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THE FUTURE OF 'NON-TRADITIONAL' EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE AND HOW CAN IT WORK?

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'NON-TRADITIONAL' EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING

- What counts as emergency/ disaster volunteering needs to be broadened
- Non-traditional volunteering needs to be supported and included in planning alongside more traditional EM volunteering



Figure 1: Hurricane Sandy Spirit NY by Thomas Good

RATIONALE

- The landscape of volunteering is transforming
- Informal, emergent disaster volunteering is prevalent and inevitable
- Community resilience is a bigger goal with more players



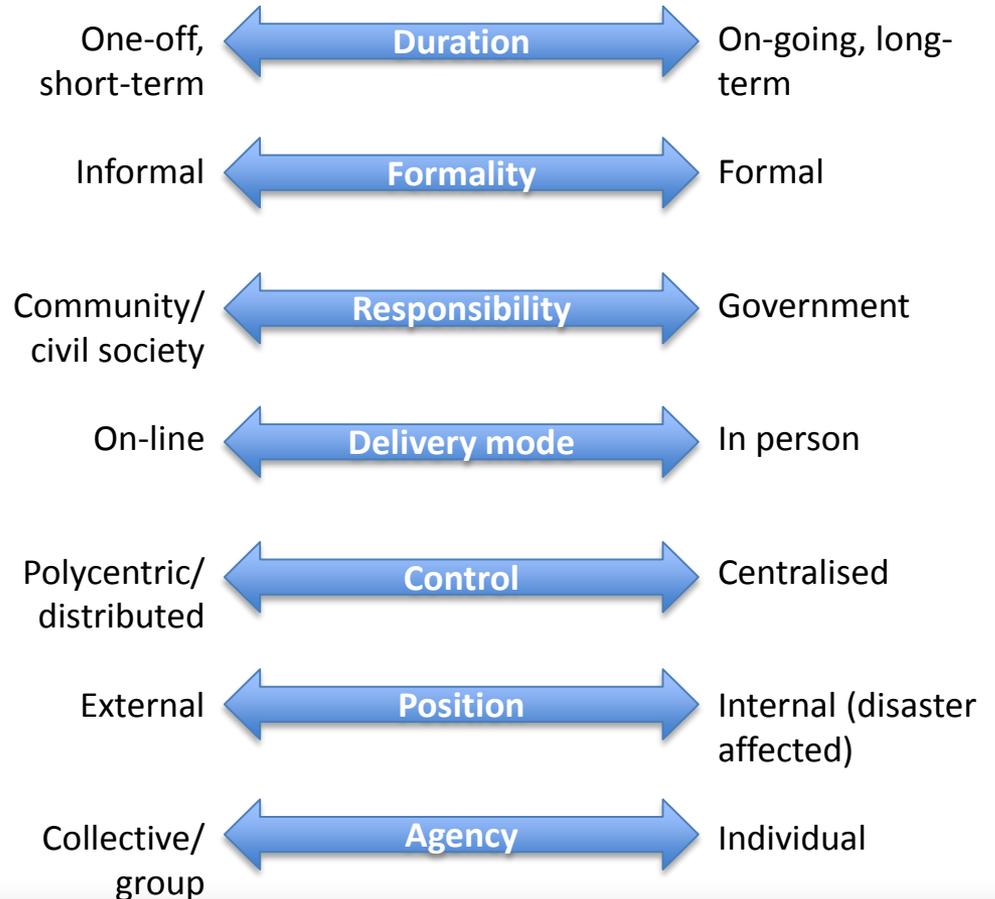
Figure 2: Cyclone Oswald – Recovery, Bundaberg, Queensland & New South Wales 2013 by John Bonello

WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

Diverse types

- Emergent (incl spontaneous)
- Extending
- Digital
- Episodic
- Employer-supported
- Skills-based
- Government outsourced
- Community-based, grassroots

Multiple dimensions (e.g.)



HOW CAN IT WORK?

Case study of Be Ready Warrandyte



Figure 3: Warrandyte State Park back burning 08 by Erin Silversmith



Be Ready Warrandyte

Living with Bushfire risk

A set of tools developed to help better prepare for Bushfires.



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BRW is winding down its operations. Thx to the community of Warrandyte for all your support. Stay prepared, stay safe pic.twitter.com/ccal3jdtxF



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REPORTED BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

Impacts	Reported by	Examples
Contributed to an increase in the level of household planning and bushfire awareness	04W, 07EM, 10W, 08W-EM	"On that day of extreme fire danger on 9th February there were a lot less people in Warrandyte. So what are the differences between that and previous years? The influence of the Be Ready project was certainly out of the ordinary. [...] If they can talk to the fire brigade, the Fire and Emergency Services Union, the Fire and Emergency Services Association, [...] House or the [...] Association." (05W-EM)
Extended emergency management organisations & community safety communication	05W-EM	"We've been able to do a lot more with the businesses [...] they've [BRW] been able to do in there with a warm heart rather than [as] a state government body." (01EM)
Adapted community to have visible communication	04W	"I know that when something dramatically bad happens in Warrandyte, there'll be a group of go-to people who will hit the ground running and they'll be respected and they will be leaders and agencies will go to them and ask questions about 'what do we do now?' which is very different to most other communities." (EM participant)
Built communication through community	07EM, 09EM, 08W-EM	"There's been discussion at CEO level between VicRoads, Councils, EMV, Craig Lapsley's office, around some of the Warrandyte issues. I think the Be Ready project has contributed to that stuff being pushed to that level." (07EM)
Increased responsibility between EMOs and the community	05W-EM	"The hard work that they've done and involving the local [brigade] members it has highlighted that community safety has got just as much of an impact as what the operational response does." (01EM)
Used communication who are not receptive to EMOs	07EM, 09EM, 08W-EM	"There's been discussion at CEO level between VicRoads, Councils, EMV, Craig Lapsley's office, around some of the Warrandyte issues. I think the Be Ready project has contributed to that stuff being pushed to that level." (07EM)
Improved relationships between EMOs and community	01EM, 02EM	"The hard work that they've done and involving the local [brigade] members it has highlighted that community safety has got just as much of an impact as what the operational response does." (01EM)
Raised awareness of local priority safety issues with EMOs	07EM, 09EM, 08W-EM	"There's been discussion at CEO level between VicRoads, Councils, EMV, Craig Lapsley's office, around some of the Warrandyte issues. I think the Be Ready project has contributed to that stuff being pushed to that level." (07EM)
Increased support for community safety activities amongst local fire brigade members	01EM, 02EM	"The hard work that they've done and involving the local [brigade] members it has highlighted that community safety has got just as much of an impact as what the operational response does." (01EM)
Established a trusted network of community leaders that can engage with EMOs now and into the future	09EM, 01EM, 10W, 06W, 02EM	"I know that when something dramatically bad happens in Warrandyte, there'll be a group of go-to people who will hit the ground running and they'll be respected and they will be leaders and agencies will go to them and ask questions about 'what do we do now?' which is very different to most other communities." (09EM)
Directly engaged with the local business community on community safety issues	07EM, 01EM, 08W-EM	"We've also been able to do a lot more with the businesses [...] they've [BRW] been able to do in there with a warm heart rather than [as] a state government body." (01EM)
Initiated discussion and communication on local priority safety issues in ways that EMOs are unable to	04W, 07EM, 01EM, 09EM	"Government can't lead a discussion on fire shelters and bunkers. A community group can because there's no risk. There's no responsibility. There's no liability. There's no anything. There's no negative outcome. It's just 'let's have a rational discussion about this issue.'" (09EM)

TABLE 6: REPORTED COMMUNITY SAFETY BENEFITS OF BE READY WARRANDYTE WITHIN GREATER WARRANDYTE

Impacts	Reported by	Examples
Shown EMOs alternative ways to communicate with communities; challenged 'one-size-fits-all' approach	10W, 02EM, 04W, 06W, 05W-EM	"I think they have opened a few of the emergency service's eyes to other ways of how the community are going to actually take this message and how else do we get community's buy in to accept that these messages are not only good for them but created by them." (02EM)
Provided a proof of concept of the value of community-led initiatives	09EM, 02EM, 08W-EM, 05W-EM	"It proved a concept that they didn't know they were setting out to prove essentially and that is communities can run their own discussion and can lead the way and that agencies can support that and have extraordinary outcomes for everyone." (09EM) "I think it's actually made the emergency management community realise that the community have a great amount of power. That something that's born from right at the community level has the capacity to be fantastic and to really take off. And it works sometimes a lot better than trying to push the message down from the top." (02EM)
Influenced emergency management policy and dialogue in response to community concerns and priorities	10W, 08W-EM	"In the time that we've been involved the CFA's position and Emergency Management Victoria's position on bunkers has changed. [...] The landscape's shifting on this and it's shifting because of pressure, community pressure. [...] in our local community I think it's probably very much about Be Ready but I don't think we're the only people having this conversation." (10W)
Developed tools that community groups and EMOs can use	05W-EM	"I think it's actually made the emergency management community realise that the community have a great amount of power. That something that's born from right at the community level has the capacity to be fantastic and to really take off." (EM participant)
Provided a platform to initiate community communication	05W-EM	"I think it's actually made the emergency management community realise that the community have a great amount of power. That something that's born from right at the community level has the capacity to be fantastic and to really take off." (EM participant)
Was a cost effective way for EMOs to communicate safety messages	01EM, 02EM	"The more I attended I thought 'yeah we need to be doing this everywhere.'" (02EM) "I'll fully admit I walked in there thinking these guys would [mess] it up. I'll admit that but I've been proven totally wrong." (05W-EM)
Tested and applied community-led initiatives	01EM, 02EM, 05W-EM	"The more I attended I thought 'yeah we need to be doing this everywhere.'" (02EM) "I'll fully admit I walked in there thinking these guys would [mess] it up. I'll admit that but I've been proven totally wrong." (05W-EM)
Brought fresh eyes to bushfire risk	05W-EM	"The more I attended I thought 'yeah we need to be doing this everywhere.'" (02EM) "I'll fully admit I walked in there thinking these guys would [mess] it up. I'll admit that but I've been proven totally wrong." (05W-EM)
Increased or reinforced support for community-led initiatives amongst EMO representatives involved	01EM, 02EM, 05W-EM	"The more I attended I thought 'yeah we need to be doing this everywhere.'" (02EM) "I'll fully admit I walked in there thinking these guys would [mess] it up. I'll admit that but I've been proven totally wrong." (05W-EM)

TABLE 7: REPORTED IMPACTS OF BE READY WARRANDYTE ON BROADER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT THINKING AND PRACTICE

BRIDGING GAPS THROUGH COPRODUCTION

- 1) An example of effective coproduction in a high capacity community
- 2) Underpinned by good leadership, sound governance & project management, strong community authority
- 3) Highlighted how community-led projects can do things governments can't
- 4) Benefited from good relationships with EMOs: didn't go it alone

“Prior to Be Ready Warrandyte the responsibility of fire safety for the Warrandyte community was the CFA. Now the CFA is just a player. They're just one of the participants. They do what they can, that will be respected. Thank you very much for doing what you could. Council did what they could. We as people did what we could.” (EM participant)

KEY POINTS

1. Future emergency volunteering will be more diverse, involve more (non-EM) players, and be more densely networked
2. This diverse volunteering needs to be planned for and supported by the EM sector
3. There are benefits from using a coproduction model
4. BRW demonstrates strengths that underpinned effective coproduction under good conditions
5. Additional case studies will include a focus on issues and tensions encountered under more difficult conditions

THE OUT OF UNIFORM PROJECT

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EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING IN AUSTRALIA: TRANSFORMING, NOT DECLINING

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COMMUNITY-LED BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS IN ACTION: THE CASE OF BE READY WARRANDYTE

A case study for the Out of Uniform: building community resilience through non-traditional volunteering project



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Review Article

A review of informal volunteerism in emergencies and disasters: Definition, opportunities and challenges

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ABSTRACT

Despite highly specialised and capable emergency management systems, ordinary citizens are usually first on the scene in an emergency or disaster, and remain long after official services have ceased. Citizens often play vital roles in helping those affected to respond and recover, and can provide invaluable assistance to official agencies. However, in most developed countries, emergency and disaster management relies largely on a workforce of professionals and, to varying degrees, volunteers affiliated with official agencies. Those who work outside of such systems have tended to be viewed as a nuisance or liability, and their efforts are often undervalued. Given increasing disaster risk worldwide due to population growth, urban development and climate change, it is likely that ‘informal’ volunteers will provide much of the additional surge capacity required to respond to more frequent emergencies and disasters in the future. This paper considers the role of informal volunteers in emergency and disaster management. Definitions of volunteerism are reviewed and it is argued that there is an overemphasis on volunteering without, and for, state and formal organisations. We offer a broader definition of ‘informal volunteerism’ that recognises the many ways ordinary citizens volunteer their time, knowledge, skills and resources to help others in times of crisis. Two broad types of informal volunteerism are identified – emergent and extending – and the implications for emergency and disaster management are considered. Particular attention is given to increasing ‘digital volunteerism’ due to the greater accessibility of sophisticated but simple information and communication technologies. Culture and legal liability are identified as key barriers to greater participation of informal volunteers. We argue that more adaptive and inclusive models of emergency and disaster management are needed to harness the capacities and resilience that exist within and across communities.

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Be Ready Warrandyte
LIVING WITH BUSHFIRE RISK

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