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Background, Objectives and Methodology
Background and Objectives

- Volunteers are critical to the successful delivery of frontline services and are essential in building community capacity and enhancing community resilience. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has approximately 42,000 dedicated volunteers across the state in the State Emergency Service (SES), Rural Fire Service (RFS), Research and Scientific Branch network, and Technical Rescue Unit.

- The volunteer base is largely made up of the RFS and SES with approximately 36,000 and 6,200 volunteers respectively.

- Across both of these services, the contribution of volunteers is vital in ensuring positive community outcomes, and as such it is imperative that the views and opinions of the volunteer base is heard. Only in this way can QFES understand the satisfaction of its volunteers, how it is performing in supporting them in their volunteer role and what can be done to improve their volunteer experience.

- In 2016 TNS has been commissioned to follow up and build on the 2014 survey it conducted to ascertain current levels of satisfaction and opinion on the support provided and organisational practices and processes.

- The findings of the 2016 volunteer survey are contained within this report.

The overall aim of the research is to:

Provide Queensland Fire and Emergency Services with robust measures of volunteer satisfaction with the services provided in order to provide direction and understanding as to what, if any, issues exist and how volunteers can be better supported in the future.
Methodology

Who did we survey?  
- Volunteers in State Emergency Service (North Coast)

How many responses did we receive?  
- n=226 (maximum margin of error at 95% confidence interval is ±6.5%)

When did we interview?  
- 11 July – 23 August 2016

Sampling strategy  
- Contacts from the QFES Volunteer database were emailed with an invitation to complete the survey. The survey was also distributed via hard-copy on request and at SES training nights, and a link to the survey was also placed on the QFES website.

Interview methodology  
- Online, self-completed interview. Average questionnaire length 10 minutes.

Weighting  
- No weighting was applied

*This research was carried out in accordance with ISO 20252*
Questionnaire Flow

- The questionnaire covered the following content:

1. Screener questions
2. General satisfaction
3. Perceptions of SES
4. Recruitment
5. Leadership
6. Workplace conduct policies and procedures
7. Inclusion
8. Information and Communication
9. Recognition
10. Training and development
11. Intention to continue volunteering
12. Demographics
Reporting Notes

- While the online survey required a forced response for each question, some respondents who completed a hard copy of the survey skipped certain questions. As such, sample sizes may vary slightly throughout the report.
- Where a total satisfied score is reported, this is calculated as the sum of satisfied + very satisfied.
- Where a total dissatisfied score is reported this is calculated as the sum of dissatisfied + very dissatisfied.
- These aggregated scores may not always add exactly to the individual percentage scores reported due to rounding.
- For single response questions, the sum of responses may not always add exactly to 100% due to rounding.
- Where questions have more than one response allowed, the sum of responses may add to more than 100%.
Detailed Findings
2.1
General Satisfaction
B1. How satisfied are you in general with the experience of volunteering with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Reasons for satisfaction with volunteering experience (%)

- **70% Satisfied**
  - I feel I contribute to the community: 83%
  - I have learnt new skills: 57%
  - I am able to use my skills in a productive way: 52%
  - I meet great people: 49%
  - It is a challenging and new experience: 37%
  - I feel valued: 36%
  - It enhances my ability to gain paid employment: 8%
  - Other: 2%
  - Don’t know: 1%
  - Refused: 0%

B1. How satisfied are you in general with the experience of volunteering with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
B2. Why are you <insert satisfied or very satisfied as appropriate>?
BASE: Those satisfied with volunteering experience (n=157)
B1. How satisfied are you in general with the experience of volunteering with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)

B3. Why are you <insert dissatisfied or very dissatisfied as appropriate>?
BASE: Those dissatisfied with volunteering experience (n=37)

- There is a lack of communication: 59%
- The unit is too unprofessional: 59%
- There is too much red tape: 54%
- There is conflict within the environment: 51%
- There is too much time wasted: 46%
- I don’t feel valued: 43%
- My skills are under utilised: 38%
- There is not enough training: 38%
- I don’t feel like I make a difference: 16%
- Other: 27%
- Don’t know: 0%
- Refused: 3%

16% Dissatisfied
2.2 Perceptions of SES
Perceptions of SES (%)

G1. You will now be shown pairs of words / phrases that people have used to describe the State Emergency Service. For each pair, please select which word or phrase you feel best describes the State Emergency Service. You may also select 'neither' if you feel neither word is an appropriate description.

- Left anchor selected
- Neither selected
- Right anchor selected

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G2. Which level / levels of Government do you believe is / are responsible for the Queensland State Emergency Service?

BASE. SES respondents - North Coast (n=225)
2.3 Leadership
Perceptions of leadership in SES – Top 2 (rated “Quite a lot” or “A great deal”) (%)
Perceived level of support in volunteer role by... (%) 

Group: 4 - Not at all  8 - Just a little  11 - A moderate amount  21 - Quite a lot  52 - A great deal  13 - Don't know  73% 

Unit: 11 - Not at all  11 - Just a little  14 - A moderate amount  22 - Quite a lot  38 - A great deal  31 - Don't know  60% 

Area/Region: 8 - Not at all  20 - Just a little  21 - A moderate amount  23 - Quite a lot  18 - A great deal  10 - Don't know  40% 

State Office: 16 - Not at all  19 - Just a little  28 - A moderate amount  10 - Quite a lot  7 - A great deal  16 - Don't know  2 - Not applicable  17% 

D1. To what extent do you feel supported in your volunteer role in the State Emergency Service by each of the following? 
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (Group: n=224; Unit: n=225; Area/Region: n=226; State Office: n=225)
Perceived ability to resolve conflict by... (%)

D2. And to what extent do you feel the following resolve conflict?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (Group: n=224; Unit: n=225; Area/Region: n=226; State Office: n=225)
D3. And to what extent do you feel the following model effective leadership skills?

BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (Group: n=224; Unit: n=225; Area/Region: n=226; State Office: n=225)
Extent to which input is valued by... (%)

**D4. And to what extent do you feel the following value your input?**

**BASE: SES respondents - North Coast** (Group: n=224; Unit: n=225; Area/Region: n=226; State Office: n=225)

- **Top 2** (rated 4 or 5 out of 5)
  - **Group**: 67%
  - **Unit**: 52%
  - **Area/Region**: 27%
  - **State Office**: 15%

- **1 - Not at all**
- **2 - Just a little**
- **3 - A moderate amount**
- **4 - Quite a lot**
- **5 - A great deal**
- **Don't know**
- **Not applicable**
### Perceptions of organisational culture (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 - Not at all</th>
<th>2 - Just a little</th>
<th>3 - A moderate amount</th>
<th>4 - Quite a lot</th>
<th>5 - A great deal</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a strong sense of team work in my SES group</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is strong culture of team work in my local area</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation is sufficiently focussed on its people during times of crisis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7 &lt;1</td>
<td></td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation is sufficiently aligned with my personal values</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation is sufficiently focussed on its people in its day-to-day management approach</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There have been positive changes in the organisations culture over the past 2 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D5. Thinking about the organisational culture in the State Emergency Service, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=225 for each)
2.4
Workplace Conduct Policies and Procedures
Perceptions and understanding of workplace conduct policies and procedures (%) 

I have a good understanding of the organisation's expectations of my behaviour 
- Strongly disagree: 11, 5, 10
- Disagree: 37, 45, 30
- Neither: 61, 42, 50
- Agree: 61
- Strongly Agree: 61

I understand the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service 
- Strongly disagree: 112
- Disagree: 35
- Neither: 62
- Agree: 62
- Strongly Agree: 62

I received education on matters relating to workplace conduct for behaviours 
- Strongly disagree: 11
- Disagree: 8
- Neither: 45
- Agree: 42
- Strongly Agree: 42

I am able to find out about the various processes relating to workplace conduct matters 
- Strongly disagree: 4
- Disagree: 2
- Neither: 50
- Agree: 36
- Strongly Agree: 36

My immediate supervisor is approachable and readily available to me to hear about workplace conduct behaviour issues 
- Strongly disagree: 9
- Disagree: 5
- Neither: 6
- Agree: 30
- Strongly Agree: 30

I feel that I am able to resolve a workplace conduct issue or conflict locally 
- Strongly disagree: 8
- Disagree: 6
- Neither: 7
- Agree: 41
- Strongly Agree: 41

My immediate supervisor is capable of resolving a workplace conduct issue quickly 
- Strongly disagree: 12
- Disagree: 5
- Neither: 10
- Agree: 32
- Strongly Agree: 32

I am confident that if I reported a workplace conduct or behaviour issue, there are safeguards in place to ensure that I would not face retaliation 
- Strongly disagree: 13
- Disagree: 8
- Neither: 12
- Agree: 32
- Strongly Agree: 32

F1. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with these statements about the State Emergency Service policies and procedures. Please note for these questions your immediate supervisor refers to the next person in line through the chain of command. 
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (Sample sizes from top to bottom: n=225;226;225;225;225;225;225;225)
Perceptions of ... (%)

Individuals are challenged when exhibiting unacceptable behaviour:
- Strongly disagree: 12
- Disagree: 10
- Neither: 15
- Agree: 38
- Strongly Agree: 16
- Don't know: 9

Total Disagree: 22%
Total Agree: 54%

Individuals are held accountable for their actions:
- Strongly disagree: 12
- Disagree: 12
- Neither: 13
- Agree: 33
- Strongly Agree: 23
- Don't know: 6

Total Disagree: 25%
Total Agree: 56%

F2. And to what extent do you agree with the following statements?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (Sample sizes from top to bottom: n=225;226)
F3. During the last 2 years have you witnessed any such bullying in your State Emergency Service volunteer environment?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
F4. And during the last 2 years have you been subject to any such bullying in your State Emergency Service volunteer environment?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
2.5 Inclusion
Barriers to inclusion (%)

There are no barriers to my inclusion 64
Age 10
Length of service 10
Not fitting in with local culture / atmosphere 8
Gender 7
Disability 4
Sexual Orientation 1
Language 1
Ethnicity 0
Refused 2
Don't know 9

E1. Thinking about possible barriers to inclusion within the State Emergency Service, which, if any, of the following have been barriers to your inclusion?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
2.6 Information and Communication
Satisfaction with general information received (%)

H1. How satisfied are you with the general information received from the State Emergency Service during the year? Note: This does not refer to in field communications or calls for service.

BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
H1. How satisfied are you with the general information received from the State Emergency Service during the year? Note: This does not refer to in field communications or calls for service.
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
H2. What is the main reason for your dissatisfaction with general information received from the State Emergency Service during the year?
BASE: Those dissatisfied with general information received (n=25*)
*Caution: small sample size – results should be interpreted as indicative only
Current information access methods (%)

H3. What current methods do you use to access and keep up to date with information relating to the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)

- Portal: 64%
- Noticeboards / announcements: 60%
- Email: 59%
- Word of mouth: 52%
- Text messages to phone: 41%
- Internet: 40%
- Paper based: 39%
- Social media (Facebook /Twitter-@QFES /Instagram): 38%
- Other: 3%
- None of the above: <1%
H4. And what is your preferred method to access and keep up to date with information relating to the State Emergency Service?

BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
### Desired frequency of service updates via each method (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Fortnightly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>As available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper based</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portal</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text messages to phone</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noticeboards / announcements</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*HS. And how frequently would you like to receive updates / information via your preferred method of communication(s)?*  
*BASE: Those who preferred each method (Paper based n=61; Portal n=122; Internet n=103; Email n=166; Social media n=75; Text messages to phone n=101; Word of mouth n=72; Noticeboards/announcements n=108)*
2.7 Recognition
11. Which of the following forms of recognition is most important to you?

BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
2.8
Training and Development
Satisfaction with training over the past two years (%)

J1. How satisfied were you with the training provided for your volunteer work with the State Emergency Service over the past two years?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)

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Reasons for dissatisfaction with training (%)

- There was not enough training: 58%
- The trainer was not effective: 39%
- The training was not necessary to undertake my volunteer role: 14%
- The timing of the training conflicted with work and other commitments: 6%
- The location of the training was not convenient: 6%
- The training was too long: 0%
- There was too much training: 0%
- Other: 28%

16% Dissatisfied

J1. How satisfied were you with the training provided for your volunteer work with the State Emergency Service over the past two years?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)

J2. What are the main reason/s for you dissatisfaction with your training?
BASE: Those dissatisfied with training (n=36)
2.9
Recruitment and Intention to Continue Volunteering
First learnt about volunteering opportunities (%)

- **Word of mouth**: 53%
- **Organisation website**: 8%
- **Social media**: 2%
- **Local Council**: 2%
- **Radio**: 1%
- **Other website**: <1%
- **Other**: 31%
- **Don’t know**: 3%

C1. How did you first learn about volunteer opportunities with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
C2. What factors motivated you to volunteer with the State Emergency Service?
BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Intention to continue volunteering (%)

- Yes: 80%
- No: 4%
- Don't know: 15%
- Prefer not to say: 1%

Reasons for not intending to continue volunteering (%)

- Lack of leadership / direction: 75%
- Lack of communication: 63%
- I don’t like the culture: 50%
- Too much red tape: 50%
- Lack of training: 25%
- It is a waste of time: 13%
- Lack of equipment/uniform: 13%
- Lack of diversity of role: 13%
- Not enough time / busy with other commitments: 0%
- Changed jobs: 0%
- Moved locations: 0%
- Life changes caused me to leave: 0%
- Out of pocket expenses: 0%
- Other: 13%
3
Respondent profile
**Respondent Profile (1)**

### Gender (%)
- Male: 58%
- Female: 38%
- Prefer not to say: 4%

### Age (%)
- 16-24 years: 13%
- 25-34 years: 15%
- 35-44 years: 22%
- 45-54 years: 35%
- 55-69 years: 28%
- 70+ years: 18%
- Prefer not to say: 2%

### Employment Status (%)
- Full time: 27%
- Part time: 12%
- Self-employed: 11%
- Retired: 28%
- Student: 3%
- Not working: 18%
- Prefer not to say: 2%

### Highest level of Education (%)
- Less than year 12 or equivalent: 18%
- Year 12 or equivalent: 14%
- Certificate level including trade: 26%
- Diploma / Advanced Diploma or equivalent: 20%
- Bachelor Degree or equivalent: 11%
- Post-graduate Degree or equivalent: 8%
- Prefer not to say: 2%

### Personal Identification (%)
- Aboriginal: 3%
- Torres Strait Islander: 0%
- Non-English Speaking background: 2%
- Person with a disability: 8%
- Person with a diverse sexual or gender identity: <1%
- None of the above: 82%
- Refused: 6%

Demo7. What is your gender? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Demo5. What is your age? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Demo2. What is your current employment status? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Demo8. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Demo8. Do you identify as any of the following? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Respondent Profile (2)

How long have you been volunteering with the SES (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 12 months</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 years</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 5 years</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 15 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 20 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 + years</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Position within organisation SES (%)

- Community Member: 24%
- Field Operations: 18%
- Senior Field Operations: 14%
- Team Leader: 5%
- Group Leader: 14%
- Deputy Group Leader: 7%
- Local Controller: 4%
- Deputy Local Controller: 5%
- No rank yet: 5%
- Other position: 3%
- Don’t know: 1%
- Refused: 1%

Approx. hours per month spent volunteering in past 2 years (%)

- Less than 10 hours: 17%
- Between 10 and 20 hours: 32%
- Between 21 and 40 hours: 21%
- Between 41 and 80 hours: 16%
- Between 81 and 120 hours: 7%
- Between 121 and 160 hours: 6%
- More than 160 hours (or more than 40 hours/week): 1%

Extent that employer supports volunteering (%)

- Strongly supports me: 12%
- Supports me: 12%
- Neither supports nor does not support me: 14%
- Does not support me: 3%
- Strongly does not support me: 1%
- I do not tell my employer that I volunteer: 4%
- I am not employed: 44%
- I am self employed: 11%

Demo4. How long have you been volunteering with the SES? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
A3. And which position do you currently hold? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
A4. On average, across the last 2 years, approximately how many hours per months did you spend volunteering for the SES? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
A5. To what extent does your employer support you volunteering? BASE: SES respondents - North Coast (n=226)
Thank you

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