

From:
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Flood Inquiry
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Hello

I am the _____ of the _____, which provide volunteer incident management members to support operational Incident Control Centres across the State.

I have limited input to provide the committee on the management of this incident because my unit was not deployed during the Northern Rivers incident. However, I hope to provide an insight into what may have caused some of the issues in the management of the incident.

1. Training

IMT training for volunteers does not exist in this Zone.

Even though Incident Management is based on the AAIMS principles there is no interest in sharing training resources with other emergency management agencies.

Concerns:

1. Volunteers are the main source of support for paid staff.
2. Training of all emergency management volunteers should be on a multi-agency basis.

2. Deployment

There are a number of risks that are not addressed in the deployment of volunteers.

These include the inability of the SES to manage deployment of volunteers on a large scale, ie 2019/20 Bushfires and the Northern Rivers event.

The SES does not and has never had a fully operational volunteer management system that allows volunteers across the State to register their availability. After the IMT determine the skills and numbers of volunteers needed such a system would allow the SES to source skills / qualifications / experience. This would also provide a gap analysis of required skills for future training. This will also immediately identify what skills can be provided internally and allow the SES to find alternative sources from outside the SES, other emergency service agencies then to interstate agencies. For example it would be appropriate for the SES to be able to search the database of volunteers (which currently exists) for specific skills or qualifications then approach those volunteers directly, all electronically. The current system requires a broadcast email to all Zones seeking volunteers to submit an EOI. The form used for this EOI asks the volunteer to provide details of their skills, which is already available within the system. Clearly this is inefficient and those charged with reviewing the hundreds if not thousands of EOIs are swamped with details they already have. The work around system as described is too cumbersome and inefficient for large scale deployments. Most deployments are by word of mouth from within the incident. Example of how the systems fails are:

1. It is estimated that 4-4,500 SES volunteers were deployed during the 2019/20 fires. Yet the SES is still trying to confirm volunteers eligibility for the National Emergency medal because the records are not available or they do not have sufficient staff to complete the work.
2. During the Northern Rivers event the SES was seeking outside assistance when there were many volunteers who had submitted their EOI and not contacted.

Concerns:

1. Volunteers spend a lot of time training to assist in events.
2. Safety of members being deployed without appropriate skills.
3. Management's ability to demonstrate due care in selecting appropriately skilled and qualified volunteers, such as using spontaneous volunteers to operate rescue boats.
4. Volunteers need certainty to enable them to manage their private work and volunteering commitments