

## **AEMVF 2018 CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations have been made by the volunteers who attended the 2018 Conference in Sydney on 20-21 June.

### **TIME**

1. Time is the major barrier to emergency sector volunteering, and members must structure their policies accordingly.
2. Volunteers must be advised of the potential time commitment expected of them when they apply to join a member organisation.
3. More flexible volunteering is required through redefinition of roles and restructuring of local units.
4. Regular checks are required to minimise the administrative load on volunteers and targeted recruiting should be introduced to provide volunteers who are happy to undertake administrative roles.
5. The processes which require volunteers to undergo police checks, working with children and vulnerable children need to be streamlined and be transferable.
6. A program is required to encourage businesses to support volunteers by allowing them time off for operations.
7. More streamlined processes are required to assess operational readiness of units.
8. Additional paid leave is required for extended absences on operations by government employed volunteers .

### **TRAINING**

1. High quality training must be provided to volunteers by competent instructors.
2. Volunteers, particularly new recruits must not be kept waiting for long periods for training
2. All training must be nationally consistent, flexible and transferable.
3. There must be greater recognition of inter-agency and inter-state qualifications.
4. There needs to be greater collaboration between States and member organisations In order to standardise training resource material wherever possible.

5. A nationally recognised certificate of qualifications should be available to volunteers
6. All training should be aligned to national competencies..
7. Member organisations should map their qualifications so that they can be related to careers.
8. The use of spontaneous volunteers should be further examined to enable the development of up-to-date processes for their management and use.
9. Training should include representations of local situations which are relevant to both response and recovery operations.
10. Maximum use should be made of on-line training for theoretical subjects.

## **COST**

1. Further improvements are necessary to move the sector to a zero cost to volunteer situation for all emergency management volunteers.
2. Member organisations should regularly survey out-of-pocket expenses incurred by their volunteers and adjust reimbursement as required.
3. The processes for volunteers to claim out-of-pocket expenses should be simplified and entitlements clarified.
4. All member organisations should establish standard cost recovery systems for their volunteers.
5. Volunteers' out- of- pocket expenses should be tax deductible.
6. A national financial support scheme is required to assist volunteers who suffer financial hardship as a result of being deployed on operations for extended periods.
7. Financial and other incentives should be provided to employers who release volunteers for operations.
8. The processes for obtaining grants by volunteer organisations should be simplified and streamlined.
9. Financial assistance and or tax deductibility should be available to volunteers who undertake study which is relevant to their volunteering.

## **RECOGNITION**

- 1.** There is a requirement for a permanent and consistent public education campaign to acknowledge the contribution of emergency sector volunteers to the safety and wellbeing of the Australian community
- 2.** There needs to be a survey of recognition programs within all states and territories so that they can be harmonised.
- 3.** There needs to be a survey of national and state and territory volunteer awards.
- 4.** A National Employer Day should be introduced to acknowledge employers who support emergency sector volunteers.
- 5.** The sector should participate more actively in National Volunteer Week and members should encourage state and territory and local governments to join in acknowledging the volunteers.
- 6.** States and Territories and member organisations should make more use of social media to promote their volunteers.
- 7.** Member organisations should become more active in providing material for local media outlets which relate to their volunteers and their activities.
- 8.** The status of future volunteer summits should be restored to the previous high profile and better Government support.

## **PEOPLE**

- 1.** Peer support and mentoring programs are required to ensure that new recruits are properly integrated into local units and made to feel welcome.
- 2.** Volunteering models must reflect the personal circumstances of today's volunteers.
- 3.** Targeted recruiting is essential if full advantage is to be taken of the total population.
- 4.** Volunteers must be kept informed about what is happening in their organisations and be involved in decision making.
- 5.** Member organisations should make use of electronic newsletters to keep volunteers advised.
- 6.** New volunteers must not be kept waiting for lengthy periods before becoming operationally ready.
- 7.** Volunteers should be given local leadership opportunities.

- 8.** All member organisations should develop tailored leadership training and take advantage of the AIDR conducted leadership program.
- 9.** Volunteers must be properly protected in the event of accident, injury or death.
- 10.** A nationally recognised Volunteering Certificate should be created.
- 11.** The AEMVF should ensure that future Emergency Management Sector Conferences are not conducted as minor and poorly acknowledged parts of larger conferences.
- 12.** The AEMVF should monitor national legislation to ensure that it does not adversely affect emergency sector volunteers.

**Ends**