

Enhancing Tasmania SES Volunteer Recruitment and Retention



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Background

Tasmania State Emergency Service (SES) records from the mid-nineties to 2003/04 reveal that the numbers of active volunteers in Tasmania SES have steadily reduced by around 4% per year. In 2003/04 total numbers of active volunteers had reached 464, the lowest number in the Service's history, with the threat of further decline if something was not done to improve recruitment and retention.

This decline led to a number of initial low cost initiatives to improve recruitment and retention from 2001, but without much success. Feedback from the volunteers via training and operational debriefs and unit management meetings indicated that there were several concerns relating to training, recognition, but particularly insufficient resources, and various aspects of their management. These were consistent with feedback received from emergency management volunteers at the 2001 Volunteer Summit in Canberra (EMA, 2002; Howard, 2003). For this reason a Tasmania SES Volunteer Survey was conducted by the Tasmania SES Volunteer Association in 2002 to help understand and address these concerns. With a 59.4% unit return rate, the survey confirmed previous feedback and helped SES to justify a 30% increase in its budget to enhance volunteer resources and training support (SES, 2002).

While the purpose of the survey was not specifically to improve volunteer recruitment and retention, the resulting improvements to equipment, vehicles, training and support from the beginning of 2004/05, coupled with some recruitment activities by more satisfied volunteers, resulted in an overall 24% increase in active volunteer numbers during 2004/05. Numbers continued to rise until 2005/06 where active SES volunteers peaked at 577.

In 2006/07 and despite a business target of meeting and sustaining 600 active volunteers, numbers started to decline again. Overall numbers of active volunteers dropped 9.0% to 525 in one year. Based on direct feedback from volunteers at unit management meetings and post-training and operational debriefs, they were generally happy with their resources and training, so it was assumed that other factors influenced this decline.

With the aim of collecting data that may provide insights into motivational and other factors that may be affecting recruitment and retention, another SES Volunteer Survey was conducted by SES State Headquarters late in 2007 (SES, 2008a; Appendix A). The survey resulted in a 54.5% unit return rate (similar to the 2002 survey). Some of the key findings are detailed in Table 1. Table 2 represents some key SES volunteer statistics that were collected at the same time as the survey from SES records.

While the two SES surveys seemed to provide some useful information, SES management resolved to conduct a literature review to further inform the development of appropriate strategies. The author completed a literature review in March 2008 as part of a separate task. This was updated to reflect additional research that had come to light over the following six months (Lea, 2008; Appendix B).



Tasmania SES volunteers – Storm response

Table 1 – Key findings of Survey (SES 2008a)

- **Motivation.** The overall top motivator for joining and staying with SES as a volunteer was “to give back to the community” followed by, “it’s rewarding”. By age group, younger members in the 18-29 year age group were more attracted to join, as a secondary motive, “to gain qualifications”. This was consistent with the 2002 survey (SES, 2002)
- **Knowledge of SES.** 48.0% of SES volunteers first heard about SES by word of mouth, 62.7% of these were via serving SES volunteers and the remainder from family members or friends. 34.2% first heard about SES via the media, 51.9% of these via the newspaper, 36.5% from television and the remainder from radio. Only 1.3% first heard about SES via the web and 2.6% from the SES volunteer brochure. This was not covered in the earlier survey.
- **Age Profile.** The largest percentage of SES volunteers was in the 40-44 age bracket (16.3%), closely followed by 30-34 (14.1%) and then 35-39 and 55-59 (both at 12.0%). Average age was 42.95 state-wide (40.91 in the south region, 42.17 in the north region and 45.06 in the northwest region).
- **Volunteering for Other Emergency Services.** 27.2% of SES volunteers also volunteered for other emergency services. 72% of these were with the Tasmania Fire Service and 16% with the Tasmanian Ambulance Service. This was not covered in the earlier survey.
- **Employment Status.** 12.7% of volunteers were self employed business owners, which was about half of the number in 2002 (SES, 2002). New data revealed that 53.6% worked full-time and 14.9% part-time. 13.8% were retired and 5.0% unemployed at the time.
- **Training Preferences.** 81.5% agreed or strongly agreed that training was adequate for their role, which closely resembled the results of the earlier survey (SES, 2002). About 69.8% of SES volunteers preferred evening training over weekend training and 71.5% preferred it to be conducted at their units instead of elsewhere in their region. Although asked to select one or the other, many (10-15%) commented that they wanted a mix of evening and weekend training and unit and regional training.
- **Funding and Spending Priorities.** 61.0% of SES volunteers were not happy with the level of funding their unit received, which was 10% more than 2002 and 75.3% were not happy about the level of funding the SES organisation received, which was 22% more than in 2002 (SES, 2002). When asked about their preferred spending priorities, equipment came well on top, followed by training and then uniforms. This was consistent with the previous survey (SES, 2002).

Table 2 – Tasmania SES volunteer numbers, average age and years of service at time of survey (SES 2008a)

SES Units	Number of Active Volunteers	Male	Female	Ave Age	Ave Years Service
South Region					
South Regional Unit (Hobart)	46	27	19	40.23	9.59
Search & Rescue Team (Hobart)	20	18	2	32.70	5.23
Brighton	14	13	1	44.81	14.38
Bruny Island	8	8	0	46.77	10.94
Central Highlands	4	4	0	39.81	2.04
Derwent Valley	18	14	4	31.50	6.67
Glamorgan Spring Bay	15	9	6	53.63	4.24
Huon Valley	22	17	5	38.89	5.10
Southern Midlands	18	17	1	41.49	5.01
Tasman	22	15	7	39.30	9.42
Regional Sub-totals / Averages	187	142	45	40.91	7.26
North Region					
North Regional Unit (Lanceston)	54	32	22	40.51	2.90
Search & Rescue Team (Launceston)	19	15	4	40.84	3.35
Break O'Day	16	12	4	38.66	3.76
Dorset	11	11	0	46.61	11.70
Flinders Island	9	7	2	42.75	10.31
George Town	17	15	2	39.34	9.31
Meander Valley	14	12	2	37.06	7.70
Northern Midlands	7	5	2	51.81	9.12
West Tamar	14	10	4	41.98	1.76
Regional Sub-totals / Averages	161	119	42	42.17	6.66
Northwest Region					
NW Regional Unit (Burnie)	13	9	4	56.74	7.4
Search & Rescue (NW)	5	4	1	44.61	4.9
Burnie	22	16	6	46.50	9.7
Central Coast	19	13	6	42.07	7.0
Circular Head	22	18	4	38.38	6.2
Kentish	13	10	3	50.74	9.2
King Island	13	13	0	40.80	6.0
Mersey	25	21	4	46.53	11.1
Queenstown	8	5	3	33.76	3.6
Rosebery	9	8	1	39.94	6.2
Waratah	6	4	2	58.54	3.4
Wynyard	14	11	3	48.38	9.3
Zeehan	9	6	3	38.76	6.8
Regional Sub-totals / Averages	178	138	40	45.06	6.98
State Totals / Averages	526	399 (75.9%)	127 (24.1%)	42.95	6.98

Research Question

With the benefit of some analysis of the recent SES volunteer survey (SES, 2008a), a review and analysis of available Australian literature on volunteer recruitment and retention, and a focus-group workshop using the Delphi research technique (Linstone, 2002), this project aimed to use the research to answer the question: *What strategies can be translated from available research and then implemented by Tasmania SES to improve the recruitment and retention of its volunteers?*

To help answer this question, sub-questions will be considered during the analysis of available literature. Firstly, *can the two SES survey results (SES, 2002 and 2008a) indicate any trends or issues over a five year period that can assist in the translation of recruitment and retention needs and priorities?* Secondly, *what other results from the 2007 survey can assist with the identification of possible recruitment and retention strategies?* These needs and priorities can inform discussions at the Delphi workshop when considering the primary research question.

Thirdly, *according to available research literature, who joins and stays in the SES as volunteers?* Knowing who is more inclined to join and stay with regards to gender, age, employment and education background should assist in:

- The development of strategies that suit certain target groups;
- identifying opportunities or encouragement for certain types of people who may not be provided with the right opportunities, information or support necessary to join and stay; and
- helping SES to avoid wasting valuable resources trying to recruit certain types of people who don't tend to stay.

Justification

SES is totally reliant on a volunteer workforce for its emergency response functions, primarily road crash rescue, storm and flood response, search and rescue, general rescue and operational support to local government and the other emergency and police services. In Tasmania they voluntarily commit to 500-700 emergency callouts and 7,000-10,000 emergency contact hours each year, and an estimated ten times this amount for training and assessment each year (DPEM, 2007 and SES, 2008b). Their role in many other areas, such as community safety and awareness is also expanding with over 9,000 hours being committed to almost 300 non-emergency activities, such as driver reviver, displays and demonstrations (SES, 2008b). Then there are the many hours they are available to be called out, or are on standby.

Their voluntary time commitment alone is valued at around \$13,000 per active SES volunteer per year, or, in Tasmania, about \$7.2M for the whole service each year (Ganewatta, 2007). This equates to around four times the current SES budget (for volunteer emergency service and support functions), which represents excellent return from every dollar spent on supporting our volunteer workforce, particularly when you consider that the value does not include other savings, such as lives saved, prevention of further injury and distress, and protection of hundreds of properties each year, which must save property owners, or their insurance companies a great deal. SES volunteers are therefore our most important resource, a resource that must be supported and sustained.

In the past, decisions on Tasmania SES volunteer recruitment and retention have, to a large extent, been based solely on the judgement of SES management depending on fairly subjective observations and common sense. They have not been backed by much research and strategies implemented have tended to be a little hit-and-miss and inconsistently applied across the regions with mixed results. When having to compete for available funding and resources against other departmental or state government priorities, funding commitments and incorrect/unsuccessful strategies can be heavily scrutinised and future support or funding can be jeopardised.

With volunteer numbers once again declining, SES management must do better. It must make better and more informed decisions on volunteer recruitment and retention based

on valid research to help justify the increased investment, effort and resources that may be necessary to sustain an effective volunteer workforce.

As the literature review at Appendix B revealed, there has also been very little published research specifically on SES volunteer recruitment and retention, or the motivational aspects of being an SES volunteer – most has been conducted on fire services volunteers (McLennan, 2008a). While researchers have not been troubled by relating the motivational factors for fire services volunteers across the other two main volunteer-based emergency services (SES and ambulance), SES specific research will help validate these interrelationships (McLennan, 2008a). It will also help to validate, for SES, some of the consistent findings arising from fire service research or whole-of-volunteer sector research, such as the impact of rural population decline, aging population, more transient younger populations (Reinholdt, 1999; McLennan, 2004), growing (paid) work demands, longer work hours (Reinholdt, 1999; Volunteering Australia 2006, McLennan, 2008a), increasing out-of-pocket expenses (Volunteering Australia, 2005, 2007a and 2007b) and growing government and community expectations (Foster, 2005; Pearce, 2008). The results of this SES research may therefore be useful for any volunteer-based organization when considering strategies to enhance volunteer recruitment and retention.



Tasmania SES volunteers – Leadership

Literature Review

The literature review conducted in March 2008 by the author under a separate research project proved to be very useful. Preliminary analysis allowed preparations to be made for this research project including a better understanding of a number of initial recruitment and retention themes and ideas, which were presented to the SES volunteers at the Delphi focus group workshop. During the six months that elapsed since the earlier literature review was completed, two key events relating to research into emergency services volunteer recruitment and retention occurred that provided additional knowledge.

Firstly, Emergency Management Australia, on behalf of the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management, sponsored Dr Jim McLennan to provide an analysis of recent research on recruiting, supporting and retaining emergency services volunteers and to identify gaps in current research-based volunteering knowledge (McLennan, 2008a). Jim McLennan is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Psychological

Science at La Trobe University, and is also the Manager of the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre's (CRC) *Enhancing Volunteering Project*, which has been responsible for a great deal of fire service volunteer research since 2005.

This body of work was particularly useful because it reviewed a great deal of research already covered in the initial literature review, provided further insights as a result of more recent research that was not previously available, and it made a bold attempt to interpret the research into fire service volunteerism across the other emergency services, particularly SES. It also identified a number of applicable research gaps, which are detailed in Table 3.

The second event was the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Conference held in September 2008, where members of the Bushfire CRC *Enhancing Volunteering Project* team presented their latest findings. These provided new information, or supported research already reviewed. While based largely on fire service volunteers, it was acknowledged during a thematic session on volunteerism that the findings were generally applicable across all emergency services.

The March 2008 literature review was subsequently updated and is provided at Appendix B. This review was analysed as part of this project to help identify the types of people who join and stay as emergency services volunteers. Evidence provided in the research literature also helped to identify motivating factors and other issues that can be translated into recruitment and retention strategies.



Tasmania SES volunteers – Search and rescue

Table 3 – Current Significant Research Gaps for Emergency Services Volunteerism (McLennan, 2008a)

Priority	Research Gaps
High	Determine the level of need to introduce financial incentive schemes for volunteers, the scope and structure of such schemes and whether there are non-financial forms of recognition that volunteers value highly
	Determine the training needs of staff in order to improve the effectiveness of volunteer supervision, support and management
	Determine the training needs of volunteers in order to improve the supervision, leadership and management of local volunteer emergency services units
	Determine ways in which the burdens on employers of volunteers can be eased, including an examination of the forms of recognition that will assist the employers with marketing their goods/services
Intermediate	Development of ‘best practice’ models for emergency services organisations to more effectively manage and support their volunteers and to recognise and support employers and families of their volunteers
	Development of new models of emergency response volunteering that is better suited to current social and economic realities than is present ‘for life, 24/7’ availability model which operates in practice
Modest	Determine ways in which more volunteers can be recruited and retained who come from cultural and linguistic backgrounds other than Anglo-Australian
	Determine ways in which links between local emergency services units and Indigenous Australians can be strengthened
Global (to be incorporated with all of the above)	More research is required for non-fire service volunteers, such as SES and ambulance (most research has only been conducted on fire services volunteerism)
	There is a need for a comprehensive database which is readily available to researchers, policy makers and planners, which records the annual numbers of emergency services volunteers

Approach

A number of research methods were used for this project including quantitative research (analysis of survey data) and qualitative research (document analysis, literature review, Delphi focus group workshop). The following two steps were conducted and informed answers to the research question, *what strategies can be translated from available research and then implemented by Tasmania SES to improve the recruitment and retention of its volunteers?*

Step 1 - Analysis of the recent SES volunteer surveys and available Australian literature

The first stage of step 1 was to consider additional research that had come to light since March 2008 and update the previous literature review conducted by the author in March 2008. The latest version of that literature review (Appendix B) was analysed and interpreted in conjunction with the SES surveys (SES, 2002 & 2008a).

The scope of the literature review was limited to Australian literature because it was difficult to align the different frameworks and cultures and it was desirable for the findings to be as relevant as possible to the Tasmanian SES context. Some Australian research (eg, Esmond, 2001 and TFS, 2003) relied on research from the USA, Britain and New Zealand, but this was permitted because the literature was contextualised for use in Australia.

Where appropriate, the results were analysed using the three research sub-questions and translated into strategies to improve SES volunteer recruitment and retention in Tasmania. Potential areas of further research were highlighted throughout.

The analysis of the SES surveys focused mainly on the 2007 survey because, unlike the 2002 survey, this was designed more specifically for research into volunteer recruitment and retention. Despite this most questions asked in both surveys were similar, which allowed for some quantitative analysis of trends over a five year period.

Step 2. Focus-group workshop using the Delphi research technique

An interim report and a powerpoint presentation were prepared to summarise the key findings of step 1. In mid-July 2008, these were presented to all participants of a two day Unit Management Workshop (focus-group) with a list of options derived from the earlier research. By design, the workshop was attended by 30 current and future volunteer leaders, 10 from each geographic region. All but six of Tasmania's SES volunteer units were represented. These were unable to participate for a range of reasons (Warratah, Wynyard, King Island, Northern Midlands, Bruny Island and Central Highlands - see Table 2). The organisers were satisfied that the cohort covered a broad range of backgrounds, communities, ages, skill sets and experience. 20% of the participants were female volunteers, which was close to the 24.1% state total.



Tasmania SES volunteers (current and future leaders) – Participating in the Delphi focus group workshop

Participants were chosen by the units themselves after the aims of the workshop were explained in a letter during the planning stages. The Delphi research technique was used to ensure all participants were able to contribute equally towards a consensus view (Linstone, 2002). This involved three sessions:

Session 1: The Delphi workshop process was explained followed by a presentation on the interim report and a facilitated discussion and workshop on options based on preliminary research and any new options participants thought would be effective. A feedback form with a list of options and an opportunity to include new ideas and comments was handed out for completion and further discussion. Participants had to state on the form whether they supported the proposed options or not and explain their reasons. Those who wanted extra time to consider and complete their forms were granted as much time as they needed as long as they could provide their feedback before the next session.

Session 2: An updated and consolidated list of options based on feedback at session 1, with total votes for or against and the main reasons was prepared in real time. During facilitated discussion on this feedback (four hours after session 1), participants were given another opportunity to raise new ideas or issues. All were offered an opportunity to amend previous forms or add extra comments.

Session 3: This final session repeated session 2, but allowed 18 hours for participants to consider and provide any further feedback via the feedback forms, or verbally at the final session. All participants were asked to agree on the best options for recruitment and retention strategies.

Ethical Issues

Confidentiality

The recent survey (SES, 2008a) was conducted on the basis that responses would not be attributed to individuals or units. This was particularly important as some of the questions were of a personal nature (eg. Are you receiving income support payments? What is your level of education? What is your employment status?). During follow-on research (discussion during document analysis, literature review, the Delphi workshop and report writing), confidentiality and anonymity continued to be assured.

For the Delphi workshop, full and effective participation was encouraged by assuring participants that their comments in the feedback forms would be confidential and not attributed to the author without their expressed permission. All forms were marked “Personal and Confidential (when completed)” and it was optional to include their name and Unit. Participants were also given the opportunity to deposit completed forms out-of-session and in a way that no-one could attribute the comments to anyone. No-one took up this opportunity, however, and all were happy to attribute their names to their comments and ideas. While some were quieter than others all were happy to discuss their ideas during group discussions, a sign that they were quite passionate about what we were trying to achieve. Even so, their completed forms remained personal and confidential throughout. This did not hinder the research in any way.

External Documents

Some references used in this research had not been published or had not been publicly released in their current form at the time they were used (i.e., TFS, 2003; Volunteering Tasmania, 2008). Permission was subsequently obtained to cite any of the information contained in these documents.

Equal Opportunity

While all Tasmania SES units were expected to be appropriately represented at the Delphi Workshop, six were unable to attend for various reasons. To ensure fair opportunity to provide input, these units were given the opportunity to provide out-of-session input. In each case, they did not provide any additional comments and were happy to accept the consensus view of the focus group at the Delphi workshop.

Access

All Tasmania SES volunteers and staff had equal access to materials associated with this research. The Delphi Workshop relied on an appropriate cohort of SES volunteer leaders, but they were encouraged to discuss the issues covered with all their members so their comments could be regarded as the collective comments of their units. If participants wanted extra time to discuss issues with their members, they were granted extra time to do this. Some actually chose to accept this offer, but the feedback did not change any of the results of the workshop. This was further confirmed with a report of the consolidated results to all units about two months after the workshop.



Tasmania SES volunteers – Road accident rescue

Results

The analysis of available research literature and the two SES surveys allowed the broad strategies in Table 4 to be proposed at the Delphi workshop. These were presented to all participants with evidence of supporting research. This was followed by discussion and a great deal of constructive feedback from the volunteers who would ultimately take ownership and responsibility for the delivery of many of the final preferred recruitment and retention initiatives. While notes were taken during the workshop, most information was drawn from the written feedback forms.

The workshop also provided a good opportunity for the volunteers to provide feedback on the effectiveness of various retention initiatives implemented by SES since 2004/05 (eg, SES Long Service Medals, enhanced resources, various profile raising activities, etc). As many of these strategies were implemented without the benefit of much research, the feedback generally verified that the strategies were thought by the volunteers to be effective.

The Delphi research technique proved effective. It allowed the quieter or more introverted members to have their say and in many respects, their input proved to be the most considered and useful. Where members wanted to consult more broadly with their unit members, an extension of time was allowed and the results proved consistent with the original cohort, which provided added confidence with the results. Table 5 provides the end results of the Delphi workshop. This table was mailed to all units for comment and no issues or concerns were raised.

Subject to further research and the availability of funding, the accepted strategic options will be adopted by Tasmania SES, commencing in 2008/09.



Tasmania SES volunteers – General rescue

Table 4 – Preliminary Strategic Proposals Presented at the Delphi Workshop

Proposed Strategy	Supporting Arrangements/Initiatives
Implement Effective Volunteer Recruitment Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be an annual blanket campaign, targeted campaign, position vacant campaign or custom made campaign (combination of the above) • SES volunteers to have a key role locally • Supported by enhanced methods, resources and profile
Supporting references:	Esmond, 2001; Fahey, 2001; TFS, 2003; Aitken, 2000
Enhance Volunteer Recruitment Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on volunteer word-of-mouth • Effective local SES awareness and profile building activities (eg, displays and demonstrations) • Unit visits and public information forums • SES management to support with enhanced resources and publicity
Supporting references:	Fahey, 2001; TFS, 2003; Swan, 1991a; SES, 2008a; Morisey, 1993; Reinholdt, 1998
Enhance Volunteer Recruitment Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy and motivated serving SES volunteers to be the most important recruitment resource • Update/enhance printed and audio-visual recruitment information that focuses on main motivators and provides the best opportunity to join • Have appropriately equipped, skilled and supported volunteers to specialised in recruitment activities • Entry questionnaires for ongoing research
Supporting references:	EMA, 2002; Howard, 2003; Esmond, 2001; Fahey, 2001; TFS, 2003
Enhance Volunteer Retention by Enhancing SES Profile and Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide general duties uniform • Improve media engagement • Recognition of long service/achievement • Engage people who thank volunteers at unit level
Supporting references:	Aitken, 2000; Aldridge, 2004; Morisey, 1993; Reinholdt, 1998; Swan, 1991a; Fahey, 2001; SES, 2002 & 2008a; EMA, 2002; TFS, 2003
Enhance Volunteer Retention with Enhanced Management and Administrative Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with legitimate volunteer out-of-pocket expenses • Exit questionnaires for ongoing research • Operational Support stream of volunteer for those who feel they are no longer suited to physical/heavy tasks (can do admin, training, maintenance, etc) • Provide enhanced support and development for volunteer Unit Managers
Supporting references:	McLennan, 2007 & 2008a; Aitken, 1999; Woodward, 2001; Reinholdt, 1998; Volunteering Australia, 2005, 2007a & 2007b
Volunteer Recruitment and Retention to Remain a Strategic Priority of SES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term and sustainable strategies and goals • Seek additional funding/resources
Supporting references:	Esmond, 2001; TFS, 2003; Fahey, 2001; Anheier, 2000
Further Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to better understand specific needs of units and their communities before fully committing to new recruitment initiatives • With limited funds/resources, we need to be sure that we get it right
Supporting references:	McLennan, 2008a; Woodward, 2001

Table 5 – Results of the Delphi (Focus Group) Workshop

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Recruitment Campaigns	1 Annual 4-6 week blanket recruitment campaign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the entire State • Targeting all types of people • Using all available methods and resources, including volunteers, where possible (see strategy categories below) 	93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bit hit and miss • While simple to implement, it may be very expensive • Suitable around SES Week • Although not fully supported, there was consensus that the strategy should be trialed and evaluated
	2 Targeted recruitment campaigns, as required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For specific areas of need • Targeting specific types of people based on unit/area needs, if required • Using all available methods and resources (including volunteers) appropriate to the targeted areas and types of people required 	97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units have different requirements, which can be met more effectively • Particularly useful for smaller rural units • Will be more resource intensive • Use driver reviver stops for targeted recruitment • Despite one member not supporting in favour of the above, there was consensus that the strategy should be implemented
	Position Vacant campaign, as required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements to target people or groups with specific skills or attributes • Respond to expressions of interest with information and written invitations to visit the unit • Using all available methods and resources (including volunteers) appropriate 	77%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires careful management to avoid discrimination • May be confused as paid work • Expensive, time consuming and difficult to manage • More suited to the large city units • May reduce opportunity and motivation for advancement within the unit towards key positions/roles
	Custom Made campaigns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of the above based on emerging needs 	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires more background research (eg, demographics) • More difficult to develop and implement, but can be the most effective if properly resourced • Not supported except for combining blanket and targeted recruitment campaigns, as appropriate

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Recruitment Methods (to be applied to the selected campaigns)	3 Publicise volunteer opportunities via broadcast media (television and radio): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New SES volunteer recruitment CSA • During media/news opportunities • Feature the main volunteer motivators and areas of greatest need, where possible 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should feature all key functions, all gender and all age groups unless targeting specific attributes • Generic CSAs could be used for targeted recruitment with overlaid scrolled text messages to state specific needs • Seek opportunities for support from other emergency services by building relationships
	4 Publicise volunteer opportunities via an enhanced SES website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved website with more prominent features supporting volunteer recruitment, including instructions on how to join or how to find out more information (eg, visit the unit) • Provide details on all possible functions within volunteer units • Include unit web pages to provide specific contact and other information on SES units 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More suited for young people – regarded as the first place they would look if interested • Should allow email contact to be made • Must be well maintained and kept up to date • A standard proforma should be developed for Unit web pages, so units can contribute to changes and to ensure consistency (will look unprofessional there are a range of different formats) • Seek opportunities for support from other emergency services by building relationships
	5 Use contact cards to provide information and invite people to consider volunteering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used like a business card to provide contact details and website URL, but to also invite interested people to the unit at a designated convenient time • People visiting the unit with a contact card are hosted to an information session and tour of the unit prior to being provided instructions for joining 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances approachability and is more welcoming • Need to be complemented with good unit signage, additional information (eg, brochures), a good SES website and a welcoming unit environment • Volunteers can have the cards available at all times • Empowers volunteers to target people who have the right skills, attitudes or other suitable attributes
	Letterbox drops, street drives, door knocks, etc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide information and invite new members using contact cards • Can target certain areas or businesses 	93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some concern in certain city areas regarding safety during door knocks and likely imposition on people's privacy • A bit hit and miss • Could be a great deal of effort and time for little gain • Generally not supported, but left up to unit discretion if required, particularly for targeting certain local businesses

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Recruitment Methods (to be applied to the selected campaigns) - continued	6 Programmed unit open days, local demonstrations, displays, SES field days, etc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise profile and visibility of SES and the unit • To raise awareness of volunteer functions • To provide information on SES and instructions on how to join • Target the general public, or specific target groups, such as industry, big business, schools, scouts (depending on local needs and circumstances) 	97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many units already do this on an opportunity basis with some success – most success with “in-your-face” demonstrations • Will need added resources to support • Will increase time commitment of volunteers • Unit open days should be combined with BBQ to promote a relaxed and welcoming environment – should also combine with other units • Consensus reached on trying this, particularly for targeted recruitment campaigns
	7 Personalised letters of invitation to visit unit and to volunteer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide people who express an interest in volunteering with a personalized letter from the Unit Manager or Director, as required • Letter provides information and invites them to visit the unit or attend information sessions • Letter includes registration forms and instructions 	97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be difficult getting mailing addresses, so contact cards are a good backup • Suggest pre-formatted letters - Will need additional administration support from SES Regional or State HQs • Portrays a well organized and professional organization • Documents recruitment efforts – good for evaluation compared to contact cards • Consensus reached on trialing and evaluating this
	Adopt a 3-step approach for potential recruits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If people initially say “no”, keep their details and approach them again after 3 monthly periods to see if they can reconsider • Assumes “no” actually means “not now” • Keeps the opportunity open for up to 6 months 	77%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will take considerable effort • People may feel “hassled” • May be difficult getting contact details in the first place • May help to make people feel more wanted • Could be used at unit’s discretion on a case-by-case basis
	‘Bring a Mate’ or ‘Family night’ information sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program special nights where members bring friends or family members who might be willing to volunteer • Provide tours, meet other members and deliver an information session (can also combine a demonstration, display and/or social activity such as a BBQ) 	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been tried by some units without success • Happens anyway without the need for a deliberate strategy through word of mouth • Can be done for friends using the agreed contact card method • Could be used at unit’s discretion on a case-by-case basis

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Recruitment Resources (to be applied to the selected campaigns)	8 Print media to provide generic SES volunteer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures, posters, etc • Contact cards • Available to all SES units • Feature the main volunteer motivators 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current brochures should be updated for distribution during all recruitment activities or other opportunities • Posters can be placed in local businesses or council shop fronts, particularly during programmed campaigns • Should also be available on SES website • Should feature all key functions, all gender and all age groups unless targeting specific attributes
	9 Audio-visual media to provide generic SES volunteer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD for SES unit displays • CSA for broadcasting on television (and radio) • Feature the main volunteer motivators and areas of greatest need, where possible 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different versions should be made to target certain needs • Should be good quality, striking and memorable • Should feature all key functions, all gender and all age groups unless targeting specific attributes
	10 SES unit recruitment ‘buddies’/mentors for new members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be carefully selected and appointed by Unit Managers for each new recruit to assist with fitting in and the provision of information • Where appointments are not made, Unit Manager to perform the role 	93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many thought this would significantly help newcomers to fit in and feel more welcome, providing the buddy/mentor was appropriately appointed, eg, female member to female recruit, family member to family member recruit • Some Unit Managers already perform this role • While two respondents did not support because they felt the appointment of this resource should be left up to the unit, there was consensus that it should be trialed and evaluated
	Community Relations Officer’s within each Unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a single point of contact and coordinator for all unit recruitment and retention activities, including media and marketing coordination • Development opportunities provided, if required 	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not popular in the smaller rural units – would prefer to rely on Unit Managers for contact and coordination • Difficult to appoint the right person • Workload is high enough without appointing volunteers for additional specialized functions • Should be given to volunteers with good local contacts and networking/interpersonal skills

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Recruitment Resources (to be applied to the selected campaigns) - continued	11 Regional Community Relations Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a regional resource of willing and appropriately skilled and resourced volunteers to support volunteer recruitment and retention activities, including unit-level media and marketing coordination • Development opportunities provided, if required 	97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some units were uncertain due to concerns that the groups may interfere with the control of their own activities (as experienced when last attempted in the South Region) • Will need good support and direction from Regional and State Headquarters • Members of the group need to be carefully selected • Consensus was achieved for this to be trialed and evaluated in consultation with all units
	12 Entry questionnaire to allow ongoing research and development in volunteer recruitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some questions added to volunteer application form, eg, Why do you wish to volunteer? How did you first hear about SES and volunteering? How could the recruitment process be improved? etc 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While supported, some thought we should keep the paperwork to an absolute minimum so not to be a turn-off • Return rate should be good if part of the application form • If we're doing ongoing research/assessment we need to be prepared to adapt to changing trends – this needs to be done in consultation with the units

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Retention – Building Profile and Visibility	13 Continue to provide a dedicated Tasmania SES Long Service Medal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 10 years diligent service (clasp for every additional 5 years) • Include lapel Service Pin with SES logo and years served in 5 year increments • Have appropriate award ceremonies in front of all unit members and invite local dignitaries and family members • Director, Minister or other VIP to officiate 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent introduction of medal and pins was considered a worth while or successful retention strategy • Need a uniform to wear it with • Should publicise existing recognition award system more, eg, commendations, certificates of appreciation, unit awards, etc
	14 Provide general duties uniform for all SES volunteers and staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform comprises light blue shirt with SES badges, ribbons and epaulettes (epaulettes also for overalls to indicate position/status); navy blue trousers/skirt, SES belt, black shoes/boots • At no cost to the volunteers (except for maintenance) 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will improve local profile and visibility compared to other volunteer-based emergency services • Will provide a greater sense of individual and unit pride • Looks more professional • Volunteers should not have to provide uniform items
	Public ‘Thank You’ certificates and publicised visits by people the volunteers help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When people thank SES for volunteer services, invite them to present a thank you certificate to the unit or volunteers involved • Completed certificates to be made available by SES Regional or State Headquarters • Publicise via the media and invite family and local public figures to the event 	87%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some strongly supported from the point of view of publicity within the community regarding the profile of their unit, or SES as a whole • Some were strongly against because they don’t volunteer to be thanked, or they don’t want the public to think that they need to be thanked • Others stated that they don’t do what they do to be thanked, but it’s nice/rewarding when it happens • May trial and evaluate with the units who supported, subject to agreement from the Unit Manager

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Retention – Building Profile and Visibility continued	15 Improve media engagement to publicise SES activities, particularly the achievements and commitment of volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen relations with media to optimise publicity of SES and its volunteers • Provide more media releases on achievements of SES and volunteers • Provide more media awareness training on a needs basis 	93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularly important during SES Week • Publicity and recognition from others is appreciated, but is not a major motivator for all volunteers – it's more about self reward and self satisfaction for helping others • Some are concerned when other emergency services get mentioned in news for multi-agency response, but SES gets no mention despite a significant role as well • Consensus achieved to implement on a needs basis
Retention – Management and Admin.	16 Assist more with legitimate volunteer out-of-pocket expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State HQ to review entitlements • State HQ to publicise entitlements 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes too much trouble/paperwork for volunteers to claim • Many saw increasing petrol costs to attend units as the greatest out-of-pocket expense (some volunteers live 30km away) • Other common expenses include: unclaimed meals, mobile phone call costs, use of personal equipment/clothing • Some claim they have never experienced out-of-pocket expenses – others claim they were unaware of existing entitlements and would like them explained
	17 Reintroduce exit interviews/questionnaires to assess the reasons why volunteers leave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support units with questionnaires to ensure consistency • Completed questionnaires to be sent to Regional / State HQ for ongoing assessment 	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some considered this unnecessary because the units already know why people leave • Good for those who state their intention to leave, but would be difficult to do for volunteers leaving on bad terms or for volunteers who just stop turning up • Consensus agreement to trial and evaluate at willing units providing the units are properly supported with the necessary questionnaires and expected return rates are realistic
	18 Introduce an Operational Support Stream of volunteer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily for those who believe they cannot cope with the more physical/heavy tasks or with the emotional stresses (eg, exposure to trauma) • May also help with recruitment for people initially daunted by the more physical/heavy tasks (eg, women, retirees) or tasks that may expose them to trauma 	97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several units already do this effectively • Good as long as they have a constructive role to play, eg, administration, training, maintenance, public relations and awareness (eg, driver reviver), etc – will help retain experience • Many 'operational' volunteers are happy doing these support tasks anyway • Consensus agreement to trial and evaluate

Strategy Categories	Options Considered at the Delphi Workshop (green = accepted; red = not accepted)	Level of Support	Comments
Retention – Management and Admin. - continued	19 Continue to program a Unit Management Workshop each year to provide development opportunities for volunteer Unit Managers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on management and leadership • Exchange experience, information and knowledge 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning materials to be provided in advance to participants can be better prepared • All thought the pilot 2008 Workshop was successful
	20 More combined unit training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed in consultation with the units • Allows for greater sharing of experience, information and knowledge 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All supported on the basis that it fit into their own training and operational programs • Might need transport and accommodation support
Other Supporting Recruitment / Retention Strategies	21 Volunteer recruitment/ retention should be an ongoing strategic priority for Tasmania SES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To remain a business priority • Develop long term strategic goals • Allocate appropriate funds and resources 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment/retention needs an ongoing sustained effort to be effective in the long run and needs to adapt to change • May become more challenging in the future due to aging population, growing work/family demands and increased workload due to climate change
	22 Before committing to a recruitment campaign SES should have a better understanding of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any specific needs or issues within each Unit area • The numbers of active volunteers required per Unit (upper and lower limits) • Demographic issues in each local area • Potential resource implications and costs and the level of volunteer engagement in the process 	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential for targeted recruitment to ensure local needs are met • Will also inform potential levels and types of training and support to follow an influx of volunteers • Can't afford to overdo recruitment – there will be upper limits due to space and available resources
	SES to take management and funding responsibility of unit facilities and vehicles away from local government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For maintenance of more consistent facility and vehicle standards across the State • Local government to retain broader emergency management responsibilities per the <i>Emergency Management Act 2006</i> 	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those units that are well supported by the councils were strongly against – they were primarily concerned that they would take a backwards step • SES funding and human resources would need a significant increase to manage this effectively • SES should still provide more funding and resource support to councils, if possible • SES management should maintain close relations and linkages with local government

Analysis and Discussion

As most of the research literature was about fire services volunteers, the relevance to SES volunteers was questioned. In view of the following, however, such research was generally considered valid for SES volunteers:

- About a quarter of the Tasmanian SES volunteers were also volunteers for the Tasmania Fire Service (SES, 2008a);
- Research on fire services volunteer motivating factors was generally consistent with SES research – the main motivations were not specifically about the tasks or functions performed within the different services (ABS, 2007; Maher, 2005; Volunteering Australia, 2004; Pope, 2005; Wilson, 2005; Fahey, 2002; McLennan, 2008a & b; SES, 2008a);
- The volunteers from all services share the same communities, they work together for most emergency events (in complementary or support roles), and they share the same barriers to volunteering (McLennan, 2008a); and
- The Delphi workshop (step 2) provided some assurance that fire services volunteer research was valid, as the participating SES volunteers accepted the findings as generally being relevant to them and acceptable for informing 'their' recruitment and retention strategies.

Step 1 - Analysis of the recent SES volunteer surveys and available Australian literature

The three sub-research questions were considered during the analysis of available literature. These proved useful in translating strategies and initiatives in support of the primary research question for further consideration at the Delphi workshop. They also made it very apparent that, as Jim McLennan found (McLennan, 2008a), there were many research gaps and opportunities for the future. These are detailed throughout this section and consolidated in Table 9.

Can the two SES survey results indicate any trends or issues over a five year period that can assist in the translation of recruitment and retention needs and priorities?

The two SES surveys (SES, 2002 and 2008a) were conducted for different purposes, but many of the questions were similar, which allowed for some analysis of trends over a five year period. These could then be used to determine emerging recruitment and retention issues, needs or priorities.

Some translation of the 2002 survey results was necessary to align it with the results of the 2007 survey. For example, in 2002, participants had to respond to questions like, "Generally, do you feel that the equipment you use in your role as an SES volunteer is reliable?", with answers like "always", "usually", "sometimes", "rarely", "never" or "don't know". In 2007, participants had to respond to questions like, "The equipment you use in your role as an SES volunteer is unreliable/faulty?", with answers like "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree" or "strongly agree". In this case, the questions were similar enough and "strongly disagree" (2007) could be aligned with "never" (2002); "disagree" (2007) aligned with "rarely" (2002); "neutral" (2007) aligned with "sometimes" (2002), etc (see Figure 9).

An analysis of these two sets of results revealed good correlation, however, compared to the 2007 cohort, the respondents in 2002 were consistently more inclined to opt for the extreme answers, such as “*always*” (translated to “*strongly agree*”), or “*never*” (translated to “*strongly disagree*”). While the reasons for this are unclear, anecdotal evidence suggests that, for questions relating to resources and funding, it may have been because the participants knew that the survey was to help justify additional funding and resources, which were more significantly lacking at the time, so they may have opted for the stronger answers to make a stronger point.

Motivational Factors

Similar questions were asked about the motivations to become an SES volunteer, but the resulting answers were not exactly the same and required some translation. Table 6 shows all the answers to the 2007 survey and the top three from the 2002 survey. Giving back to, or helping the community came well on top for both surveys as the greatest motivating factor. In 2002, this was followed by gaining new qualifications/skills and then meeting new people. The rewarding nature of the work did not feature in the 2002 survey, but was easily the second greatest motivating factor in 2007, above the gaining of new qualifications/skills.

This would indicate that, while SES should continue to focus on publicising its ability to help communities and to provide new skills and learning opportunities, it should also focus on how these can be very rewarding. Rewarding aspects could be portrayed in new volunteer recruitment advertisements, website, print materials and via the media. Greater emphasis on enhancing and maintaining good profile and visibility of SES within the communities should also help to enhance the rewarding nature of volunteering, as will better recognising the achievements and commitment of SES volunteers.

Table 6 – SES Volunteer motivational factors for wanting to become an SES volunteer (SES, 2002 and 2008a)

Rank	To gain qualifications / learn new skills		Because it is rewarding	Social aspects / meet new people		To give back to the community / help the community		To fulfil income support mutual obligations	Other
	2007	2002	2007	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2007
1	23	32	49	12	9	105	83	2	11
2	31	70	61	16	5	25	26	0	2
3	38	20	23	31	24	21	15	2	0
4	20	NA	4	51	NA	7	NA	8	0
5	3	NA	0	7	NA	0	NA	29	3
6	0	NA	0	1	NA	0	NA	2	5

Training

During the five year period Tasmania SES volunteers were generally happy with the training support they receive with less than 5% disagreeing (Figures 1 and 2). A smaller percentage of the 2007 cohort strongly agreed than the 2002 cohort. This may be a translation issue, because this trend was common to most other questions. If not, however, it would suggest that, while the 2007 volunteers were happy with their training, they recognise that SES can still do a little better, perhaps in small ways, such as offering more cross-unit training, more management training for Unit Managers and better programming of first aid courses. These were some of the general comments raised in the survey and at the Delphi Workshop.

Figures 3 and 4 also reveal that improvements in training time convenience and accessibility may help for the 4-7% of volunteers who were dissatisfied. SES's continuous improvement program should take all these smaller issues into account.

Table 7 reveals that the respondents chose training as the second most important SES spending priority for both surveys. This indicates and further supports the level of importance volunteers and the SES places on good training as a key motivation for joining and staying in the SES. This is further supported by the literature (Fahey, 2002; Stone, 2000; Anheier, 2000).

Figure 1 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *The training you receive through SES is adequate for your needs as a volunteer?*

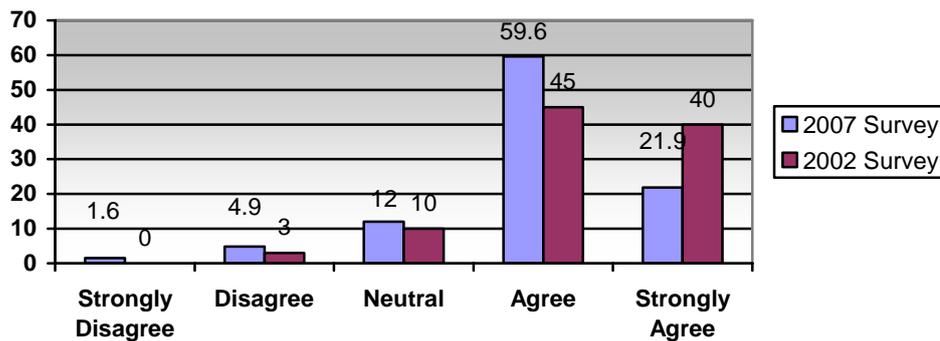


Figure 2 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *The training you receive through SES is conducted professionally?*

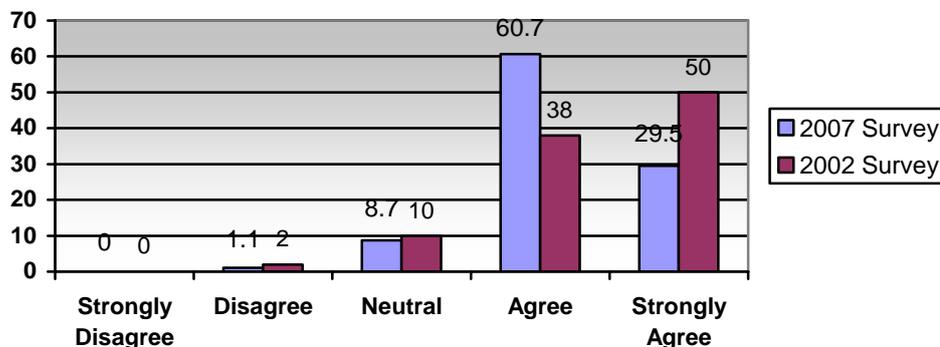


Figure 3 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *The training you receive through SES is conducted at convenient times?*

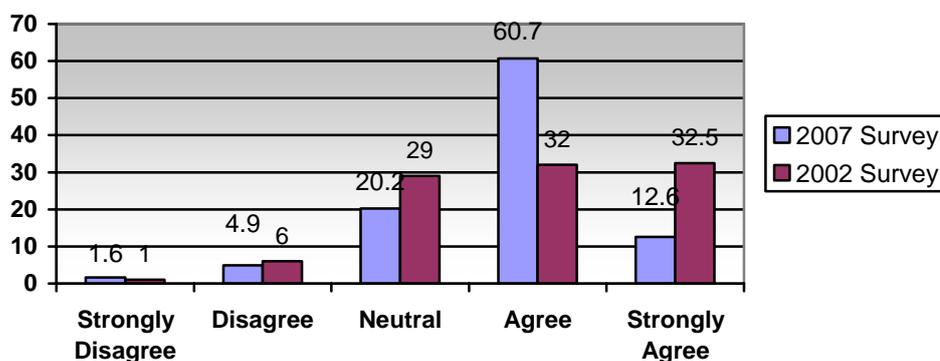
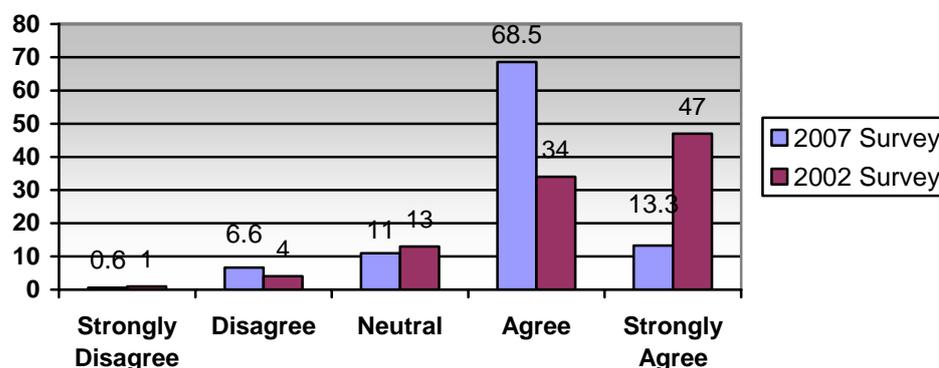


Figure 4 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *The training you receive through SES is accessible to you?*



Funding

Figures 5 and 6 reveal that volunteers are still not happy with the funding their unit or the SES organisation receives. Although the respondents for the two surveys had to answer funding questions differently the results were fairly similar (in 2007 they only had to answer “yes”, “no” or “unsure”; in 2002 they had more options and could answer “yes”, “mostly”, “kind of”, “hardly”, “no” or “unsure”).

While most respondents were not happy with the level of funding the SES organisation received, it is highly likely that the majority would not be aware of the amount the SES actually receives. An informal verbal survey with staff, who have more opportunity than the volunteers to be aware of the SES budget, reinforced this view by revealing that very few had a good understanding of the organisation’s funding. This information is not generally communicated to the volunteers. If funding questions of this type are asked in future, some background funding information should also be provided.

SES could enhance volunteer recruitment and retention if it were able to satisfy the volunteers that funding levels were acceptable. SES could also better promote the advancements it has been able to make for the volunteers since it received the 30% budget increase in 2004. It could also explore better options for specific unit funding, which is currently provided in partnership with local government. Some councils provide outstanding funding support, while others don’t. A more consistent high standard of funding support, regardless of the source should help with volunteer recruitment and retention.

Table 7 – SES Volunteer preferences on spending priorities in their Unit, 1 being highest priority (SES, 2002 and 2008a)

Rank	Equipment		Uniform		Social Activities		Training		Other
	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007
1	126	120	17	5	4	2	42	35	5
2	40	39	32	23	6	0	88	90	0
3	6	1	105	122	19	9	32	24	2
4	1	2	15	7	119	144	7	2	11
5	5	NA	4	NA	17	NA	3	NA	45
Total	178	162	173	157	165	155	172	151	63

Figure 5 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Are you happy with the level of funding your unit receives?*

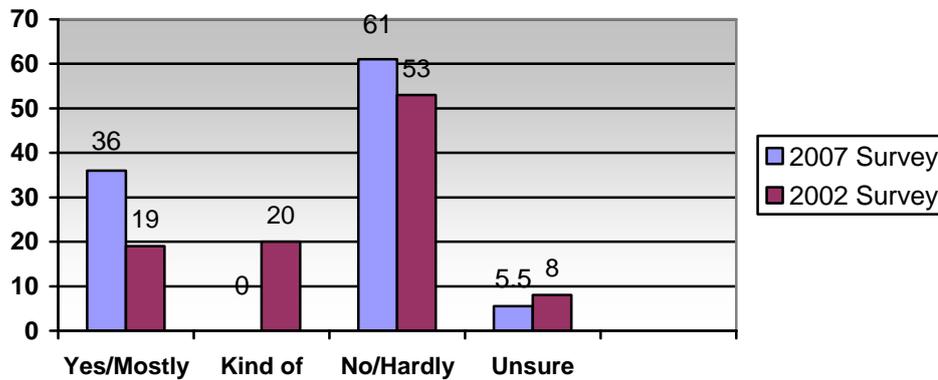
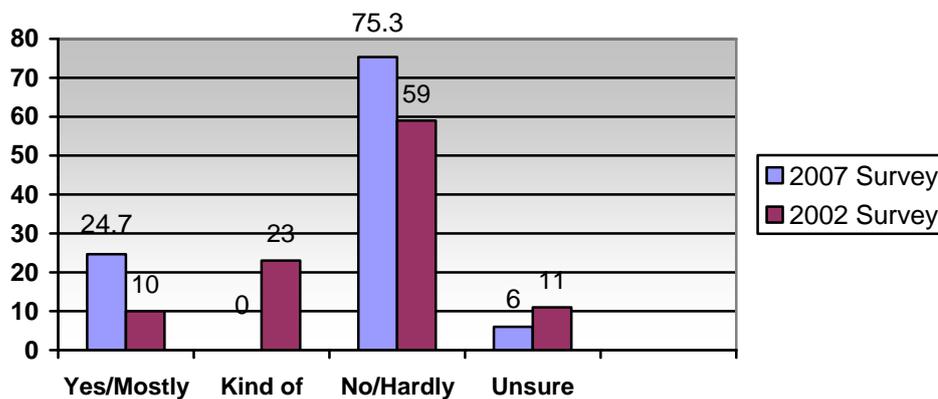


Figure 6 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Are you happy with the level of funding the SES as an organisation receives?*



Uniforms

Figure 7 reveals that SES can still do better at providing new and replacement uniforms within an appropriate timeframe, with 33% being dissatisfied. Figure 8 reveals that, when they are provided they fit well for three-quarters of the volunteers, but the quarter who reported that they don't fit well is a concern and will need to be addressed. Despite the introduction of a greater range of personal protective uniform items, such as two-piece overalls, cold weather gear, improved safety boots and other gear the problems associated with well fitting uniforms have remained similar over the five year period. Per Table 7, the purchase of uniforms is considered the third highest spending priority for 2002 and 2007.

Figure 7 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: SES uniforms (new/replacement) are issued in an appropriate time-frame

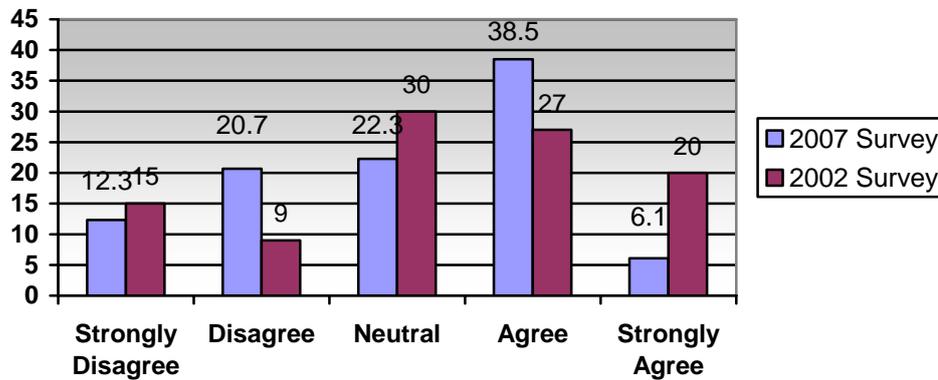
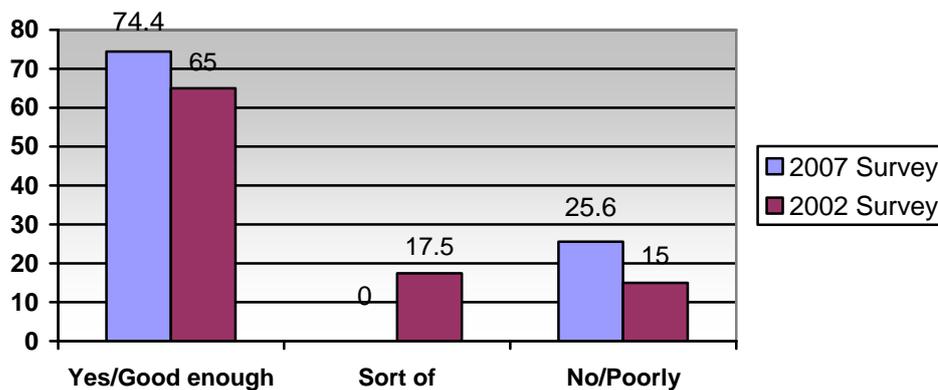


Figure 8 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: Are correct sizes of uniform/PPE items provided (2002: Do your overalls fit?)



With regards to spending priorities, the results over the five years remained quite consistent, per Table 7.

Equipment

Table 7 reveals that volunteers continue to rate equipment as the highest spending priority. Figure 9 also reveals some increased concern regarding equipment quality and maintenance over the same five year period. This is surprising because of the significant enhancements in the provision of additional and higher quality resources to volunteers since 2004, particularly in the areas of personal protective equipment, road crash rescue equipment, vehicles, traffic management kits, storm response kits, general rescue equipment and related consumables (eg, rope, tarpaulins, etc).

Informal verbal feedback obtained at regular unit visits, training activities and the Delphi workshop reveal no significant dissatisfaction over equipment. There were several relatively minor concerns by some units regarding delays with vehicle replacement, radio coverage, numbers of pagers provided and unit facilities, but these seemed to be relatively isolated cases that were addressed as such. A number of factors may have contributed to these results, which should be the subject

of further research. For example, what seems to be a relatively minor equipment issue for SES management, can apparently be a major issue for the volunteers.

Regardless of the results of any additional research, it might pay to ensure all volunteers or prospective volunteers are aware of the significant enhancements in the provision of equipment since 2004 and that their equipment standards generally match those, and in some cases exceed those, for other SES organisations (eg, Tasmania SES has kept pace with changing car technologies and ensured units are provided with improved road rescue tools).

Figure 10 represents little volunteer concern about the adequacy of equipment to do their job, or any trends over the five year period that would require priority attention. In light of the above, however, volunteers may be developing a desire to receive yet further, more specialised equipment to do more for their communities. Again, this should be explored further.

Figure 9 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *The equipment you use in your role as an SES volunteer is unreliable / faulty?*

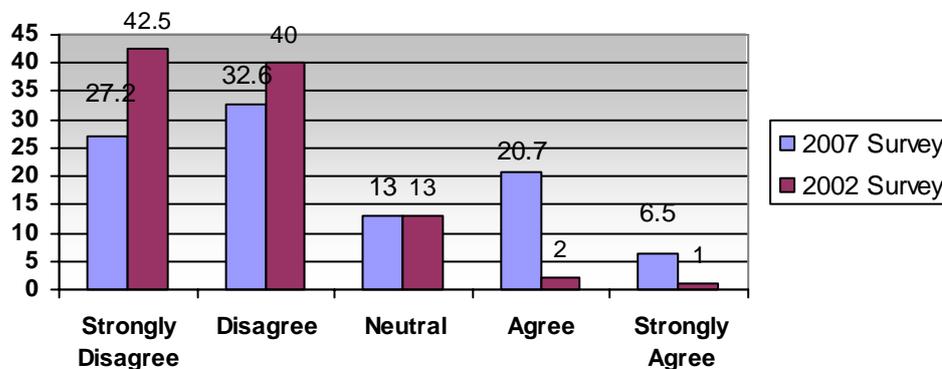
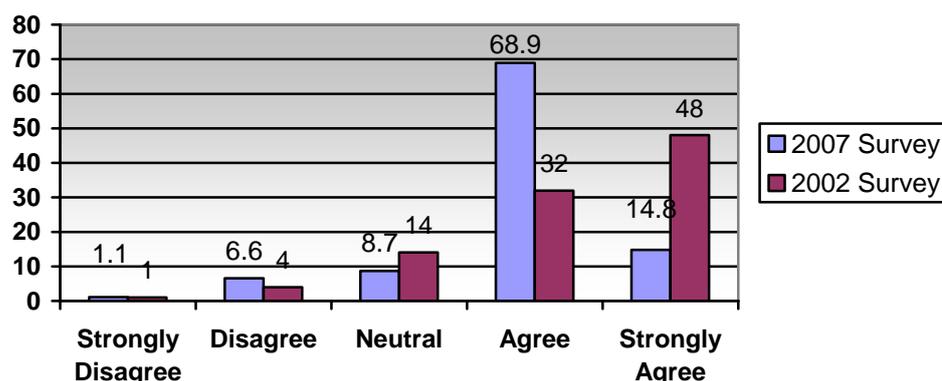


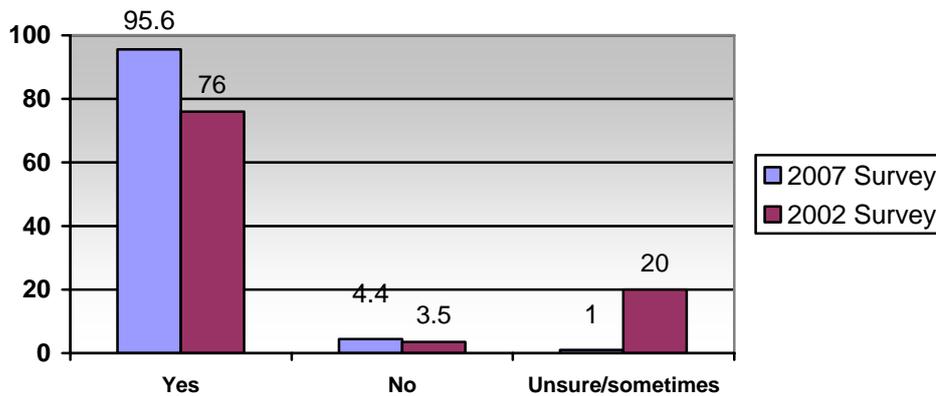
Figure 10 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *The equipment you use in your role as a volunteer is adequate for the job it is provided for?*



Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)

Figure 11 indicates a marked improvement in OH&S compliance, which is also a reflection of the leadership and management of units and unit members. This reflects greater emphasis being placed on OH&S awareness and compliance over the last five years, which should be maintained into the future.

Figure 11 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Does your unit comply with Occupational Health and Safety requirements?*



Access and Equity

Figure 12 and 13 indicate a marked improvement in access and equity awareness and are also a reflection of the leadership and management of units and unit members. This also reflects the greater emphasis SES has placed on access and equity awareness and compliance over the last five years, which should be maintained into the future. While the 15.4% who were not aware of their access and equity responsibilities (Figure 12) was a very significant improvement, SES should aspire to get this result to zero. This is supported by the fact that the percentage of female volunteers has remained steady over the five year period. If conducting targeted recruitment for female members, or people with attributes not regarded as typical for SES, these results should be at hand to provide some reassurance.

Figure 12 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Are you aware of your Access and Equity responsibilities in SES?*

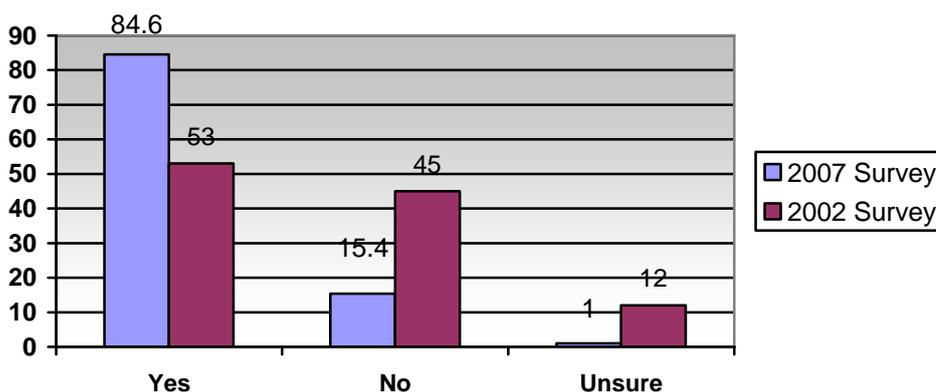
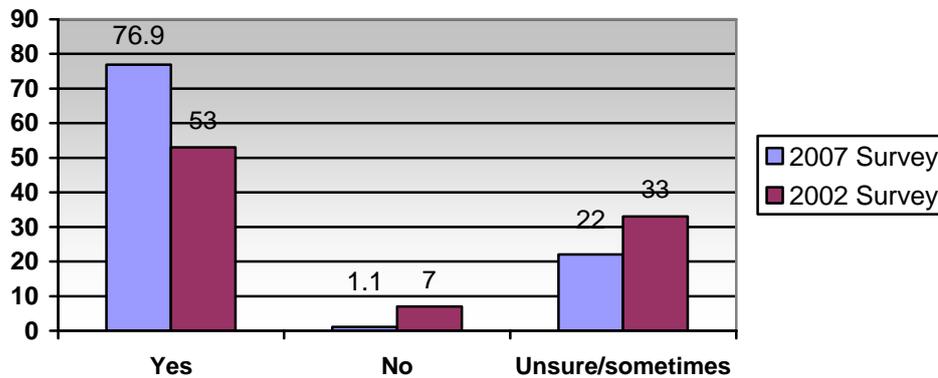


Figure 13 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Does your unit comply with Access and Equity requirements?*



Recognition

The results in figures 14 to 17 represent a marked improvement over the five year term with publicity and recognition, however there is still a significant number of volunteers who believe SES should receive more publicity for what it does. While respondents believed that the SES organization adequately recognized the contribution of SES volunteers, over 20% felt that the general public did not. This would suggest that SES can do more to publicise the great work and commitment of SES volunteers. Organisationally, more can also be done to enhance the general profile and visibility of SES within communities, but also with employers of volunteers (or others, such as families, government, etc) to enhance broader support. The literature supports this approach (McLennan, 2008a; Woodward, 2001; Aitken, 2000; Aldridge, 2004).

Figure 14 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *SES receives enough publicity?*

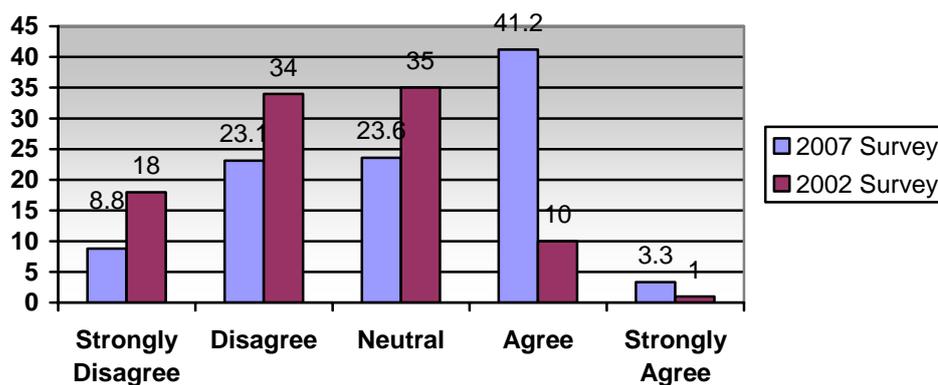


Figure 15 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Your contribution as a volunteer is recognised by SES?*

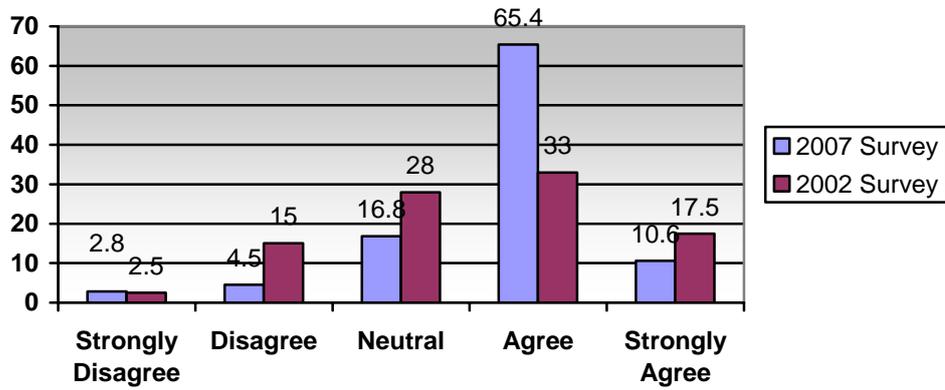


Figure 16 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Your contribution as a volunteer is recognised by the Tasmanian public?*

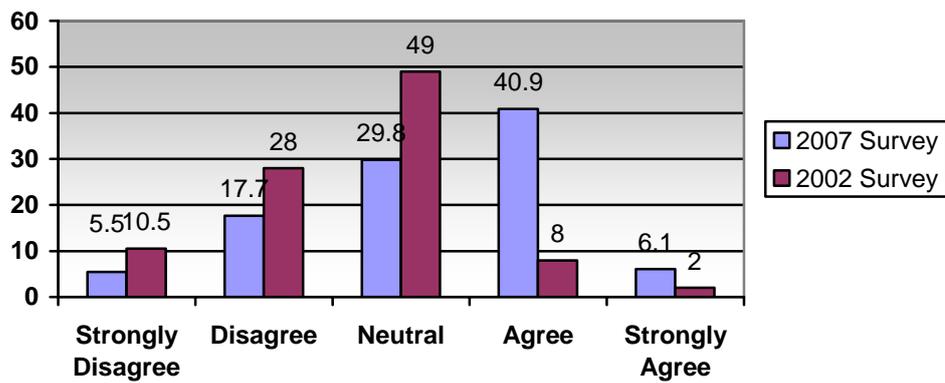
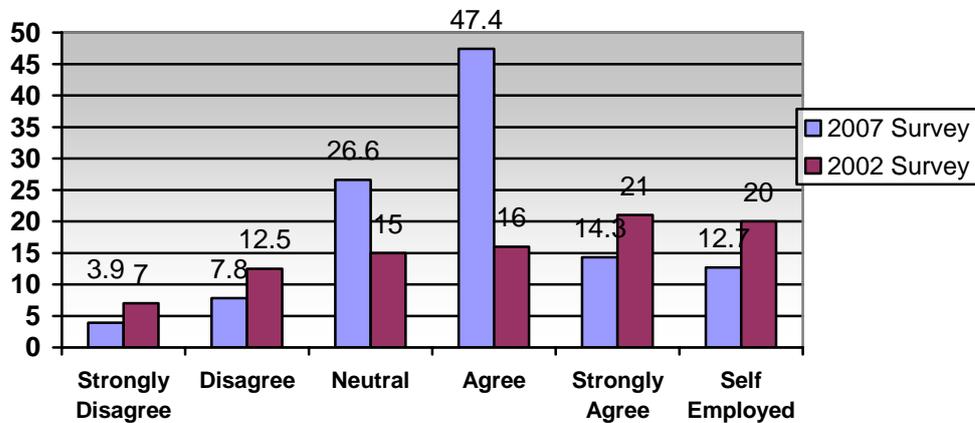


Figure 17 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Your employer is supportive when time off work is required to conduct SES duty?*



Management

Despite the tendency for respondents in 2002 to opt for the more extreme answer (in the positive) the results were fairly consistent over the five year period, with the vast majority agreeing that people in management roles are approachable (Figure 18), they communicate well (Figure 19), they are fair (Figure 20) and are responsive to volunteer needs (Figure 21). The 18.5% of respondents who felt that regional staff were not responsive to their needs (Figure 21), represented a worsening trend that will need some further assessment, particularly with regards to volunteer retention. Discussions with regional staff and performance data reveal that the level of engagement has actually increased markedly since 2004, but at times, their ability to respond to growing volunteer needs and expectations has been hampered by added work and time pressures and a lack of human resources.

Figure 18 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Your Unit Manager is approachable?*

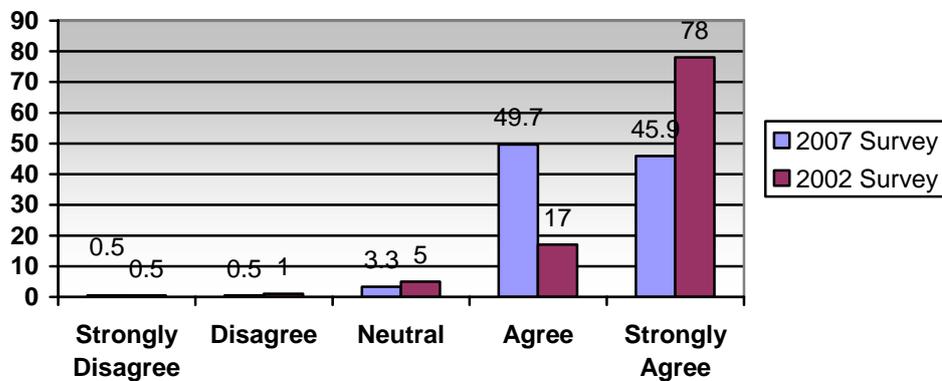


Figure 19 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Your Unit Manager communicates well with unit members?*

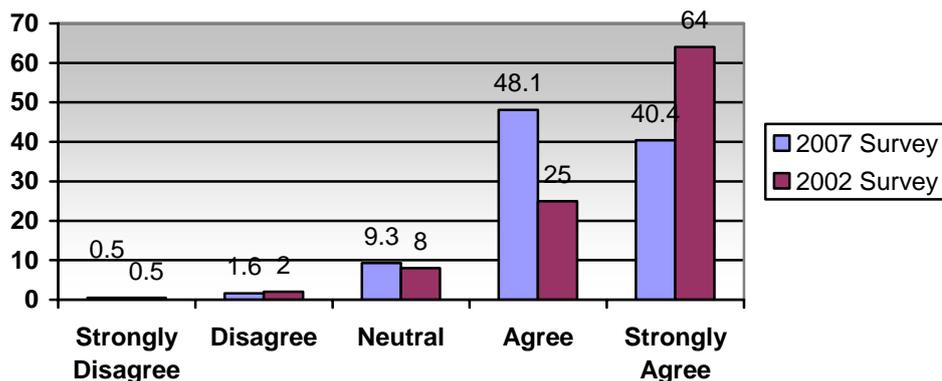


Figure 20 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Your Unit Manager is fair to all members of your unit?*

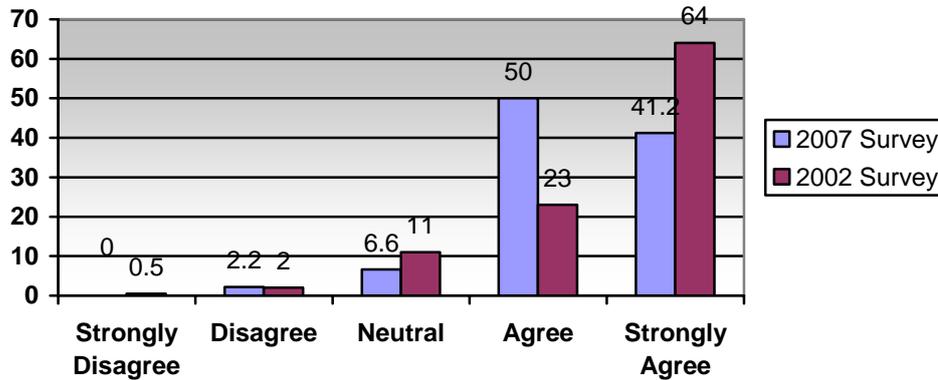
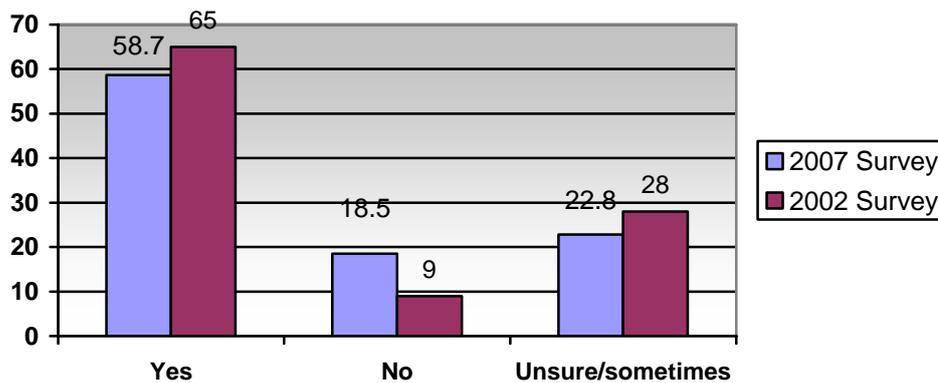


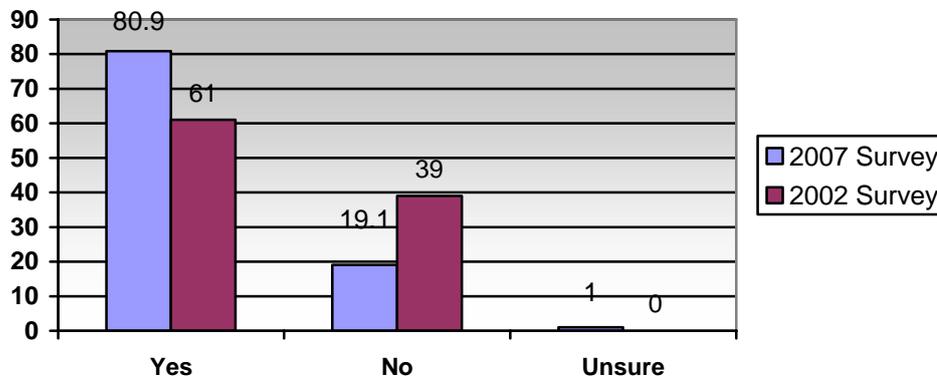
Figure 21 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Do you feel that the regional staff in your area are responsive to your needs as a SES volunteer?*



Legal Protections

During the five year period between surveys, new legislation was prepared that improved legal protections for all emergency services volunteers. A number of awareness sessions held throughout the State would have attributed to the improvement in awareness, but the 19.1% who are still not aware would indicate that some additional awareness activities may provide some added assurances for prospective or serving volunteers.

Figure 22 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Are you aware of the legal protections offered to you whilst performing SES duties in accordance with the Emergency Management Act 2006 (Emergency Services Act 1976 in 2002)*



What other results from the 2007 survey can assist with the identification of possible recruitment and retention strategies?

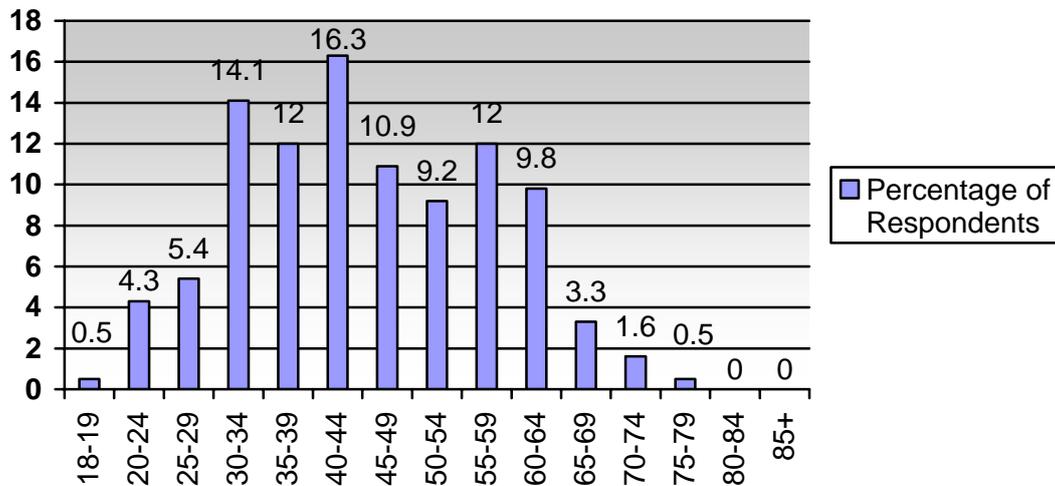
Age Profile

An analysis of the age profile in Figure 23 and the data collected for all SES volunteers per Table 2 provides some valuable insights. The most striking insight is the small percentage of young volunteers within the 18-29 year age group, which comprises only 10% of all respondent volunteers. While this relates to the survey respondents only, the data for all Tasmanian SES volunteers at Table 2 and other statistics held by SES correlate well. This suggests that SES could do more to attract and retain younger people.

The need to do more to attract 18-29 year olds may, however, depend on the ability to retain these younger members. For example, if SES finds that younger people are more difficult to retain due to the transient and unstable lifestyles they tend to lead it might be more cost effective to focus on the recruitment of more settled and reliable age groups. Further research specifically on the recruitment and retention of volunteers within the 18-29 year age group would be beneficial.

The Tasmania Fire Service has found that junior/cadet programs help significantly with the recruitment and retention of younger volunteers, but SES lacks the same resources and funds to support such programs and would therefore need the benefit of considerably more research to justify the investment (TFS, 2003).

Figure 23 – Age Profile of the 2007 SES Survey Volunteer Respondents (SES, 2008a)

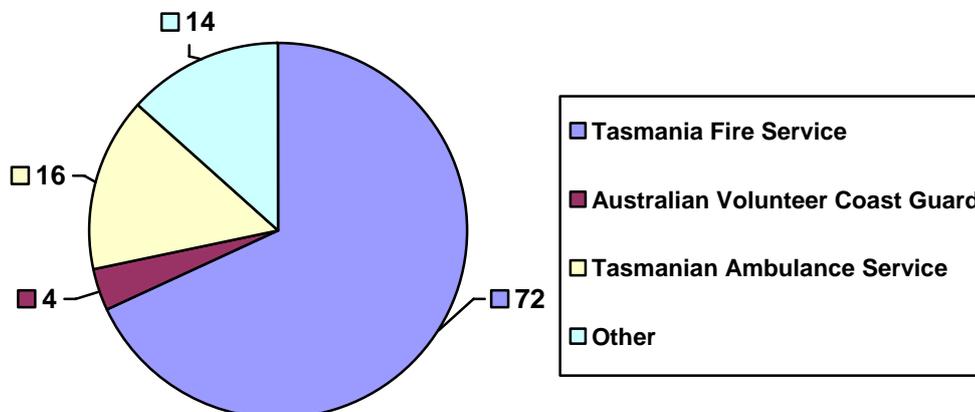


Volunteer Membership of other Emergency Services

Figure 24 reveals that, of the 27.2% of SES volunteers who were also volunteers of other emergency services, almost three-quarters of these were volunteer firefighters (SES, 2008a). Rather than competing against the other Services for volunteers, particularly the Tasmania Fire Service, relationships could be strengthened to share related knowledge in volunteer recruitment and retention and also to coordinate or combine recruitment and retention activities and resources.

This type of partnership approach might be particularly useful in the more remote rural areas where all services struggle to recruit and maintain sufficient numbers of volunteers. At these locations, volunteers could be encouraged to multi-skill and be rewarded by the benefits of more than one Service. With over a quarter of SES volunteers already volunteering for other Services, the culture would seem suitable for this, subject to an appropriate consultative change management approach being adopted so existing SES identities and cultures are not unduly threatened.

Figure 24 – Percentage breakdown of volunteers who volunteer with other Services

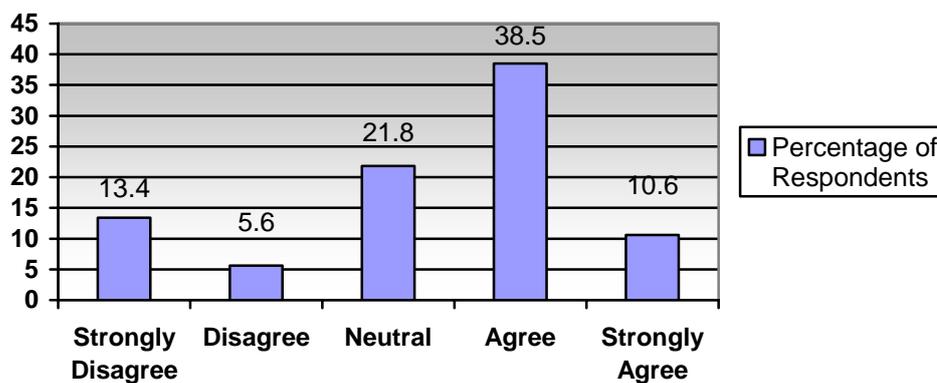


Training Delivery

The survey revealed that around 70% of the volunteers preferred to receive their training at their units instead of other regional locations and on weekday evenings instead of weekends. Many respondents commented that, although this was their preference, they still preferred a mix and would not want regional or weekend training opportunities cut altogether. Other supporting comments within the survey and also at the Delphi workshop suggested that time pressures and out-of-pocket expenses were the main reasons for these preferences. SES should therefore tailor its training program to support these preferences, but also with supporting strategies to help volunteers with legitimate out-of-pocket expenses and help volunteers and their families to justify the time needed for training.

With regards to the issue of training certificates in a timely manner (Figure 25), the survey revealed that 13.4% of the respondents were strongly dissatisfied. While the majority were happy, SES will need to speed up the provision of training certificates to ensure they feel appropriately rewarded for their training commitment.

Figure 25 – Percentage responses by SES volunteer respondents to: *Training certificates are issued in a timely manner?*



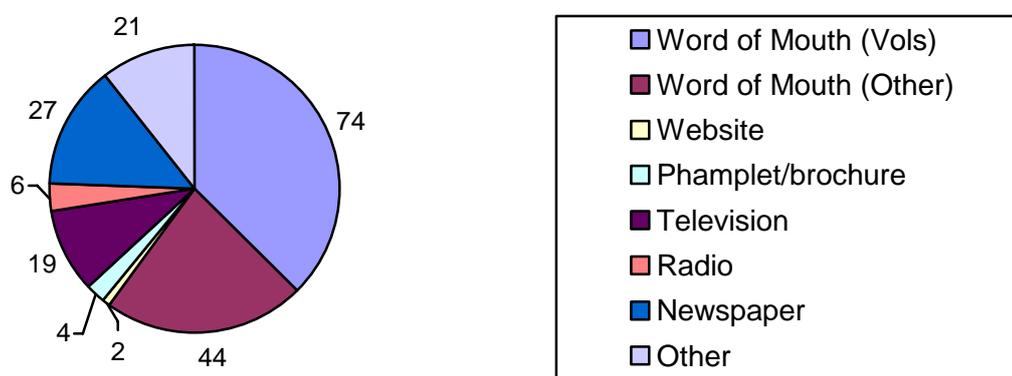
First Hearing about SES

Learning how serving volunteers first heard about volunteering for the SES could indicate the most effective method of communication with future potential volunteer recruits. Figure 26 is useful in this regard, because it indicates that the vast majority found out volunteering in SES by word-of-mouth. The majority of these were from serving volunteers who were friends, family members or acquaintances, or from serving volunteers at public activities, such as SES displays, demonstrations or awareness activities (eg, Driver Reviver). This suggests that word-of-mouth has been effective and should continue as a key medium to attract new recruits. Of the remaining methods, newspapers and television were reasonably effective at introducing people to the possibility of volunteering in the SES. With increased publicity and engagement with the media, this could be further enhanced. These results are consistent with the literature (Morisey, 1993; Reinholdt, 1998; Swan, 1991a).

The SES website, radio and pamphlets/brochures did not feature as key methods of introducing the public to volunteering. The reasons for this are unclear and should be the subject of further research to be sure that enhancements in the application of these methods cannot improve recruitment. For example, added publicity about the

SES website, enhancements to the website itself and possible use of interactive web technology might be an effective means of exposing SES to larger numbers of younger people. For SES pamphlets/brochures, SES could assess the effectiveness of delivery methods. In the main, these brochures are left at council or other shop fronts hoping people would take one. Subject to further supporting research, SES could trial other methods, such as letter box drops in areas of need, mail-outs (with contact cards and an invitation to visit the unit) for specifically targeted people or groups.

Figure 26 – How SES Volunteers first heard about volunteering in the SES - Number of responses (multiple responses allowed if a combination) (SES, 2008a)



Motivations for Staying a Volunteer

The 2002 survey did not ask volunteers about the motivational factors for wanting to continue as an SES volunteer. The 2007 results revealed that, overall, the rankings for the main motivating factors for joining were the same as those for staying, as represented in Table 8 (see also, Table 6). By far the greatest motivating factor for staying was to give back to the community. The rewarding nature of the work still scored fairly highly as the number one ranked factor and, despite this, it was still ranked as the second highest motivating factor, by a clear margin. Gaining new skills was ranked third, closely followed by social aspects. Other motivators were relatively insignificant.

An analysis of age group preferences did not reveal any correlations between motivating factors and age, with respect to retention, but for recruitment motivations (Table 6), the younger age groups (18-29 years) generally ranked the rewarding nature of the work and gaining new qualifications higher than other age groups. Further research would be useful to determine the motivating factors for certain gender or people with other attributes that might need to be targeted in the future.

An analysis of the results in both Tables 6 and 8 reinforce the requirement for SES to support and equip serving volunteers with the means for them to give back, or to help their communities. SES should ensure its volunteers are appreciated and valued for their achievements and their commitment, so they feel appropriately rewarded. It is unclear whether volunteers value self reward (i.e. feeling good about yourself) above more tangible rewards, such as commendations, letters of appreciation, etc, which should be the subject of further research.

It is clear from the research literature (Gledhill, 2001), the Delphi workshop and from regular feedback from SES volunteers, that they do not want financial reward and they don't do what they do to be recognised, but they report that when sincere recognition does come, particularly from their own community, it is greatly appreciated.

Table 8 - SES Volunteer motivational factors for wanting to continue as an SES volunteer (SES, 2008a)

Rank	To gain qualifications	Because it is rewarding	Social aspects	To give back to the community	To fulfil income support mutual obligations	Other
1	22	62	14	94	2	8
2	27	60	21	27	0	0
3	40	22	32	18	1	1
4	23	1	46	11	6	0
5	1	0	5	0	32	2
6	0	0	0	0	0	5

According to available research literature, who joins and stays in the SES as volunteers?

Gender

The volunteer demographic data collected in conjunction with both SES surveys revealed that the proportion of female members remained about the same since 2002 (24-25% female)¹. This is about 12% more than the Tasmania Fire Service, but about on par with the average over all volunteer-based emergency services and other male dominated volunteer sectors, such as maintenance, gardening and refereeing (ABS, 2007; TFS, 2003; Beatson, 2008). Male members of the community are therefore three times more likely to join Tasmania SES and stay than female members.

The reasons for this are not clear from the SES survey results alone, but the literature tells us that the following recruitment barriers exist for women:

- Old-fashioned “boys club” and “militaristic” culture evident in the emergency services can be a turn-off for potential female members (TFS, 2003; Davis, 2005);
- Perception that women are incapable of carrying out the traditional male roles, yet the same women have generally been unaware of the full range of tasks available to them as volunteers (Beatson, 2008);
- That the promoted activities of the volunteer emergency services are more appealing to men (TFS, 2003; Baxter-Tomkins, 2006; ABS, 2007); and
- Competing commitments, such as child care and paid work, particularly now that single income families are a thing of the past (Beatson, 2008; McLennan, 2008a).

¹ The 2002 survey reported 28.9% female membership, but this was based on respondents only and not actual membership

No information was available from the SES surveys on the proportion of females who wanted to join and stay, but didn't. In view of the fact that four SES units have no female members and a further two have less than 10% female membership, it seems possible that prospective female volunteer recruits are being turned off by the male dominated culture within some units. Further research to explore this hypothesis would be beneficial.

A simple recruitment questionnaire used in conjunction with volunteer registration forms for those who decide to join would be helpful in determining motivating and demotivating factors at that crucial stage. For those who don't quite make it to this stage, the same feedback questionnaire could be used, but some added incentives might be necessary to ensure the questionnaires are completed and returned.

The research by Beatson (2008) and McLennan, et al (2007) suggests that women who are more informed about the following are more likely to join and stay as emergency services volunteers:

- The nature of all available SES volunteer activities, not just the main tasks like road crash rescue, temporary roof repairs, etc. This is because women, more than men, have perceptions that they will not cope with the physical or heavy work. In reality, and with the benefit of training, all tasks can be performed by female members. If they don't like the more physical or heavy work, there are numerous other tasks they might be more willing to do (eg, search and rescue, general rescue, communications, maintenance, administration, training, etc).
- Flexible volunteer work arrangements that won't conflict with childcare responsibilities. If suitable childcare facilities or support are available, they should be promoted, particularly for women.
- Arrangements the unit or service have in place to:
 - Make heavy equipment or vehicles easier to work with/operate;
 - Accommodate different shapes, sizes and needs of its members with regard to personal protective clothing and uniforms (eg, two-piece overalls); and
 - Protect women from discrimination and harassment.



Tasmania SES volunteer – Vertical rescue

Age

Available research literature revealed that certain aged people were influenced by different motivations:

- 18-19 year olds are more attracted by the rewarding nature of the work and the prospect of learning new skills, while primary and secondary motivations for all other age groups were to give back to their communities, and the rewarding nature of the work (SES, 2008a);
- The above is backed by other research that finds that younger people (18-34 year olds) are 20-30% more motivated to join because of self-oriented motivations than community contribution issues (Birch, 2006; Esmond, 2001);
- 35-44 year olds are least likely to join as a volunteer due to work and family pressures (McLennan, 2008a); and
- Younger people were more likely to join for active volunteer service if they participated in junior or cadet programs (TFS, 2003).

Employment and Educational Background

The research has revealed that people wishing to volunteer come from more diverse work backgrounds than the pre-1990's recruits, who tended to be less educated and from low income 'blue collar' backgrounds (Reinholdt, 1999). While no data is held to confirm this trend for Tasmania SES, the SES survey (SES, 2008a) revealed that:

- As many as 60.5% of the respondents had tertiary educations;
- only 5.0% were unemployed (does not include the 13.8% who were retired);
- 85.5% of respondents were not in receipt of any income support payments; and
- of those who were employed, 73.2% worked within the private sector, 26.8% within state or local government agencies.

This data and knowledge of the work backgrounds of most volunteers suggests that they cannot be typecast overall as being "less educated", or from low income "blue collar" work environments, which supports Reinholdt's (1999) research. Income seems to have little bearing, as does the nature of the paid work. For example, there are many SES volunteers who now fall outside the stereotypical "blue collar" labourer/tradesperson category and are successful small business owners/managers, senior company managers or public servants (state and local government), teachers, nurses, scientists, etc).

Research has found that employers of volunteers are more inclined to support volunteering with the emergency services if they will benefit from it in some way, or if local volunteer units have a good image and reputation within the community (Woodward, 2001; McLennan, 2008b; Aitken, 1999; Aldridge, 2004). Experience within Tasmania SES would prove this correct in the case of volunteers from the mining industries where SES has supported various mines with training and has publicly thanked mine companies for their support to SES volunteers. Added support and acknowledgement by SES to local government has led to added support in return, including the support of a considerable number of volunteers who are council workers.

The main motivations for joining the Tasmanian SES have remained consistent within since 2002; to give back to, or help their communities and because of the rewarding nature of the work, with learning new skills being a strong secondary

motivation (SES, 2002 & 2008a). Research within other Tasmanian emergency services have revealed the same (Fahey, 2001; TFS, 2003).

Step 2 - Focus-group workshop using the Delphi research technique

Using the Delphi research technique was an effective means of maximising the levels of engagement of a representative cohort. It allowed time for reflection of the findings from the surveys and the literature review and three opportunities to provide verbal or written input. For example, the proposal to support volunteer recruitment campaigns with community service announcements was supported on the basis of research by Fahey (2001). Profile building initiatives were supported by research by Woodward (2001) and McLennan (2008b) (see Table 4). The feedback forms allowed the quieter members to contribute at the same level as the more vocal members. According to verbal feedback, the technique also provided participating volunteers with a sense of ownership with the decision making processes of the organisation.

New ideas or proposals that were not supported by the SES surveys and other available research literature were not ruled out. For example, enhancing the website to improve recruitment was proposed despite evidence that it was not very effective at first introducing members of the public to volunteering opportunities in the SES (SES, 2008a). By allowing discussions on the proposal, some excellent ideas for website enhancements were raised that are worthy of trying. For example, the current SES home page could have more prominent and interactive features to encourage users (particularly younger users) to consider volunteering, no matter what their reason was for using the website. They could be directed to new web pages with details about their nearest SES unit. It would provide the four main ingredients to join as a volunteer: 1. motivating factors; 2. information on all available functions and the resources necessary to join; 3. reliable contact details; and 4. information on the benefits against other volunteering opportunities (McLennan, 2008b). Furthermore, with these web enhancements in place, the SES website could be promoted a great deal more than it is at present. With these suggestions, agreement was reached to make some significant improvements to the website.

The same applied to recruitment brochures, posters, etc. The SES survey revealed these were not very effective, but members of the workshop questioned the way these materials were distributed and considered they would be more effective if used in conjunction with some of the other proposed recruitment methods, such as contact cards, personalised letters of invitation to visit units, etc (SES, 2008a). Current brochures were also out of date and needed to focus on the main motivating factors of giving back to the community, the rewarding nature of the work and learning new skills. All agreed that these could be a useful recruitment resource and that they be updated and better utilised in the future.

Generally, all other accepted proposals were supported by the research literature. While 100% agreement was not reached for all of these, all members reached consensus that SES should trial and evaluate proposals with 93-97% support. If possible, these would not be trialled at units that did not fully agree. There was one exception with the proposal to reintroduce exit interviews/questionnaires for volunteers, which was accepted despite only 90% support on the basis that it only initially be trialed at units that supported the proposal. Some members considered this unnecessary because Unit Managers know why people leave and also because they thought the return rate would be so low that it would be ineffective. SES will need to think of ways to encourage departing members to participate in the exit

interview/questionnaire, particularly for those who are not happy with their Unit or the SES in general.

Opportunities for Further Research

The analysis highlighted a number of opportunities for further research besides those proposed by McLennan in Table 1 of the literature review (Appendix B). SES should consider further research per Table 9.

Table 9 – Opportunities for further research

Topic	Questions
Volunteer satisfaction of physical resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors influence the degree of volunteer satisfaction of the physical resources they are provided to do their job? • Is it possible for small equipment problems, as perceived by management, to be major problems from the point of view of the volunteers? • Does this affect retention?
Increased volunteer workloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the provision of more specialised equipment (that broadens SES capability) still be a motivating factor if it led to a significant increase in volunteer workload?
Support expectations of SES management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support expectations do volunteers have of SES management, particularly their regional headquarters? • Can SES management meet these expectations with existing resources/funding?
Age profiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there age groups of volunteers that are more difficult to retain? • Do urban and rural environments make a difference? • What are the reasons?
Motivational factors for different attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do motivational factors differ with attributes, such as gender, employment and educational backgrounds? • Are there other attributes that need to be considered (eg, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds)?
Website, radio and pamphlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the reasons why the website, radio and pamphlets were not effective at introducing people to volunteering (per SES, 2008a)? • What delivery methods are most effective?
What is “rewarding” about volunteering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers are motivated because it is “rewarding” (SES, 2008a) – What is it that they actually find rewarding? • Is it self reward and gratification, or more tangible rewards, such as long service awards, expressions of appreciation, commendations, etc? • Do people with different attributes feel “rewarded” for different reasons?
Barriers for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What recruitment and retention barriers exist at the four SES units that have no female volunteers (Table 2)? • Do these barriers exist in other units? • What strategies can help break down these barriers?

Conclusion

Table 5 details 22 preferred options under six broad strategies to enhance SES volunteer recruitment and retention in Tasmania. These were translated from the review and analysis of available Australian research literature (including the two Tasmania SES volunteer surveys) and further developed using the Delphi focus group workshop with the current and future SES volunteer leaders. The preferred strategies are likely to be implemented during 2008/2009, depending on available funds and resources. Where funding is lacking, this body of work is expected to assist the organisation in future funding bids, or to justify certain changes in its budget priorities.

Central to many of the preferred options and strategies, is the finding that the best strategic approach an organisation can adopt to enhance volunteer recruitment and retention is to ensure your volunteers are happy doing what they are motivated to do – primarily to give something back to, or to help their communities. Happy volunteers are then more likely to use the most effective medium for recruitment, ‘word-of-mouth’, to attract further volunteers. They are also more likely to stay. For this to happen, the volunteers must be well supported with a range of supporting resources and good, inclusive management from all levels, not just for recruitment and retention activities, but for all the activities SES volunteers perform. Efforts must also be made to mitigate the many barriers or obstacles and to increase opportunities to join, to stay and to give back to their communities.

This project has revealed many opportunities for further volunteer recruitment and retention research. Of significance, the project has revealed a significant lack of available research into SES volunteerism across Australia, compared to the abundant research within the fire services. This body of work should encourage further research by other SES organisations across the country.

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Internal Tasmania SES Volunteer Survey Report January 2008

Summary of Key Findings

- **Motivation.** The overall top motivator for joining and staying with SES as a volunteer was “to give back to the community” followed by, “it’s rewarding”. By age group, however, younger members, particularly in the 18-29 year age group, were more attracted to join, as a secondary motive, “to gain qualifications”.
- **Knowledge of SES.** 48.0% of SES volunteers first heard about SES by word of mouth, 62.7% of these were via serving SES volunteers and the remainder from family members or friends. 34.2% first heard about SES via the media, 51.9% of these via the newspaper, 36.5% from television and the remainder from radio. Only 1.3% first heard about SES via the web and 2.6% from the SES volunteer brochure.
- **Age Profile.** The largest percentage of SES volunteers was in the 40-44 age bracket (16.3%), closely followed by 30-34 (14.1%) and then 35-39 and 55-59 (both at 12.0%). Average age was 42.95 state-wide (40.91 in the south region, 42.17 in the north region and 45.06 in the northwest region).
- **Volunteering for Other Emergency Services.** 27.2% of SES volunteers also volunteered for other emergency services. 72% of these were with the Tasmania Fire Service and 16% with the Tasmanian Ambulance Service.
- **Employment Status.** 12.7% of volunteers were self employed business owners. 53.6% worked full-time and 14.9% part-time. 13.8% were retired and 5.0% unemployed at the time.
- **Training Preferences.** 81.5% agreed or strongly agreed that training was adequate for their role. About 69.8% of SES volunteers preferred evening training over weekend training and 71.5% preferred it to be conducted at their units instead of elsewhere in their region. Although asked to select one or the other, many (10-15%) commented that they wanted a mix of evening and weekend training and unit and regional training.
- **Funding and Spending Priorities.** 61.0% of SES volunteers were not happy with the level of funding their unit received, which was 10% more than 2002 and 75.3% were not happy about the level of funding the SES organisation received. When asked about their preferred spending priorities, equipment came well on top, followed by training and then uniforms.

Observations and recommendations

Motivators

The survey results suggest that the majority of people join SES as a volunteer to 'give back to the community' they reside in. Surprisingly this motivator is not impacted by age barriers or generational changes. The only exception to this is the 18-19 age group who noted the 'because it is rewarding' option as the major motivator. 'Because it is rewarding' has been noted as the secondary motivator for joining SES.

The secondary motivator has been affected by generational change with four age groups being split between rewards and gaining qualifications. Again the 18-19 age group were defined in their choice of qualifications as their secondary motivator. The motivators for continuing to volunteer with SES show no major shift in the overall analysis, though age breakdowns show a difference in motivators. Giving back to the community is again ranked highest with rewarding again being the secondary motivator.

The age breakdown shows a slight generational shift with rewarding being ranked in the 18-19, 40-44 and 50-59 age brackets and giving back to the community covering all other age brackets except 75-79, where qualifications was noted. Qualifications, rewarding and giving back to the community were all mentioned as secondary motivators and social aspects also got noted.

It is interesting to note that initial joining motivators such as to give back to the community continues through the majority of age groups and doesn't appear to be affected by length of service.

Languages

With a total of 11 languages spoken by our respondent base it is recommended that a register of volunteers who speak languages other than English is kept. This could be useful during evacuations and public awareness campaigns such as the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Project (CALD) etc. The register would be of a confidential nature and access given only to Regional Staff and State headquarters EMG.

Income support/Mutual obligation

An information pamphlet distributed to all volunteers explaining how they are able to use their volunteering hours with SES to meet any mutual obligations requirements they have. This would need to be addressed in a delicate manner as it may be a sensitive issue for some.

Education

Make contact with education institutions in areas that have been identified as needing to address recruitment issues. By addressing areas with a higher need for new volunteers, the success rate over a period of time can be used as a precedent for further canvassing throughout the State.

Employment sector

The high level of private sector volunteers supports the avenue of conversing with major and minor private business employers around the State and advocating the beneficial relationship between employers and SES volunteer employees.

Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare (OHS&W)

15.7% of respondents are either unaware of their requirements or request more training in OHS&W. This figure is not surprising when 27.5% do not know who their representative is. It is clear that further training workshops are needed as a priority. Not with standing this, 97.2% are happy with the level of responsibility their Unit Manager shows towards their safety.

Access and Equity (A&E)

15.4% are not aware of their A&E responsibilities and 23.1% are unsure their Unit complies. This is reflective of the lack of A&E knowledge. If SES is to be proactive in addressing recruitment and retention issues, then firstly creating an environment that is safe and that complies with A&E requirements is essential. It is recommended that A&E sessions are organised as a priority.

Employer recognition programme

The reasons behind volunteers not nomination their employers for business recognition awards need to be addressed. Is it due to a lack of advertising and support from headquarters and the regions or are volunteers not interested in the programme.

Emergency Management Act 2006

19.1% of the respondents are unaware of the legal protection offered under the Act and how it relates to them as volunteers. Three volunteers also noted more training was needed.

Methods of recruitment

The top three methods of recruitment are linked to word of mouth and have proved to be extremely beneficial to SES. SES volunteers have been noted as the number one recruitment tool for our current volunteer workforce. It is noted that the SES website needs attention with only 1.2% first hearing about SES through the website.

Methodology

The Volunteer Survey was conducted using a mail out system to each Tasmanian SES Volunteer Unit. The survey was widely promoted throughout SES and volunteers at all levels were encouraged to take the time to fill out the survey and provide feedback.

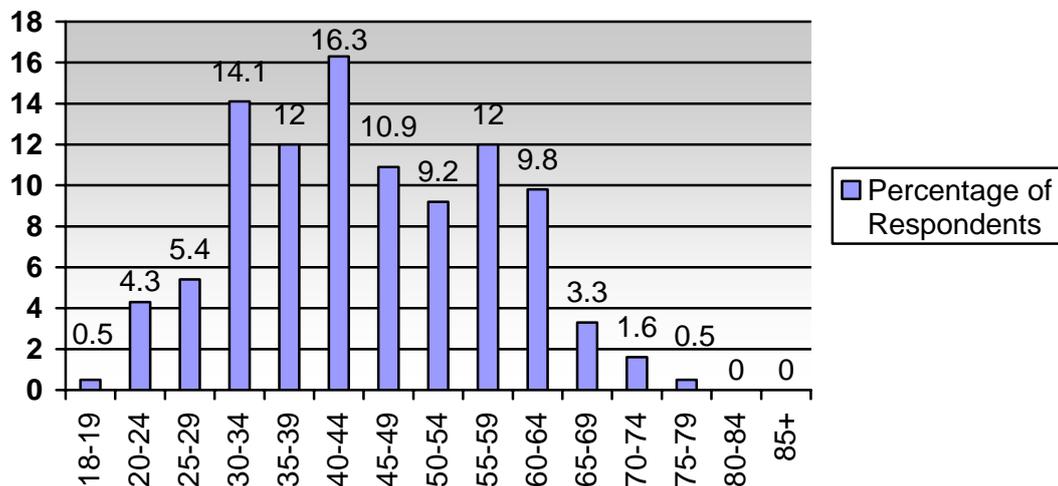
A total of 500 surveys were sent out to 33 volunteer Units in membership batches. Each survey was packaged up with the Learning and Development team's 'Client Satisfaction Survey' and addressed individually to each volunteer. These packages were sent out with a letter to each Unit Manager explaining the survey process, as well as a reply paid envelope for Unit Manager's to send completed surveys back in.

Of the 500 surveys sent out, 185 surveys were completed and sent back from throughout the State. Along with this response rate, 12 uncompleted surveys were sent back due to volunteers leaving Units or being inactive members. Due to the anonymity of the survey and some respondents not sending surveys back in reply paid envelopes, it is impossible to determine accurately which or how many Units responded to the survey. Though with this in mind, 18 reply paid envelopes were mailed back to State Headquarters with surveys and a number of surveys sent back through Regional Staff. This would show a 54.5% response rate from volunteer Units and 37% response rate from the volunteer workforce.

The Volunteer Survey has a number of key objectives. The first is to identify the key motivators that SES volunteers identify as their reasons for joining SES and whether the same motivators are the reason they continue their volunteering work. Within this objective, identifying whether there is a shift in motivators throughout the age groups is also an aim. The second objective is to identify the top three successful methods of recruitment within the existing SES volunteer workforce. And also identify where SES can improve recruitment and retention strategies.

Results

Q1. Which age bracket are you in?



answered question	184
skipped question	1

2. Gender?

	Male	Female
Response Percent	76.1%	23.9%
Response Count	140	44
answered question	184	
skipped question	1	

3. How many years have you been with the SES?

answered question	165
skipped question	20

4. Do you identify yourself as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	3.9%	96.1%
Response Count	7	174
answered question	181	
skipped question	4	

5. Do you speak any languages other than English?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	7.6%	92.4%
Response Count	14	171
answered question	185	
skipped question	0	

Languages spoken by a number of volunteers are:

- Italian
- Polish
- Indonesian
- Dutch
- Bahaman, Malay, Tamil, Chinese - Mandarin
- German, Dutch, French, Flemish

Recommendation: It is recommended that a register of volunteers who speak languages other than English is kept. This could be useful during evacuations and public awareness campaigns such as the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Project (CALD) etc. The register would be of a confidential nature and access given only to Regional Staff and State headquarters EMG.

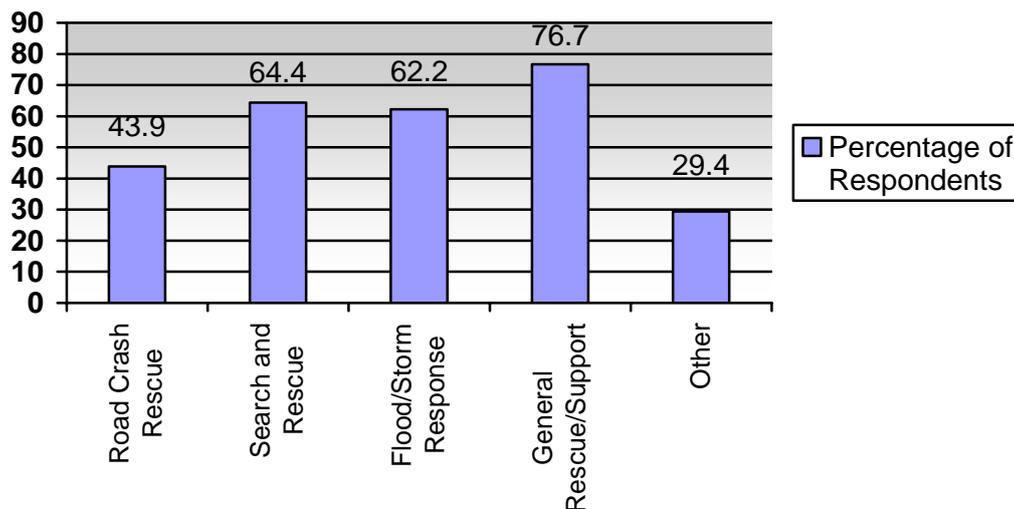
6. Are you in receipt of any of the following income support payments? (Youth Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Parenting Payment or Mature Age Allowance)

	Yes	No
Response Percent	14.5%	85.5%
Response Count	26	153
answered question	179	
skipped question	6	

It was noted that some respondents did not feel this question was required, with this in mind the response rate for yes may have been higher. This would suggest that the Voluntary Work Initiative will be of benefit to the existing volunteer work force.

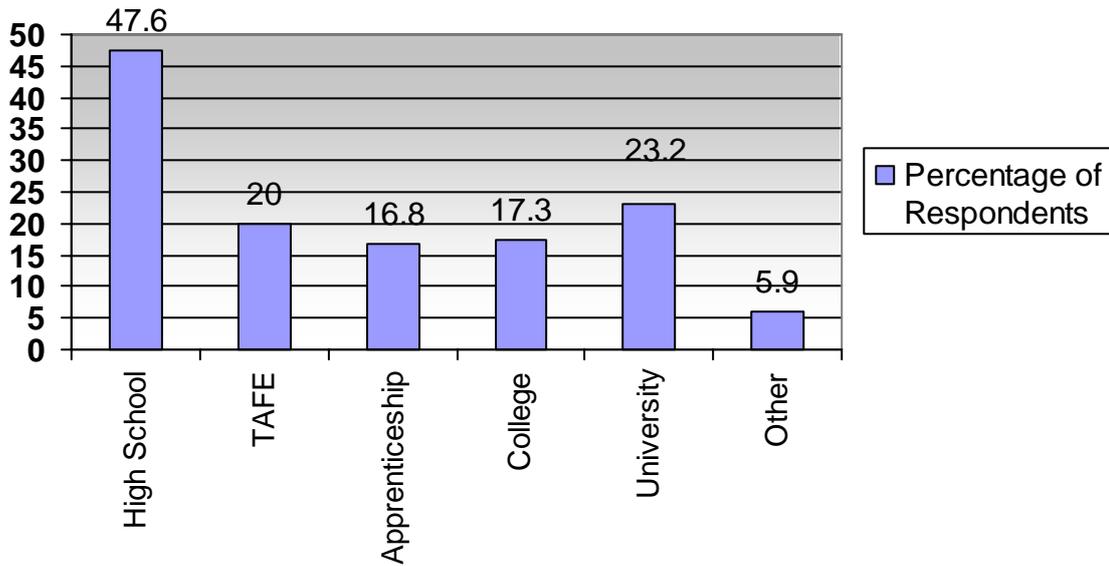
Recommendation: An information pamphlet distributed to all volunteers explaining how they are able to use their volunteering hours with SES to meet any mutual obligations requirements they have. This would need to be addressed in a delicate manner as it may be a sensitive issue for some.

7. What are your SES roles?



	Response Percent	Response Count
Road Crash Rescue	43.9%	79
Search and Rescue	64.4%	116
Flood/Storm Response	62.2%	112
General Rescue/Support	76.7%	138
Other	29.4%	53
	answered question	180
	skipped question	5

8. What is your level of education or training?



	Response Percent	Response Count
High School	47.6%	88
TAFE	20.0%	37
Apprenticeship	16.8%	31
College	17.3%	32
University	23.2%	43
Other (Please specify)	5.9%	11
Other (please specify)		9
answered question		185
skipped question		0

The high response for high school may be reflective of the ageing demographic of our volunteers. The data shows that advertising and promotional visits would be most beneficial in the top three categories of High Schools, University and TAFE. Even though High School students will be under the SES minimum age, a general approach to raising the awareness of the roles and responsibilities of SES volunteers will aid in recruitment in the future.

Recommendation: Make contact with education institutions in areas that have been identified as needing to address recruitment issues. By addressing areas with a higher need for new volunteers, the success rate over a period of time can be used as a precedent for further canvassing throughout the State.

9. What is your employment status?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Part-time	14.9%	27
Full-time	53.6%	97
Self employed	12.7%	23
Student	0.6%	1
Employee	0.6%	1
Retired	13.8%	25
Unemployed	5.0%	9
	answered question	181
	skipped question	4

More than half of the respondents are currently in full time work, showing that full time employment is not a major contributing factor to volunteer attrition rates. A number of studies have identified that working full time and the assumption that people do not feel they have enough time to volunteer is a key deterrent. With this in mind, utilising our full time employed volunteers and their stories may be a useful tool in showing prospective volunteers that working full time is not a reason to not volunteer.

10. Which industry are you employed in?

	Private	Government
Response Percent	73.2%	26.8%
Response Count	112	41
answered question	153	
skipped question	32	

The number of respondents who skipped this question matches the number of respondents who noted they were either retired or unemployed in question 9.

Recommendation: The high level of private sector volunteers supports the avenue of conversing with major and minor private business employers around the State and advocating the beneficial relationship between employers and SES volunteer employees.

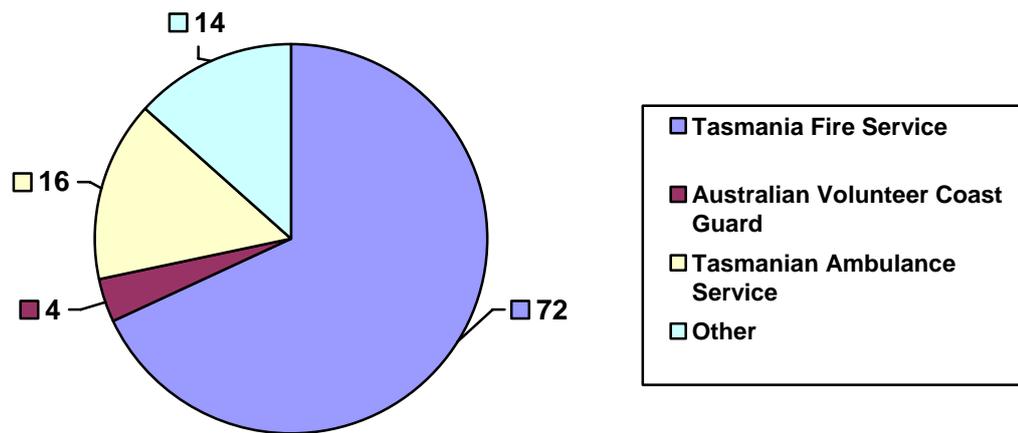
11. Do you volunteer with another emergency service organisation?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	27.2%	72.8%
Response Count	50	134
answered question	184	
skipped question	1	

If yes, which one?

Tasmania Fire Service	Australian Volunteer Coast Guard	Tasmanian Ambulance Service	Other	Response Count
72.0% (36)	4.0% (2)	16.0% (8)	14.0% (7)	50
answered question			50	
skipped question			135	

Percentage breakdown of volunteers who volunteer with other Services'

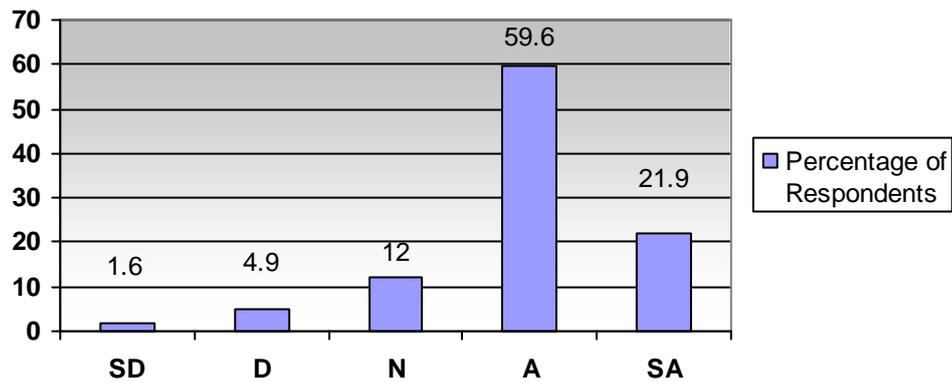


Of the 27.2% of respondents who are currently volunteering with another organisation, 72% are with the Tasmania Fire Service. This relationship between both services shows an avenue for shared resources and group training and promotion of interoperability.

TRAINING

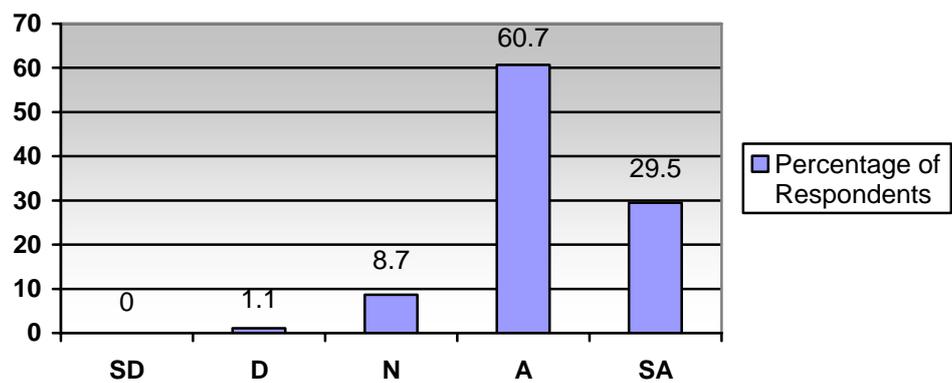
12. The training you receive through SES is adequate for your role as a volunteer?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
1.6% (3)	4.9% (9)	12.0% (22)	59.6% (109)	21.9% (40)	183



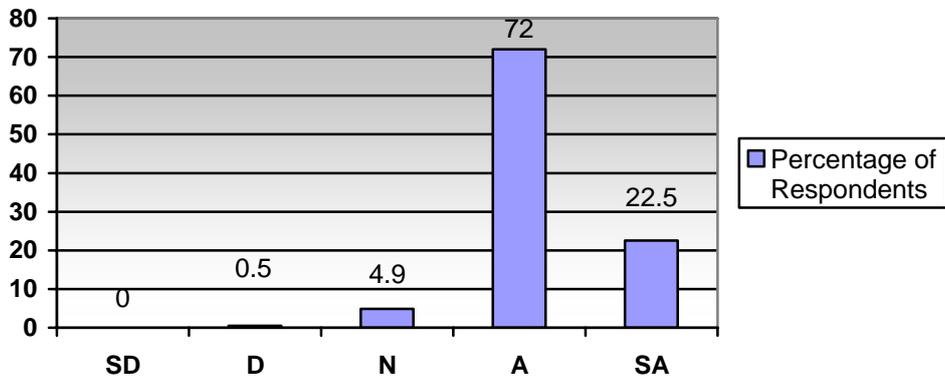
13. The training you receive through SES is conducted professionally?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.0% (0)	1.1% (2)	8.7% (16)	60.7% (111)	29.5% (54)	183



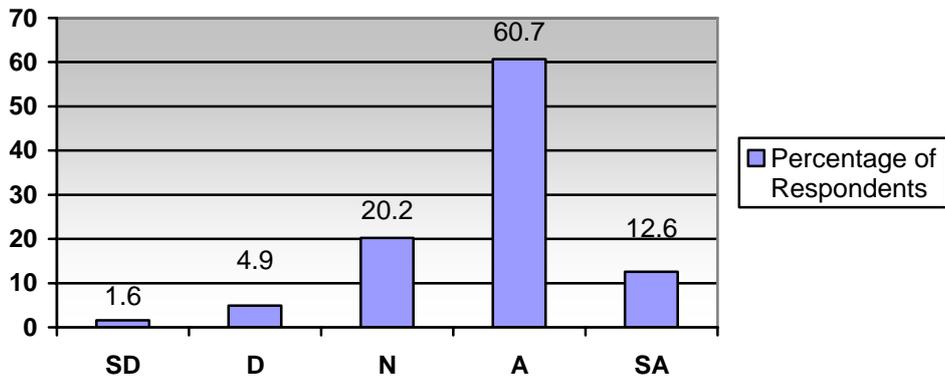
14. The training you receive through SES is easy to understand?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.0% (0)	0.5% (1)	4.9% (9)	72.0% (131)	22.5% (41)	182



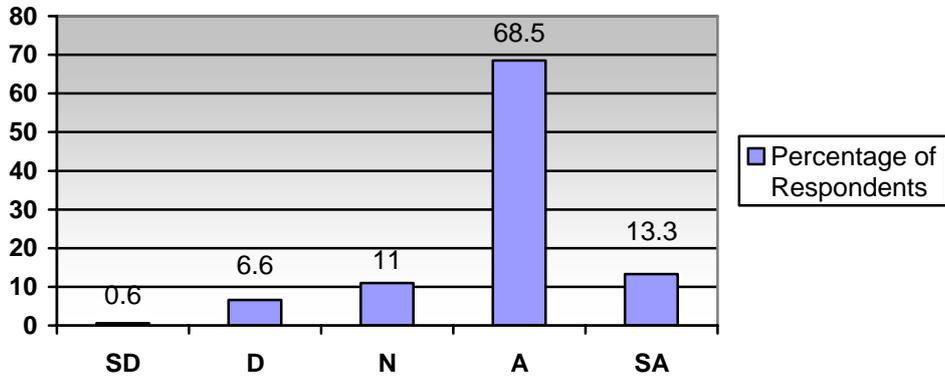
15. The training you receive through SES is conducted at convenient times?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
1.6% (3)	4.9% (9)	20.2% (37)	60.7% (111)	12.6% (23)	183



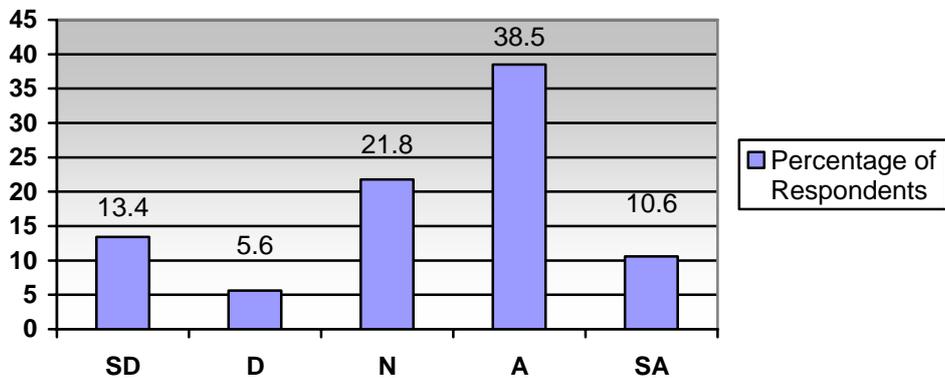
16. The training you receive through SES is accessible to you?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.6% (1)	6.6% (12)	11.0% (20)	68.5% (124)	13.3% (24)	181



17. Training certificates are delivered in a timely manner?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
13.4% (24)	15.6% (28)	21.8% (39)	38.5% (69)	10.6% (19)	179



18. Do you prefer Unit or Regional training activities?

	Unit	Evening
Response Percent	71.5%	28.5%
Response Count	128	51
answered question	179	
skipped question	6	

Of the 179 respondents to this question, 8 chose both Unit and Regional training and 26 respondents noted that they would like a mix of unit, regional, evening and weekend training.

19. Do you prefer evening or weekend training?

	Evening	Weekend
Response Percent	69.8%	30.2%
Response Count	125	54
answered question	179	
skipped question	6	

Of the 179 respondents to this question, 16 chose both Evening and Weekend trainings as their preference.

FUNDING

20. Are you aware of where your Unit's funding comes from?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	81.1%	18.9%
Response Count	146	34
answered question	180	
skipped question	5	

21. Are you happy with the level of funding that your Unit receives?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	36.0%	61.0%
Response Count	63	112
answered question	175	
skipped question	10	

22. Are you happy with the level of funding that the SES as an organisation receives?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	24.7%	75.3%
Response Count	43	131
answered question	174	
skipped question	11	

23. Rank your preference on spending priorities in your Unit (number your preferences from 1-5, 1 being highest priority)

Rank	Equipment	Uniform	Social Activities	Training	Other
1	126	17	4	42	5
2	40	32	6	88	0
3	6	105	19	32	2
4	1	15	119	7	11
5	5	4	17	3	45
Total count	178	173	165	172	63
answered question			180		
skipped question			5		

Spending priorities identified at a Unit level were in the following order:

1. Equipment
2. Training
3. Uniform
4. Social Activities
5. Other

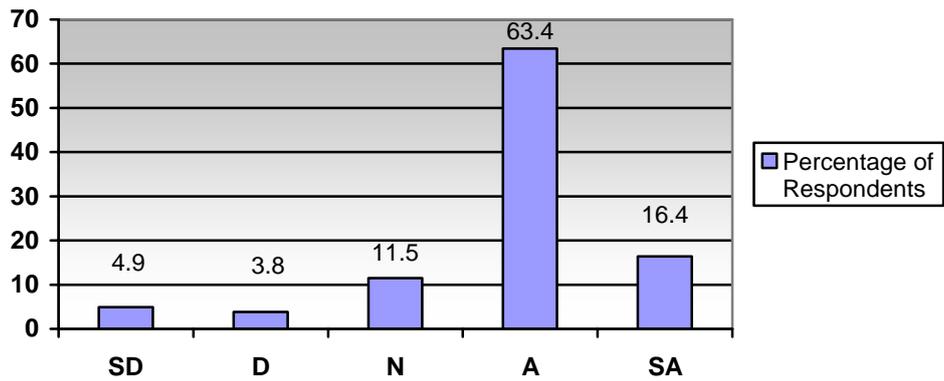
Comments provided in the 'Other' option are as follows:

- Building improvements
- In field training
- Another vehicle / rescue gear
- Car
- Inter unit training
- Boots
- Community support activities
- More training x2
- Shed, base maintenance
- Contribution towards travel costs
- Discounts for service
- Extra training
- Specialised clothing etc for tasks eg. Remote Area Search
- Inter service training activities x2
- Require more info on vehicle access safety issues.

UNIFORMS

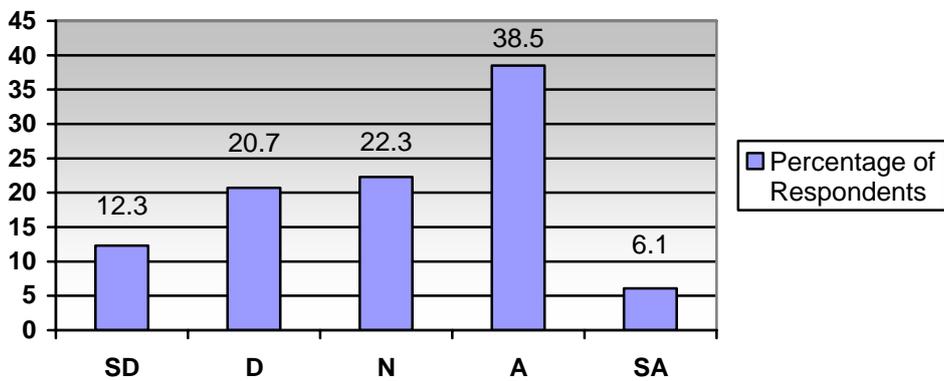
24. Your uniform/PPC is suitable for your role in SES, eg RCR, SAR etc?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
4.9% (9)	3.8% (7)	11.5% (21)	63.4% (116)	16.4% (30)	183
answered question			183		
skipped question			2		



25. Uniforms (new/replacement) are supplied in an appropriate time frame?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
12.3% (22)	20.7% (37)	22.3% (40)	38.5% (69)	6.1% (11)	179
answered question				179	
skipped question				6	



26. Are correct sizes available for your uniforms?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	74.4%	25.6%
Response Count	131	45
answered question	176	
skipped question	9	

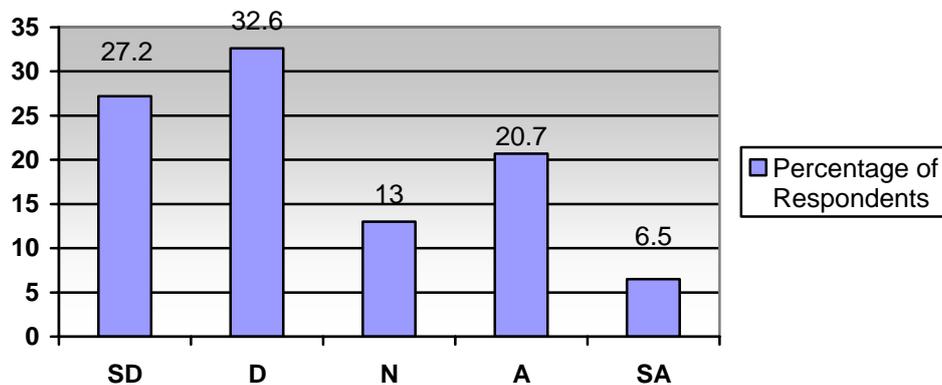
27. Should volunteers pay for specialist uniform items themselves?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	6.1%	93.9%
Response Count	11	169
answered question	180	
skipped question	5	

EQUIPMENT

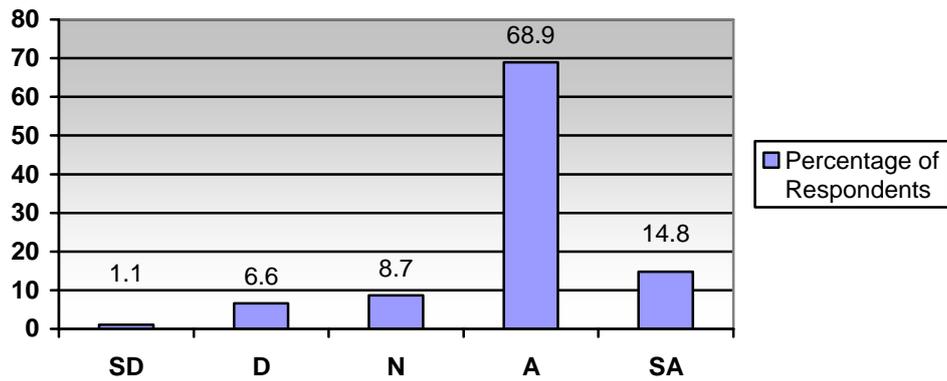
28. The equipment you use in your role as an SES volunteer is unreliable / faulty?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
27.2% (50)	32.6% (60)	13.0% (24)	20.7% (38)	6.5% (12)	184



29. The equipment that you use in your unit roles is adequate for the job it is provided for?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
1.1% (2)	6.6% (12)	8.7% (16)	68.9% (126)	14.8% (27)	183



30. Do you have access to additional equipment (radios, vehicles etc) from Regional Headquarters for use in incidents?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	75.7%	24.3%
Response Count	134	43
answered question	177	
skipped question	8	

OCCUPATIONAL, HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE (OHS&W)

31. As a volunteer are you aware of your OHS&W requirements?

	Yes	No	More training needed
Response Percent	84.3%	2.2%	13.5%
Response Count	156	4	25
answered question	185		
skipped question	0		

32. Does your Unit comply with OHS&W requirements?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	95.6%	4.4%
Response Count	174	8
answered question	182	
skipped question	3	

33. Do you know who your Unit's OHS&W representative is?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	72.5%	27.5%
Response Count	132	50
answered question	182	
skipped question	3	

34. Do you feel that your Unit Manager is actively responsible for your safety and the safety of others?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	97.2%	2.8%
Response Count	175	5
answered question	180	
skipped question	5	

ACCESS AND EQUITY

35. Are you aware of your Access and Equity responsibilities in the SES?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	84.6%	15.4%
Response Count	154	28
answered question	182	
skipped question	3	

36. Does your Unit comply with Access and Equity requirements?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Response Percent	76.9%	1.1%	22.0%
Response Count	140	2	40
answered question	182		
skipped question	3		

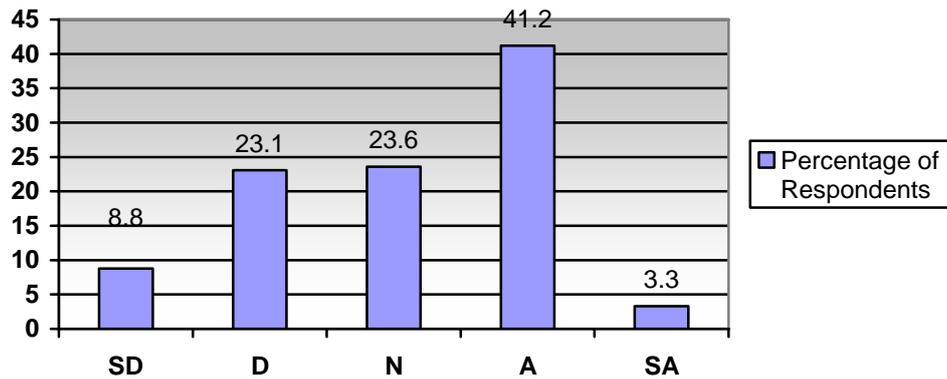
37. Do you know who to approach if you have an issue?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	94.3%	5.7%
Response Count	164	10
answered question	174	
skipped question	11	

RECOGNITION

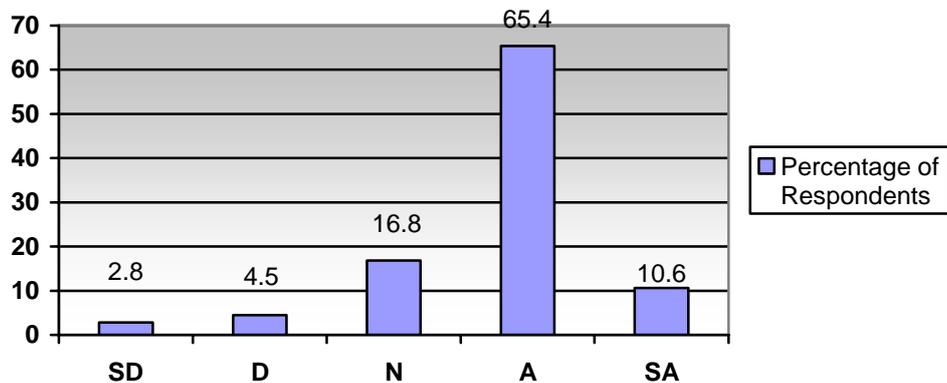
38. SES receives its fair share of publicity?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
8.8% (16)	23.1% (42)	23.6% (43)	41.2% (75)	3.3% (6)	182



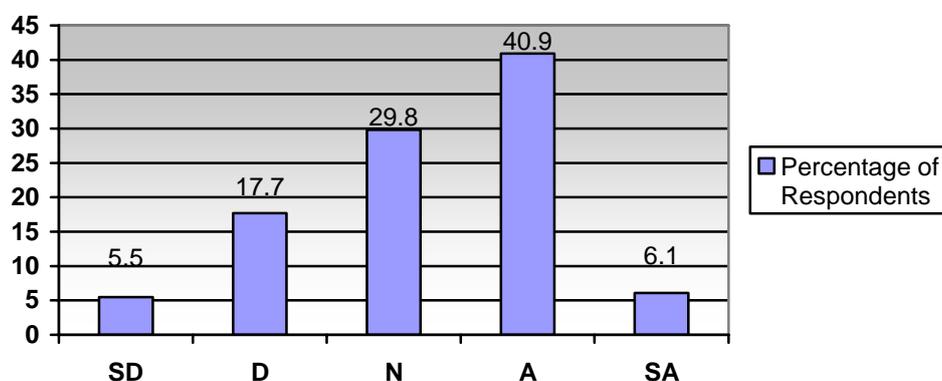
39. Your contribution as a volunteer is recognised by the SES?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
2.8% (5)	4.5% (8)	16.8% (30)	65.4% (117)	10.6% (19)	179



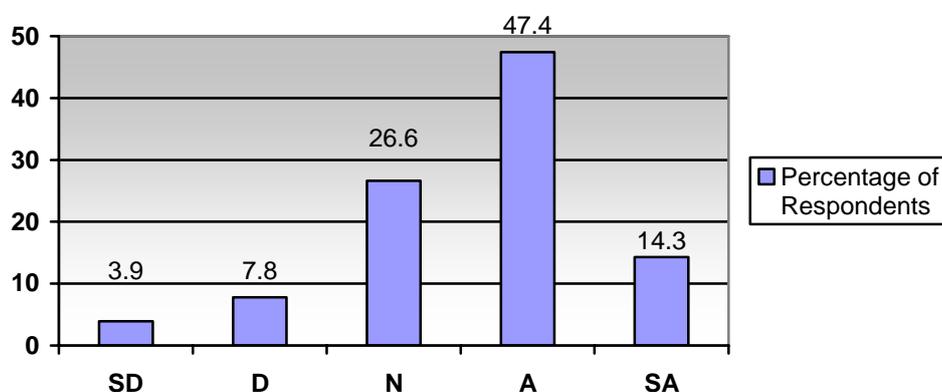
40. Your contribution as a volunteer is recognised by the public of Tasmania?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
5.5% (10)	17.7% (32)	29.8% (54)	40.9% (74)	6.1% (11)	181



41. Your employer is supportive when time off work is required to complete SES duty?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
3.9% (6)	7.8% (12)	26.6% (41)	47.4% (73)	14.3% (22)	154



Question 41 may show a lean away from employers supporting volunteering as SD & D and N equal almost 50%.

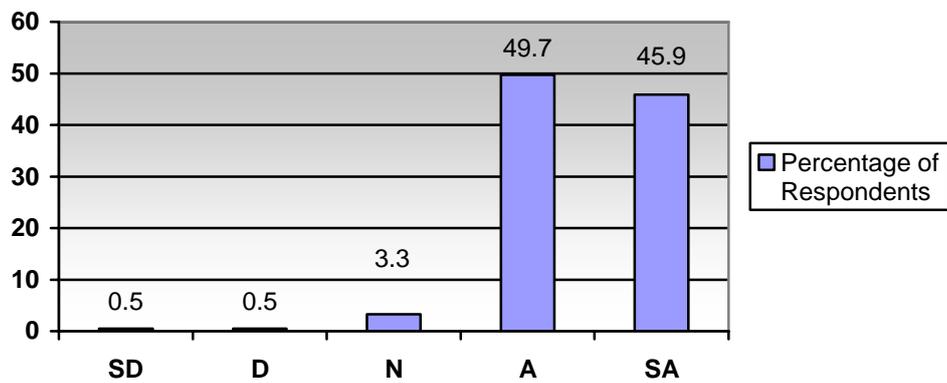
42. Have you nominated your employer through the SES employer/business recognition program?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	15.2%	84.8%
Response Count	23	128
answered question	151	
skipped question	34	

MANAGEMENT

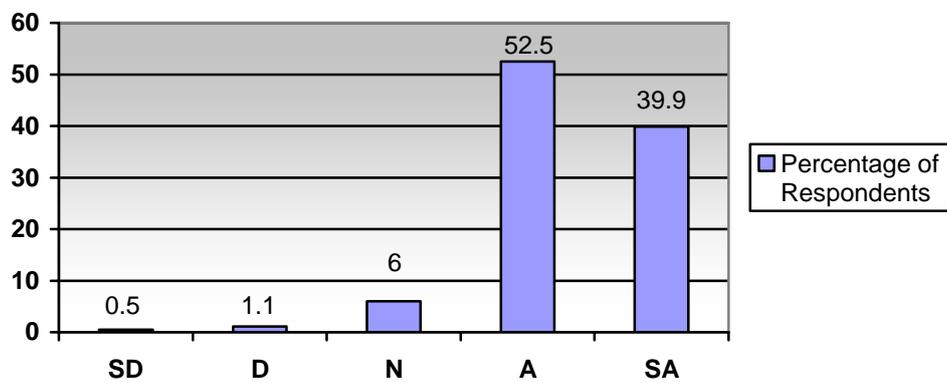
43. *Your Unit manager is approachable?*

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.5% (1)	0.5% (1)	3.3% (6)	49.7% (91)	45.9% (84)	183



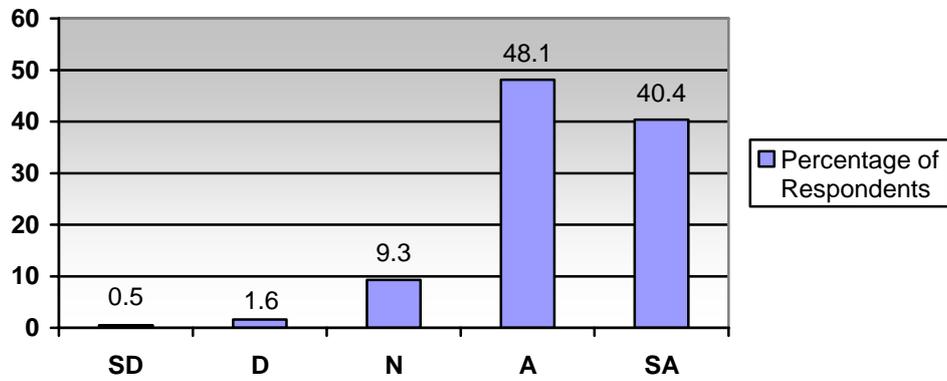
44. *Your Unit manager listens to your needs as a volunteer?*

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.5% (1)	1.1% (2)	6.0% (11)	52.5% (96)	39.9% (73)	183



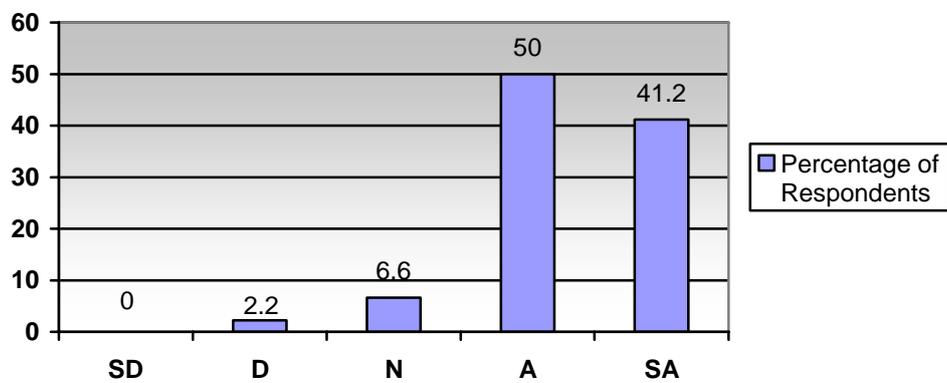
45. Your Unit manager communicates well with Unit members?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.5% (1)	1.6% (3)	9.3% (17)	48.1% (88)	40.4% (74)	183



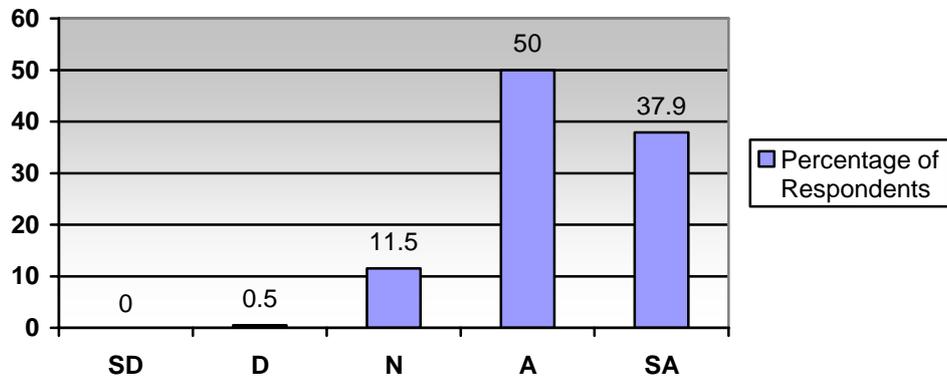
46. Your Unit manager is fair to all members of the Unit?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.0% (0)	2.2% (4)	6.6% (12)	50.0% (91)	41.2% (75)	182



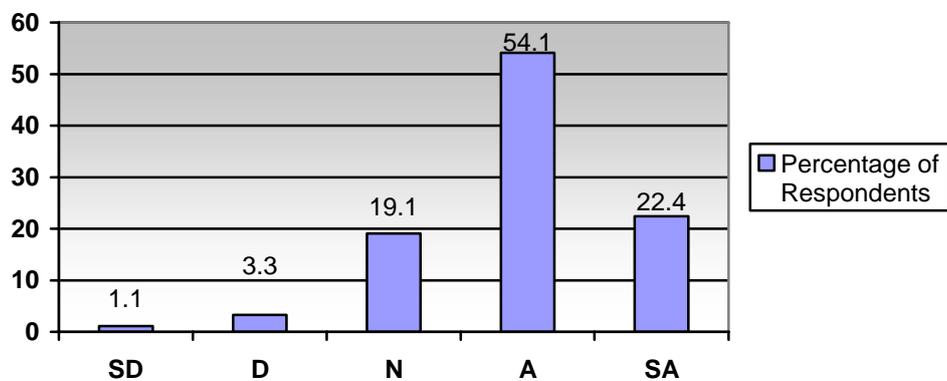
47. Your Unit is professionally managed?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
0.0% (0)	0.5% (1)	11.5% (21)	50.0% (91)	37.9% (69)	182



48. Your Unit is aware of the support provided by the State Headquarters?

SD	D	N	A	SA	Response Count
1.1% (2)	3.3% (6)	19.1% (35)	54.1% (99)	22.4% (41)	183



REGIONAL STAFF

49. Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of your regional staff?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Response Percent	66.3%	11.4%	22.3%
Response Count	122	21	41
answered question	184		
skipped question	1		

50. Do you feel that the regional staffs in your area are responsive to your needs as a volunteer in the SES?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Response Percent	58.7%	18.5%	22.8%
Response Count	108	34	42
answered question	184		
skipped question	1		

51. Do you think you see your respective regional staff enough?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	46.2%	53.8%
Response Count	85	99
answered question	184	
skipped question	1	

LEGAL

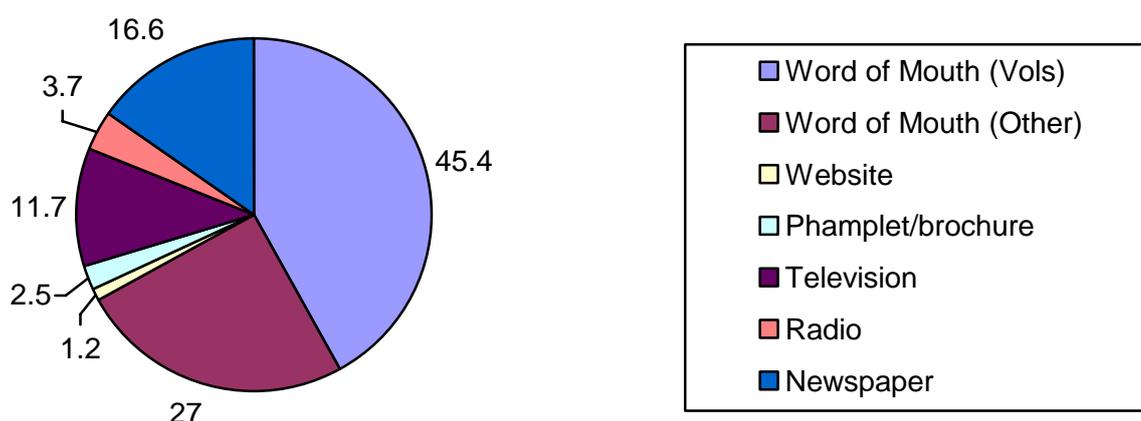
52. Are you aware of the legal protection offered to you whilst performing your duties in accordance with the Emergency Management Act 2006?

	Yes	No
Response Percent	80.9%	19.1%
Response Count	148	35
answered question	183	
skipped question	2	

Three volunteers noted that they would like more training in regards to the *Emergency Management Act 2006*.

53. How did you first hear about the SES? (you may select more than one reason)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Word of mouth (from SES volunteers)	45.4%	74
Word of mouth (from family member or friends etc (not SES volunteers))	27.0%	44
Website	1.2%	2
Pamphlet/brochure	2.5%	4
Television	11.7%	19
Radio	3.7%	6
Newspaper	16.6%	27
Other (please specify)		21
answered question		163
skipped question		22



54. When you first joined SES, what were the main motivational factors that lead you to become an SES volunteer? (You may select more than one reason, but please rank your choices in order of importance. 1=Most important)

Motivator	Response count
To gain qualifications	115
Because it is rewarding	137
Social aspects	118
To give back to the community	158
To fulfil income support mutual obligations	43
Other	21
answered question	178
skipped question	7

Rank	To gain qualifications	Because it is rewarding	Social aspects	To give back to the community	To fulfil income support obligations	Other
1	23	49	12	105	2	11
2	31	61	16	25	0	2
3	38	23	31	21	2	0
4	20	4	51	7	8	0
5	3	0	7	0	29	3
6	0	0	1	0	2	5

Joining motivators in order of importance are as follows:

1. To give back to the community
2. Because it is rewarding
3. Social aspects
4. To gain qualifications
5. to fulfil income support mutual obligations
6. Other

Comments provided in the 'Other' section are as follows:

- Not enough volunteers in area, had/have significant background experience, skills and qualifications
- No one else to do the job
- Utilisation of previous skills
- To support a friend who started the particular Unit
- To provide community leadership
- To find people who were lost in the wilderness
- Personal development
- Unit supported my family
- To maintain skills already acquired
- Training
- To continue learning and being challenge myself. Undertake different types of training, maintain fitness and improve skills
- To go bushwalking / training in areas I have not been to
- Now single, plenty of time to learn and hep people
- My partner made me.

Motivators broken down by age group

* 1= Most important, 6 = least important

Data ranked through majority rule.

	Age Group												
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79
To gain qualifications	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	2	4
Because it's rewarding	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Social Aspects		3	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	3
To give back to the community	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
To fulfil income support mutual obligation		4	4	5	5	6	5	5	5	4		3	5
Other		5	5	6	6	5							

Top two motivators for joining SES per age group are:

Age Group	Number 1 Motivator	Number 2 Motivator
18-19	Because it is rewarding	To gain qualifications
20-24	To give back to the community	Qualifications/rewarding
25-29	To give back to the community	Qualifications/rewarding
30-34	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
35-39	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
40-44	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
45-49	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
50-54	To give back to the community	Qualifications/rewarding
55-59	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
60-64	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
65-69	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
70-74	To give back to the community	Qualifications/rewarding
75-79	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding

55. What are the motivational factors that have you continuing your volunteering with SES?

Motivator	Response count
To gain qualifications	113
Because it is rewarding	145
Social aspects	118
To give back to the community	151
To fulfil income support mutual obligations	41
Other	16
answered question	178
skipped question	7

Rank	To gain qualifications	Because it is rewarding	Social aspects	To give back to the community	To fulfil income support mutual obligations	Other
1	22	62	14	94	2	8
2	27	60	21	27	0	0
3	40	22	32	18	1	1
4	23	1	46	11	6	0
5	1	0	5	0	32	2
6	0	0	0	0	0	5

Continuing to volunteer motivators in order of importance, are as follows:

1. To give back to the community
2. Because it is rewarding
3. Social aspects
4. To gain qualifications
5. to fulfil income support mutual obligations
6. Other

Comments provided in the 'Other' section are as follows:

- Not enough volunteers in area, had/have significant background experience, skills and qualifications and to manage the transition of one Unit manager to the next
- No one else to do the job
- There are no younger volunteers prepared to commit to the service and serve their community
- Someone has to do the job
- To find lost people
- It gets me away from the missus
- Training
- My partner is forcing me.

Motivators broken down by age group

* 1= Most important, 6 = least important

Data ranked through majority rule.

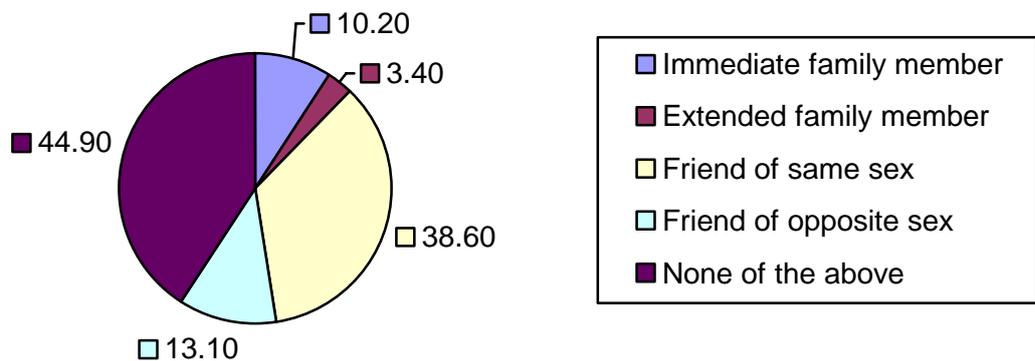
Age Group													
	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79
To gain qualifications	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	2	1
Because it's rewarding	1	2	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
Social Aspects	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	3	3
To give back to the community	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	4
To fulfil income support mutual obligation		5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5		4	5
Other		6	6	6		5	6			6			

Top two motivators for continuing to volunteer with SES per age group are:

Age Group	Number 1 Motivator	Number 2 Motivator
18-19	Because it is rewarding	To gain qualifications
20-24	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
25-29	To give back to the community	To gain qualifications
30-34	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
35-39	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
40-44	Because it is rewarding	To give back to the community
45-49	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
50-54	Because it is rewarding	To give back to the community
55-59	Rewarding/give back to community	Social aspects
60-64	To give back to the community	Because it is rewarding
65-69	To give back to the community	Qualifications/rewarding
70-74	To give back to the community	Qualifications/rewarding
75-79	To gain qualifications	Because it is rewarding

56. When you joined SES, were any of the following people members? (you may select more than one option)

	Immediate family member	Extended family member	Friend of the same sex	Friend of the opposite sex	None of the above
Response Percent	10.2%	3.4%	36.6%	13.1%	44.9%
Response Count	18	6	68	23	79
answered question			176		
skipped question			9		



What words of advice would you give to anyone thinking of volunteering with the SES?

- Be prepared for call out any time day and night and weekdays and weekends. Be prepared for unpleasant sights.
- Be prepared to make the commitment. Don't expect too many thank you. It can be very rewarding if you are committed. Try not to get tangled up in the bureaucratic bullshit.
- Very rewarding to help the community and great training
- It is very rewarding
- That SES service is no glory position and can be a lot of work with very little outside accolades.
- Join - local units do a great job
- Have plenty of time, stable income and reliable transport
- Think clearly about your time and availability. Be prepared to train and qualify.
- Step outside your comfort zone and test your capabilities, you will surprise yourself.
- Go for it!
- Do not get involved in State policies (policies?) within SES or the great Hobart Unit.
- rewarding - of value in society - gain skills - acquire knowledge
- Self motivation, Improve fitness, Work with others
- Be prepared for bureaucracy! But the people are great, the training fun, and the work worthwhile.
- I would encourage it. Great people, opportunities to learn and help the community. Well structured framework, and a professional operation.
- Join
- Meeting very positive, outgoing people.
- Enjoy the ride
- Make sure you can commit the time.

- Be patient, skills and training take time to build up, get involved, help is always given.
- Be prepared to put in. Take training and not leave to others. You only get out what you put in.
- The more they can put into the SES the more they will get out of it; people are only there because they want to be there.
- Go for it, it is so awesome
- Come, learn, look, participate and enjoy
- If you're thinking about it, do it. It's not compulsory if it's not for you.
- Packages on CD
- It is rewarding, give something back to the community.
- Go ahead
- to help people in trouble
- Join up
- Give it time to get a true and overall concept of what we do. One or two nights is not enough.
- Join Now
- Enjoy it!
- Its well worthwhile, there a sense of accomplishment!!!
- It is rewarding to give back to the community and help others in a time of need.
- Give back to the community, rewarding experience.
- Go for it
- Very rewarding and enjoyable social group meeting once a week. Good chance to get to know more people.
- Rewarding opportunities
- To have a sense of giving.
- Be prepared to commit time and sometime be prepared to pay for personal items.
- Go for it
- need plenty of spare time, weekends etc
- Don't join to become a glory seeker - advice them of high level of commitment required.
- Always be prepared to assist people in their time of need. The appreciation and relief, of hurt, anxiety, is beyond money value.
- Advice those of high level of commitment required.
- I would suggest that they join, meet other people, see things from a different view or angle, and learn new skills.
- Check with your employer to make sure they are supportive of the needs and time requirements of a volunteer.
- All prospective volunteers need to be made aware of the commitment required specific to each SES Unit. Which in most cases they are.
- Talk to other members that have been volunteering for some time.
- Rewarding way to participate in community.
- To give it a try because it can be both a rewarding and enjoyable experience.
- Try it, you will like it.
- Give it a go, you might enjoy it.

- That volunteering with the SES is rewarding, however the treatment by management of volunteers could be greatly improved.
- =Be prepared to give approximately 12 hours a month to training =have bush walking skills =have enough bush walking kit for extended walks overnight.
- Don't hesitate, the skills you learn are extremely beneficial not only in the SES but outside the organisation. Gives you confidence and is very rewarding.
- When you call for help, who is going to answer
- Rewarding - you gain what you put into the organisation.
- Do it while you are young and keep doing it
- It can be very rewarding
- Do it now
- IT'S VERY REWARDING AND LOTS OF FUN
- Go for it
- It is not all action and excitement, sometimes it can be dull and boring, with unpleasant jobs to do.
- Fantastic way to give something back to the community, make great friends and learn some excellent skills.
- Join
- Be dedicated.
- A great way to learn and give something back to the community
- It's rewarding
- Service requires commitment and training, both require dedication. Training results in AQTF qualifications that are portable and nationally recognised, as no cost to the individual other than commitment.
- A strong commitment to training is required
- Do it, it's really enjoyable; the knowledge you gain is excellent.
- Rewarding, meet good people, training very beneficial
- Go for it, rewarding and worthwhile
- Enjoy yourself because you only get out as much as you put in.
- Be sure that it is what you want and be prepared for red tape.
- Be prepared for a lot of 'political' issues within the unit.
- Be committed and duly undertake training for your position
- Be prepared to put the time in - we are a professional organisation relying on volunteers
- Think about obligations, come along to a training and see what we do and talk to other members
- Go for it
- You will enjoy the challenge being with friends

answered question	83
skipped question	102

General Comments

- It would be nice to hear from SHQ once the survey is collated. The last survey that was conducted (some 6-8 years ago) we are still waiting for the results.
- Questions too general
- PPC has been issued but NO uniform, what we have we have bought out of our own pocket.
- Seen lots of paperwork that vol's are asked to fill out but don't we get the results back. Some better communication would be valuable, perhaps via email.
- Issues are present regarding:
 - staff able to assess competencies and sign off on them.
 - requirements for competency based assessments - not all packages complete and disagreements between states.
 - access to vehicles for training.
 - equipment funding for GR but limited funding for SAR - feel like the poor cousin for many years. GR kitted up but struggle to get funding for Gore-Tex and PPC.
- HQ's keep records that are up to date: -When sending out training sheets for community events (can't read writing). a need to put names who is out of date at the time of need. (sic)
- Our local controller runs a good HQ
- I have nothing but praise for the unit manager and other staff who make up the SES. Their commitment is admirable.
- Clearer direction from State level and Regional Area Managers to Unit members. Need more highly motivated members.
- The SES is a worthwhile organisation, I enjoy being a member, but I feel frustrated when we are expected to pay for uniforms that should be supplied. I realise that it's all to do with budgets - don't make the vols suffer. Training is satisfactory more regional involvement is required. We are fortunate that my unit have some older members that are able to maintain a high level of training.
- Website needs significant work - it would be quite simple to make it more appealing to members and encourage them to visit it more often = photos, photos, photos and news re what units are doing etc. Is currently very static and lifeless. In North at present I feel that vols are here to support paid staff, not the other way round!! Seems "we are doing them a favour". Is becoming difficult to maintain volunteer motivation and enthusiasm. Needs to be addressed!!
- Love being a volunteer but need to have more support from paid staff.
- The world is a beautiful place it owes you naught, but you owe it much.
- Enjoy being involved in SES but would prefer better support from regional staff
- I believe the SES provides a great opportunity to be active with in your community in a role that assist people in their time of need. To contribute your skills and develop further skills that are easily applicable to other areas of life. Very rewarding.
- This survey has been a waste of time because nothing will ever change.
- I enjoy being a member of the SES and can not see myself leaving the organisation any time soon.
- Would like to see a politician doing up and perhaps include volunteers from work for dole etc. more business involvement and or support.

- Training emphasises the need to operate within OHS standards and that gear is to be up to date and maintained - why is it so hard to acquire funding to maintain or purchase equipment used to save lives.
- Our Unit manger is fabulous, training is very well organised
- Need to get a new RTO for South because the current one is not approachable every time I've asked a question he has been very rude.
- As we are on Flinders Island we need to be fairly self sufficient. so we need a vehicle that will cope with all the aspects of jobs required as single cab rodeo 4x4 is not a good option as it is over loaded by equipment at all time. a dual cab 4x4 3to4 tonne truck would be ideal. but as I am only someone who does jobs for SES what would I know.
- There needs to be a demonstrated, positive, attitude, change across the organisation towards OHS. there needs to be acceptance by paid training staff that there are some volunteer trainers within the SES that are as good as and more qualified than they are and full use should be made of them. the principle of leadership need to be learnt and applied by all staff members. there is an urgent need for a professional fully funded, ongoing recruitment strategy, with emphasis being placed on using TV during prime time. Reconsider the implementation of a cadet scheme.
- I think it is time the SES moved away from the Police and Public Safety controls and moved to a more volunteering type service. maybe fire as I can see benefits to both services. also the cadet system may help to bring family members on board, plus the ability to use some good training facilities around the State etc.
- I believe that the emphasis of media involvement with Tas SES is extremely poor compared to that of mainland states. Web access for training officer to their respective unit's members competencies would be handy. (as discussed in CS Survey)
- RCR requires detailed info on vehicle access especially on new models post 2000
- It is difficult to respond to some of the questions due to the fact we gave a new Unit Manager and we are struggling with his lack of communication; commitment; people skills; management skills; insight to the position; planning; May seem harsh but unfortunately true.

answered question	27
skipped question	158

Emergency Services Volunteer Recruitment and Retention: Literature Review

By Andrew Lea
Director State Emergency Service, Tasmania
March 2008
(updated September 2008)

Australian literature published in the 1990s alerted the emergency management sector to the potential decline in emergency services volunteer numbers and the need to focus on volunteer recruitment and retention (Fitch, 1994; Johnson-Coffey, 1997; Morisey, 1993; Swan, 1991b; EMA, 2002). Greater attention since 2000, particularly since the 2001 International Year of the Volunteer and national Volunteer Summit (EMA, 2002; Howard, 2003), had therefore been given to research in this field.

Open source literature on SES volunteer research within Australia is very scarce. Research of this type has either been occurring in other jurisdictions, but has not been made available; or, as revealed by McLennan (2008a), it represents a significant national research gap compared to the more abundant research on fire service volunteers (McLennan 2008a).

Tasmania SES Volunteer Literature

Except for the small amount of volunteer information in the Tasmanian Department of Police and Emergency Management Annual Reports, which cover SES business performance, literature specifically relating to SES volunteer recruitment, retention and possible strategies is limited to internal unpublished documents such as SES volunteer survey reports and SES performance review reports (SES, 2002; SES, 2008a; SES, 2008b).

The more recent of these surveys (SES, 2008a) was initiated, in part, to specifically inform further research on SES volunteer recruitment, retention and possible strategies, so will be central to this project. SES volunteer exit questionnaires are made available to departing members and should be included for future analysis, but the return rate for these is less than 10% and most of these are by happy volunteers who had no choice in leaving (eg, moving with work).

Other Relevant Tasmanian Emergency Services Literature

There are two other Tasmanian bodies of work that examined volunteer recruitment, retention and possible strategies for improvement, but these were for volunteer recruitment and retention within the Tasmanian Ambulance Service (Fahey, 2001) and Tasmania Fire Service (TFS, 2003). While not SES, these services work within the same communities and in a similar work environment where volunteers from all

emergency services are exposed to similar pressures and demands (Volunteering Tasmania, 2008). According to the more recent SES survey (SES, 2008a), 27.2% of SES volunteers also volunteer with these services and the three services often work closely together, so, in the absence of significant SES literature, these research documents will be considered very relevant to this SES research project.

Fahey and Walker (2001), both academics from the University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania, have contributed the only real piece of academic literature that proposed 54 recruitment and retention strategies within 10 output areas for emergency service volunteers in Tasmania, specifically Volunteer Ambulance Officers (VAO). These strategies have been developed on the basis of a VAO survey that achieved a 55% return rate and a comprehensive literature review (Fahey, 2001). This work has informed further work to support VAO recruitment and retention, but with a focus on enhancing training (Fahey, 2002).

Their literature review did not benefit from the flurry of research that followed the International Year of the Volunteer and the 2001 Volunteer Summit (EMA, 2002; Howard, 2003), but effectively reinforced the view that a better understanding of volunteer motivations and issues will allow organisations to implement effective volunteer recruitment and retention strategies. Research by Aitken (1999), and Reinholdt and Smith (1998) supported this view, as did Vineyard (2001a and 2001b), Woodward and Kallman (2001) and Birch and McLennan (2007) since Fahey and Walker completed their project.

The Tasmania Fire Service Volunteer Recruitment Project Report (TFS, 2003), also used a volunteer survey with a 37% return rate (for brigade responses) to determine the level of concern within the brigades about recruitment and retention, what recruitment methods were being used and which methods were more successful. They relied on the literature (Fahey, 2001; Esmond, 2001), plus research conducted in New Zealand (Fire Service Commission research, 2001 – not available) and Western Australia (Fire and Emergency Services Authority survey, 1999 – not available) to determine why volunteers join, stay and leave their service. This research led to four broad recommendations:

- Create a system to strategically manage volunteer workforce planning and recruitment;
- Encourage flexibility and inclusiveness;
- Support brigade-level recruitment; and
- Enhance recruitment of young volunteers.

There was no literature available to indicate the success or otherwise of these proposals. This will require further consultation with the Tasmania Fire Service.

Recruitment

With regards to volunteer recruitment, the literature has revealed that the most commonly used and effective recruitment methods were word-of-mouth, public displays and print news media (Morisey, 1993; Reinholdt, 1998; Swan, 1991a). This has generally been backed up by Tasmanian volunteer surveys (Fahey, 2001; TFS, 2003; SES, 2008a), but these have proposed some other interesting methods that should be considered by SES. The Tasmania Ambulance Service, for example, has had some success through advertising the need for volunteers (Fahey, 2001). The

Tasmania Fire Service has had considerable success leading up to their survey with recruiting volunteers through their junior member and cadet streams, local door-to-door recruitment with pamphlets/brochures and station open days with recruitment videos (TFS, 2003).

Fahey, Walker and Sleigh (2002) provided a compelling argument against a previous myth that high training standards scare potential volunteer away. On the contrary, potential volunteers would be attracted to join and stay if there were greater attention given to higher quality, more flexible and timely training (Fahey, 2002; Stone, 2000).

Esmond (2001), who was informed by two years of volunteer research on volunteer recruitment in Australia, the USA and Britain, dedicated a book with hundreds of ideas for the effective recruitment of volunteers across all sectors. Some of these ideas are based on the notion that happy volunteers, willing to brag about their work, would be the best recruiters of new volunteers. Such a strategy has been effectively used, with added support from management, by the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS, 2003).

If relying on volunteers to conduct their own recruitment activities, however, care is to be taken to not overburden them with work, as this could end up being a demotivating factor (Esmond, 2001). Esmond (2001) proposes to do what several fire agencies have done and appoint dedicated paid volunteer recruitment (and retention) staff to support volunteer recruitment at all levels. Clearly, if organisations are unable to appoint dedicated recruitment staff, as is currently the case with Tasmania SES, and volunteers are required to conduct recruitment activities, the research indicates that the volunteers must be well supported with the resources, skills and profile building strategies from management (Esmond, 2001).

Some of the resources covered in Esmond's book (2001) that can assist volunteers in recruitment activities include contact or referral cards to invite prospective volunteers to visit the unit, or find out more information; catchy and motivating brochures, posters or postcards; and targeted community service announcements on television and radio. Regarding skills, organisations need to be selective if using volunteers to speak to the public about volunteering, or otherwise develop these skills for those who wish to participate (Esmond, 2001).

Esmond's claim that the image and profile of the Service as a whole will affect volunteer recruitment is supported by other Australian research that has found that the more favourable a volunteer brigade or unit is seen through the eyes of its community and the employers and families of volunteers, the more social approval and support the unit will receive for volunteer recruitment and retention (McLennan, 2008b). With this support and the right recruitment strategies in place to complement this support, locals will have the four main ingredients to join as a volunteer:

- **Increased motivation** (eg, to support the community and public safety, personal reward);
- **Increased capacity and resources** (eg, to have the time, ability to learn);
- **Increased contact opportunity** (eg, make it easy to contact someone who can help join or provide information); and
- **Reduced alternative opportunities or demands** (eg, maintain a high profile against competing opportunities, partner your 'competitors' in some way).
(McLennan, 2008b)

Research on what actually does motivate people to volunteer reveals fairly consistent results across all volunteer sectors, particularly for the greatest motivating factor, which is to give something back and to help your community (ABS, 2007; Maher, 2005; Volunteering Australia, 2004; Pope, 2004; Wilson, 2005; Fahey, 2002; McLennan, 2008a). Fahey's and Walker's literature review (2001) considered research into management practices for volunteer-based organisations, an area they considered was not well understood within the emergency sector (Fahey, 2001; Anheier, 2000). They considered recruitment and retention as key components of the management practices of any volunteer-based organisation, but included support services and training as other key management areas that particularly support volunteer retention.

Motivated by emerging concerns about the difficulties employers of our volunteers face with periods of staff absence while tending to emergencies, more recent literature proposes recruitment methods such as incentive driven encouragement by employers and family through profile building strategies (of the emergency service, the employers' business/company, or the family's status within the community) and the promotion through employers of more flexible hours of volunteer commitment (Woodward, 2001; Volunteering Australia, 2006; McLennan, 2008b). This tells us that an effective recruitment strategy is not just about emergency service organisations communicating with potential volunteer candidates. Getting broader community, business, industry and employer support for volunteer service within your organisation and focusing on current and achievable benefits (skill development, recognition/rewards, etc) can greatly assist recruitment (Aitken, 2000; Aldridge, 2004).

The age of people who choose to volunteer for SES can be determined to some extent by the recent SES survey (SES, 2008a). This reveals that the majority of the SES volunteers fall in the 40-44 age bracket with an overall average age of 42.95 (see Table 2). This is higher than the Tasmania Fire Service, largely due to their Junior/Cadet Program, which has led to a significantly greater percentage of volunteers within the 18-29 age group (21%) compared to Tasmania SES (10.2%) (SES, 2008a; TFS 2003). While the most popular volunteering age bracket for SES volunteers is fairly close to the national statistics for all sectors, SES is about 17% below the norm for the younger 18-29 age bracket, which suggests that this may be an area for some attention (ABS, 2007; Birch, 2007). There is also evidence from the research by Birch and McLennan (2007) that younger people are more interested in emergency operational functions (firefighting), but people across all age groups who are considering volunteering would be 10-20% more interested in non-operational roles, at least to start with. They also found that 18-34 year olds, when compared will all other age groups, lived up to the 'what's in it for me' stereotype of the Y-generation by being more attracted to volunteering because of self-oriented motives, instead of community safety/contribution (Birch, 2006). McLennan (2008a) also found that 35-44 year olds are least likely to join as a volunteer due to work and family pressures.

The literature reveals that emergency services are more inclined to attract and retain larger proportions of males than other volunteer sectors due to the nature of the work being traditionally more appealing to males (TFS, 2003; Baxter-Tomkins, 2006; ABS, 2007). An exit survey project conducted for the South Australian Country Fire Service also revealed that the "old-fashioned" and inflexible leadership styles, where "boys club" and "militaristic" cultures prevail, is a significant turn-off for prospective young and female members (Davis, 2005). The above research highlighted this gender imbalance as a concern that should be examined in more detail to ensure the services are not unnecessarily missing out on untapped volunteer opportunities.

Research by McLennan, et al (2007) and Beatson (2008) on several fire authorities reveals that women interested in volunteering have little knowledge of the full range of roles available to volunteers and are often turned off because of their perception that they would not cope with the physical/heavy work. This research also found that women were almost three times as concerned as men about volunteering due to the impact it might have on their childcare responsibilities. For serving women volunteers, difficulties with the shape and size of their personal protective clothing was a significant concern, as was difficulties handling and working heavy equipment and vehicles. In one survey, 18% of women respondents reported that they *“have been told by at least one man in the brigade that women do not belong in the fire services and are not capable of the work”*, but 87% agreed that *“most of the men in the brigade have no trouble with women fighting fires”* (Beatson, 2008, p.3)

Recent research can also provide valuable insights into the type of people we recruit, such as the work conducted by Baxter-Tomkins and Wallace (2006). This research differentiates emergency service volunteers from other types of volunteers because the work is often stressful and dangerous, and appeals to only 4.5% of all Australian volunteers (Baxter, 2006). Of the 115,600 volunteers in Tasmania (across all sectors) only a small percentage of these (around 4.5%) are expected to be attracted to emergency services and an even smaller percentage to SES (ABS, 2001). Volunteering in SES is therefore a small and specialised area of interest that appeals to only certain people who want to help or give something back to their communities, as shown by the surveys, but also those willing to work in stressful and dangerous situations. No literature could be found, however, that suggested that recruitment strategies should focus on the stressful and dangerous aspects of volunteering in the emergency services, as used in the past for military recruitment advertisements (eg. Royal Australian Navy recruitment campaign in the 1980's, *“You'll be cold, you'll be wet, you'll be homesick, but the pride of the fleet will be yours”*).

Retention

Recruiting volunteers can be a challenge, but retaining them can be more difficult unless you have sound retention strategies in place to ensure the volunteers feel valued and appreciated (EMA, 2002; Aitken, 2000; Vineyard 2001a and 2001b). Vineyard (2001a and 2001b) steps through a range of practical retention tips, such as fostering volunteer units that are well informed, appropriately rewarded and have a good team spirit, sense of belonging and kinship.

Aitken (2000) found that different environments affected volunteer retention differently, which required different retention strategies for different areas. For example, rural volunteers prefer to be left to their own devices more and be managed less formally than urban units; volunteers from mining communities (such as the west coast of Tasmania) need flexible callout and training arrangements due to shift work; and volunteers from rural/agricultural areas may need support due to extra travel for training/operations, or flexibility during seasonal farming demands, such as harvesting or shearing (Aitken, 2000). Importantly, Aitken also recognised that the maintenance of an effective recruitment strategy was an effective retention strategy, particularly if it focused on the benefits of volunteering, such as the satisfaction and rewards for helping people and serving your community, learning new skills and the interesting and challenging aspects of the work (Aitken, 2000).

Several researchers have highlighted various trends that have made it more difficult for volunteers to stay. These trends include declining and aging rural populations, changing societal values (eg, 'what's in it for me' attitude), increasing rules and standards (eg, safety, training), work pressures and reluctance of employers to

release volunteers for emergencies, changing technology (eg, can provide volunteer services on line or be entertained from home) and out of pocket expenses (ABS, 2007; Aitken, 2000; Anglicare, 2005; Barnett, 2006; Esmond, 2006; McLennan, 2008b; Volunteering Australia, 2005, 2007a and 2007b).

McLennan, Birch, Cowlshaw and Suss (2008), informed by nine bodies of volunteer recruitment and retention research across Australia, found that there were many reasons why volunteer firefighters leave. Many volunteers have no choice because they move from place to place due to work or family; many believe they have no choice due to age and fitness for the job; those who choose to leave do so because of work and family conflicts with their time, stress of dealing with emergencies and trauma, or because they are not satisfied with management at the brigade level or don't feel accepted (McLennan, 2008b). By rectifying the issues where volunteers choose to leave, you should achieve greater retention.

Supporting Documentation

A number of Government reports provide useful data and issues that are applicable to all volunteer sectors (DPCD, 2007; Ironmonger, 2006; Barnett, 2006). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on volunteer issues/trends and Tasmanian volunteer statistics, while not directly related to recruitment and retention, will help contextualise some of the research (ABS, 2007; ABS, 2001).

It was also apparent through anecdotal input and reference to various Annual Reports (eg. Fire and Emergency Services Authority, WA; Emergency Management Queensland; and most SES organisations) that organisations are conducting internal research work on enhancing the support and management of their volunteers. This is apparently occurring at regional and local levels as well. Recruitment and retention issues for volunteers are likely to feature in this work, therefore future literature review work would benefit from an audit of all related internal or unpublished literature that exists on the files of these organisation and added encouragement provided from peak bodies/authorities to share this information as broadly as possible.

Much of the literature identifies opportunities for additional research. The most recent research, conducted by McLennan (2008a) considers these research gaps for volunteerism across all emergency services (see Table 1). Of significance here is his finding that there is a significant lack of research into SES volunteerism.

Table 1 – Current Significant Research Gaps for Emergency Services Volunteerism (McLennan, 2008a)

Priority	Research Gaps
High	Determine the level of need to introduce financial incentive schemes for volunteers, the scope and structure of such schemes and whether there are non-financial forms of recognition that volunteers value highly
	Determine the training needs of staff in order to improve the effectiveness of volunteer supervision, support and management
	Determine the training needs of volunteers in order to improve the supervision, leadership and management of local volunteer emergency services units
	Determine ways in which the burdens on employers of volunteers can be eased, including an examination of the forms of recognition that will assist the employers with marketing their goods/services
Intermediate	Development of 'best practice' models for emergency services organisations to more effectively manage and support their volunteers and to recognise and support employers and families of their volunteers
	Development of new models of emergency response volunteering that is better suited to current social and economic realities than is present 'for life, 24/7' availability model which operates in practice
Modest	Determine ways in which more volunteers can be recruited and retained who come from cultural and linguistic backgrounds other than Anglo-Australian
	Determine ways in which links between local emergency services units and Indigenous Australians can be strengthened
Global (to be incorporated with all of the above)	More research is required for non-fire service volunteers, such as SES and ambulance (most research has only been conducted on fire services volunteerism)
	There is a need for a comprehensive database which is readily available to researchers, policy makers and planners, which records the annual numbers of emergency services volunteers

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