

Harnessing the power of Spontaneous Volunteers in an Emergency



Manager of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers Pilot Program in the G21 Region

Final Report
February 2015

Contents

Executive Summary	3
The G21 Pilot.....	4
Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes	5
MSEV – A Valuable Resource	8
Methodology.....	9
Guiding Principles.....	11
The Model	13
Host Agencies.....	14
Regional Capability	14
Risk Management.....	16
What we learnt	19
Next steps	20
Budget	20
Acknowledgements.....	21
Appendices.....	22
Appendix 1 - Desktop Research.....	22
Appendix 2 - Working Group Members.....	26
Appendix 3 - Collaboration	27
Appendix 4 - Training Program.....	28
Appendix 5 – Recruitment, Selection & Deployment.....	30

Executive Summary

The Manager of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers G21 Pilot was funded by Regional Development Victoria as part of its Resilient Communities Program. Volunteering Victoria has been the lead agency for the project, supported by Volunteering Geelong and City of Greater Geelong.

The project has been a collaborative effort building on existing relationships with Australian Red Cross, local government municipalities, CFA and SES. The G21 is an alliance working together to improve people's lives in the Geelong region including the municipalities of Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Surf Coast and Queenscliff.

The pilot program is the first of its kind in Victoria and has been successful in recruiting, training and supporting a select group of well qualified Volunteer Managers to support spontaneous emergency volunteers in an emergency.

The project involved the establishment of:

- a reference group, training workgroup and project management team to provide advice and to monitor the project
- guiding principles to define the program structure and ensure the implementation of the project complied with the intent, while remaining realistic and sustainable
- a team of trained Managers of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers (MSEVs) who can be deployed to help coordinate or manage spontaneous volunteers during an emergency
- a systematic approach to coordinate volunteer manager resources across the G21 region
- systems, processes and resources to train, register, support and communicate with the MSEV champions
- links to relevant existing networks that were engaged with and informed about the project.

Key project learnings and recommendations reflect the complexity and challenges facing agencies and organisations that operate in relief and recovery settings after emergencies. However, by working collaboratively with an extensive range of stakeholders who provided expertise and guidance, the project team has succeeded in developing a solid base of resources, systems and processes to increase G21 regional capability around the management of spontaneous emergency volunteers.

This report provides a detailed overview of the G21 Pilot, outlining objectives, outputs and outcomes. Volunteering Victoria has now received funding under the Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme (NDRGS) to commence rolling-out the model across Victoria.

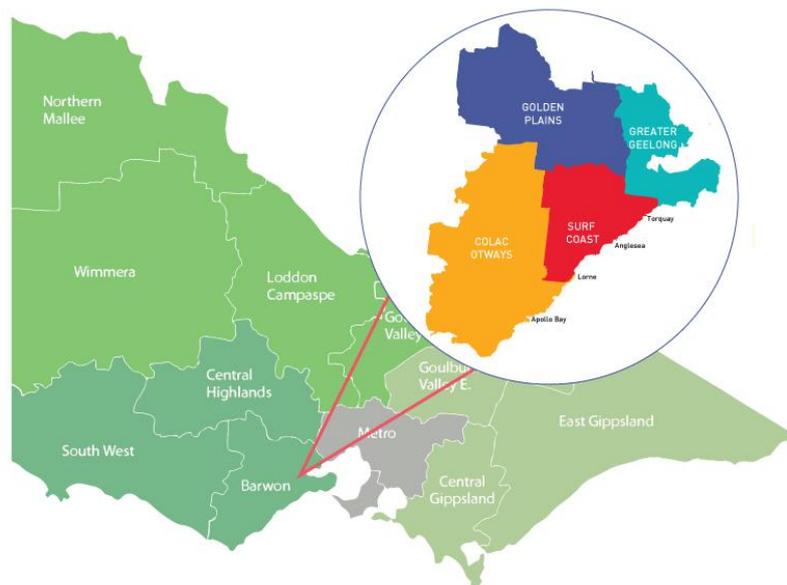
The G21 Pilot

Emergencies can strike anywhere and at any time. Whether planned or not, spontaneous volunteers will come forward with offers of assistance. While these volunteers can be an invaluable workforce to help with relief and recovery efforts, emergencies including the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, highlight that most communities are not able to cope with a mass influx of spontaneous offers of assistance, and in some instances, these volunteers can put themselves and others at risk.

The challenges posed for emergency management by spontaneous volunteers was acknowledged in the 2012 *Victorian Emergency Management White Paper*, which recommended the development of "strategies to manage spontaneous volunteers during relief and recovery efforts."

The Manager Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers G21 Pilot program has been designed to help build community resilience by recruiting, training, supporting, deploying and debriefing a workforce of skilled Managers of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers (MSEVs) to assist during emergency relief and recovery activities.

The Geelong pilot program focused on building capability to manage spontaneous volunteers in the **G21 region**, in the event of an emergency in the region. The G21 region comprises City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliffe, Colac Otway Shire, Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire.



Emergencies and emergency relief and recovery is innately unpredictable. We don't always know what is going to be needed nor can we predict the greatest issues or what the challenges will be.

This pilot was established as a partnership between local government, local volunteer organisations, emergency services agencies and the local community. It was important that the program aligned with existing emergency management arrangements to enhance, rather than duplicate or replicate what is already in place.

IMAGINE EMERGENCIES WITHOUT THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERS

Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes

Project Objectives

Overall objective

Establish a trained and engaged volunteer workforce of experienced volunteer managers who can be effectively deployed to assist in managing spontaneous emergency volunteers during relief and recovery activities.

In doing so, we will be increasing the G21 regional capability to provide relief to volunteer managers in emergency situations without compromising recovery efforts within communities.

Specific program objectives

1. Develop best practice training and professional development to upskill and support a workforce of Managers of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers
2. Set up a central register, managed by Volunteering Victoria, of experienced and trained Managers of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers (MSEVs) willing to be called on in times of emergency
3. Develop an online Resource Centre to house a suite of resources to support volunteer program MSEVs in managing spontaneous volunteers in a variety of settings and disaster types
4. Establish a communications program to recruit and retain MSEVs and keep them engaged with the central register (and its development).
5. Develop a support program including peer support network, telephone support, email updates, deployment debriefs as well as arrangements for counselling services for MSEVs for post event trauma if required
6. Through Volunteering Victoria's local, state and national networks, share learnings from pilot development and specific emergency events
7. Ongoing research and evaluation tracking the development and capability of the management of effective deployment of volunteers in emergencies, and best methods of collaboration between volunteer program managers and agencies.

The original pilot project outline anticipated recruiting and training up to 50 volunteer managers into the program. In developing the program, we identified a number of unanticipated complexities and outcomes in relation to marketing, recruitment, screening and deployment.

The recruitment strategy adopted (described in Appendix 5 page 30) allowed us to open the doors for the training session to all "interested" parties and then apply more stringent selection criteria in a second stage application process. The benefits to this approach were four fold:

- a. we were able to observe the interaction of potential MSEVs throughout the training
- b. participants were able to make a well informed decision before making a 12 month commitment to the program
- c. attendees of the training who have not committed to the program have a greater awareness of emergency management in Victoria and how the program will benefit the G21 region
- d. marketing collateral provided background information on preparing for emergencies that proved to be of general value to this cohort.

By taking the *less is best* approach and nurturing a smaller pool of MSEVs under the pilot, councils will have confidence when the time comes to utilise the highly skilled, quality resource represented by the MSEVs, and Volunteering Victoria have established an effective and efficient recruitment process, which will facilitate engaging larger numbers of MSEVs in the future.

Target numbers for trained MSEVs were reduced from 50 to 20. The MSEV champions in the program have excellent credentials and mind set to take on an MSEV role.

Additional Benefit

A small number of applicants who undertook the training did not proceed with their application to the program when they realised, through their improved understanding of relief and recovery, that they may be fully committed within their own organisations. Others have determined to seek ongoing volunteer roles in relief and recovery as a result of their enhanced understanding of what is involved and which agencies play a role. In these instances, participation in a training session has increased the level of knowledge of emergency management within the community despite not resulting in direct application to the project.

Project Outputs

- Recruitment and selection materials including position description, email invite, website content, registration portal, application form, interview guide, referee checklist and program acceptance form
- Full day training program including Participants Handbook, video case studies and train the trainer materials. *Refer to Appendix 4 for more detail*
- Thirty-four volunteer managers participated in the full day training session. Of these 14 have applied and subsequently been approved as MSEVs on the central database and an additional 7 applications are in progress. There were an additional 2 apologies and 4 non attendances for the training sessions
- Central register
 - Database platform to record details of trained MSEVs including deployment history
 - Templates for communications to MSEVs before, during and after a deployment
 - Online Resource Centre for MSEVs
- MSEV introduction pack including:
 - Welcome letter
 - Outline of deployment process
 - MSEV tabard – for use when deployed for identification of spontaneous volunteer managers
 - Volunteering Victoria name badge and lanyard – for use when deployed for practical identification/validation.
- Engagement activities with stakeholders to build understanding of potential utilisation of MSEVs. *Refer to summary of key engagement activities in Appendix 3*
- MSEV Peer support network to provide an opportunity to share knowledge and learnings.

Project Outcomes

- A systematic and organised approach to coordinating volunteer manager resources and experience across the G21 Region during relief and recovery activities
- A workforce of 14 trained volunteer managers (with an additional 7 applications pending at time of writing this report) who can be deployed to help coordinate and more effectively manage the spontaneous volunteers who want to assist in times of emergency
- A community-demand driven MSEV deployment model, ensuring the affected community is assisted and remains in charge
- Reduced likelihood that valuable resources from emergency service agencies and LGAs have to be redeployed to manage the spontaneous volunteer “problem”
- A more sustainable, resilient volunteer manager community, brought together to learn from each other, assist each other, and thus create more resilient and supported communities
- Improved knowledge of emergency management structures, planning process and practices at Volunteering Victoria and Volunteering Geelong
- Enhanced relationships and clarity of roles between Volunteering Victoria, Volunteering Geelong, City of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway, Surf Coast and Golden Plains Councils to accept MSEVs as a ready volunteer workforce
- Enhanced emergency preparedness, capability and resilience within G21 Region
- Volunteering Geelong included on Barwon South West Regional Emergency Relief and Recovery Committee network and regional emergency management training opportunities
- Greater understanding of the program and role the MSEV workforce can play to manage spontaneous emergency volunteers (SEVs) across the G21 Region
- Stimulation of conversation in LGAs about managing SEVs
- Development and clarity of procedures for managing spontaneous volunteers between Volunteering Geelong and City of Greater Geelong (i.e. Standard Operating Procedures)
- Tested recruitment model and processes.
- Tested concept and model, supported by extensive resources for State rollout
- Provision of a model that can be integrated into a MEMP
- Theoretical deployment and support framework
- A single program that has had focus on transferable skills, expertise and capability from **all sectors** of the volunteering community. Volunteering and volunteer management has remained the central theme – without any legacy of sector-based or ‘type’ of volunteering
- Stakeholder engagement and collaboration at local, state and national levels has spurred conversation and collaboration to share learnings, processes and resources across sectors.

At the time of writing this report the G21 region had not experienced a large scale disaster. As a result the processes and procedures designed to deploy MSEVs have not been activated.

MSEV – A Valuable Resource

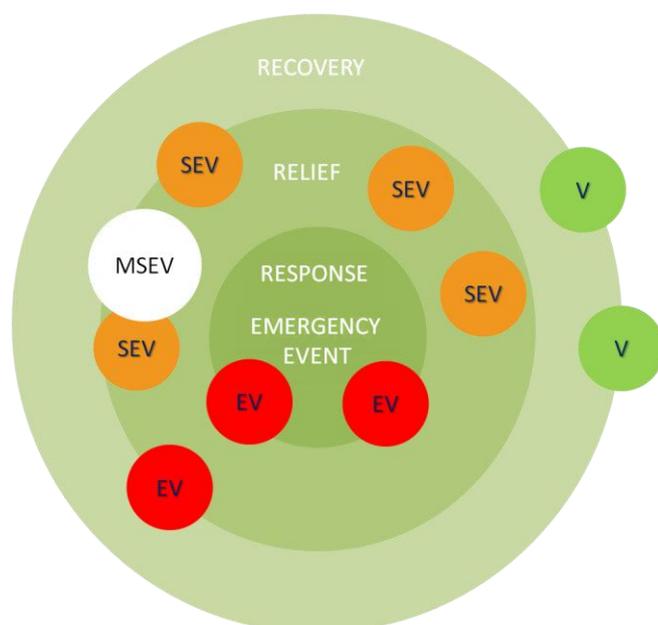
Effectively utilising the skills and manpower that spontaneous volunteers bring with them and ensuring they are not a burden for those embroiled in relief and recovery priorities is a major challenge. The innate diversity of communities and unpredictability of disaster situations precludes overly prescriptive approaches to engaging spontaneous volunteers.

Disasters by nature are unpredictable, as is the exact role an MSEV will undertake. The workforce of MSEV champions provides those responsible for relief and recovery efforts extra personnel who can think independently, take direction, work as part of a team, remain calm in challenging circumstances and show initiative. They are resourceful, adaptable and flexible, and they understand volunteering and how to manage volunteers.

The role of the MSEV

The roles and position responsibilities will vary depending on which Host Agency an MSEV is deployed to and the needs of the affected community. In the aftermath of previous large natural disasters, recovery teams have needed assistance with:

- Providing customer service to handle enquiries from potential spontaneous volunteers
- Registering spontaneous volunteers
- Reference and background checks of spontaneous volunteers
- Briefing and debriefing spontaneous volunteers
- Assist in managing volunteers to sort and distribute material aid
- Supporting data collection for a number of purposes
- Preparing rosters for serving in kitchens providing meals for survivors and responders
- Overseeing childcare activities in relief and recovery centres
- Assisting with registration of displaced animals.



Working within existing emergency management structures, the MSEV could assist with relief and recovery activities, generally within the first 3 – 4 weeks of an event when the cohort of spontaneous volunteering is at its peak.

Typically, a few weeks after an emergency, when the danger has subsided, media attention has reduced and community priorities are established, the resourcing for volunteer activities is more structured.

EV = Emergency Volunteer
 MSEV = Manager of Spontaneous Volunteers
 SEV = Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers
 V = Traditional volunteer

Methodology

Stage 1: Desktop Research

Secondary research was undertaken in the form of a desktop review to gain an understanding of what information, research, findings, and resources existed within Australia and internationally that could be considered in the development of the Victorian G21 MSEV Pilot Project. *Refer to appendix 1 for a summary of the desktop research.*

Stage 2: Development of training material

A **Training Working Group** was established to help design the content and flow of the training program and ensure the training was not biased towards the processes and opinions of any one agency. Training goals, outline and position description were initially developed and approved and the full training program written. *Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of the Training Workgroup members.*

Stage 3: Project Management Team and Reference Groups

A **Reference Group** was established to guide development and delivery of the project in the G21 Region. Role of the Reference Group:

- Take an 'overall' view of the project and support project model activities
- Provide advice in regard to development and implementation of project activities
- Facilitate networking and broad participation through sharing knowledge of contacts and existing stakeholder networks
- Review and provide comment on resources (such as training and marketing material) developed during the project
- Provide expert community knowledge and insights along with strong community connections
- Assist in identification of community leaders whilst providing knowledge about key organisations in local communities involved in Emergency Management recovery activities.

A number of one-on-one discussions were held with Reference Group members as well as two group meetings to review progress of the project (20 August and 9 December, 2014). *Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of the Reference Group members.*

A **Project Management Team** was set up to develop and report on operational matters and has met on a monthly basis. *Refer to Appendix 2 for a list of the Project Management Team members.*

Stage 4: Stakeholder engagement

Extensive stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken including speaking opportunities to increase the awareness of the program and discuss how the project could be implemented in the G21 region. *Refer Appendix 3 for a summary of key collaboration activities.*

Stage 5: Set up processes, resources and Centralised Services

All processes to support project delivery, including roles and responsibilities, were documented including and a suite of resources sourced/developed to support the MSEVs. The MSEV resources are accessed through **www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au**.

Stage 6: Training, recruitment, delivery and selection of MSEVs

Three full day training sessions were delivered to 34 potential MSEVs. Attendees were experienced Volunteer Managers who have provided valuable input and feedback into training delivery and content for future programs.

The training and selection process is explained further in Appendices 4 and 5.

Guiding Principles

Throughout the program design process a number of decisions were made that helped to define the program structure and became the guiding principles for the project. These were:

- Operate within existing emergency management structures

To be most effective and to assist the Emergency Management sector we must understand and work within existing structures for emergency Relief and Recovery activities.

This project is designed to provide a management resource to support volunteers who are affiliated with Councils and approved Host Agencies that have adequate systems and support structures in place. The need for an MSEV resource will be identified via the LGA and Community Recovery Committees. Whilst this project recognises the value and importance of unaffiliated volunteers, for simplicity they were considered to be outside the scope of this pilot project.

Host Agencies using the trained work force will need to fit into the existing LGA Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) structures that have recognised roles in relief and recovery activities.

Host Agencies outside the LGA MEMP arrangements contacting Volunteering Geelong or Volunteering Victoria to be part of the program will be directed to the LGA and/or Community Recovery Committee.

- Deploy in response to need

The demand for an MSEV must come from the affected community. This raises the importance of the local Volunteer Resource Centre (i.e. Volunteering Geelong) to be well networked with the LGA and Community Recovery Committee, where decisions on relief and recovery activities are made.

- Shared responsibility and partnership

The deployment of any MSEV is about partnership and respect. The project will recruit and train effective people that are experienced in dealing with volunteers. Participants have demonstrated experience in volunteer management/coordination, human resource management and/or team leadership and bring with them experience in leading, motivating and coordinating teams.

The essential skills and experience required are documented in the MSEV Position Description.

- Flexible, adaptable and agile

The exact needs of a host agency are difficult to define prior to an event and this makes it difficult to precisely stipulate, in advance, the role of an MSEV. During the training and application process it is important to manage MSEVs expectations and ensure they understand this unpredictability and uncertainty of the role.

- Integrated with the MEMP

Although each LGA operates independently with its own unique structures, priorities and capacities, the MEMP is a critical planning document common to all Council staff to reference in the case of an emergency. Pre-engagement with LGAs to ensure local Volunteer Resource Centres are documented as an agreed partner in helping to manage the challenges of SEVs supports the preparedness of a community.

- Balanced, realistic and sustainable

Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers generally converge in large numbers at large scale emergencies that involve significant disruption and/or loss of property and lives. The program will deploy MSEVs during the first 3 – 4 weeks of activation of a MEMP when spontaneous volunteering is at its peak.

An MSEV would generally be asked to help out for deployments of up to one week's duration. If a Host Agency requires resources for more than one week, a second or possibly third MSEV would be offered to assist in a buddy relationship to cover the Host Agency's needs.

Deployment for longer than one week would be at the mutual agreement of the MSEV and the Host Agency.

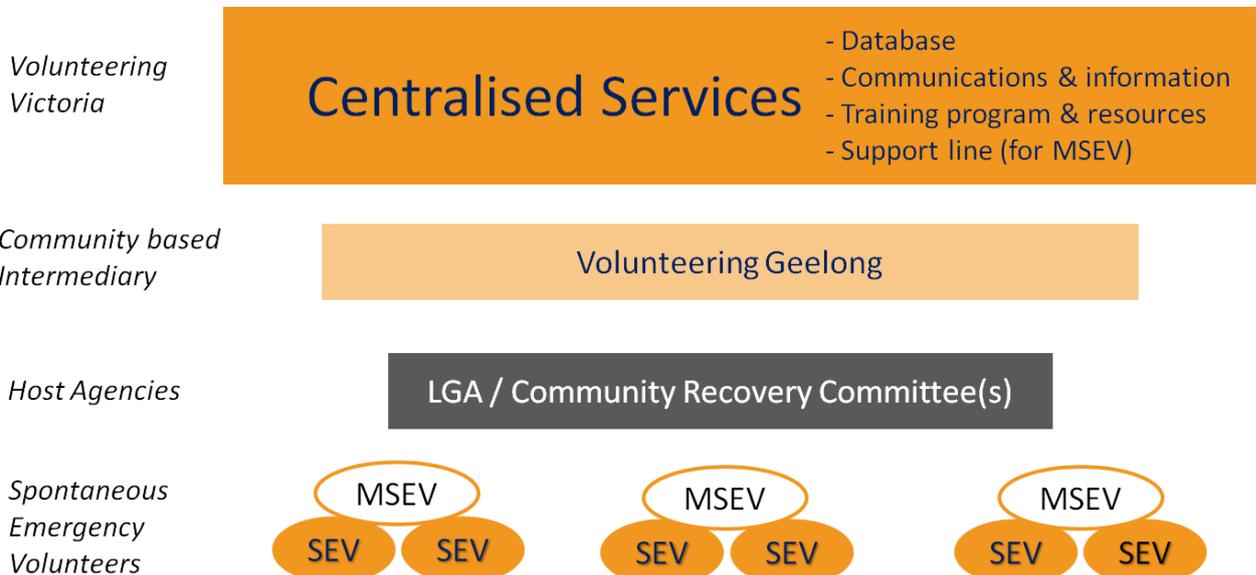
Similarly, long working days would be managed by offering Host Agencies two MSEVs to cover shifts.

MSEVs are committing to this role as volunteers and may have other commitments, such as family or work, that they need to consider when the call comes asking if they are able to be deployed.

The Model

The base model for the G21 pilot program has four key segments working collaboratively to deliver the program:

1. Volunteering Victoria for the delivery of centralised services
2. Community based intermediaries to provide the strong link to the LGA and connections to regional community groups and volunteer-involving organisations
3. LGA as a Host Agency to ensure integration with local MEMP and access to local Community Recovery Committee
4. Regional and local agencies involved in relief and recovery activities as defined through the Community Recovery Committee



LGA– Local Government Agency

MSEV – Manager of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers

SEV – Spontaneous Emergency Volunteer

The framework for the model centres heavily on supporting the LGA as the key agency responsible for the management of relief and recovery services at the local level.

Typical relief and recovery activities undertaken by Councils (often in conjunction with or with direct support by Government departments and agencies) can include the **provision and/coordination of volunteer helpers**.

Host Agencies

As defined in the Guiding Principles, the deployment of an MSEV to a Host Agency will be through an LGA or a Community Recovery Committee (generally chaired by an LGA). The Host Agency will be responsible for MSEV from an insurance, safety and reporting perspective.

Given the nature of emergencies it is difficult to predict which host agencies will be involved in a particular emergency or service delivery function. Some agencies such as the Australian Red Cross or Salvation Army are designated 'primary agencies' with key roles in delivering services to communities affected by emergencies. Other agencies such as DEPI, Parks Victoria, RSPCA and service clubs play a 'secondary role' to assist in delivering relief and recovery services.

Depending on the nature of the emergency other agencies, organisations and community groups may become involved in relief and recovery activities via a Community Recovery Committee.

Stakeholder engagement with a wide range of potential hosts has created awareness of the project and potential to utilise MSEVs to support delivery of their volunteer programs in an emergency setting. Activities have included participating on the Barwon Region Emergency Relief and Recovery Agencies network meeting which saw an enthusiastic response for the MSEV Pilot and an invitation to continue involvement at this level.

Regional Capability

One of the biggest challenges for the project has been to *clearly define where the responsibility for spontaneous volunteers sits within relief and recovery plans*. The Emergency Management Manual Victoria provides guidance around how LGAs should plan for SEVs, however LGAs within the G21 region have varying priorities, capacity and capability to manage SEVs.

While some LGAs acknowledge spontaneous volunteers will present after a large scale emergency, they may be hesitant to address the issue or have unrealistic views about how spontaneous volunteers might behave or be managed and the impact mismanagement can have on relief and recovery efforts.

Work has been undertaken to engage the five LGAs in the G21 region, especially to build relationships with Municipal Emergency Management Planning teams, and foster a mutual understanding of how systems and processes could be improved with the introduction of Managers of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers to manage spontaneous volunteers.

A review of the Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) in each of the G21 LGAs has identified:

- Emergency management structures in place both within the broader Emergency Management sector and local LGA MEMP Recovery Plans
- The agencies that are likely to provide additional support to LGAs in an emergency
- How Managers of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers might be utilised by agencies involved in relief and recovery activities.

City of Greater Geelong (COGG)

The G21 Pilot Project reflects and is aligned with the COGG volunteer recruitment process so that MSEVs in the program are automatically accepted as COGG volunteers. In the event of an emergency, MSEVs can be referred to COGG as they and/or the Community Recovery Committee (CRC) identify roles. Suitable MSEVs would then be identified by Volunteering Geelong for these roles. *Refer to Appendix 5 - MSEV Recruitment, Selection & Deployment.*

Surf Coast Shire

Following a large scale emergency MSEVs could be deployed via COGG to assist at the Surf Coast Relief and Recovery Centre as a COGG volunteer. Alternatively or simultaneously MSEVs could also be placed at Volunteering Geelong to handle calls and enquiries from potential SEVs thereby allowing Surf Coast Shire staff to focus on priority tasks. When and where necessary Volunteering Geelong could participate on the CRC and assist with the process of recruiting and referring MSEVs to CRC Host Agencies as required.

Colac Otway Shire

Colac Otway Shire has had limited input into the project development due to the key contact in Council being on leave over the development phase. Due to limited resourcing at the Council, a replacement contact was not provided to collaborate with the Project Team on the program development. However, in the event of a large scale emergency at Colac Otway, COGG has indicated that they will assist Colac Otway with relief and recovery activities. If COGG identify the need for an MSEV as part of their assistance to Colac Otway Shire, the MSEV will be deployed as a COGG volunteer.

Alternatively or simultaneously MSEVs could also be placed at Volunteering Geelong to assist with enquiries from potential SEVs. When and where necessary, Volunteering Geelong could participate on respective CRC and assist with the process of recruiting and referring MSEVs to CRC Host Agencies that require SEVs.

Golden Plains Shire

Given that Golden Plains Council has an appointed Volunteer Coordinator, MSEVs could be referred to Golden Plains to work alongside the Volunteer Coordinator to provide temporary relief to the Volunteer Coordinator (particularly as the Volunteer Coordinator could be deployed to focus on other priority tasks).

Alternatively or simultaneously MSEVs could also be placed at Volunteering Geelong to manage SEV enquiries on behalf of Golden Plains. When and where necessary Volunteering Geelong could sit on the respective CRC and assist with the process of recruiting and referring MSEVs to CRC Host Agencies that require SEVs.

Borough of Queenscliff

The Borough of Queenscliff has not provided input into this project. They are the least resourced council in the G21 Region, and despite the efforts of Volunteering Geelong, there has been limited engagement. Through an MOU between COGG and the Borough of Queenscliff, MSEVs can be deployed as COGG volunteers to assist the Borough in the event of an emergency.

Risk Management

The pilot highlighted a number of risks and issues, some of which were uncovered or not fully appreciated or understood at the beginning of the project.

An assessment was made regarding the criticality of each risk (i.e. its potential to impact the success of the project), action taken to mitigate the risk and the mitigation status of the risk. If a risk has been mitigated, the criticality of the risk has been classified as low.

At time of writing this report we are still waiting for legal advice on some items. These will be addressed on receipt of advice.

Risk	Critical? H / M / L	Mitigation	Status
1. Lack of clarity existing around protections for Councils and Host Agencies utilising MSEVs and SEVs	H	Awaiting legal advice on liability and risk to both Councils and host agencies operating in this space. A 'portable' insurance cover for MSEVs has been scoped that could be utilised by Volunteering Victoria as back up cover for Volunteering Victoria as the lead agency for this project.	Open
2. Volunteering Victoria's duty of care to MSEVs	H	Awaiting legal advice.	Open
3. Who covers the MSEV for insurance	H	MOU with LGA to identify that MSEV will be covered by LGA as the Host Agency. Additional security: Volunteering Victoria take out a portable insurance policy – <i>Currently under consideration</i> .	Open
4. A council does not recognise their responsibility for managing SEVs	H	Traction of LGAs and Host Agencies outside an emergency can be difficult, particularly if a region is not staffed by people who have experienced a large scale emergency first hand. Ongoing relationship building required. A deployment of one or more MSEVs would help to demonstrate the effectiveness of the role.	Ongoing
5. Preparing for SEVs is not a priority for LGAs	H	Ongoing engagement work to build awareness of the issue and the role MSEVs can play.	Ongoing
6. Longer term effects of psychological trauma	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of ongoing self-care training • Investigate getting access to an employee assistance program or support from counselling service such as BeyondBlue 	Open

7. Validity of a Police Check	L	A low risk issue given MSEVs are well credentialed. Host Agency will be asked at time of requesting an MSEV if a valid police check is required for the role.	Closed
8. MSEVs overdoing their role and working long hours	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSEVs reminded of the importance of self care as part of deployment briefing • When requesting an MSEV, host agency to be reminded that extra MSEVs are available to avoid MSEV burnout • Self care training module and information sheet to be developed • Deployment case study to be established once an MSEV has been deployed 	Closed
9. Lack of provision for reimbursement of expenses could deter participation in the program	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All host agencies to confirm if costs will be reimbursed at time of requesting an MSEV • Minimise costs by deploying MSEVs locally 	Closed
10. Maintaining connection with MSEVs	L	Engagement plan including ongoing eLearning opportunities, updates and information about emergency sector, Special Interest Group and online Resource Centre.	Closed
11. Suitable trainer availability for future sessions	L	<p>The Australian Red Cross is undergoing a number of changes, including the promotion of the key trainer (Angela Sutherland) as Red Cross State Manager Emergency Services.</p> <p>A train the trainer program will be developed to extend the pool of available trainers Volunteering Victoria and Volunteering Geelong can call on to deliver future training sessions and to prepare future eLearning modules. Need to ensure consistency of message.</p> <p>Future trainers to have credentials/experience in Emergency Management.</p>	Closed
12. Recovery efforts can go on for months if not years. How long do volunteer MSEVs help in rebuilding	L	Guiding principles define that MSEVs will be made available in the first 3-4 weeks of a disaster when the appearance of SEVs is at a peak. It is likely, after this period, that more formal planning and resource allocation will be established through the CRC.	Closed

13. Undermining the self-determination of local communities	L	Training and deployment briefing must clearly articulate the role the program has to support community-led needs and reinforce guiding principles that note <i>Recovery needs to be a community-led process.</i>	Closed
14. Overstepping the role of the Emergency Management sector	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships and support through ongoing engagement with agencies within the EM sector • This issue is considered in the guiding principles • Clarity that MSEVs are only involved in relief and recovery activities NOT response • Desktop research indicates this program is not duplicating or replicating any other program / service currently running within Victoria 	Closed
15. Office of Volunteering Geelong is not staffed when a disaster occurs ie on a weekend	L	Volunteering Geelong staff will provide on call phone numbers to key contacts in council. Volunteering Victoria to provide back up support.	Closed

What we learnt

Detailed below is an overview of key learnings from the G21 Pilot project, which helped shape the program design.

- No "one size fits all" between the structures of local councils (LGAs). They all have different focus, funding, challenges, capabilities and capacity in relation to emergency risk, planning for emergencies, volunteer management and spontaneous volunteering
- Many LGAs are overwhelmed with the complexity and expectations regarding the drafting and implementing a MEMP
- Many LGAs do not consider or prioritise the management of SEVs in their MEMPs
- Engaging with stakeholders and potential stakeholders requires long term engagement to build relationships and confidence to embrace the MSEV concept and implement changes of practice
- Improved understanding of emergency management structures and frameworks across the State and capability, and local and regional bodies' around the potential to utilise MSEVs, along with planning process and practices required to support them
- Improved knowledge within the volunteer sector around State frameworks that support relief and recovery work during and after an emergency
- Verification that volunteer manager networks are interested and keen to be involved in the management of spontaneous emergency volunteers. Their enthusiasm to be part of an ongoing network that supports continuous learning and knowledge sharing, was very apparent
- The importance of local knowledge and relationships when recruiting and screening potential MSEVs
- Importance of empowering MSEVs to make 'best possible practice' volunteer management decisions in an emergency context
- Importance of acknowledging the uncertainty that comes with working in emergency settings
- Importance of developing relevant MSEV deployment case studies that provide 'tangible' examples of what an MSEV role looks like
- We are all in it together! Importance of collaboration and working towards a common goal in an emergency setting
- The absence of standard and consistent emergency management terminology relating to people offering to 'help out' or formally volunteer in an emergency creates confusion for all parties involved
- Absence of adequate system to support SEVs recruitment and referral, along with concerns around managing consequential risk meant sometimes it was difficult to have conversations with stakeholders confidently on these matters.

Next steps

Funding

- Secure further funding to support the future deployment of MSEVs and expand local Host Agencies in the G21 area
- Explore funding opportunities to:
 - develop a framework to set up Volunteer Support Centre alongside a Relief and Recovery Centre
 - research SEV motivations and behaviours to inform the development of additional practical resources for use by MSEVs in the field
 - have the training program accredited

MSEV

- Further develop the MSEV Special Interest Group
- Finalise investigations into portable Insurance option by Volunteering Victoria for MSEVs
- Annual refresher training (Local networking events and provide opportunities to MSEVs to participate in training, events or briefings generally not available to the public such as tour of State Control Centre (outside an emergency event)

State rollout

- G21 model becomes the foundation of the State rollout
- State program picks up on developing and implementing the eLearning, MSEV engagement and network events
- Negotiation of state-wide Host Agency arrangements e.g. Australian Red Cross
- Investigate opportunity to partner with VICSES to develop an abbreviated version of “Introduction to Emergency Management” as an online accredited learning module for MSEVs

Support services

- Secure additional funding to further develop support services for MSEVs through organisations such as BeyondBlue, Australian Psychological Society

Budget

Refer to online report submission.

Acknowledgements

Training materials and resources

Volunteering Victoria kindly thanks all those involved in the planning, development and review of the training materials. Particular thanks goes to Angela Sutherland (Australian Red Cross), the principal author of the training materials.

Volunteering Victoria would also like to thank all those involved in the consultation process, in particular: Bernadette Northeast (Volunteering Warrnambool), Brad Dalglish (State Emergency Service), Leanne Wilson (CFA), Anne Leadbeater (Anne Leadbeater Consulting), Jonathan Amey (City of Greater Geelong).

Other references

- SES Introduction to Emergency Management Handbook
- Northern Volunteering South Australia - Harnessing Spontaneous Volunteer Effort Pilot Program
- Australian Red Cross - Spontaneous Emergency Volunteer Management Resource Kit
- Australian Red Cross - Psychological First Aid - An Australian guide to supporting people affected by disaster
- Emergency Management Manual Victoria
- The Fallout of trauma - Source: The Age, February 21, 2009
- Gannawarra Managing Volunteers in Emergencies Kit
- Spontaneous Volunteer Management Planning: Civil Defence Emergency Management Best Practice Guide NZ

Pro Bono legal advice

- Maddocks, Melbourne

Other in kind support

- Geelong Football Club

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Desktop Research

Research

Desktop research was undertaken to gain an understanding of Australian and international research findings and resources relevant to the Victorian G21 MSEV Pilot Project. Findings are expanded below however the main points impacting this project included:

- A review of 20 MEMPs across Victorian LGAs highlighted considerable variation amongst local government regarding how they planned for spontaneous volunteers in an emergency
- Importance of pre-planning for the management and utilisation of spontaneous volunteers
- Lack of clear strategic direction for the management of spontaneous volunteers in Victoria
- No clear or consistent system or process throughout the State whereby Volunteer Resource Centres support the recruitment and referral of SEVs
- Variations in MEMPs throughout the State around management, systems and processes for recruitment, deployment and communication with SEVs
- Lack of clarity as to how MSEVs and SEVs are covered for personal accident insurance and public liability
- Identification of an number of existing resources developed nationally and internationally that could be utilised or adapted to ensure no duplication of effort.

Note: Developing structures for recruiting and deploying SEVs is outside the scope of this project.

Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs)

A review of 20 MEMPs across Victorian LGAs highlighted the considerable variation in how local government planned for and managed spontaneous volunteers in emergency. It appeared that Councils with recent experience with large scale emergencies put greater emphasis on planning for SEVs in the future.

Some Councils had clear structures in place that identified an internal volunteer coordinator who would be deployed to handle enquiries from SEVs along with deploying SEVs to Council Programs or on to external agencies.

Some Councils had built relationships with their local Volunteer Resource Centres and would work with them to share the roles of recruiting and deploying SEVs. In the instance of Gannawarra Shire, an extensive plan and resource kit had been developed for Council to manage the setup of a Volunteer Relief Centre.

Some MEMPs detailed compensation arrangements for volunteers in the event of injury to a volunteer or to a third party by a volunteer who has offered to assist with emergency activities. Other MEMPs did not mention compensation or insurance arrangements for volunteers at all. Lack of clarity around insurance has meant further advice has been sought by the project team from external legal advisors. To mitigate risk to Volunteering Victoria and project partners a 'portable' insurance cover is also being investigated that could protect MSEVs with an extra level of cover to support deployment to Councils and Host Agencies in emergencies.

In the G21 region most Councils identified Volunteering Geelong as the 'go to' point for handling SEV enquiries, however until this project commenced Volunteering Geelong had not been made aware of these arrangements.

Existing Resources

The following information provides an overview of various resources developed that could impact this project. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

CREW

Community Response to Extreme Weather (CREW) is a volunteer referral service developed and managed by Volunteering Queensland. CREW operates year-round taking offers of volunteer assistance from Queenslanders, registering and linking them to natural disaster response agencies when help is needed. CREW was created in response to the unprecedented outpouring of volunteer support in the wake of extreme weather in 2008 and has been deployed during various events including the 2010-11 Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi. Volunteering Queensland saw the need for a coordinated registration and referral service to best manage the wide variety of volunteer skills, availabilities and locations.

When disaster strikes, the CREW admin team move into action registering spontaneous offers of assistance and taking requests for help from organisations and disaster response agencies. The team links volunteers with these agencies according to their skills and abilities.

The CREW system provides an example of a robust, tested and evaluated program for recruiting and deploying SEVs. This system does not currently support the recruitment and deployment of MSEVs or similar.

Victorian Volunteer Portal

The Victorian Volunteer Portal (managed by DHS) provides a 'holding mechanism' for obtaining names and skills of SEVs. This database does not appear to have systems and processes in place for referral and deployment (as with the Qld CREW system). This has meant that some Victorian Councils and VRCs have attempted to set up their own systems for this purpose.

Gannawarra Shire Council – Managing Volunteers In Emergency Kit

The Gannawarra Shire Council Managing Volunteers in Emergencies Plan, together with a supporting Kit has been developed to provide the Council with a clear method and resources to manage spontaneous volunteers in the event of an emergency. Gannawarra have agreed to share this comprehensive tool kit with the G21 Pilot and State Project.

Australian Red Cross FaCHSIA Handbook

The *Spontaneous Volunteer Management Resource Kit* was developed in support of a project, overseen by the Australian Red Cross and funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, to develop a resource for managing spontaneous volunteers in an emergency, regardless of whether they are used.

Great South Coast Project (Warrnambool)

The 2014 Great South Coast (GSC) Recovers project aims to develop a community resilience network in the Great South Coast that links the wider community together in an emergency via a community controlled and constructed website. The GSC Recovers website will link volunteers, material aid and donations in a way that supports the community to plan for its own recovery in consultation with local agencies. The Great South Coast partners in this project include: Corangamite Shire Council, Glenelg Shire Council, Moyne Shire Council, Southern Grampians Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council.

Community Resilience Mentoring Initiative (CRMI)

The CRMI is an ideal program for recruiting and deploying mentors to support people who have taken on roles in an emergency setting – and may be feeling “out of their depth”.

It makes sense for the MSEV Project to tap into such a well-researched and tested concept to provide mentors to MSEVS. Unfortunately at this stage the program has not received funding for a national rollout.

South Australia Program

The Harnessing Spontaneous Volunteer Effort Pilot Project (HSVE) was funded through the NDRGS. Key components included developing a network of 20 volunteer managers trained to work with spontaneous volunteers in relief and recovery. A training program was developed and delivered to equip these managers to coordinate the set up and operation of a Volunteer Coordination Centre. The program also developed a Resource Kit that could assist with setting up and operation of this centre. Training offered to the participants included Senior First Aid, setting up child safe environments, establishing systems and processes for a Volunteer Coordination Centre.

This project differed from G21 MSEV project in that Volunteer Managers were not recruited to be deployed as ‘volunteers’. Also, in South Australia, State Emergency Management Plans encouraged the set-up of Volunteer Coordination Centres in the event of an emergency, to specifically deal with recruiting and deploying spontaneous volunteers. South Australia also has the Volunteer Emergency Recovery Information System (VERIS) to support registration of spontaneous volunteers. However similarities included the development and deployment of a team of well-trained volunteer managers who could support managing enquiries from spontaneous volunteers along with being deployed to host agencies to manage spontaneous volunteers.

Recovers.org

Recovers.org is a simple, easy-to-use recovery software framework that can be deployed before a disaster to prepare communities. It has been adopted by local organisations and government, serving as the central online hub where residents can offer and request help, and is ideal for managing unaffiliated volunteers.

Crisisworks

Crisisworks is a suite of cloud based tools for emergency managers - in control, in the field or in the community. Crisisworks provides coordination, communication, situational awareness and resilience across all phases including - Planning, Preparedness, Response and Recovery. More than 70 Victorian LGAs have adopted this product to support delivery of some emergency management activities, however at this point G21 LGAs are not using this tool to support volunteer recruitment or management.

Crisis Cleanup

Crisis Cleanup was developed in America by and for field volunteers, team leaders, canvassers, and the people who work one-on-one with people whose homes have been affected by flood, tornadoes, earthquakes, wind, fire, or other disaster.

Crisis Cleanup's core objective is to embrace and support the interests of disaster survivors by providing transparent, collaborative, and privacy-enhancing open source technology to assist those who directly interact with and help survivors.

Crisis Cleanup implements a "Craigslist" philosophy to recovery efforts – organisations that are aware of work orders enter them into the system, and organisations with capacity to help can claim and perform the work. The system is not public, but it is open and transparent among participating

organisations. No centralised organisation is "in charge." This non-threatening approach minimises duplication and maximises communication, coordination, and efficiency.

While entering a client into Crisis Cleanup does not guarantee that he or she will be served, it guarantees visibility and maximises the chances for assistance, while helping relief organisations prioritise their limited resources.

The system is based upon a few foundational philosophies:

- The right way to do things is however it gets done, locally
- Technology should enhance, not replace, inter-organisation relationships
- Voluntary organisations are co-equal, sovereign and interdependent; no single organisation is in charge. There is no pyramid, and you're not on top
- Collaboration and communication should be not only convenient, but required
- There is no such thing as the "One App to Rule them All." The system should not try to do things it was not intended to do
- The system is open (but not public), and should therefore not contain sensitive personal information.

University Groups

Linkages have been made with the University of Melbourne Emergency Services Club (UMESC). This Club has been set up to foster interest in emergency management and create volunteering pathways into the field for university students. This group uses Facebook to communicate with members and potential members. MSEV training has been offered to this cohort to build understanding around spontaneous volunteering in emergencies along with the management of such.

Appendix 2 - Working Group Members

Training Workgroup members:

Australian Red Cross	Angela Sutherland
SES	Brad Dalglish
CFA	Leanne Wilson
City of Greater Geelong	Jonathan Amey
Warrnambool City Council	Bernadette Northeast
Volunteering Victoria	Helen Kierce, Alison Duff, Catie Hocking,

Training materials were also reviewed by Anne Leadbeater, State-Wide Project Manager

Reference Group members:

Colac Otway Shire	Wendie Fox
COGG	Jane Wager and Jonathon Amey
Golden Plains Shire	Jill Evans and Caroline Jordan
Warrnambool City Council	Bernadette Northeast
G21	Fiona Reidy
Surf Coast Shire	Virginia Morris
NDRG State-wide Project Manager	Anne Leadbeater
The Australian Red Cross	Angela Sutherland
Volunteering Geelong	Gail Rodgers
Volunteering Victoria	Sue Noble, Alison Duff, Catie Hocking

Project Management Team members:

NDRG State-wide Project Manager	Anne Leadbeater
Volunteering Geelong	Gail Rodgers
Volunteering Victoria	Sue Noble, Alison Duff, Catie Hocking
COGG	Jane Wager and Jonathon Amey

Appendix 3 - Collaboration

Key 2014 – 2015 stakeholder activities:

Date	Activity
February (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference Group
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Work Group
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden Plains Stakeholders • Surf Coast Stakeholder meetings
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Colac Otway Stakeholders • Richard Marles MP Strategic Engagement Meeting • Attend and present to VCOSS MAV EM Forum
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Golden Plains Stakeholders • Presentation to Barwon South West - Regional Emergency Relief & Recovery Committee • Training Working Group Meeting • MAV discussion
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Geelong Volunteer Network • Intro to Personal Support Training - DHS, Opportunity to speak about EVM Project • Reference Group Meeting
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project presentation to COGG MEMPC • Barwon South West Region Relief and Recovery Network meeting and presentation
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation at Volunteering Geelong AGM
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with COGG MEMPC
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference Group Meeting • DHS Summer Season Planning • National SEV collaboration
February (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSEV Network meeting with COGG MEMP presentation

Appendix 4 - Training Program

The training component of the program is central to the success of the pilot. It provides an overview of the emergency management context in Victoria; explores the complexities of managing spontaneous emergency volunteers; and explains the important role of the MSEV in an emergency and how MSEVs may be deployed in an emergency. Key learnings for training participants include:

- Why this role is needed
- How this role is different from their “day job”
- Where this role sits in the emergency management context in Victoria
- Skills to help them function effectively during an emergency
- Skills to help them manage spontaneous volunteers and how to look after themselves and others in an emergency.

The training is not designed to be an introduction to volunteer management. All participants are required to have demonstrated experience in volunteer management/coordination, human resource management or team leadership.

The training program is not presently formally accredited.

Training Resources

- Full day training program with group activities
- Training handbook and video case studies.

Format

Three full-day training sessions were run on Tuesday 28 October 2014, Saturday 8 November 2014 and Thursday 12 February 2015 to test the content and format of the training program. The training sessions were run by Angela Sutherland (Australian Red Cross) with the support of Alison Duff, Helen Kierce, Catie Hocking and Anne Leadbeater (Volunteering Victoria), and Amanda Everton and Phillipa Day (Australian Red Cross).

Participants were encouraged to interact with the trainer and their peers.

Key learnings from training

- Trainers experienced in emergency management bring credibility to the content and use of real examples ensure relevance of content
- There will be different levels of volunteer management experience in the room. The training content needs to balance reinforcement of volunteer management practice with the expectations of what might be asked of an MSEV in an emergency
- More emphasis to be given on how the program will work including deployment procedures, while reinforcing the unpredictability of emergencies.
- There is a desire from participants to learn more, and get involved including networking with each other outside an emergency
- Council staff and potential State-wide host agencies will be encouraged to attend the training to:
 - Better understand the program
 - Network and engage with potential MSEVs.

Feedback from training sessions

Participant feedback from all sessions was generally positive. Feedback from session 1, was used to restructure and improve subsequent sessions, rearrange some content, add explanatory project models and also develop some alternative scenarios. General comments included:

Session 1 – 28 October 2014

I think the training set a good grounding for a pilot program, and covered as much as it could, given the fluid and flexibility of what the role requires

It's a fantastic pilot and I believe I could be useful in the role. A very important initiative

Concept is very good

This training was not the best way to find out if participants were suitable as MSEV, an information session would have been a better process

As expected, a room full of competent, capable, resourceful managers and some excellent discussion around training (content)

The plan of today's session could have flowed better i.e. exactly what the role the MSEV would play

Could use some more information about specifics; what are the likely scenarios MSEV would face managing SEVs

Insight into the flood experience (video) brings home the potential emotional intensity that may be encountered in the role

Great opportunity however a lot more work needs to be completed prior to engaging busy staff from G21 region

Session 2 – 8 November 2014

Very good balance between training and group activities. Good relaxed training with opportunity for feedback

A very well structured and presented training program

The session worked well including: background about program, stages of emergencies, a little bit about the role – although this is evolving

It was extremely informative and flowed well

I really enjoyed the content and expertise of trainer

This was the best training session I have ever attended – and I have attended a lot!

Session 3 – 12 February 2015

Training was as I expected it to be and was really engaging and enlightening...left me keen to learn more

The program aligned with pre-training notes and information

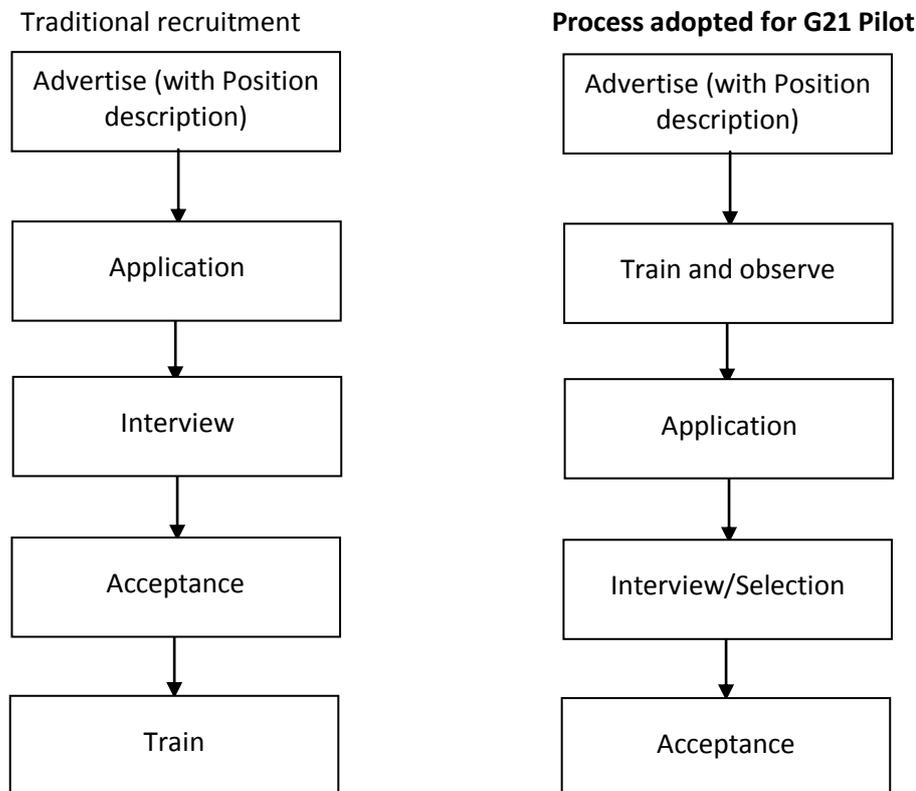
Addressed key questions I had in terms of operational procedures

Training has met my expectations and has maintained my interest as a prospective MSEV

Well put together and delivered

Appendix 5 – Recruitment, Selection & Deployment

A number of approaches to the recruitment and selection process for the program were considered as part of the project design phase, including the traditional HR approach for job seekers:



The rationale for our approach was based around the principle that the training session would provide greater opportunity for the project team to observe and build rapport within the group, and provide inspiration to continue with the program. Group participation and interaction with others gave participants a greater understanding of the environment and expectations of the program prior to making an important commitment to us.

It was also considered that even if a participant decided not to proceed with the program, the training would provide a greater awareness of the emergency management sector that could be utilised in their own workplace.

Recruitment

Experienced volunteer managers were targeted across the G21 region. Sessions were planned to provide opportunities to attend during or outside working hours.

Application and selection

The application process of the program is three fold:

- 1) Interested parties registered and attended a full day training session
- 2) On completion of the full day session, and with a comprehensive understanding of the program, interested participants submitted a full application

- 3) Applicants were then given a final phone interview and had 1 – 2 referees checked. Confirmation of acceptance was sent to participants, which will be followed up with signing a formal Acceptance form.

The selection process is well considered to ensure the selection of the highest calibre of participant is maintained and LGAs and participating Host Agencies are confident the workforce is well placed to assist in the event of an emergency.

Essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience, along with personal attributes required, are detailed in the full position description. During an interview potential MSEVs are asked to provide examples of such attributes, skills and knowledge to support their MSEV application. Referees are then asked to verify this information and provide background of their relationship with the candidate.

Once MSEV's have completed recruitment, selection and registration processes their details are loaded into the Volunteering Victoria MSEV database. These MSEVs will also be registered on the COGG volunteer database.

Inclusion does not commit participants to any particular event or activities, only to receive requests from Volunteering Victoria (and Intermediaries) to assist local communities when they need it.

Deployment

For the G21 pilot, deployment arrangements are in place with City of Greater Geelong. In the event of an emergency or disaster the Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) at the City of Greater Geelong will call Volunteering Geelong to request an MSEV. Using the MSEV database, Volunteering Geelong will identify and communicate with a suitable MSEV(s).

Confirmation of the deployment brief will be emailed to both the MSEV and the MRM.

The MSEV would then report directly to the MRM.

On completion of the deployment, Volunteering Geelong and Volunteering Victoria will coordinate debriefs with both the MSEV and COGG.

There is potential for COGG to redeploy an MSEV to Host Agencies on the Community Recovery Committee, or other G21 LGAs (where an MOU is in place with the COGG).