A3: The Volunteering in Australia research – what's next?
Volunteering in Australia Research
What’s Next from the Organisation Perspective?
Volunteering in Australia Research

Professor Kirsten Holmes, Professor Leonie Lockstone-Binney, Professor Amanda Davies & Associate Professor Patrick Dunlop
Methodology

- Online survey open 13 May to 22 June 2022
- Target population: representatives of Australian volunteer involving organisations
- Newsletters, social media, direct emails, VIKTOR/VIRA Mailing List
- 1,345 usable responses
- Focus groups to probe on follow up issues
Organisational Size - Volunteers

50% of organisations involved 50 volunteers or fewer
How Organisations Currently Involve Volunteers?

• 92% of organisations involved volunteers in ongoing roles performed regularly (e.g., weekly, fortnightly)
• 63% engaged volunteers episodically
• 28% of organisations provided micro-volunteering opportunities
• 80% indicated their volunteers volunteered in person for the organisation
• 68% also had volunteers representing them out in the field/community
• 39% of organisations involved their volunteers remotely over the Internet
83% of organisations surveyed need more volunteers in the immediate term.
5 years into the future, 60% said their organisation would need more volunteers.
I think we're past the awareness stage, particularly in community sport. It's now at a stage where we need to provide more educational opportunities and resources to help our volunteers become comfortable and safe with promoted diversity.
Employee Volunteers

- 30% organisations involved employee/corporate volunteers
- Employee volunteering appears more common among Animal Welfare, Environment, Disability, and Community Services / Welfare / Homelessness organisations
- 53% indicated that they did not have appropriate volunteering opportunities for this cohort

I mean our biggest partner is (corporate de-identified) so we have a lot of vollies that come through from there, highly professional, organised people, beautiful to work with. But yeah, they just have a set of expectations…
Circumstances, Challenges and Changes
I'm really pushing for the whole organisation to understand what, how important the volunteers are. And that's like me getting anecdotal evidence from each of the staff members to actually take a moment, think of a situation where a volunteer was super helpful.
I think we're noticing people being a lot more selective with the volunteer roles they're looking for and wanting to use specific skills if they are volunteering…I think we're now starting to look a lot more at skilled volunteering opportunities, corporate workplace opportunities or matching people better to different skills.
Could Be Better cont.

1 = Strongly disagree     3 = Neither     5 = Strongly agree

Recent events in Australia have put financial strain on our organisation
Volunteers seem to have less time to commit than in previous years
Our volunteering program has yet to recover from the impact of COVID-19
We are able to engage effectively with government and policy makers
Top 5 Changes in the Last 3 Years

1. Regulation and administrative requirements have become more complicated
2. Our volunteers have been unable to volunteer due to COVID-19
3. The numbers of volunteers in our organisation has declined
4. Our volunteering programs are no longer operating at their full capacity
5. People want to volunteer episodically, rather than on a regular basis

1 = Strongly disagree      3 = Neither      5 = Strongly agree

3.62 3.56 3.43 3.43 3.38

One of the impacts from COVID is moved to offer more virtual opportunities. So definitely we've invested in some new initiatives there. I think COVID will be an issue for some time, but it has really opened up the doors with hybrid working and technology.
Drivers of Change

COVID-19: 88%
The need to be increasingly adaptable and resilient to the changing landscape: 55%
Shifts in volunteering rates and styles: 27%
Demographic and population changes (e.g., rural depopulation and ageing): 26%
Technological changes: 23%
Rising expectations of voluntary organisations: 19%
Rising levels of business risk: 12%
Rising expectations of increased inclusive community involvement: 9%
Climate change: 4%
Organisational Perspective:
Key Takeaways

• Organisations are still in COVID-recovery mode

• There is a disconnect with the level of commitment that volunteers prefer as compared to the commitment that organisations require

• Organisations are diversifying their volunteering cohorts (minority groups, employee volunteers) but there are barriers to involvement

• Recruitment and retention remain significant concerns for organisations **for now and into the future**, irrespective of organisational size and geographical location (some sectoral differences noted)
Implications

Government
• Sector funding and red-tape reduction are priorities
• Meaningful engagement with the sector needed

Practitioners
• Push to tailored, flexible volunteering will continue
• Strong reliance on “traditional” volunteering model – opportunities to diversify via virtual, episodic and employee volunteering and diversity and inclusion strategies

Researchers
• Opportunities to analyse the dataset lodged with the Australian Data Archive
• Need a sampling frame for volunteer-involving organisations
For the full report:  
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For access to the dataset:  
Organisational dataset

Curtin University  
Griffith University  
The University of Western Australia  
Volunteering Australia