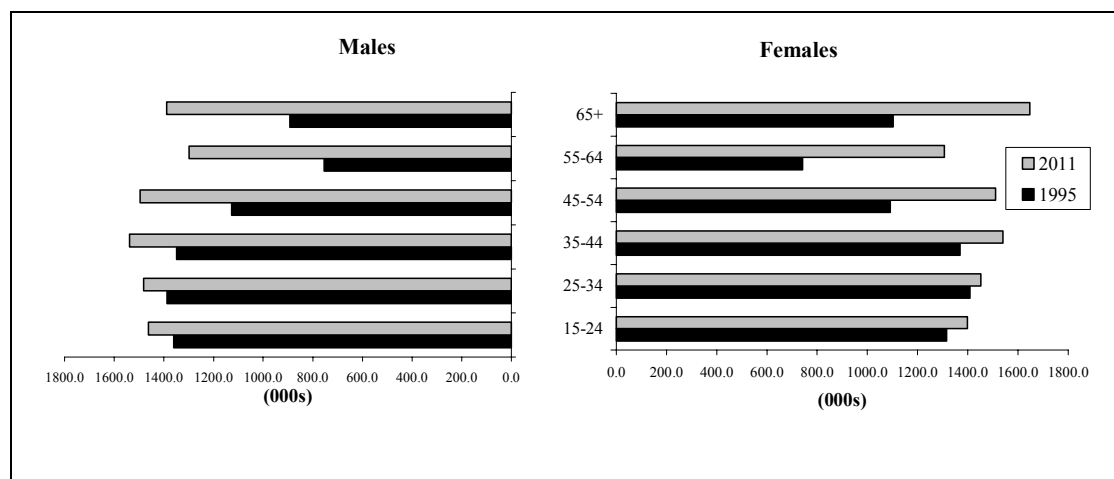
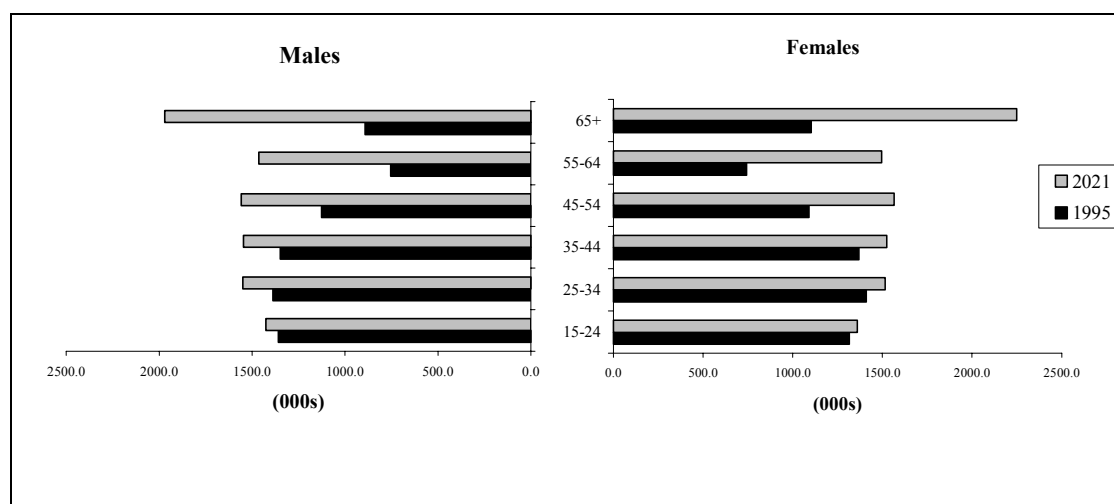


Figure 2 is in a similar format as the previous figure and shows the projected population numbers by age category in 2021. Once again, the darker shading represent the population numbers in 1995. However, in this case the lighter shading represents the projected population in the various age categories in the year 2021.

Figure 2: Projected Age Distribution of the Population by Age Group and Sex, 2021



Over the quarter century period under consideration, the proportion of the population aged less than 45 years of age will continue to decline, whereas those aged 55 years and above increase even more conspicuously. Again, the most dramatic change is the

percentage increase in the proportion of the population above 54 years of age. Between 1995 and 2021, the proportion aged 55 to 64 years will increase 43 per cent; however, those aged 65 years or more outstrip this increase, growing by a weighty 52 per cent. The decline in proportion of the population aged less than 45 years is less dramatic but still very marked. As a proportion of the population, the three youngest age-groups decline even more noticeably, over this time period at a rate of between 18-25 per cent. Only the group aged 45 to 54 years remains a stable proportion of the population.

Having described the projected changes in the age composition of Australian society, we turn our attention to examining the likely effect of these changes on the supply of volunteer hours. Recall that this projection is based on the assumption of unchanging age specific propensities to volunteer. The proportion of active volunteers in each age category in 1995 determined a rate of volunteering.

Rate of volunteering =

$$\frac{\text{Numbers of volunteers in a specific age category}}{\text{Population in that age category}}$$

Dividing the total hours of voluntary work contributed by each age category by the number of active volunteers yields the average hours volunteering per volunteer.

Average hours of volunteering per volunteer =

$$\frac{\text{Total of voluntary work in a specific age category}}{\text{Number of active volunteers}}$$

The projected supply of voluntary work for 2011 or 2021 is derived by dividing the projected number in each category by the age-specific rate of volunteering and multiplying by the age-specific average hours per volunteer.

Projected hours contributed =

$$\frac{\text{Projected number in age category}}{\text{Age - specific rate of volunteering}} \times \text{Age - specific average hours of volunteering}$$

These projections are calculated separately for both men and women.

The lowest rate of volunteering is found among the young (15-24 year olds). The rate of volunteering rises gradually before reaching a peak in middle age and then declining slightly in the later years. However, the average hours of voluntary work contributed by volunteers increases steadily throughout the life course. The supply of hours of voluntary work is determined by both the age-specific rate of volunteering and the average hours contributed by each age group. Not only is the rate of volunteering lowest among those aged less than 25 years but also the average number of hours contributed by each volunteer in this age category is less than that contributed by any other age group. In contrast, although the rate of volunteering among those aged 65 years and over is lower than among the middle-age categories, the average number of hours contributed by persons over 65 years of age is higher than any other group.

Part of the growth in aggregate hours of voluntary work results from the simple fact that the population increases with the passage of time. Since demand is also likely to grow in step with population growth, it is instructive to look at the per capita hours of voluntary work. The per capita figure gives a truer indication of trends in the supply of hours of volunteering independent of the growth in population.

The first two columns of Table 1 present data from the ABS Survey of Voluntary Work conducted in 1995. The remainder of the table shows ABS population estimates for each age category and projected hours worked by volunteers for 2011 and 2021. Per capita hours for the male, female and total populations (over the age of 15 years) are shown in the last line of each panel.

The rapid projected growth in the proportion of Australia's population aged more than 54 years leads to the prediction of a substantial increase in the supply of hours of voluntary work. Between 1995 and 2021, the pool of estimated yearly hours of voluntary work is projected to grow by more than 200 000 hours. The increase in volunteer hours provided is highest among women aged 65 years and over, where the supply will more than double. However, substantial rises for both sexes are found in all age categories above 54 years. These increases are only slightly offset by a projected marginal decline after the year 2011 in the hours provided by the proportion of the female population under 45 years⁴ and the male population below the age of 25 years.

The same factors that are projected to boost the supply of volunteer hours also are likely to increase the demand for the services of volunteers. Examining the trend in the per capita supply should give us information about whether the growth in supply will at least keep pace with the population increase. Overall the per capita hours of volunteering among adult Australians are projected to be over two hours a year. In other words the predicted effect of the changing age structure of the Australian population since 1995 is equivalent to every adult Australian volunteering for two more hours per year by 2021. The increase in the supply of volunteering is projected to come more from women than from men. Indeed women are projected to increase their per capita hours volunteering at a rate one-third higher than the increase in men's hours.

8.2 Is the Propensity to Volunteer Changing over Time?

Unfortunately, at the time of writing data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of volunteering in 2000 had not been released. Fortunately, there is another source of information about volunteering in Australia: time use surveys. There have been four time use surveys conducted in Australia, with a sample size sufficient to make some generalisations possible.

⁴ The exception is women aged 25-34 years, who are projected to marginally increase the hours of voluntary work supplied.

Table 1: Actual and Projected Number of Hours Worked by Volunteers by Sex and Age Group: 1995, 2011 and 2021

Age	1995		2011		2021	
	Population (‘000s)	Total hours (million)	Population (‘000s)	Total hours (million)	Population (‘000s)	Total hours (million)
Males						
15-24	1 359.6	16.3	1 462.5	17.5	1 425.5	17.1
25-34	1 387.5	26.4	1 481.3	28.2	1 548.4	29.5
35-44	1 348.3	47.6	1 538.7	54.3	1 546.1	54.6
45-54	1 126.7	40.7	1 494.9	54.0	1 558.7	56.3
55-64	754.4	26.8	1 298.6	46.1	1 464.9	52.0
65+	891.7	29.8	1 388.7	46.4	1 970.7	65.9
Total	6 868.2	187.6	8 664.7	246.6	9 514.3	275.3
Per capita	27.3		28.5		28.9	
Females						
15-24	1 316.2	18.6	1 398.9	19.8	1 360.8	19.2
25-34	1 409.5	35.2	1 452.2	36.3	1 515.8	37.9
35-44	1 369.6	61.0	1 539.5	68.6	1 524.9	67.9
45-54	1 091.3	46.9	1 510.6	64.9	1 565.6	67.3
55-64	743.0	36.6	1 306.6	64.4	1 495.5	73.7
65+	1 102.6	47.9	1 647.4	71.6	2 249.7	97.7
Total	7 032.1	246.3	8 855.1	325.5	9 712.3	340.5
Per capita	35.0		36.8		37.4	
Persons						
15-24	2 668.8	34.9	2 861.4	37.4	2 786.2	36.4
25-34	2 800.6	61.6	2 933.5	64.5	3 064.2	67.4
35-44	2 715.3	108.7	3 078.3	123.2	3 071.0	122.9
45-54	2 216.0	87.6	3 005.5	118.8	3 124.3	123.5
55-64	1 495.9	63.4	2 605.4	110.4	2 960.5	125.5
65+	2 001.7	77.7	3 036.0	117.8	4 220.3	163.8
Total	13 898.3	433.9	17 520.1	572.2	19 226.5	639.6
Per capita	31.2		32.7		33.3	

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (1995, 2000)

Time use surveys use diaries to collect information about how individuals allocate their time. The respondents note when an activity was begun and when it ended and describes that activity in their own words. Fortunately, the activity classification in all

four surveys was explicitly related to the internationally standardised activity classification (Szalai, 1972), removing the greatest barrier to incomparability. However, some other difficulties remain.

The first large scale time use survey in Australia was conducted in 1974 by the Cities Commission in Albury-Wodonga and Melbourne. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducted a pilot survey in the Statistical District of Sydney (which takes in the Central Coast) in 1987 and collected national time use data for the first time in 1992. The national survey was repeated, as part of a five-year cycle, in 1997. The national survey is collected over the whole year, capturing regional and seasonal effects. This information can be used to calculate and correct for regional and seasonal effects (Bittman, 1995). Using these corrections makes it possible to compare time use data from all four surveys ⁵.

Previous research has shown that there was no significant variation in time spent volunteering in different metropolitan locations (Bittman, 1995). The next step was to use the national surveys to test whether there were any systematic differences in hours devoted to voluntary work in metropolitan ('major urban') and regional/rural areas ('minor urban' and 'rural') (See Table 2).

Despite large sample size, only two statistically significant differences in hours of voluntary work between metropolitan and regional/rural areas were found. In both 1992 and 1997 regional/rural women average significantly⁶ more minutes per day of voluntary work than their metropolitan counterparts. On this basis, comparisons of men's propensity to volunteer drew on all the cases in each survey, while for women the comparison was restricted to metropolitan women only.

Table 2: Inclusion of Respondents in Analysis: Location of Respondents by Survey Year

Location		1974	1987	1992	1997
Metropolitan	Males	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Females	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regional/Rural	Males	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
	Females	No	-	No	No

⁵ The only remaining constraint on comparing the four surveys centres around the difference in the age range in the 1974 survey. Whereas the ABS collected time use diaries for a sample of all persons living in a household over the age of 14 years, the Cities Commission collected data for only one individual aged between 18-65 years in the sampled households. While analysis of data collected after 1987 and later is relatively unrestricted there are some restrictions on analysis of the data before 1987. However, there is generally a surprising degree of comparable data spanning a period of almost a quarter of a century.

⁶ Using a t-test, assuming independent sample, the likelihood that this difference in means was the result of chance is less than 5 per cent.

The time use surveys provides us with information on activities undertaken on a particular day. On any given day only some of the people who provide annual hours of voluntary work will actually be engaged in voluntary work. Estimates derived from the time use survey show what proportions of people engaged in volunteering on an average or 'typical' day. These rates will naturally be lower than the estimates derived from the question in the ABS survey of *Voluntary Work*, which asks respondents whether they volunteered in the last year.

For the purposes of the analysis volunteer activity is defined as time spent in the following activities: community activities; religious activities and ceremonies; helping, caring and doing favours for others (excluding children); and travel associated with volunteer and community work and religious activities. Appendix A provides a detailed account of the individual activities classified as 'volunteering', as well as explaining the steps taken to ensure the greatest comparability in activity classifications between surveys. Since comparability between surveys is greatest at the highest level of aggregation, no analysis of changes in the component activities is undertaken.

Daily rates of volunteering according to age group and sex for the survey years are presented in Table 3. Rates have been calculated for two different age breakdowns. The first represents a simple breakdown into volunteers below the age of 35 and those 35 years and over. This is shown in the first three lines of each panel in Table 3. This dichotomous division of the population into those aged 35 years or more and those aged less than 35 years permits a comparison of volunteering over the full 23-year period covered by the four Australian time use surveys. Owing to limited cell sizes, a more detailed analysis by smaller age groups is only possible among the three surveys conducted since 1987. Trends for these age groups can only be investigated for the decade, 1987-97. This analysis is shown in the fourth to eight lines in both panels of Table 3. This more detailed analysis disaggregates the daily rate of volunteering by 10-year age categories.

A cursory glance at Table 3 shows that, generally, rates of volunteering are higher among women than men. For most age groups the average female rate of participation is higher than that of men, and for some age groups the difference is as high as ten percentage points. Also the younger age categories, regardless of gender, are less likely to volunteer.

Between 1974 and 1987 there was relatively little change in the daily rate of volunteering, with the exception of men over the age of 34 years. These older men increased their rate of volunteering by almost a half, so that by 1987 roughly 13 per cent of these older males volunteered on a typical day.

Between 1987 and 1992 the rates of volunteering for both men and women appear to increase significantly. For both men and women, above and below the age of 35 years, about 10 per cent more people appear to volunteer on any day in 1992 than in 1987. In 1992, the rate of volunteering among men was close to one-fifth of the population and the rate for women close to one-quarter.

There are two obvious interpretations of this apparent jump in volunteering. First, that volunteering did, indeed, significantly increase over this period. This coincides with

Table 3: Weighted Daily Rates of Volunteering By Age Group and Sex: 1987, 1992 and 1997

Age Groups	1974 (%)	1987 (%)	1992 (%)	1997 (%)
Males				
Under 35	9.0	8.8	17.1	14.5
35 and over	8.8	13.1	22.6	22.1
Total	8.9	11.4	20.5	19.4
20-29	-	9.9	18.4	14.6
30-39	-	8.5	17.2	17.2
40-49	-	13.4	20.9	18.2
50-59	-	11.4	23.2	21.7
60-69	-	18.0	27.4	32.1
Females				
Under 35	10.5	10.8	20.3	21.7
35 and over	18.3	18.3	28.8	31.1
Total	14.6	15.4	25.6	27.7
20-29	-	9.8	17.9	22.7
30-39	-	14.1	25.2	23.9
40-49	-	19.6	29.1	26.5
50-59	-	14.2	31.2	31.8
60-69	-	23.0	28.8	41.6

Source: See Appendix A

the movement toward ‘de-institutionalisation’ – that is, the release of former inmates of institutions into ‘care in the community’ and the shift away from residential aged care and towards servicing the aged in their own homes. The year in question, 1992, was also a year in which the demand for labour was relatively weak and unemployment was relatively high. If volunteer activity is related to the availability of time, then it could be that lower employment encourages increases participation in voluntary work. Second, it could be that volunteering appears to increase dramatically because of the different treatment of activities in the surveys before and after 1992. Every possible step to ensure comparability, over all four surveys, in the activities included in volunteering has been taken. The most difficult ‘grey area’ is where religious activity overlaps with community services. By adopting a broad definition of volunteering that included all religious activity, as well as secular forms of volunteering, the problem associated with comparability over time has been minimised.

However, between 1992 and 1997 (generally considered to be the most comparable surveys in the series) a clear pattern of change by gender emerges. Participation in volunteering declines amongst both the younger and the older male age groups, while

among females it increases for both the younger and the older group. In the light of the increasing participation of women in the labour force over this period, this is a surprising trend and, as we shall see, is driven by the increasing proportion of those over 60 years of age.

Turning to the analysis of the most recent decade for which we have data – 1987-97, there appears to be a combination of cyclical patterns, gender and age-specific trends. The cyclical pattern is most strongly evident among males, where participation increases across all of the 10-year age bands in the first half of the decade and declines marginally for all age-groups except the oldest in the second half of the decade. However, among women the trend for all ages except the middle-aged groups, is for increase in the rate of participation over the whole decade. This increase in women's rate of volunteering is most rapid during the early part of the decade and less rapid thereafter.

A deeper analysis of the trend by age groups shows increases are most heavily concentrated in the oldest age groups. Men and women aged more than 60 years have disproportionately increased their propensity to volunteer. By 1997 on any given day a staggering 42 per cent of women aged 60-69 years will engage in some voluntary work.

There is an apparent decline in the hours provided by middle-aged women between 1992 and 1997, which the literature suggests results from the new pressures women experience during their middle years. Women in their middle years experience increased time pressures as a consequence of postponed childbirth associated with newly acquired pressures from their paid work careers. Work and family pressures combine to reduce the time available to commit to voluntary work.

8.3 Trends in per Capita Hours of Hours of Volunteering

In addition to investigating the numbers of persons participating in volunteering over historical time, it is interesting to examine trends in the time participants typically spent volunteering on daily basis. Since these daily estimates are average hours spent on a 'typical day', that is, this average takes into account weekday/weekend and seasonal variation, the daily information can be legitimately expanded into yearly information by multiplying the daily estimate by the number of days in the year. To express trends on a comparable basis over the decade, these averages have been calculated on a per capita basis. The estimates compared in this section are annualised

Estimated per capita supply =

$$\frac{\text{Aggregate hours in age category}}{\text{Sample number in age category}} \times 365$$

per capita hours for 1987, 1992 and 1997.

Results are presented in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3: Males: Number of Volunteering Hours Per Capita by Age Group

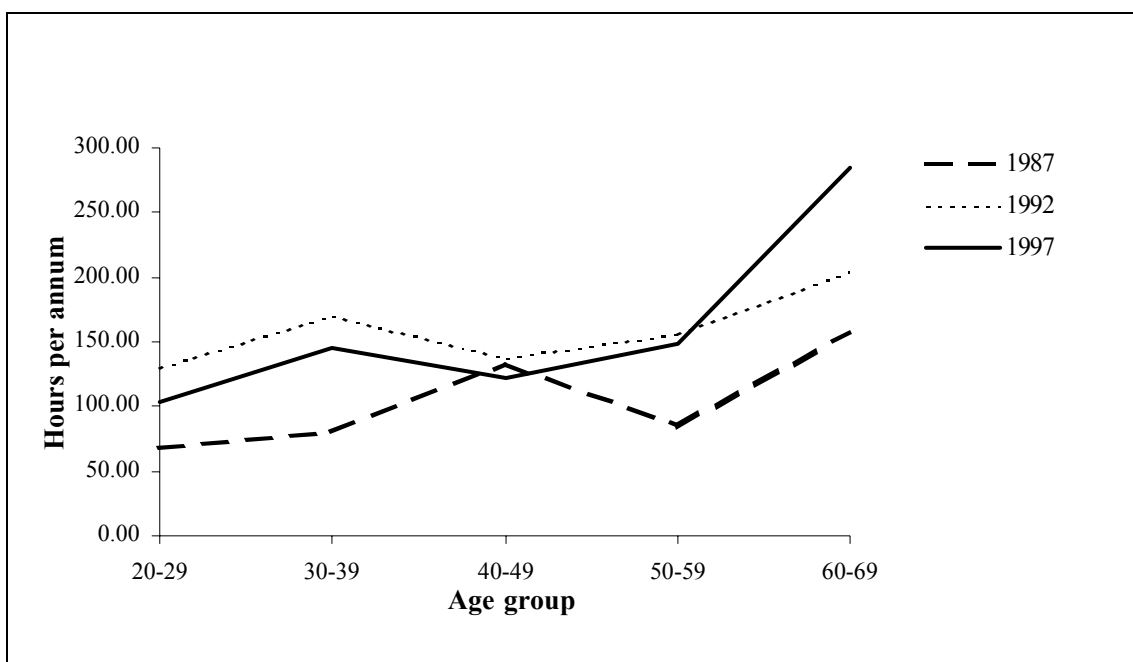
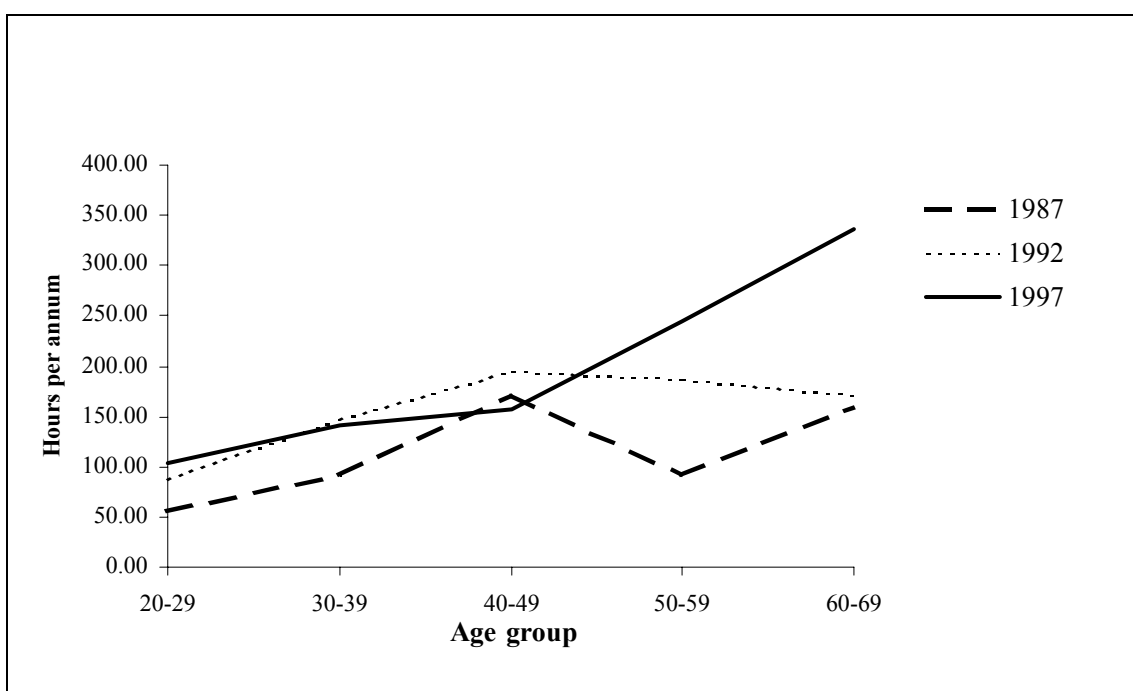


Figure 4: Females: Number of Volunteering Hours Per Capita by Age Group



Turning to Figure 3 first, over the whole decade, male annual per capita hours increase among older aged groups but change very little among those aged 40-49 years and show a more complicated pattern of change for the younger aged groups. Taking these trends singly, in all three survey years there is an obvious tendency for

per capita hours of volunteering to increase steeply at around 55 years. This trend is most marked in 1997. Among men in their middle years (40-49) there is almost a coincidence in the per capita hours in the three periods in which time use was measured. Among men aged 30-39 years, there is difference in the direction of the inflection of the curve between 1987 and later years. In 1987 the curve turned upwards around age 35 years but in the subsequent years, 1992 and 1997, this age marked a point at which per capita hours of volunteering began a decline. Among the youngest age group, 20-29 years, hours of volunteering almost double between 1987 and 1992 before reducing to a markedly lower level in 1997. This is consistent with a trend towards declining hours of volunteer activity for all men below 40 years of age, between 1992 and 1997. Between 1987 and 1992, male annual per capita hours increase across all age groups except men aged 40-49 years.

Turning to Figure 4, in contrast to the shape of the curve for men, the shape of women's curve is lowest at the youngest ages and exhibits an historically changing peak. In 1987 and 1992, the peak hours are found among women aged 40-49 years but in 1997 the peak is found among women aged 60-69 years. Moreover, the per capita hours reach unprecedented high levels among women of this age group, levels which exceeds those of comparable men by 19 per cent.

There are only small changes among younger women (aged less than 50 years) but large changes over the decade from older women (aged 50 years and over). Overall younger women averaged slightly more hours of volunteer activity in 1992 and 1997 than in 1987. However, in 1997 a new inflection point at around age 35 years depresses the level of per capita volunteer activity for middle years, making women in the age 40-49 the only category of women with lower per capita hours in 1997 than in 1987. From the age of 50 on, there is a complicated and highly dramatic pattern of change in each of the survey periods. In 1987 average per capita hours of volunteering were lower for those aged 50-59 years than those aged 40-49 years. However, by age 60-69 years average per capita hours have almost recovered to the level typical of women in the 40-49 years age group. In 1992 the curve for older women shows a mild decline. By contrast, in 1997 the curve of per capita average hours rises steadily to its maximal point.

8.4 The Future Supply of Volunteers and Voluntary Work – Tentative Conclusions

Predicting the future is risky but necessary enterprise for planners. The projections presented above are based on explicit assumptions and should always be treated with caution because these assumptions may turn out to be incorrect.

However, the information presented here suggests that both the number of volunteers and the hours of voluntary work that they supply are likely to increase in 2011 and 2021. The changing age structure of Australian society is leading to disproportionate growth among persons aged over 55 years. It is precisely among people at this stage in the life course that the propensity to volunteer is highest and the hours of voluntary work undertaken are, on average, greatest. This is also the group displaying the most pronounced increases in per capita hours of the last decade. If this tendency toward increased commitment to volunteering continues among this age group, the supply of hours of voluntary work looks set to increase.

There are some countertendencies likely to limit to the growth of hours of voluntary work. The coincidence of work and family pressure on women in their middle years has led to an emerging pattern of reduction in the average hours of voluntary work they are able to supply to the community. However, the overall effect of this trend among women in their middle years is small and not sufficient to cancel out the substantial rises due to the large increases gained from the aging of the population.

The greatest uncertainty surrounds the issue of whether this increase in the supply will be sufficient to meet the demand for volunteers. The analysis presented here shows that the predicted hours of voluntary work in 2011 and 2021 are likely to grow faster than the projected increase in the population. However, it is probable that the very same factors are also likely to increase the demand for the services of volunteers. In particular, there will be considerable pressure on the services provided to support Australians over the age of 80 years to live in their own homes. Unfortunately, at the present time it is not possible to estimate the demand for hours of voluntary work. It is worth giving some serious thought as to how this might be done in the future. At moment it is only possible to say that the supply of hours of voluntary work will most probably increase over the next two decades but it is uncertain as to whether this will be adequate to match the demand for the services of volunteers.

Part III: Focus Groups of Volunteers and Non-Volunteers

As part of the Volunteering in Australia Project commissioned by the Department of Family and Community Services, the SPRC conducted a series of focus groups with volunteers and non-volunteers. The focus groups involved a general discussion of participant's motives for, and experiences of, volunteering.

9 Focus Group Methodology

The method of studying opinions, attitudes and emotions through focus groups dates back to work on the significance of propaganda undertaken in the second World War. A group of respondents would be shown a propaganda stimulus and would be asked to comment about the impressions these images stimulated. These groups were useful for testing hypotheses about the effects of specific elements of content, and to alert researchers to unanticipated interpretations and meanings

Focus groups are increasingly used in public policy settings, including program evaluation. Focus groups can be set up rapidly; they provide qualitative data, and compared to survey research are relatively cheap to run.

The popularity of the focus group research technique is in part due to the accessibility and drama of authentic, direct quotations from participants' conversation. Most survey research asks respondents highly structured questions. Survey questions which are not structured – 'open-ended' questions – where the respondent can provide whatever answer they like often yield disappointing results. The advantage of qualitative techniques is that they allow participants to define their situation and express their own meanings, interpretations and priorities.

In this project, focus groups were an effective way of discussing the experiences of volunteering and exploring participants motivations for volunteering.

9.1 Focus Group Organisation

The SPRC held a total of eight focus groups in New South Wales, six with volunteers and two with non-volunteers. SPRC researchers conducted the focus groups with different discussion guides for volunteers (Appendix B) and non-volunteers (Appendix C). The guides were used to direct the focus group discussion around topics related to volunteering. Participants were paid a fee to reimburse them for the contribution of their time to the project.

Volunteer focus groups

Participants in the volunteer focus groups were recruited independently of the SPRC research team through the network of Volunteer Referral Centres around NSW. In view of the fact that there may be different attitudes to, and experiences of volunteering between metropolitan, regional and rural areas, a number of the focus groups were organised so as to be homogenous by location and age of participants. There were two groups held in a rural area, two groups in a regional area and in each of these locations there was a group of participants aged over 55 years and under 55 years. Two groups were held in the Sydney metropolitan area, one on the north shore and one in the western suburbs.

Non-volunteer focus groups

The participants in the two non-volunteer focus groups were recruited independently of the SPRC research team by a professional recruitment organisation. The specifications for the non-volunteer focus groups were people who did not currently perform any unpaid or volunteer work for any organisation, and had not done so for the previous 12 months. There was a mix of people in the non-volunteer focus groups, including those who had previously been volunteers and some people who had never volunteered.

9.2 Characteristics of Participants

Volunteers

A total of 52 volunteers participated in the focus group discussions. There were a majority of female volunteers and persons aged over 45 years. The age and gender breakdown of volunteers is in Table 4.

Table 4: Age Breakdown of Volunteers

Age	Female	Male
15-24 years	3	-
25-34 years	4	2
35-44 years	4	-
45-54 years	7	3
55-64 years	9	6
65 years and over	10	4
Total	37	15

There were 24 volunteers who were retired, one in full time employment, eight in part time and casual work, six involved in home duties, 11 unemployed, one self-employed and one student. The majority of older volunteers reported an involvement in voluntary work greater than 10 years. The amount of time dedicated to voluntary activity varied from two to 25 hours a week.

Non-volunteers

A total of 16 nominal non-volunteers participated in the focus group discussions. There were equal numbers of male and female non-volunteers. The age and gender breakdown of non-volunteers is in Table 5.

Table 5: Age Breakdown of Non-Volunteers

Age	Female	Male
15-24 years	2	2
25-34 years	1	2
35-44 years	2	3
45-54 years	3	-
55-64 years	-	1
Total	8	8

The majority of non-volunteers were employed on a full time basis and their main other activities involved family responsibilities, home duties and sport.

10 Focus Group Results

10.1 The Experience of Volunteering

Motivation

Participants suggested many different interpretations of the concept of volunteering. The discussion of ‘what is volunteering?’ raised issues of motivation, satisfaction with the volunteer role and how a person became involved in volunteering.

The definition of volunteering agreed in the focus groups was contributing one’s time and effort to perform unpaid work. The key element of this definition is the freedom of choice to volunteer and giving one’s time for the benefit of others without any expectation of reimbursement. Voluntary action involves commitment of time, and a requirement that a person has a choice about how and when they contribute their time. Some participants felt that volunteering involved meeting people, sharing and developing skills and contributing to the community. Most volunteers gave their time to others through a formal organisation and the discussion of volunteering did not initially include the informal activity of helping friends and family.

Volunteering was described as:

Doing something for which you are not being paid, and for which you have the option of opting in or opting out.

Doing something for the community and helping people who can’t cope on their own.

A small number of non-volunteers viewed volunteering in negative terms - as working for nothing. However, non-volunteers did acknowledge that there are a range of benefits to be gained from volunteering.

If someone is known to be a voluntary worker, they are seen as a good person, someone who goes out of their way to do something for someone else.

There is definitely an element of benevolence in volunteering.

Intrinsic rewards

All volunteers described their experience as extremely positive experience that involved intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. The intrinsic rewards included meeting people, making friends, altruism and a good feeling from helping others. For some volunteers, the intrinsic rewards were so great that they described their participation in voluntary activity as a ‘selfish’ exercise.

Volunteering as a positive experience

Volunteers tended to comment that volunteering was a very positive way to donate their time, help other people and make a valuable contribution to the community.

I could sit at home five days a week and do nothing, or I could sit in a pub or a club but I don't want to do that ... My alternative is to volunteer and I enjoy it thoroughly.

One feels a need to serve the community when you've got the time, but I think it also does us good too. I feel so much better when I get out of the house two or three days a week and do something and be with people.

I think if we could say how much joy and how much satisfaction you get from volunteering, even some of the statistics you see on volunteering – they live longer, are healthier ... to inform people that there is really great benefit in volunteering.

While it is agreed that volunteering is a way of helping others, it was emphasised in the focus groups that 'when you're helping someone else you're helping yourself'. Volunteering was described as a reciprocal arrangement where the rewards gained by giving your time were greater than your contribution. Several older volunteers commented that there are health benefits to be gained by volunteering, and also enhancements to skills, self-esteem and confidence.

You are putting yourself first by volunteering because it is good for you.

The ones that get out there and do volunteer work, our minds are more active.

Volunteers suggested that in order to maximise the benefits of volunteering, it was necessary to target your time and volunteer effort toward an area of interest.

If you're going to volunteer, you should make sure it's something you want to do, that way you'll get more out of it.

Social networks

A number of volunteers commented that volunteering was a great way to meet people, and to develop a social network. Some talked about the relationships that they had developed through volunteering – with other volunteers and clients – a key part of their enjoyment of volunteering. They reported that their experience of volunteering was one of comradeship and belonging to a team working together to achieve common goals.

To me it's like a full time occupation because I'm retired and it gives me a real buzz because in each of the groups I am involved in ... they're all a new network of friends, they all have Christmas parties ... It's just an added part of my life, together with my hobbies and my family.

One volunteer whose partner had recently died and had not been in the paid labour force for over 10 years said that:

I think that volunteering is a really good opportunity to get out and mix with people and get your confidence back.

Altruism: volunteering out of concern for others

Focus group participants were involved in a range of caring volunteer roles including community care, community visiting in private and nursing homes, child care, youth groups and transport. In several cases, volunteer roles had been developed through the volunteer's own initiative such as entertaining in nursing homes.

I'm disabled and I've been helped by the authorities and the CES and I thought I'd put something back into the community. I always wanted to see what it was like in nursing homes as well. There's a bond developing with the lady I visit.

It makes me happy but it also makes them happy, brings a smile to their face and I think they get some enjoyment out of life rather than moping around just watching TV all day, listening to the races or something.

I look at these old people and I think 'can I help someone else?' I go in now and they're another family to me and that's how I treat them. Why stay home and get morbid when you can be out helping people?

Non-volunteers recognised that one of the reasons why people are motivated to perform voluntary activities is because they feel empathy and want to help people.

Acknowledging advantage

A number of volunteers viewed their volunteer experience as a way of contributing to society and satisfying their social conscience. Volunteers described their experience as a way to make some return for the advantages they have had in life, and also to show some recognition that others are not as fortunate as themselves.

I have reached a point where I felt the desire, the need and the ability ... to give back to the community a sense of gratitude for where I am at right now and really just wanting to contribute something useful to the community without remuneration.

I think that it was I considered that I was really lucky and I just wanted to give something back, sort of like a karma thing, you give out something good and you get something good back.

Changing motivations

A number of volunteers in the over 55 year groups said that their motivation for volunteering had increased with age.

You see more and more needs and take on more responsibilities

Older volunteers reported that as they aged, they were less physically able to do all the volunteer work they wanted to do. These volunteers managed their commitment by changing the focus of volunteering and targeting areas of interest where their contribution would have the greatest impact.

Instrumental motives

A number of volunteers described their volunteering experience as a way to use the skills gained in paid employment, to refresh skills not currently being used and to develop new skills.

Volunteering is about being able to use the skills that you have achieved in the workplace.

Volunteering is a way of learning, It's a way of getting work on your CV and it's more than just giving up your time ... it gives you a lot of experience as well.

For example, one participant was a recent immigrant to Australia who had not yet received a work visa. She sought volunteer work because she was not able to take up paid employment and she 'had some skills that if I don't use they might get a bit rusty, and so I looked for something to take up time and to meet people'.

Meeting a need

A number of volunteers in the rural groups commented that volunteering was an activity that was simply expected by the community. Volunteers in rural areas tended to see their contributions as filling a gap where there were no other services available.

The service isn't there, the need is there and that's why you volunteer.

You do it because there is nobody else to do it and otherwise it doesn't get done.

A volunteer who was involved in bush regeneration began his involvement with an environmental organisation by asking for work and when there was none available, asked if he could help out in other ways.

There was nothing being done, I felt like something needed to be done ... At the end of the day you walk away and you feel pretty good about yourself, you see a job has been completed and you notice over time the improvement is rewarding.

Reciprocity in meeting the needs of self and others

All volunteers acknowledged that volunteering is a two-way process – while you are helping others, you are also helping yourself. The benefits of volunteering included

skill development, meeting people, raising self esteem and confidence and becoming involved in the community.

Sometimes volunteering can be to help yourself ... My husband died a year ago, I haven't worked for 12 years and really I am doing it for myself. It's a bit selfish but that's why I am doing it at the moment. I don't really know where it is going to lead, I figured I am just doing it to get out of the house.

Volunteering is a two-way street. You contribute your time and effort and it is unknown at the time what you will get out of it.

The significance of choice

Volunteers and non-volunteers strongly agreed that the key part of volunteering was the ability to make a choice about how and when to contribute your time by doing something that you want to do.

The essence of volunteering is that you do it as a matter of free choice.

It's your choice and you have a choice of what you enjoy doing.

If you volunteer to do something you do it willingly, you're not being conscripted into it.

Volunteering was enjoyable because: you can choose the level of your commitment, you can choose when you volunteer and you can choose the organisation or client group that you assist.

A majority of volunteers stressed the importance of flexibility on the part of the organisation in relation to volunteer commitment, and the capacity of the volunteer to say 'no'.

You've got to learn to say no. Sometimes I think 'how did I get myself into this?' But if you really don't want to, you don't have to. You have a choice.

Because of this element of choice, organisations using volunteers to deliver services need to be flexible and accommodating of volunteers' personal and work lives and commitments.

The concept of volunteering as a 'choice' is further addressed in the section on mutual obligation.

Commitment

Commitment was discussed as a key feature of volunteering. For some, commitment referred to the regularity of volunteer activities, the amount of time contributed and their sense of loyalty to the organisation.

Because you are doing something because you want to do it, not because you have to do it, but you also realise that if you are going to do it you have to make a commitment to be there when you say you are going to be there.

Volunteering was described as a lifetime commitment for some people who spoke of their involvement as a way of life.

In a way it [volunteering] becomes an addiction. You think well I can't walk away from volunteering because there is too much to do.

My family say it's well past time to slow down but it is a way of life and I love it.

Several volunteers strongly emphasised the need to believe in the organisation or cause they are volunteering for.

For volunteering you've got to have a belief in an organisation and what they do.

The long-term nature of volunteering was discussed in relation to the 2000 Sydney Olympics. A number of volunteers agreed that the Olympic volunteer experience was a one-off short-term commitment and that volunteering for an organisation over a long period of time is very different to volunteering for a large event. There was a sense that while the volunteers supported the recognition the Olympic volunteers received, other spheres of volunteer activity should be similarly recognised and rewarded.

The Olympics really showed what volunteers can do, but those volunteers were different to what we are. They might never volunteer again unless it is for some big event. It would be nice if the community as a whole could see that it's not just the people that volunteered for the Olympics, but that there are a lot of other people out there that volunteer for all different sorts of reasons ... I think we're better than the ones that volunteered for the Olympics.

Non-volunteers also recognised the commitment required by volunteers and the long-term nature of volunteering.

The Olympics were fantastic, basically you go out there for two weeks and have a ball volunteering. But when you are on a committee, or in volunteering for something else, it's not just for two weeks.

Non-volunteers' views of volunteering

A number of non-volunteers described volunteering as working for nothing, but did acknowledge that there may be many rewards involved in volunteering. Non-volunteers generally commented positively on the contribution of volunteers to the community.

Volunteers do it because they love it and because they truly want to help and be a part of it.

Non-volunteers were typically very supportive of the role volunteers play in the Australian community, with one participant describing volunteers as 'one of the community's most valuable assets'.

A small number of non-volunteers were critical and commented that volunteers 'like to blow their own trumpet' and 'they like to let you know that they are a volunteer' 'and try to get you involved'.

There was a negative perception among the non-volunteers that once a person started volunteering, increasing demands would be made on their time and it would be very difficult to reduce the level of commitment. Volunteering was linked to a feeling of being relied on and not being able take a step back once you commenced.

You might be taken advantage of by an organisation ... you might go there just wanting to do three hours a week and then it's 'can you do this, can you do that' and then they might become slack in their own job and get you to do it.

When the non-volunteers were asked to define volunteering, participants instead commented on the reasons why they were not currently involved in volunteering including fear of commitment, time pressures, and other responsibilities. The most commonly expressed reasons for not actively volunteering was a lack of time and inability to fit volunteering in with other activities such as working full time, raising a family, studying, social events and relaxation time. This time pressure and involvement in other activities meant that non-volunteers felt they were unable to make a regular commitment to a volunteer role.

For me personally, the time issue is really harsh, spending time by myself, with my son, with my wife, with my family, outside that time frame I find it really hard. Even volunteering to help my local church mowing the lawn for an hour and a half on a Saturday morning. I can't squeeze an hour and a half to volunteer for that!

Some non-volunteers commented on the changing nature of work as a barrier to volunteering.

With flexible hours you can work the hours that suit you but no one seems to have any more time ... I work for myself and I just find that every moment is precious.

Some non-volunteers simply described themselves as not cut out for volunteering.

Those are people who really put themselves out to go and volunteer to help people. And I've got to say that I am not one of those people but hopefully I'll change as I get older and wiser.

The focus groups of non-volunteers included several persons who had previously volunteered but had stopped for a range of reasons.

It depends at what stage your life is at. There are different demands. I've got kids and everywhere you go they want you on a committee for this, a committee for that. I've just decided to pull the plug for a little while and have a break because once you're on there, no one wants to take them over ... it's like 'can you do another 12 months? can you do this?' because no one else will do it. You sort of feel trapped in there.

Another ex-volunteer felt that volunteering was beneficial at different stages of the life cycle. For example, networking and gaining work experience was good for a period but there was a limit to the amount of unpaid work you should do if you wanted to make a career in that field.

There definitely does come a time when you have to say 'no more unpaid work' ... especially if it is in your field that you're moving because some people will have you working unpaid forever if you let them. So I think when people are young they tend to do a lot of volunteering so they can gain experience and then at a certain point you just have to pull the plug on it and then probably later on when you retire you can pick it up again.

Formal and informal volunteering

In the focus groups, involvement in volunteering was discussed primarily in terms of commitment to volunteering in a variety of formal organisations including Volunteer Referral Centres, Community Aid, Neighbour Aid and bush regeneration. However, it was widely recognised by volunteers and non-volunteers that volunteering also includes informal helping and neighbourly activities.

The mothers who go and help at the preschool and the school and at tuckshop, canteens and that, they don't look at themselves as being volunteers ... she would see herself as doing it for her child.

A number of volunteers and non-volunteers realised during the course of the focus group discussion that their involvement in volunteering was much greater than they had initially thought. One participant commented that she had never considered her 40-year involvement with the Boy Scouts as a form of volunteering. A number of participants in the two groups aged over 55 years described very long histories of

volunteering, beginning in schools, involvement in sport, supporting children's activities, community development, and so on.

I just never thought about working in the tuckshop and all those sort of things as volunteering.

You see there is a need ... when you are helping the neighbours you don't realise you are actually a volunteer.

Images of volunteers

The focus groups did not extensively explore participant's images of volunteers. There was a general perception among volunteers and non-volunteers that the public was not aware of the range of services and tasks that volunteers perform. In particular, there was little awareness that volunteers are not a homogenous group. It was suggested that the Olympics played a significant role in promoting a diverse image of volunteers

I hate volunteers being tagged as bored, middle-aged house wives who have got nothing to do. I take offence at that because even if you are middle-aged and you are a housewife, you don't do volunteering totally because you are bored. You do it because you want to give something as well as get something in return ... If you were bored you could go out and play tennis or something.

10.2 Pathways to Volunteering

The focus group discussions identified many different pathways to an involvement in voluntary work. Most people seem to become gradually involved in volunteering through everyday circumstances and activities. Other people have some personal circumstance that actively inspires them to volunteer, or a general desire to give back to the community. The pathways to volunteering were closely linked to a person's motivation to volunteer.

Volunteers provided descriptions of how they initially became involved in volunteering: they were asked, they had time, they were bored, through an involvement in children's activities, through friends or family, personal circumstance, to make a contribution to society, they had skills and experience to offer, and wanted to help others. One volunteer suggested that all volunteers have something happen in their life that motivated them to start'.

It is important to note that all volunteers felt strongly that volunteering was a reciprocal process, and that you often received more in return than you gave.

Life cycle factors

Volunteering was strongly identified in the discussions as an experience where an individual's level of involvement and commitment may change at different stages of the life cycle. The key life cycle factors influencing a person's involvement in voluntary activities were young children, and retirement. Parental volunteer

involvement in children's activities was described as 'just part of bringing up children'.

Older volunteers commented that their life experience enhanced their volunteering experience. Many older volunteers felt that they were at a time of their life where they were able to make a significant contribution to the community. Some volunteers who had a history of paid employment chose to volunteer as a means of maximising their energy and strategic contribution to society.

At this time of my life I am more interested in volunteering in an organisation where it will make a difference in the community.

Younger volunteers commented that their opportunities for involvement in volunteering were limited to the period between university study and full time employment.

At my stage of life, it's a bit of a luxury to be volunteering on a Monday to Friday ... I just can't see myself doing it much into the future because I'll have to find a paid job.

Many participants commented that their involvement in volunteering had gradually developed to a significant commitment with management and financial responsibilities. Several participants were involved on management committees and regarded their volunteer commitment as like a paid position.

Retirement

For the retired volunteers in the focus groups, volunteering was part of activities planned after retirement. Some retirees became involved in volunteering to fill in their extra time after ceasing paid work.

I'm 78 years old, my wife's been gone for 10 years ... and you get so bored with life, your home is empty so you look for something to do.

When I retired, I set out quite deliberately to find organisations I could absorb myself in ... I get far more out of these various organisations I am involved with than I put in and to me I am on the receiving end more than the giving. For me it's just time and my time is my own.

Participants who were retired commented that volunteering was a means of contributing their time to a cause they believed in after working for many years.

I could never get any satisfaction in being in the paid workforce, it's so worthless, you get paid at the end of the week but that's the only reason I enjoyed going to work. So when the opportunity came to part with work, I put most of my energy into volunteering and I thoroughly enjoy it. I enjoy doing it, I get a lot of satisfaction out of it

and I think my heart's more in it, more so than when I was working for a salary. I put a lot more effort into it.

Other volunteers commented that during a lifetime of paid employment they had not had the opportunity to do any voluntary work, and once they retired they chose to commit some of their time to volunteering.

My other motive was that I felt I owed society something ... as a full time worker I had never been able to do tuckshop and all those other things ... so when I retired I thought this was my chance to do a bit of payback.

When you retire, in the beginning it's nice, but then you start to get itchy feet and then you start to get bored, and then you go back to the community and be a volunteer.

Unemployment

A number of volunteers who were unemployed became involved in volunteering to 'get out of the house' and to gain skills. Volunteering is a way to meet people in a work environment, and develop valuable skills.

When I started I was hoping for some casual work but now I am enjoying it and look forward to going every week.

I was bored witless at home and to me volunteer work was really meals on wheels. I know that sounds awfully naïve. So I decided to come in and talk to someone about doing something ... I love it, I really love it. It was a whole new world that I realised what volunteers do, I had no idea. It was really about stimulation from my point.

Personal circumstances

A number of volunteers had started their volunteer involvement due to some significant change in personal circumstances that forced them to re-evaluate their lives.

One volunteer had been in a serious accident and could no longer work or play sport and wanted to find a different path and involvement in activities.

I wanted to do something, I felt guilty for getting the money (unemployment benefits) for not doing anything ... So when I started out it was really just for me, to give me something to do so I wouldn't go off my head and it turned into a loving sort of relationship and I've been doing it now for about 12 years.

Another volunteer who had ceased paid employment because of illness found volunteering a suitable alternative because of the flexible work arrangements.

I volunteer because I've been ill and it means that I can volunteer when I can and I can pull out when I can't, whereas they wouldn't put up with that with a paid job.

Several volunteers said their involvement began when they moved to a new town or region. Volunteering was a good way to meet people, find out about the community and 'settle in to the area'.

Recipient of volunteer services

Several older volunteers had been the recipients of charity services during military service and wanted to give back

I went through hell in the war and these charities and organisations helped me ... Now it's time for me to pay back what they helped me.

One volunteer whose partner had recently passed away commented that volunteering was a way of getting back into the community and identifying future plans.

Just to get back into life I think and start a new life and get experience with other things and see what I want to do.

Another volunteer had experienced volunteering through palliative care for his partner and then had decided to contribute his services:

I've been on the receiving end of volunteering and when you experience it first hand, you realise how important it is.

Family involvement and religion

A number of volunteers discussed their involvement in the church and their parent's commitment to volunteering which had been passed on to them.

My mother used to volunteer with the catholic church. So I always knew there was volunteering ... A lot of people just don't know about volunteering but I knew what my mother had done so I knew it was out there.

Views of non-volunteers

Non-volunteers agreed that ability to contribute time and effort as a volunteer is something that changes with your lifestyle. Non-volunteers commented that the pressures of full time work and raising a family presented a barrier to becoming involved in volunteering.

Non-volunteers identified different ways to get involved in volunteering: 'because they are asked'; 'because they have an interest'; 'because you see a need'; and also that 'sometimes you get roped into it, you get conscripted'. Non-volunteers also said that 'some people may not have anything better to do' and that in some cases, volunteering is a way to 'fill the time'.

Non-volunteers commented that a person's motivation for volunteering was closely linked to the nature of the volunteer's interest in the cause or activity.

10.3 Satisfaction with the Volunteer Role

Most volunteers reported being very satisfied with their volunteer role, and that it had fulfilled their motivations. Volunteers reported finding satisfaction in many ways: a sense of achievement, making a contribution, friendship, having fun, getting out of the house, seeing things from another perspective. The greatest sense of satisfaction with volunteering came from the appreciation of recipients of their services. There was a particular satisfaction in helping elderly persons who were lonely and living in nursing homes.

It's worth a million dollars just to see people's pleasure and their reaction and all it takes is a few hours of your time.

I really get a lot of satisfaction out of it. You see the little thing you do for an old person and the gratification that they give and you think 'Isn't that wonderful! I've given people a bit of esteem'.

A number of volunteers commented that their levels of satisfaction were such that they were 'hooked on volunteering'.

The job I'm doing now which is interviewing is probably one of the most enjoyable jobs I've ever done in my life ... I should have done this for a career.

One volunteer commented that as he became more involved, he sought out more challenging clients.

Once you realise the value of it, you tend to want to input more and you even try to get more difficult people to take on and get more of a challenge.

Several volunteers found that volunteering far more satisfying than paid employment: no strict hierarchical structure, more opportunities, can be more creative, you can choose your role, there was less complaining because people choose to be there, and overall it was less stressful.

However several older volunteers were wary of working beyond their limits.

I am very satisfied because I can see some of the things that we are starting to achieve, but on the other hand I am wary of burnout. Sometimes I push myself too hard.

A number of volunteers who were in management and coordination roles commented on the importance of providing worthwhile tasks for volunteers. This is necessary to motivate volunteers and to generate a sense of satisfaction and achievement.

You must have something for the volunteer to do, something that is worthwhile. I always make sure volunteers have definite tasks and are completely involved and no one is asked to bring a book to read because there is nothing for them to do.

10.4 Volunteering as a Pathway to Paid Work

There were several volunteers who reported finding paid work through their volunteer experience on a temporary basis. Volunteering was viewed by participants as a way to make personal connections with the industry they were interested in and to gain valuable work experience.

If you're linked to what you like and someone sees that you're doing a good job, they might think this bloke's worth employing.

It is interesting to note that a number of younger volunteers whose primary motivation for volunteering was to gain skills and work experience described their volunteer involvement as 'less honourable' and altruistic than others in the group.

Older volunteers commented that for those in receipt of a social security benefit such as the pension, there was no incentive to take up offers of part time work gained through volunteering due to the negative impact on their payment.

10.5 Training and Support

Training

All focus group participants agreed that volunteers should receive training from the organisation for whom they are working. The training should be matched to the types of activities they are performing and it was the responsibility of the organisation to appropriately equip volunteers to perform their role adequately. At the very least, training should include education about the aims of the organisation, and the roles and responsibilities of being a volunteer within that organisation.

Most volunteers had received a formal induction and regular training from their organisation. Much of this training was facilitated through the Volunteer Referral Centres and included grief and loss counselling, active listening, and volunteer rights and responsibilities.

We have training sessions here [at the Volunteer Referral Centre], we have revisions and we do little role plays that helps us address different situations ... We have up to 4-5 training courses a year and you can attend if you want to.

Volunteers also commented that they learnt many skills on the job and by talking to other volunteers. A number of volunteers in rural areas said that they did not receive any training because the volunteering was community-based and informal.

Support

The provision of support for volunteers was discussed as an important supplement to training. The groups agreed that organisations employing volunteers should have mechanisms in place to provide support and feedback to them when required. However, participants commented that it was the responsibility of the volunteer to advise the organisation if they required further training and support. One volunteer commented that training and support was a way to check that volunteers were working within the bounds of the organisation.

A number of volunteers mentioned the importance of organisational support for volunteers in their roles, and described it as a significant factor in the retention of volunteers.

If volunteers don't like what they are doing, they don't come back.

If there is one bad volunteer/client experience, it may be enough to put you off volunteering for life and that's a great loss.

Management issues

Volunteer management has the potential to impact strongly on the successful recruitment and retention of volunteers.

The main thing that people want to do, whether it's paid or volunteer is they want to feel like they are making a positive contribution to life and that in the process they are giving expression to their gifts, their skills, their intellect.

People in the community don't mind contributing to make a difference as long as they feel they have some control over the outcomes.

Many volunteers commented that it was important to feel as though they were a part of a team within the organisation by being involved in decision-making and regular meetings. People make a conscious decision to work as a volunteer and seek opportunities where they can maximise their contribution.

I never say I volunteer at [organisation]. I say I work at [organisation]. It is work but if you haven't got a chance to put your point of view, then you're reduced to slave labour.

A key part of volunteer satisfaction was that the organisation respect and appreciate the contribution of volunteers. Volunteers stressed that they should be treated in the same fashion as paid workers and should have similar working conditions. The rights and responsibilities of volunteers within the organisation should be made explicit, and all employees of the organisation should be made aware of the role of volunteers.

I think women have know for many years that to work without pay means that you are in many ways not given

the same recognition as someone who is a paid employee. The same thing applies to volunteers in an organisation where the paid staff can tend to assume things about their role and that has an effect in seeing volunteers as in some way there to supplement their role, rather than the volunteers being there in their own right, contributing their own time.

10.6 Recognition and Rewards

Volunteers were asked to discuss whether they felt their contributions were valued by the organisation they worked for. Most volunteers reported that they were ‘treated like gold’ by the organisation they volunteered for.

The issue of how volunteers should be, and are valued by the organisation was hotly discussed. The majority of volunteers commented that the appreciation of clients was the most satisfying part of volunteering. However, it was also important to receive recognition from the organisation.

The recognition is part of what it is all about ... If you are not appreciated, it doesn't matter how much you want to volunteer, you'll just take yourself off and you'll go somewhere else where you are appreciated.

It doesn't matter whether you're volunteering or working for a salary, to be acknowledged that you are doing a good job and that you are appreciated is very important.

A small number of volunteers were vehemently opposed to formal recognition for volunteers and stated that it was not necessary.

I don't think that that's important. If you expect thanks, if you expect recognition, to my way of thinking you're in the wrong job. To me it's a personal thing and I do what I can.

All volunteers agreed that their motivations for volunteering were to help others, and that ‘people's reaction is our reward’. Many volunteers mentioned the recognition the Olympic volunteers received in positive terms but said of themselves.

You don't want to be in the limelight, all you really want to do is do your job and disappear.

Non-volunteers were emphatic in stating that volunteers were not appreciated enough by voluntary organisations and the community.

I think they're taken a bit for granted. I think a lot of people wouldn't know who volunteers at kindergarten, playgroups, schools, working bees ... Anyone who is not doing it, just thinks ‘Oh, someone else is doing it’. If they did care they would be there.

Non-volunteers agreed that many volunteer activities were performed by the same group of people who volunteer time and time again. One ex-volunteer commented that the community doesn't care who does voluntary work, provided that the job is done:

A lot of parents who drop their kids off don't care who does it, as long their kids can still go and it all runs smoothly. Then they are the first to criticise if something goes wrong, or if they're have to put in their own time or money.

A number of ex-volunteers commented that the appreciation and rewards that volunteers receive may not be sufficient to match their contribution, and that 'all too often it is just a pat on the back'.

I don't believe in just thanks. Because everything that you are volunteering to do is going to be worth tenfold anything that they could possibly pay you back in the way of thanks. I just think that the people you are giving time to must be innovative and creative about how they thank you.

Non-volunteers suggested that volunteers could be rewarded and recognised in the form of community awards, announcements on community radio and notices in the local paper.

10.7 The Role of Volunteering in the Community

The general perception of volunteers and non-volunteers was that volunteers may not be adequately valued by the wider community.

I do think people see volunteers as doing a good job ... I think that volunteers have a good standing in the community.

People in the community don't take any notice, but the people who are getting the services appreciate it.

The poor appreciation of the volunteer effort may be due to a lack of understanding about the role of volunteers in the community. The groups concluded that a large proportion of volunteer activity may be invisible and is simply part of what is expected by the community.

A number of volunteers reported that the community had a negative perception of volunteers because they 'are doing something for nothing'.

Interestingly, non-volunteers strongly supported the role of volunteers as vital component of Australian society.

If you took volunteers away, the place would collapse.

Volunteers are like the infrastructure of the community, they help run the system. I don't think they are high up enough on the agenda.

10.8 Views on Mutual Obligation

There were a series of interesting discussions about volunteering as a mutual obligation activity. Most volunteers were favourable toward mutual obligation so long as the person has the right attitude and commitment. They stressed that participants should be properly matched to a suitable project and organisation.

Positive views

Mutual obligation and work for the dole were discussed in positive terms as a means for people to develop confidence, skills and self-esteem, meet people and become active in the community. This was viewed as very important for people who have been made redundant or had been out of the workforce for a long period of time. Volunteering as a mutual obligation activity provides an opportunity for people to gain experience in a work environment and possibly to break the cycle of unemployment.

It is a help to the community ... They're providing a service and it gives them an incentive to go out and work ... And it might give them an idea of some way of earning a living.

The majority of participants agreed that people in receipt of an unemployment benefit should perform some activity which is intended to assist them in finding work. Non-volunteers suggested that requiring people to volunteer through mutual obligation is a way to 'teach people their commitments and responsibilities', 'to open doors and perhaps it will give people the incentive to move on to something else'.

By contrast, several volunteers expressed the view that volunteering was not the most appropriate forum for encouraging the long-term unemployed to gain work experience. One volunteer commented that requiring unemployed people to volunteer was 'an awkward way for the government to tell people that they expect them to have a work ethic'.

Volunteering is a choice

Both volunteers and non-volunteers agreed the choice to volunteer is a primary element of volunteering. If a person is required to volunteer by the government in order to receive their unemployment benefit, then the activity is not voluntary.

The only problem is that it takes the volunteering out of volunteering. They should not call it volunteering because it isn't. I give my time because I choose to do so. It is my say. Perhaps they should call it something else because it is not volunteering. How can it be volunteering if you are told to do it?

You're not volunteering if you've been told to do it ... to me that's paid work because you're placed somewhere and told what to do to get the benefit.

There was some discussion in the groups about more appropriate terms for volunteering under mutual obligation. 'Community service' was suggested but it was agreed that it had negative associations.

Some volunteers felt very strongly that using volunteering as a mutual obligation activity was detrimental to volunteers, participants and organisations.

I see what the government's doing as more conscription than volunteering. I think that it is the government climbing out of its obligation in relation to the economic structure and imposing something on those people who are already finding it difficult to participate in society. I think there are ways of encouraging participation but making it mandatory is counter productive in the long run.

A number of volunteers commented that the image of volunteering would be tarnished if it is associated with unemployment and labour market programs. Volunteers were concerned that there may be a public perception that 'voluntary work is the same thing as working for the dole', and as a consequence 'it might erode the value of volunteering'.

Negative implications

There were mixed views about the benefits of volunteering as a mutual obligation activity for both the participant and the organisation. It was considered likely that persons involved in volunteering as a mutual obligation activity may not be committed to the organisation or the clients.

It would depend on whether you are doing something that is interesting to you or if you were just put into a situation that you had no control over ... You should have come choice about what you do.

Participants may resent the organisation they are placed with and in this case will be unlikely to receive any benefits from their volunteer involvement.

It could put your back up against it and you think 'I didn't ask to be here so I'm not going to do anything to help'. They're going to sit back and not be any assistance.

As a consequence, the organisation and their clients may fail to benefit from taking on volunteers through mutual obligation. One volunteer commented that forcing people to volunteer might breed resentment and that 'if they're not there from a motive of genuine giving it really doesn't work'. In addition,

What organisation wants somebody who is only there because they've got to be there?

Some volunteers commented that managing placements under mutual obligation may impose an administrative burden on the organisation. In relation to mutual obligation, the government should be responsible for placing people in volunteer positions and the position should be linked to structured training.

10.9 Costs of Volunteering

The majority of volunteers and non-volunteers agreed the potential costs of volunteering are financial and personal. Much of the discussion focused on the financial costs of volunteering.

Financial costs

There was strong support for reimbursing volunteers for expenses incurred while performing volunteer activity so that volunteers were not out-of-pocket. It was agreed that volunteers should receive the same reimbursement and conditions as paid workers: for the use of their car, phone, petrol and any meals.

You have to make sure you're not doing it at your own personal or financial ruin.

Some volunteers viewed their out-of-pocket expenses as part of their volunteer contribution.

There are costs that you want to carry yourself, there are no obligations to do it but sometimes you just see that there is a need and that's part of what you are prepared to give.

It depends on the circumstances of the person who is volunteering. In my case I don't accept any money at all because I can afford it, but other people need money because they are just on the pension so they should be reimbursed.

I think we all end up out-of-pocket somewhere along the line but I don't think it is a big issue ... It's just part of what we're giving.

The volunteer organisation may be community-based and have very limited finances. In these situations, the volunteers commented that they 'go into it knowing what you're going to be up for.'

The issue of reimbursement for expenses incurred while volunteering was identified as a major problem where it may be the barrier stopping someone from starting or continuing volunteering.

Volunteering is a great personal achievement but there is also a financial cost ... are we looking at a situation where only those who can afford to will volunteer?

I think the difference in paying their fares and that may be the difference between them being able to volunteer and not being able to volunteer.

Non-volunteers agreed that volunteering does have a financial cost and were supportive of volunteers being reimbursed for expenses.

In some cases you have to be able to afford to volunteer ... it might mean you use your own vehicle, phone and petrol is \$1 a litre.

Rural issues

The issue of financial costs is particularly relevant for volunteers on a limited income (such as the pension) and those in rural areas. The volunteers in rural areas discussed a lack of financial support for voluntary activities. The high cost of petrol, the goods and services tax (GST) had the potential to affect volunteers and the people they serve. These issues will in turn affect the ability of organisations in rural areas to recruit more volunteers.

Regional people have to use their cars over longer distances and we are paying 10-12 cents more a litre than in the city.

In addition, some volunteers in rural and regional areas reported helping clients with in-kind and financial support – with meals, furniture, transport and so on.

Personal costs

It was acknowledged that the situation may develop where a volunteer feels that the organisation is making too many demands on their time and effort. Most volunteers said that they were in a position to manage their volunteer commitment with the support of the organisation.

One thing that I think is really important and was stressed from the time I began was, my right to say no and to put limits on how much I give and who I will deal with ... so that I don't have to feel burdened.

I think sometimes though you might feel bad if you don't keep on with it because you realise how much of a help you are.

One ex-volunteer commented that a consequence of volunteering is working too hard to organise the event and missing out on the fun.

Sometimes you can miss out on the function. Just say you are volunteering to be on the finishing line for sporting events or you're at the tuckshop, organising a fundraiser ... so you have kids running and you've missed all their events because you've organised the event but you don't get time to enjoy it. You're running around making sure everyone else is having a good time.

Several non-volunteers were wary of their services being taken for granted.

People might complain about you and you don't want that if you are doing something for nothing.

Issues of concern

All volunteer groups mentioned insurance as a major area of concern for volunteers and volunteer organisations. There was confusion over whether volunteer activities were covered by insurance, who bears responsibility for insurance coverage and how claims could be made. Volunteers felt that the lack of information about insurance was 'an unfair responsibility on volunteers.'

Despite the lack of clarity over this issue, many volunteers continued with their activities because they wished to help people and serve the community. One volunteer reported injuring herself while performing voluntary activities for a community organisation that operated by donation only. She had not made a claim because the organisation was not incorporated and had few funds.

Volunteers agreed that the confusion about the issue of insurance was a serious deterrent to starting, and continuing volunteering.

Another issue raised was the privacy and confidentiality of clients. It was suggested that organisations should have written policies and procedure to cover ethical issues that may arise.

The peak volunteering body, Volunteering Australia has a statement of volunteer rights which includes the right to work in a healthy and safe environment, and to be adequately covered by insurance. The Model Code of Practice also states that is part of the organisations duty of care to provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage for volunteer staff. However, it is unclear how the Code of Practice is regulated and enforced by individual organisations.

10.10 Why Don't People Volunteer?

The focus group discussions explored why some people did not become involved in volunteering. The reasons included individual and structural reasons – for some the changing nature of employment and the corresponding time pressures meant that people simply did not have the time to be a volunteer. Another key reason was the lack of information available about the breadth and scope of volunteer roles.

Individual reasons

Volunteers commented on a range of personal reasons why people don't volunteer – burdens on finances, spare time and other priorities.

Some people are selfish.

People want to be paid.

I've got people in my own family who wouldn't volunteer, they are mostly interested in money ... They can only see that you do something to get a financial reward.

People get very caught up with their own life style and it becomes difficult to find time ... it is hard to balance what you consider is more important.

There was some agreement that volunteering is something you need to be 'cut out' to do.

It's not everyone's cup of tea to give their time freely, some people weren't brought up that way, some people don't know it exists ... If you've been brought up on the wrong side of the road and you've only had knocks and knocks and knocks and then they expect you to go out and volunteer and give something to the community.

Lack of understanding

A number of volunteers commented that people may be afraid of volunteering due to the belief that they may be taken advantage of.

I think people are afraid ... I've learnt about rights and responsibilities of volunteers but I don't think that is out there in the community, ... people are frightened that they are going to be taken over and that they don't have a right to say what their limits are.

Fear of the unknown as well as not knowing anyone else.

Lack of information

Few participants in the volunteer and non-volunteer groups were aware of the existence and role of the Volunteer Referral Centres. Both volunteers and non-volunteers commented that there is a general lack of knowledge about the range of volunteer roles and activities that are available in the community in metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

People don't know what's available, even in the local area, what you can actually volunteer your services for.

People may not be aware of the value of their own skills and believe that they are not in a position to make a contribution.

I think a lot of people that don't volunteer probably think 'Oh what can I do?' they don't realise that there is such a wide range of things to do ... maybe they don't feel they can contribute.

Volunteers thought that the general public assumed that volunteering was about Meals on Wheels and visiting sick elderly people in nursing homes.

A lot of people think volunteering is they have to go out and visit or help people who are in bad circumstances, and a lot of people can't stand to see people like that. It just brings them right down.

Age issues

A number of older volunteers expressed surprise that more elderly persons are not involved in volunteering. It was recognised that there is no obligation on the community to volunteer and that older people may be involved in informal volunteering such as babysitting grandparents and involvement in service clubs.

I am just surprised about the number of people that are retired who have got nothing to do but watch TV or play bowls ... they don't want to give any time to volunteering.

With the ageing population, there should be more volunteers ... but you mention volunteering and they run for their life.

Gender issues

One focus group in the regional area consisted of women aged over 55 years. There was a lengthy discussion about the reasons why more older men were not involved in volunteering. The comments were relevant to the gender issues apparent in volunteering – women become involved in volunteering to do something for themselves away from family responsibilities, while for men it was more difficult to start. One female volunteer commented that for women, volunteering is part of a continuum of doing things for other people – partner, children, family, neighbours.

You are home all the time, and you're doing everything for the children, and your husband. You don't really do anything for yourself and then the children grow up and your situation changes so then you look for something else to do with your time

Women generally felt that men weren't interested in volunteering – men had worked all their life and once retired wanted to spend time on hobbies and with friends.

Men aren't interested in volunteering. They would rather play bowls, have a few drinks with the mates and I think if they could just get started.

One female volunteer suggested that volunteering could be linked to redundancy packages as a form of gradual retirement.

People have worked and when they get to the end of their work life, they should gradually decrease their work days and learn to fill in those days and volunteering is a good way to do it.

For other men, a reluctance to volunteer may be linked to their status in previous employment.

For most men their job is their life and suddenly at 65 it's gone and their status has gone. If you've been a bank manager, you don't want to go and dig up the wetlands. It's not the issue that men don't want to volunteer, they might feel like they don't have any value.

By contrast, the men who were involved in community organisations during their working life tended to continue their involvement. This suggests a method of involving people in volunteering by beginning early in life so that it becomes familiar.

If you look at the difference in the men who have been in Lions, Rotary, Scouts, they carry on once they stop working. Other men who have just worked and gone home and put their feet up and read the paper and gone to bed and got up the next morning and gone to work, they don't seem to have any other interests.

10.11 Encouraging Volunteering

The focus group discussions canvassed the attitudes of volunteers and non-volunteers about how the government could encourage more people to volunteer. A number of volunteers recognised that while the community appreciates the work of volunteers, it is crucial to raise the level of community involvement in volunteering.

We need to get the general public who think that volunteering is a good idea to actually do it.

The issue of encouraging others in the community to volunteer presents many challenges. Volunteers commented on the difficulties in attempting to recruit their peers, and the general lack of community networks and social capital in Australian society.

The Olympics were discussed as a 'poster event' for volunteering and all groups agreed that volunteer organisations need to harness the Olympic volunteer spirit.

It was something that made the rest of the community want to get involved, and think I want to be a part of that.

You look at the response we got when the Olympics were on, volunteers came out of the woodwork ... Why doesn't that feeling that they had continue all the time?

Friends and family

Most volunteers reported situations where they had attempted to recruit their friends, family and peers to participate in volunteering. It appears that recruiting volunteers is an extremely difficult task and the individual decision to volunteer relies on a complex range of factors including age, personal philosophy, life experience and family background.

One female volunteer said she no longer told her peers that she was involved in volunteering:

Sometimes I feel like it's like skiting to say you are a volunteer ... If you're talking with someone who is not a volunteer ... either they become ashamed because they're not volunteering or they think you're trying to get kudos. I find I actually don't want to talk about it which is a shame.

A younger volunteer said that her age group 'finds it a bit hard to comprehend that you actually work without getting paid, especially on a Saturday.' Older volunteers said that friends say:

Why don't you play bowls or something like that. They think you are crazy to spend your life in nursing homes and doing things like that.

Centrelink

One Volunteer Referral Centre reported that many volunteers had come to the centre through advertisements in the local paper, other volunteers 'assumed that if you wanted to do volunteer work, you just got in contact with the organisation directly'.

Persons on the Voluntary Work Initiative program reported difficulty in finding a volunteer position through Centrelink or the Job Network Member. In particular, older volunteers found that Centrelink did not advise them that they could perform voluntary work to meet their mutual obligation and activity test requirements.

Corporate volunteering

A number of volunteers and non-volunteers mentioned the benefits of involving large businesses in promoting and sponsoring volunteer activity in the community and also within their organisation through employees. It was suggested that the government should target large businesses to encourage volunteering which would in turn have an effect on the wider community.

The place to start is to encourage large organisations who in turn can encourage their staff, who in turn will encourage their families.

Encouraging volunteering within the workplace may also reduce time pressures on employees.

Look at businesses where the boss allows a person to take the day off to volunteer. That is the problem, people are working 6 or 7 days a week now and they don't have time to volunteer.

Social capital

One of the key reasons discussed for the difficulty in encouraging people to become involved in volunteering was a lack of connectedness in the community. Participants commented that times have changed and that people are more involved with friends

and family and there is little sense of belonging to a particular community or neighbourhood group. This may be described as a lack of community or social capital – and the result is that fewer people help each other in the form of volunteering.

Both volunteers and non-volunteers of all ages commented that ‘we don’t have as much of a sense of community as we used to and not as much as we should.’ Participants also mentioned a lack of trust and community involvement. In the discussion ‘lack of community’ was linked to a greater focus on money and individual success than helping others. Volunteers in rural and regional areas thought that community spirit was stronger in their locality than in the city due to smaller population.

The groups suggested that one method of encouraging volunteering would be to help people feel like they are part of the neighbourhood and the community.

Everyone here [in Sydney] is on their own. You get little groups of support but if people who are retired felt that they were part of the community they would want to volunteer their services. They see themselves living in their home, and that’s separate from everybody else. (younger volunteer)

I think society has changed. If you look, one or two generations ago, smaller communities, or larger communities, basically everyone helped each other out, everybody knew each other, whereas now, it’s quite large, people are more focussed on material things and money and striving for success and are more individually focussed. (older volunteer)

I think people are more distrustful today than they used to be.

Many years ago, everybody helped everybody and in the country, on farms, like if you needed a hand, they helped, I helped people out. And then people now are too self-centred ... and ‘forget about you mate’ and this is where volunteers need to come in. I think people need to be taught again to get in and help and be friends. You can live next door to people and they won’t speak to you unless you make the move and continually make the moves. People are too self centred ‘I am the only one there is to care about’ ... People have got to start caring about other people. (older volunteer)

Suggestions

The focus groups discussed a range of suggestions for encouraging involvement in volunteering. It is likely that most of these suggestions will be addressed in the International Year of the Volunteer activities throughout 2001.

There was a definite need to raise the profiles of the Volunteer Referral Centres through advertising. Few focus group participants had heard of the Centres before becoming involved by seeking volunteer work.

It was suggested that a volunteer register be established. The register should be available in a public area like the community library and allow people to register for volunteer work.

There is a need to raise the awareness of the general public about the breadth of volunteer roles and volunteer involvement in the community through advertising.

In terms of the Voluntary Work Initiative, more networking is needed between volunteer centres, agencies using volunteers, Centrelink and Job Network members and the general public.

Involvement in volunteering could begin at an early age – ‘in school it’s a good start to let people know and experience what it is like, and if you instil it in young people and it just becomes part of life.’

10.12 Reliance on Volunteers

There was strong agreement by volunteers and non-volunteers that the ‘government is unloading more work back onto volunteers’ and that in some cases, volunteers are seen as a “cheap form of labour.’ There was a high degree of concern expressed by volunteers and non-volunteers that the government was too reliant on volunteers to deliver services, and that the increasing use of volunteers would result in the reduction of funded services. These attitudes were more strongly expressed in the rural groups.

There is a danger that the government is going to exploit communities and expect people to pick up services.

One of the things that volunteers think about is that if you are doing such a good job and filling a niche, is the government going to cut back more services?

A number of older volunteers commented that they directed their volunteer effort toward changing attitudes in the community, ‘rather than propping up something where the government should be putting in money.’

Several volunteers commented that they were fearful that the role of volunteers in service delivery will become the norm. For example, several volunteers in rural and regional areas described the situation where volunteers were reading to children in schools when there were unemployed teachers in the community.

Most volunteers were particularly concerned that volunteering should not take the place of a paid position. Instead, volunteers should be used as a supplement to existing services.

Volunteers shouldn’t be the be all and end all, they shouldn’t be expected to fill a gap ... Volunteers should be an additive and supplement whereas now it is coming to

the stage that a lot of organisation would fold if they didn't have volunteers.

Non-volunteers commented that volunteers should be utilised to assist an organisation on a short-term basis rather than be in a permanent position. One person thought that the high reliance on volunteers might be contributing to Australia's unemployment problem.

I would hate to see a push for more and more unpaid work. I think that people should be in employment if they are of a workable age.

10.13 Supply and Demand

Focus group participants agreed that there is an increasing demand for volunteers in all areas of the community.

A lot more people could do more. It doesn't matter how small or large the town is, you always need more volunteers.

A number of volunteers commented that it was difficult to recruit people to take on volunteer positions of financial responsibility such as treasurer and positions on the management committees. Older volunteers also commented that it is now harder to hold successful fundraising events.

A number of volunteers noted that there was a problem with lack of continuity among younger volunteers because they often were only involved in for a short time, and then moved into paid employment – due to the increase in self-esteem, confidence and skills gained through volunteering.

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Appendix A: Comparability of Activity Classifications

The key issue in comparing data from different time use survey is the comparability of activity classifications. The construction of the voluntary and community work and religious activities variables is described in Table A1. The Australian Bureau of Statistics itself constructed a detailed concordance between the 1987 and 1992 activity classifications (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1993: 56-57). This concordance was used in a straightforward manner to link 1992 activity categories with 1987 activity categories associated with voluntary and community work and religious activities. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has also constructed a concordance between the 1992 and 1997 activity classifications. This concordance was used in conjunction with the 1987-1992 concordance to link 1997 activity categories with 1987 activity categories associated with voluntary and community work and religious activities. The four broad voluntary and community work and religious activities variables used here, and described in Table A1, were constructed from the 1987 activity categories and from the 1992 and 1997 activity categories associated with these. The four broad voluntary and community work and religious activities variables described in Table A1 were linked to 1974 activity categories on the basis of personal judgement.

Table A1: Construction of the Voluntary and Community Work and Religious Activities Variables

	630	Community activities	640	Religious activities and ceremonies	655	Helping, caring, and doing favours for others (excluding children)	680	Travel associated with volunteer and community work and religious activities
1974	90	Voluntary collective civic activity	91	Participation in religious organisations	7	Care given to adults	98	Travel connected to above (incl waiting for transport)
	93	Participation in family/parent/military associations etc (miscellaneous organisations)	92	Religious practice/attending religious ceremonies				
	94	Participation as a member of a political party or union						
	95	Voluntary activity as an elected official of a social or political organisation						
	96	Participation in factory/work councils/committees, commissions, etc						
	99	Other civic and collective participation activities						
1987	630	Community activities	640	Religious activities and ceremonies	610	Helping/caring for sick, frail or disabled relatives	680	Associated travel
					620	Helping/caring for sick, frail or disabled other persons		
					650	Helping/doing favours for others (not sick, frail, etc)		
1992	600	Voluntary work and community participation not further described	640	Religious/church activities not further described	610	Helping/caring for sick persons not further described	680	Travel associated with community participation not further described
	630	Unpaid community work not further described	641	Religious practice	611	Helping/caring for sick relatives	681	Travel associated with community participation - in motion
	631	Unpaid services for children	642	Religious administration	612	Helping/caring for sick others	682	Travel associated with community participation -

632	Unpaid community services	643	Weddings, funerals, other "rite of passage"	620	Helping/doing favours for other (not sick, etc) adults	683	waiting Providing transport for others not elsewhere specified - in motion
650	Civic responsibilities, obligations and ceremonies					684	Providing transport for others not elsewhere specified - waiting
660	Other community participation						
671	Conversation in person, related to community participation						
672	Telephone communication related to community participation						
673	Written communication related to community participation						
674	Computing related to community participation						
690	Community participation not elsewhere specified						
700	Voluntary work and care not further defined	840	Religious activities/ritual ceremonies not further defined	710	Caring for adults not further defined	781	Associated travel
771	Associated communication	841	Religious practice	711	Caring for adults - physical care		
799	Voluntary work and care not elsewhere classified	842	Weddings, funerals, rites of passage	712	Caring for adults - emotional care		
850	Community participation not further defined	849	Religious activities/ritual ceremonies not elsewhere classified	719	Caring for adults not elsewhere classified		
852	Civic ceremonies			721	Helping/doing favours		
853	Civic obligations			251	Job search ³		
859	Community participation not elsewhere classified			311	Attendance at educational courses (excluding job related training) ³		
861	Negative social activities			331	Homework/study/research ³		
731	Unpaid voluntary work ¹			399	Education activities not elsewhere classified ³		
1997							

851	Attendance at meetings ¹	
251	Job search ²	
311	Attendance at educational courses (excluding job related training) ²	
331	Homework/study/research ²	
399	Education activities not elsewhere classified ²	
410	Food and drink preparation/cleanup not further defined ²	410 Food and drink preparation/cleanup not further defined ³
411	Food, drink preparation/service ²	411 Food, drink preparation/service ³
412	Preserving/freezing ²	412 Preserving/freezing ³
413	Wine/beer making ²	413 Wine/beer making ³
414	Set/clear table ²	414 Set/clear table ³
415	Clean up after food preparation/meals ²	415 Clean up after food preparation/meals ³
419	Food, drink preparation/service ²	419 Food and drink preparation/cleanup not elsewhere classified ³
420	Preserving/freezing ²	420 Laundry and clothes care not further defined ³
413	Wine/beer making ²	421 Washing, loading/unloading washing machine ³
414	Set/clear table ²	422 Hanging out/bringing in washing ³
415	Clean up after food preparation/meals ²	423 Ironing ³
419	Food and drink preparation/cleanup not elsewhere classified ²	424 Sorting, folding clothes ³
420	Laundry and clothes care not further defined ²	425 Clothes upkeep/care ³
421	Washing, loading/unloading washing machine ²	426 Clothes making ³
422	Hanging out/bringing in washing ²	429 Laundry and clothes care not elsewhere classified ³
423	Ironing ²	430 Other housework not further defined ³

424	Sorting, folding clothes ²
425	Clothes upkeep/care ²
426	Clothes making ²
429	Laundry and clothes care not elsewhere classified ²
430	Other housework not further defined ²
431	Dry housework ²
432	Wet housework ²
433	Occasional dry housework ²
434	Occasional wet housework ²
439	Other housework not elsewhere classified ²
440	Grounds/animal care not further defined ²
441	Gardening ²
442	Lawn care ²
443	Harvesting home produce ²
444	Cleaning grounds, garage etc ²
445	Pool care ²
446	Pet, animal care ²
449	Grounds/animal care not elsewhere classified ²
450	Home maintenance not further defined ²
451	Home/equipment repairs ²
452	Designing new home or interior design ²
453	Home improvements ²
454	Making furniture/household goods ²
455	Making furnishings ²
456	Heat/water/power upkeep ²
457	Car/boat/bike care ²
459	Home maintenance not elsewhere classified ²
460	Household management not further defined ²

431	Dry housework ³
432	Wet housework ³
433	Occasional dry housework ³
434	Occasional wet housework ³
439	Other housework not elsewhere classified ³
440	Grounds/animal care not further defined ³
441	Gardening ³
442	Lawn care ³
443	Harvesting home produce ³
444	Cleaning grounds, garage etc ³
445	Pool care ³
446	Pet, animal care ³
449	Grounds/animal care not elsewhere classified ³
450	Home maintenance not further defined ³
451	Home/equipment repairs ³
452	Designing new home or interior design ³
453	Home improvements ³
454	Making furniture/household goods ³
455	Making furnishings ³
456	Heat/water/power upkeep ³
457	Car/boat/bike care ³
459	Home maintenance not elsewhere classified ³
460	Household management not further defined ³

455	Making furnishings ²
456	Heat/water/power upkeep ²
457	Car/boat/bike care ²
459	Home maintenance not elsewhere classified ²
460	Household management not further defined ²
461	Paperwork, bills ²
462	Budgeting, organising rosters, making lists ²
463	Selling/dispersing of household assets ²
464	Recycling ²
465	Mail organisation ²
466	Packing for journey/moving ²
467	Packing away goods ²
468	Disposing of rubbish ²
469	Household management not elsewhere classified ²
499	Domestic activities not elsewhere classified ²
510	Care of children not further defined ²
511	Physical care of children ²
512	Emotional care of children ²
521	Teaching/helping/reprimanding children ²
531	Playing/reading/talking with child ²

461	Paperwork, bills ³
462	Budgeting, organising rosters, making lists ³
463	Selling/dispersing of household assets ³
464	Recycling ³
465	Mail organisation ³
466	Packing for journey/moving ³
467	Packing away goods ³
468	Disposing of rubbish ³
469	Household management not elsewhere classified ³
499	Domestic activities not elsewhere classified ³
510	Care of children not further defined ³
511	Physical care of children ³
512	Emotional care of children ³
521	Teaching/helping/reprimanding children ³
531	Playing/reading/talking with child ³
541	Minding children ³
551	Visiting child care establishment/school ³
599	Child care activities not elsewhere classified ³
610	Purchasing goods not further defined ³
611	Purchasing consumer goods ³

541	Minding children ²
551	Visiting child care establishment/school ²
599	Child care activities not elsewhere classified ²
610	Purchasing goods not further defined ²
611	Purchasing consumer goods ²
612	Purchasing durable goods ²
613	Window shopping ²
619	Purchasing goods not elsewhere classified ²
620	Purchasing services not further defined ²
621	Purchasing repair services ²
622	Purchasing administrative services ²
623	Purchasing personal care services ²
624	Purchasing medical care services ²
625	Purchasing child care services ²
626	Purchasing domestic/garden services ²
629	Purchasing goods and services not elsewhere classified ²
699	Purchasing goods and services not elsewhere classified ²
821	Attendance at movies/cinema ²
822	Attendance at concert ²
823	Attendance at theatre ²
824	Attendance at library ²

612	Purchasing durable goods ³
613	Window shopping ³
619	Purchasing goods not elsewhere classified ³
620	Purchasing services not further defined ³
621	Purchasing repair services ³
622	Purchasing administrative services ³
623	Purchasing personal care services ³
624	Purchasing medical care services ³
625	Purchasing child care services ³
626	Purchasing domestic/garden services ³
629	Purchasing services not elsewhere classified ³
699	Purchasing goods and services not elsewhere classified ³
824	Attendance at library ³
900	Recreation and leisure not further defined ³
920	Games/hobbies/arts/crafts not further defined ³
922	Games of chance/gambling ³
923	Home computer games/computing as hobby ³
924	Arcade games ³
925	Hobbies, collections ³
926	Handwork, crafts ³
927	Arts ³

825	Attendance at museum/exhibition/art gallery ²
826	Attendance at zoo/animal park/botanic garden ²
827	Attendance at amusement park ²
828	Attendance at other mass events ²
829	Visiting entertainment and cultural venues not elsewhere classified ²
830	Attendance at sports event not further defined ²
831	Attendance at sports match ²
832	Attendance at racing event ²
839	Attendance at sports event not elsewhere classified ²
900	Recreation and leisure not further defined ²
910	Sport and outdoor activities not further defined ²
911	Organised sport ²
912	Informal sport ²
913	Exercise (excluding walking) ²
914	Walking (including for exercise) ²
915	Hiking/bushwalking ²
916	Fishing ²
917	Holiday travel, driving for pleasure ²
919	Sport and outdoor activity not elsewhere classified ²
920	Games/hobbies/arts/crafts not further defined ²
921	Card, paper, board

928	Performing/making music ³
929	Games/hobbies/arts/crafts not elsewhere classified ³
930	Reading not further defined ³
931	Reading book ³
932	Reading magazine ³
933	Reading newspaper ³
934	Reading CD-ROM ³
939	Reading not elsewhere classified ³
967	Interacting with pets/walking pets ³

922	games/crosswords ²			
923	Games of chance/gambling ² Home computer games/computing as hobby ²			
924	Arcade games ²			
925	Hobbies, collections ²			
926	Handwork, crafts ²			
927	Arts ²			
928	Performing/making music ²			
929	Games/hobbies/arts/crafts not elsewhere classified ²			
930	Reading not further defined ²			
931	Reading book ²			
932	Reading magazine ²			
933	Reading newspaper ²			
934	Reading CD-ROM ²			
939	Reading not elsewhere classified ²			
967	Interacting with pets/walking pets ²			

(1) unless the activity was done for a sports or arts community organisation

(2) if the activity was done for a health and welfare, education/youth, religious, emergency services, or other community organisation (not including those related to sports or arts)

(3) if the activity was done for family not in the respondent's own household, a group household, or a friend/neighbour

Appendix B: Volunteer Focus Group Discussion Guide

We are interested in talking to people about how they relate to their communities. In particular, we would like this group to discuss your experiences of volunteering, and why you are a volunteer.

Topics for discussion-

- What is volunteering? (explore formal and informal, regularity, level of community involvement)
- How did you become involved in volunteering?
- Motivations for volunteering. What were you looking for in volunteering? Are your motivations for volunteering different now than from when you started?
- Have you ever been employed in a paid job through volunteering?
- Are you satisfied with your volunteer role? Do you feel that your motivations are met/satisfied by volunteering?
- Have you received any training as part of your volunteer role? Do you think there needs to be more training? Are you happy with
- Do you feel like your services are valued by the organisation you volunteer for? How are your contributions recognised by the organisation? Do you feel the community/family/friends/service recipient values your contributions as a volunteer?
- What are the benefits of volunteering? What is good about volunteering?
- The government has introduced measures where a person in receipt of an unemployment benefit can undertake voluntary activity as part of their activity test or mutual obligation requirements. How do you feel about this? (positive or negative responses)
- Are there negative aspects to volunteering? (poor organisation, cost, transport problems) Should there be reimbursement of all costs associated with volunteering? (eg. petrol, food, etc) Is there a lack of support for the volunteer role (within the organisation)? Does your volunteer role sometimes place too many demands on you? (time etc)
- Why do you think people don't volunteer?
- Is there too great a reliance on volunteers? (by government, community organisations, the community)

Appendix C: Non-Volunteer Focus Group Discussion Guide

We are conducting a study of attitudes to volunteering and voluntary activities in Australia, particularly with the recent focus on volunteers in the Olympics and Paralympics. We are interested in why some people do, or do not get involved in volunteering and your views on the role of volunteering in society

Topics for discussion-

- What is volunteering? (explore formal ‘organised’ and informal volunteering, regularity, level of community involvement, membership of organisations, working at the canteen, P&C)
- What do you think about people who volunteer?
- Why do you think people volunteer? What are their motivations for volunteering? Who benefits from volunteering?
- How do you think people become involved in volunteering? What do you think would be a good way to encourage more people to volunteer?
- Have you ever been approached to volunteer (do unpaid work) for an organisation? Have you ever volunteered? If so, what were your motivations to volunteer, did you ever receive training in your volunteer role, did your volunteer role lead to paid employment? Why did you stop volunteering? (time/other issues)
- Do you think volunteers should receive training from the organisation they are working for?
- Do you think that the services provided by volunteers are valued by the community/general public/organisation? How are volunteers recognised? How should they be recognised?
- What do you think are the benefits of volunteering?
- Do you think it is likely that people may get paid employment through being a volunteer?
- The government has introduced measures where a person in receipt of an unemployment benefit can undertake voluntary activity as part of their activity test or mutual obligation requirements. How do you feel about this? (positive or negative responses)
- Do you think there are negative aspects to volunteering? (poor organisation, cost, transport problems) Should there be reimbursement of all costs associated with volunteering? (eg. petrol, food, etc)
- Do you think there is too great a reliance on volunteers? (by government, community organisations, the community)

- In your view, what is the role of volunteering in the community? (fishing for comments on social capital, government services, private sector and corporate volunteering)
- Have you heard of Volunteer Referral Centres?