

weVolunteer and Spontaneous volunteering: A Key Resource for the Emergency Management Sector

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The [Phase 2 of the Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian fire season](#) was published last week. This extensive report explores the progress and effectiveness of Victoria's immediate relief and recovery arrangements.

The report highlights the role of volunteering in improving recovery management and outcomes. While for many affected communities, the recovery is still ongoing 18 months later, the Inspector-General for Emergency Management emphasises how formal and informal volunteering represented a vital resource throughout the relief and recovery phases. The report goes further by inviting the emergency management sector to deliberately consider how it can maximise the contribution of spontaneous volunteering in the future.

For Volunteering Victoria, [weVolunteer](#) – an initiative designed to bring together volunteers and local community organisations to help communities through the recovery phase – represents a powerful tool allowing to mobilise this largely untapped resource and enable government and local agencies to harness the strength of spontaneous volunteering.

“Meaningful and safe volunteering must align with the demand for volunteers, driven by the needs of the affected communities. weVolunteer ensures organisations have the required capabilities, structures and legal protections in place to effectively manage volunteers during the recovery phase,” says Scott Miller, Chief Executive of Volunteering Victoria.

The weVolunteer pool continues to grow each day across both metropolitan and regional areas, with over 2,400 volunteers currently registered. This demonstrates much of what we have come to know about the Victorian community; there is no shortage of good-will during times of crisis and emergency. Further funding and support for weVolunteer would only see this number grow.

“As we begin to recover from the effects of the pandemic, now is a critical time to focus on revitalising the volunteering sector and supporting weVolunteer as a resource to enhance recovery efforts,” adds Miller.

The weVolunteer platform can play a central role in times of need. For this to become a reality, the government needs to allocate long-term funding to guarantee the viability of the platform and maximise the positive impact of emergency volunteering across the state. Volunteering Victoria stands ready to work with the Victorian government to ensure volunteers can help communities recover when they need it the most.

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