

# Department of Community Safety

## Volunteer Management Strategy 2009–2013 Volunteer Initiatives 2009–2010



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## Executive Summary

Volunteers of emergency services are essential in building community capacity and enhancing community resilience to the adverse affects of disasters and emergency events. The delivery of emergency services utilising volunteer support relies on strong local community backing and critical partnerships with all local governments and key stakeholders within state and national government, disaster management organisations and industry across Queensland. The Department of Community Safety (DCS) acknowledges these critical partnerships and will continue to strengthen the coordinated approach to plan, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster situations.

Over the last few years, a range of emerging issues have affected volunteering at a state and national level. These issues include: the expected increase in severe weather events due to climate change; challenges of economic and demographic factors; the attraction, retention and recruitment of volunteers due to competition in the volunteering sector and the trend towards periodic volunteering. The Department recognises these challenges and has developed initiatives to address these issues. The Department's *Volunteer Management Strategy 2009–2013* supports the Queensland Government's *Toward Q2 – Tomorrow's Queensland (Q2)* ambition to increase by 50% the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers.

The *Volunteer Management Strategy 2009–2013* outlines anticipated service standards, performance indicators, goals and strategies (attachment 1). In support of the Strategy, this companion document reflects the Department's commitment in continuing to work towards the goal of Q2 and to capitalise on the substantial work already undertaken in the field of volunteer recruitment and retention. DCS has developed 53 initiatives to increase volunteer recruitment and improve volunteer retention.

The Strategy and this companion document highlight the Department's current state of activity, the proposed strategic direction, and the initiatives that contribute to meeting the Q2 target. The initiatives focus on supporting and promoting volunteers and volunteering, building a strong and sustainable base for volunteering; and increasing volunteer numbers. The majority of the initiatives outlined in this document are intended to be developed and implemented in 2009–2010 and will be reviewed on an annual basis. However the continuation, evaluation and improvement of these initiatives will be ongoing over the next five years in line with the *Volunteer Management Strategy 2009–2013*.

The key focus of the *Volunteer Management Strategy 2009–2013* targets volunteers including the State Emergency Services (SES), Queensland Corrective Services (QCS), Rural Fire Service (RFS), Local Ambulance Committees (LACs) and Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) Community First Responders. The Department recognises its network of supported volunteer organisations: Surf Life Saving Queensland, Volunteer Marine Rescue Association of Queensland, Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association and Royal Life Saving Society of Queensland, and will continue to share information and strategies that they may find beneficial.

Volunteer projects and initiatives will continue to be developed with strategic partners in volunteering, including Department of Communities, Volunteering Queensland, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, and Emergency Management Australia as well as Advisory Groups and community organisations associated with the Department's volunteer groups.

The Department recognises the five major challenges in the attraction, support and retention of emergency management volunteers, as outlined in the 2009 report<sup>1</sup> commissioned by Emergency Management Australia. These challenges are: time, training, cost, recognition and people.

The initiatives are specifically targeted to respond to these challenges. Included are programs to improve training and reporting, reducing time constraints on volunteers and initiatives to reduce out of pocket expenses for volunteers. Also included are improvements to reward and recognition programs for volunteers and implementation of functions for volunteers.

<sup>1</sup>Esmond J., "The Attraction, Support and Retention of Emergency Management Volunteers", 2009.

# Department of Community Safety: Volunteer Management Strategy 2009-2013



Community Objectives (Q2 Ambitions)	Strong Creating an economy powered by bright ideas	Green Protecting our lifestyle and environment	Smart Delivering world-class education and training	Healthy Making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people	Fair Supporting safe and caring communities
DCS-related Targets	<b>Fair</b> – increase by 50% the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers • Support our Heroes – aimed at dramatically boosting volunteer numbers in Queensland and helping communities prepare for natural disasters • Keeping our Beaches Safe - aimed at improving the safety of Queensland and visitors to our beaches and public swimming locations • Rural Fire Service Volunteer Community Educators established • Volunteer Management Strategy developed and reviewed annually • Volunteer Information Management System developed by end of 2010				
Vision	<b>That the Department of Community Safety be recognised as an organisation of choice for support, values, advocacy and professional standards amongst community safety volunteers.</b>				
Services	Emergency Management Queensland	Queensland Ambulance Service	Queensland Corrective Services	Queensland Fire and Rescue Service	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends.</li><li>Promote volunteerism as a core value of Emergency Management Queensland.</li><li>Improve coordination of the SES volunteer base.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends.</li><li>Promote volunteerism as a core value of Queensland Ambulance Service.</li><li>Improve coordination of Queensland Ambulance Service volunteer base.</li><li>Identify further opportunities for Community First Responder initiatives.</li><li>Sustain or increase volunteer numbers, particularly in rural and regional communities.</li><li>Develop a profile in Queensland Ambulance Service of additional locations that would benefit from volunteers.</li><li>Improve the retention rate of volunteers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends in correctional services.</li><li>Increase volunteerism within Queensland Corrective Services.</li><li>Explore a greater range of options for volunteering in probation and parole and custodial operations.</li><li>Investigate how volunteers could optimise the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.</li><li>Develop a profile of volunteers across Queensland Corrective Services.</li><li>Identify opportunities for volunteering across Queensland Corrective Services.</li><li>Improve the retention rate of volunteers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leadership, coordination and innovation in response to contemporary volunteering trends.</li><li>Promote volunteerism as a core value of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service.</li><li>Improve coordination of Rural Operations volunteer base.</li><li>Increase opportunities for and promotion of alternative volunteering opportunities in the Rural Fire Service.</li><li>Enhance retention and volunteer satisfaction through communication, support mechanisms, resourcing and promotion of financial support opportunities.</li><li>Enhance volunteer leadership through support, leadership identification, training and development and provision of clear corporate governance.</li><li>Improve the retention rate of volunteers.</li></ul>	
Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish agreed SES functions with each Local Government in Queensland to assist in service delivery, planning and management of the SES, including target membership, structure, training, equipment and administration of SES Groups.</li><li>Identify and strive to achieve optimal SES membership numbers based on agreed functions for each SES Group.</li><li>Enhance SES leadership through support, leadership identification, training and development and provision of clear corporate governance.</li><li>Improve the retention rate of volunteers.</li></ul>				
Goal	1: People	2: Recognition	3: Time	4: Cost	5: Training
Strategies	1.1 Maintain focus on volunteer well being.	2.1 Support and promote diversity in volunteering.	3.1 Identify flexible approaches to volunteer roles.	4.1 Minimise, where possible, out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers.	5.1 Facilitate access to training, information and management support.
	1.2 Incorporate sustainable policy development to support volunteers.	2.2 Raise awareness of volunteering and its economic value.	3.2 Build and sustain the capacity to recruit, retain and manage volunteers.	4.2 Ensure that volunteers are appropriately resourced to effectively perform their duties.	5.2 Ensure volunteers have access to appropriate training, equipment and infrastructure to undertake their volunteer role safely and effectively.
	1.3 Commit to providing administration, operational and infrastructure support to ensure volunteer time is used to optimal advantage.	2.3 Support reward and recognition of volunteers and voluntary organisations.	3.3 Identify and promote volunteering models that respond to contemporary trends and align with emergency service volunteering.		5.3 Ensure effective volunteer management and leadership through the provision of leadership training.
Values	Volunteer Focus	Professionalism	Leadership		
	Our volunteers have a strong commitment to community service.	We value our volunteers through providing appropriate resources to conduct their duties.	We are committed to support and encourage volunteers while developing their skills and competencies.		We recognise and value volunteers through providing respect, trust and mutual benefit.
Strategic issues and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increase in severe weather events due to climate change.</li><li>Challenges of economic and demographic factors which pose a threat to volunteers e.g. work/life balance.</li><li>Attraction, retention and recruitment of volunteers due to competition in the volunteering sector and the trend towards periodic volunteering.</li></ul>				

# Overview of DCS Volunteer Initiatives

Each of the 53 volunteer initiatives are listed below along with a measure by which the Department will monitor and evaluate during 2009–2010.

Dr Judy Esmond's report on *"The Attraction, Support and Retention of Emergency Management Volunteers" 2009*, recognises five challenges for organisations with emergency management volunteers, those being – Time (T), Training (TR), Cost (C), Recognition (R) and People (P). Each initiative has been categorised against challenges which are applicable.

1.0 Roles	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
1.1 Identify critical partnerships with key stakeholders <b>Measure:</b> Critical partnerships identified and established. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, TR, R, P	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.2 Partnering with other volunteer organisations to enhance volunteer capability <b>Measure:</b> A stronger base for volunteering established and enhanced volunteer capability. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, TR, R, P	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.3 New membership roles based on function within the SES and RFS <b>Measure:</b> Provided clearly defined membership roles to enhance volunteer personal and skill development. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓		
1.4 New approaches to volunteering in the RFS, SES and QAS <b>Measure:</b> Supported volunteers through providing flexible options and choices for volunteer roles. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓	✓	
1.5 Agreed SES functions <b>Measure:</b> Evaluated and developed SES functions to inform allocation of the appropriate level of support and resources required for SES volunteers <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, TR, P		✓		
1.6 Community educator roles for RFS and SES volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Supported transition processes for volunteers moving from an operational to support role <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓		
2.0 Recruitment and Selection Processes	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
2.1 SES and RFS role descriptions and selection processes <b>Measure:</b> Developed and implemented merit-based procedures to ensure equity in the selection process <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, R, P	✓	✓		
2.2 SES recruitment systems (RFS and QCS to consider) <b>Measure:</b> Recruited volunteers in an effective way and provided data as evidence to support the recruitment system <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓		✓
2.3 Partner with local government and community organisations to enhance volunteer recruitment strategies <b>Measure:</b> Developed and implemented a streamlined recruitment strategy for volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓	✓	✓



2.4	1300 recruitment number for DCS <b>Measure:</b> Implemented 1300 recruitment number assisting public enquiries associated with recruitment volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.5	Further internal publication and education on the existing RFS volunteer recruitment campaign <b>Measure:</b> Enhanced partnerships between the organisation and volunteers to maximise volunteer recruitment. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, R, P	✓			
2.6	Expanding the RFS and SES recruitment campaign to include new roles <b>Measure:</b> Expanded RFS and SES recruitment campaign including new roles for volunteers and enhanced brand recognition. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓		
2.7	Exit interviews for DCS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Captured data from exit interviews on reasons why volunteers leave. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, R	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.8	DCS volunteer survey <b>Measure:</b> Developed and distributed a survey for DCS volunteers. Collated information, trends identified and where required, developed initiatives to overcome issues. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R, P	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.9	Develop a QCS volunteer recruitment process <b>Measure:</b> Increased number of volunteers in QCS. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P				✓
<b>3.0 Communications</b>		<b>RFS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>QAS</b>	<b>QCS</b>
3.1	Enhanced communication processes for DCS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Supported volunteers through enhanced communication between the organisation and volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2	Review of all external websites <b>Measure:</b> Reviewed all DCS external websites ensuring current and informative information is available to the public. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.3	The 'New Look' DCS Volunteer Portal <b>Measure:</b> Provided volunteers with an enhanced and more user friendly Volunteer Portal. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.4	Area/Regional and state marketing for RFS/SES <b>Measure:</b> Provided Area/Regional and state levels with the appropriate resources to conduct marketing and raise awareness of the volunteer roles. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, R, P	✓	✓		
3.5	Distribution of information to people moving to iZone/rural areas <b>Measure:</b> Informed communities regarding iZone/rural transition issues and the role of rural operations at the local level. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R, P	✓	✓		
3.6	RFS Bulletin circulation <b>Measure:</b> Improved communication with volunteers through increased distribution of the RFS Bulletin. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P	✓			

4.0 Leadership and Governance		RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
4.1	Reward and recognition programs for DCS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Implemented and sustained reward and recognition program for volunteers, including widely circulated awards information. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.2	Enhanced quarterly performance reporting <b>Measure:</b> Reported Q2 volunteer initiatives through the quarterly performance reporting process. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.3	Enhanced workplace health and safety for DCS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Reduced risk and a safe working environment provided for volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, P	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.4	Assist RFS Brigades with incident reporting <b>Measure:</b> Minimised administrative burden by introducing an electronic reporting system which provides Rural Operations with up-to-date and accurate information. This assists with strategic planning, service delivery planning and resource allocation, allowing QFRS to provide comparisons with other state agencies. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R, P	✓			
4.5	Recognition for employers who support DCS volunteering <b>Measure:</b> Encouraged employers to support employees who are volunteers or those who wish to become volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R, P	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.6	QFRS Rural Operations volunteer conference <b>Measure:</b> Engaged RFS volunteers and provided an opportunity to discuss emerging issues, organisational priorities, volunteer issues and encouraged networking with staff and other volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R, P	✓			
4.7	SES Local Controllers' conference <b>Measure:</b> Engaged SES volunteer leaders and provided an opportunity to discuss emerging issues, organisational priorities, volunteer issues and focus and most importantly, encouraged networking with staff and other volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R, P		✓		
4.8	QAS LAC Conferences <b>Measure:</b> Engaged QAS LAC volunteers through an opportunity to promote participation and awareness of ambulance services, discuss community issues, volunteer issues and encouraged networking with staff and other volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> R, P			✓	
4.9	Enhanced leadership <b>Measure:</b> Provided leadership training for volunteers to enhance group management skills and effective operations. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, P	✓	✓		
4.10	SES operations doctrine/RFS Brigade manual <b>Measure:</b> Supported volunteers through the provision of appropriate policy and procedural resources to enhance operational performance and support recruitment and retention. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, R, P	✓	✓		

4.11	Working with local government <b>Measure:</b> Sustained partnerships with local governments to ensure awareness of the significant role for SES during emergency response situations. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P	✓	✓		
4.12	Emergency Services Units – evaluation and enhancement <b>Measure:</b> ESUs evaluated and improvements implemented. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, TR, R, P	✓	✓	✓	
<b>5.0 Financial Support</b>		<b>RFS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>QAS</b>	<b>QCS</b>
5.1	Identify, maintain and secure sponsorship for DCS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Secured and sustained sponsorship of volunteer organisations which provides a range of benefits including funding, status and external resources. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.2	Mitigate personal costs to volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Reduced out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers which recognises efforts and assist volunteer retention. <b>Identified challenges:</b> C	✓	✓		
5.3	Grants and subsidies for DCS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Obtained grant funding for volunteer initiatives to continue to support, maintain and retain volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, R, P	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>6.0 Training and Development</b>		<b>RFS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>QAS</b>	<b>QCS</b>
6.1	Career development and progression for SES and RFS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Provided opportunities to support career development, particularly targeting under 35 year old volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, TR, R, P	✓	✓		
6.2	Delivery of training to SES volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Provided flexible delivery of training to accommodate volunteer engagement. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR		✓		
6.3	Increase number of RFS volunteer trainers across the state <b>Measure:</b> Supported and retained volunteers through offering incentives to take on the role of a volunteer trainer. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, P	✓			
6.4	RFS Volunteer Learning and Development Framework (VLDF) <b>Measure:</b> Supported rural volunteers with no requirement to re-do training they had already completed. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, P	✓			
6.5	E-Learning for DCS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Provided training options for volunteers which best suit their lifestyle. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, TR	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.6	Trial of Certificate II school program at selected State High Schools <b>Measure:</b> Provided training to grade 12 students enabling them to become Registered Junior members of their local brigade with the option of becoming a full member at the age of 18. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓			



6.7	Primary Producer Brigade strategy <b>Measure:</b> Implemented dedicated classification and specialised training programs for Primary Producer Brigades. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓			
6.8	Expanding peer support program for RFS volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Improved post incident support to RFS volunteers and families through the Fire Care System. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓			
6.9	Emergency Services Volunteer Skills and Training Passport <b>Measure:</b> Recognition and alignment of volunteer skills, experience and training programs. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, TR, C, R, P	✓	✓	✓	
<b>7.0 Equipment and Facilities</b>		<b>RFS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>QAS</b>	<b>QCS</b>
7.1	RFS, SES and QAS equipment <b>Measure:</b> Provided equipment and personal protective clothing to support volunteers performing emergency service functions in a safe effective manner. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, C	✓	✓	✓	
7.2	RFS and SES facilities <b>Measure:</b> Audited SES and QFRS facilities to ensure adherence to Workplace Health and Safety standards and suitability for volunteer duties. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR	✓	✓		
7.3	Partner with community organisations to enhance response capability in a disaster <b>Measure:</b> Engaged with service clubs, community and not for profit organisations to establish partnerships to promote a coordinated approach to a disaster situation and provide facilities and resources to establish emergency centres. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, C	✓	✓	✓	
7.4	Allocate uniforms to RFS first officers and community educators <b>Measure:</b> Provided first officers and community education officers with a uniform to reinforce they are valued volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, C, P	✓			
7.5	Kit bags provided to Firefighter members and SES volunteers <b>Measure:</b> Provided kit bags for RFS as an incentive for volunteers to complete their Firefighter Minimum Skills. Provided kit bags initially to SES members that deploy inter and intra state. <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, R, P	✓	✓		
<b>8.0 Supporting Systems</b>		<b>RFS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>QAS</b>	<b>QCS</b>
8.1	Volunteer Information Management System (VIMS) for DCS <b>Measure:</b> Developed and maintained a VIMS containing DCS volunteer data which will be used to compile reports and streamline the management of volunteer information and resources (e.g. equipment and training). <b>Identified challenges:</b> T, P	✓	✓	✓	
8.2	Request for Assistance Online (RFA) <b>Measure:</b> Introduced SES tasking management system state wide to enhance disaster management response and reporting capability. <b>Identified challenges:</b> P		✓		
8.3	SES TARDIS project <b>Measure:</b> Implemented a time and attendance monitoring system providing enhanced reporting to manage fatigue amongst SES volunteers. <b>Identified challenges:</b> TR, P		✓		

The outline and benefit of each initiative follows. These initiatives will be continually reviewed and assessed in relation to their progress. DCS values the volunteers who dedicate their time to support RFS, SES, QAS and QCS.

The initiatives are categorised under the eight key areas of Roles; Recruitment and Selection Processes; Communications; Leadership and Governance; Financial Support; Training and Development; Equipment and Facilities, and Supporting Systems.

## Roles

1.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Identify critical partnerships with key stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	✓

**The Department will identify further critical partnerships and enhance existing critical partnerships with local governments, state and national governments, community organisations and industry.**

Volunteers of emergency services are essential in building community capacity and enhancing community resilience to the adverse affects of disasters and emergency events. So too are the critical partnerships with local, state and national government, volunteer advisory groups, community organisations and industry. The Department will identify further critical partnerships that will strengthen the coordinated approach to plan, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster situations.

**Benefit:** Identifying further critical partnerships and enhancing existing critical partnerships will improve the delivery of emergency services throughout Queensland. These partnerships will further strengthen the support for our volunteers.

1.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Partnering with other volunteer organisations to enhance volunteer capability	✓	✓	✓	✓

**The Department will develop and strengthen partnerships and alliances between the government, non-government, business and the community to strengthen knowledge, focus, reach, leverage and resource utilisation.**

DCS will strengthen links by developing agreements with other volunteer organisations such as Volunteer Marine Rescue Association of Queensland, Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ), Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association and Royal Life Saving Society of Queensland. For example, SLSQ agreed to formalise its involvement with the Government and SES as a callout taskforce in natural disasters or other emergencies, using the organisation's expertise and equipment to expand the state's current response capabilities. This initiative involves identifying opportunities to align training and accreditation between similar emergency response organisations to enable rapid access to appropriately trained and motivated volunteers during significant events.

QAS has a mix of operational and non-operational volunteers. Operational volunteers are appointed under the *Queensland Ambulance Service Act 1991* (Ambulance Act) as Honorary Ambulance Officers and include Volunteer Ambulance Drivers, Volunteer Ambulance Attendants and Community First Responders. Non-operational volunteers are members of LAC established under the Ambulance Act. Within these volunteer roles, QAS will investigate more flexible approaches to recruiting, supporting, training and retaining volunteers.

**Benefit:** DCS will build a stronger base for volunteering and enhance volunteer capability. Establishing agreements with our partners will also attract more volunteers to support community organisations.

1.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
New membership roles based on function within the SES and RFS	✓	✓		

**EMQ and Rural Operations will implement new membership roles within the SES and RFS.**

EMQ and Rural Operations have developed and will implement refined membership structures within SES and RFS that establish roles based on functions. Through this approach, volunteers will receive best practice training in a range of disciplines, providing them with adaptable real life skills which can be utilised in an emergency situation and within their personal life.

**Benefit:** All members are provided clear pathways to develop their skills through a structure that enables personal development of individual members and enhances functional skills development and response capability.

1.4 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
New approaches to volunteering in the RFS, SES and QAS	✓	✓	✓	

**RFS, EMQ and QAS will review and analyse innovative approaches to volunteering to counter the pressures impacting on traditional methods of recruitment and development of volunteers.**

Skills based volunteer organisations, such as the SES, require the volunteer to devote significant time towards attaining and maintaining skills and competencies. This requirement is directly confronted by the identified pressures on emergency services volunteering - time poor, aging population and geographic changes. To respond to this EMQ will investigate more flexible approaches to volunteering and/or support for SES volunteers which may include:

**Event based volunteering**

Attracting nominations from skilled members of the public who may wish to register their skills and qualifications to be called for assistance for a short period for a specific event i.e. tradespeople, tree-loppers, waste/debris removalists.

**Strengthened operations protocol with RFS**

Practical protocol to enhance “integration” of RFS volunteers into disaster response events.

**Benefit:** Research may provide alternative innovative options for accessing volunteers to support RFS, SES and QAS. DCS will build a strong and sustainable base for volunteering that reflects contemporary volunteering trends.

1.5 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Agreed SES functions		✓		

**A. EMQ will establish the agreed SES functions with each local government.**

The SES is a community based volunteer emergency service organisation which is strongly supported by local governments through a partnership arrangement with EMQ. Section 87 of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* requires the state to consult with local government on the functions of each SES Unit and SES Group.

The community relies on SES volunteers to deliver services through the following ten functions:

Community Education	Traffic Management
Agency Support	Storm Response
Incident Management	Flood Boat Operations
Search	Vertical Rescue
Special Rescue	Road Crash Rescue

EMQ has initiated discussions with Queensland local governments to gain agreement on SES functionality and optimal membership per SES Group throughout the state. From this, EMQ is able to plan for the resources which include skills training and equipment that each SES Group requires to respond to both localised and state wide emergencies and disasters.

**Benefit:** This will assist with decision-making regarding the development of appropriate training, the procurement of equipment, the development of policy and operating procedures and the adoption of a management structure that will ensure a continuity of standards across the state.

## **B. EMQ will analyse the data from the SES functions to enhance planning.**

EMQ will analyse the data from the SES functions for service delivery planning, capacity and capability planning and financial modelling.

**Benefit:** The analysis will provide a structured and strategic approach for resources, equipment and training within the SES to provide for enhanced service delivery.

<b>1.6 Initiative</b>	<b>RFS</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>QAS</b>	<b>QCS</b>
Community educator roles for RFS and SES volunteers	✓	✓		

## **EMQ aims to develop comprehensive community education materials and support volunteer community education officers.**

EMQ aims to improve community resilience and preparedness by developing a program of targeted community engagement and education strategies. This will align with national strategies to enhance community resilience.

EMQ intends to create, develop and support through the SES, a network of up to 400 volunteer community education officers to deliver community education messages to their local communities to build community resilience to disasters and emergencies.

## **Rural Operations will implement two new volunteer roles within the RFS i.e. volunteer community educators and operational support volunteers.**

The volunteer community educator role will be a non-operational role dedicated to providing bushfire and fire safety education to Queensland communities. The role will provide bushfire related education such as Bushfire Prepared Communities, Prepare, Stay and Defend or go Early and Bushfire Action Plans, as well as presenting programs currently undertaken in urban areas by full-time Firefighters, such as Safehome, Smoke Alarms and Fire Education.

The operational support volunteer role is designed to allow volunteers who are unable to undertake an active firefighting role, due to poor health or other issues, the opportunity to actively participate in operational activities. The range of duties or positions appropriate to operational support members includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Incident management team member.
2. Incident control centre activities.
3. Radio operations.
4. Logistics support.

There will be 6 stages involved in the implementation of the community educator roles:

1. Development of the community educator role descriptions and supporting permanent positions.
2. Development and implementation of Communication or Marketing Strategy.
3. Development and implementation of a training framework for volunteer community education.
4. Implementation of business systems such as RIMS (RFS volunteer database), application process and performance measures and reporting.
5. Resource development (this stage would vary depending on receipt of funding. The complete version would include a full facilitator's kit for each community educator including a facilitator's guide for each program and a range of supporting resources).
6. Roll out.

The allocation of community educators across the RFS is intended as follows:

Brigade Classification	Community Educators per brigade	Number of Brigades	Sub Total
Groups	2 per group	35 groups	70
iZone Brigades	3 per brigade	166 brigades	498
Village	2 per brigade	168 brigades	336
Rural	1 per brigade	495 brigades	495
Primary Producer Brigades	1 per brigade	656 brigades	656
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2055</b>

#### **Benefit:**

##### **Community education and volunteer community educators for SES**

A range of community engagement and education programs aimed at building resilience using an all-hazards approach that will deliver community resilience outcomes. The volunteer community education officer role supports the functions of the SES and will allow the SES to appeal to a new target audience by offering a different role for those not wanting to undertake an “operational” role.

##### **Volunteer community educators**

Rural Operations aims to recruit 3000 volunteer community educators over a three year period. It is expected that approximately 1000 of those will come from existing volunteer ranks and 2000 will be new volunteers. The community educator role will allow the RFS to appeal to a new target audience and offer a different ‘type’ of volunteering.

##### **Operational support volunteers**

It is expected that many existing volunteers will take the opportunity to move into the new role, which will assist with retention, as volunteers who no longer feel they are able to participate as Firefighters, have an area within the organisation to move.

# Recruitment and Selection Processes

2.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
SES and RFS role descriptions and selection processes	✓	✓		

## Development of role descriptions and merit based selection processes for both SES Executive members and key positions in Rural Fire Brigades.

Role descriptions and merit based selection processes for SES and RFS Executive members will:

- Enhance the process of appointments to key positions.
- Improve the governance surrounding recruitment and selection processes.
- Enhance performance management.
- Provide opportunities for personal development and a performance review processes.

**Benefit:** This would ensure that appropriately skilled and qualified volunteers take on Executive roles within the SES and Rural Fire Brigades.

2.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
SES recruitment systems (RFS and QCS to consider)	✓	✓		✓

## EMQ will provide a comprehensive and sustainable SES volunteer recruitment process.

EMQ has developed a comprehensive and sustainable end-to-end SES volunteer recruitment process. This process:

- Tracks prospective SES volunteers from initial contact with the SES via one of several identified entry points.
- Provides detailed information relating to requirements and expectations of SES volunteers.
- Provides detailed information of entry processes including criminal history checks.

**Benefit:** Prospective volunteers are supported throughout the recruitment process. EMQ has access to detailed data which will provide for more effective and meaningful reporting and analysis on recruitment targets.

2.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Partner with local government and community organisations to enhance volunteer recruitment strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓

## DCS will undertake regular reviews of volunteer recruitment practices. In partnership with our key stakeholders DCS will strengthen the evidence base to respond to contemporary volunteering trends and recruitment strategies.

In light of significant challenges, such as a growing risk profile through climate change, demand pressures and pressures on volunteering such as an aging population, DCS will develop a comprehensive, sustainable recruitment strategy to maintain appropriate levels of emergency services volunteers into the future. In order to ensure recruitment is relevant and effective, DCS will regularly review the overall approach as well as information provided to potential recruits through the 'essential information for potential volunteers' and 'essential information for new recruits' booklets. DCS will also review the recruitment process to ensure that there is a streamlined process for new members.

All operational divisions of DCS will undertake regular reviews of existing recruitment strategies to ensure prospective community volunteers are identified and effectively engaged to ensure sustainable levels of support are maintained.

**Benefit:** Regular review of volunteer recruitment strategies will ensure that the materials remain current and can adapt to emerging trends and issues impacting on volunteering.



2.4 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
1300 recruitment number for DCS	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS to implement 1300 recruitment number to provide and market a telephone recruitment number to assist public enquiries.**

EMQ has purchased a 1300 telephone number (1300 753 737) to support recruitment inquiries for SES. The 1300 number will assist public enquiries through its easy translation into a memorable phone word – i.e. 1300 QLD SES. Phone words are easy to promote and for callers to remember, as they can be linked to an organisation's brand. This number will be available state wide and charged at a local rate. 1300 QLD SES also spells 1300 QLD RFS and as such, RFS will investigate into the options for utilising this number for recruitment purposes. Options for QAS and QCS will be investigated to enable a Whole of Department approach to fielding recruitment enquiries.

**Benefit:** Details of calls received through this number will be monitored which will provide comprehensive data through the recruitment systems.

2.5 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Further internal publication and education on the existing RFS volunteer recruitment campaign	✓			

**Rural Operations will develop an electronic training tool to further train Rural Operations staff in the use of existing recruitment tools.**

The RFS recruitment campaign was launched in November 2007 and to date, it has been difficult to assess its effectiveness, although the ordering of the resources by brigades and area offices has been high. To ensure this campaign is effectively being used to improve volunteer recruitment across the state, Rural Operations will produce an electronic training tool to further train Rural Operations staff in the use of the tools provided in the campaign.

**Benefit:** To ensure brigades are getting the best possible assistance with their recruitment plans from Rural Operations staff and to maximise volunteer recruitment.

2.6 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Expanding the RFS and SES recruitment campaign to include new roles	✓	✓		

**Rural Operations and EMQ will include new roles in their existing recruitment campaigns to assist with the ongoing recruitment of the new roles.**

Rural Operations and EMQ will undertake an extension of their existing recruitment campaigns to include the new membership roles developed. This will require production of revised brochures, postcards and potentially campaigns (to discuss how to target the new 'type' of volunteer) and production of new posters.

**Benefit:** Ongoing recruitment of the new roles, in conjunction with existing recruitment strategies will expand recruitment and assist with creating recruitment brand recognition.

2.7 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Exit interviews for DCS volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

**RFS, EMQ and QCS will consider implementing exit interview processes to assist with maintaining accurate data and future recruitment and retention strategies. QAS will review their current exit interview processes.**

As part of the Future Directions paper, Rural Operations is exploring the process of implementing exit interviews within brigades. It is proposed that area offices would write to all brigade secretaries informing them of the exit interview process and asking for their assistance to advise Rural Operations, as soon as possible, after members leave the brigade.

Consideration is currently being given to both a hard copy and electronic exit interview process.

Exit interview practices will be reviewed and streamlined to provide information to the divisions on the effectiveness of volunteer recruitment and retention strategies.

**Benefit:** This initiative would allow each division to maintain accurate data and gather information on why volunteers are leaving and to determine if there is remedial action that may be able to be taken to retain the volunteer in question, and assist with future recruitment and retention strategies. Analysis of data from exit interviews will also inform and measure volunteer support and minimise recruitment costs and minimise volunteer turnover.

2.8 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
DCS volunteer survey	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will conduct a Whole of Department volunteer survey to collect a sample of information relating to Recruitment, Retention, Training, Equipment, Time and Recognition.**

Previously a range of volunteer surveys have been undertaken by the divisions. A Whole of Department survey will be conducted to ensure consistency across the Department, and to improve the Department's ability to combine and cross reference volunteer feedback from the four divisions.

**Benefit:** The volunteer survey will enable the Department to collate data directly from volunteers within the categories of Recruitment, Retention, Training, Equipment, Time and Recognition. This will provide the Department with information on current issues and concerns which volunteers may have. In response, the Department will be able to develop and implement initiatives to overcome issues.

2.9 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Develop a QCS volunteer recruitment process				✓

**QCS will develop a volunteer recruitment process.**

QCS will develop a recruitment process for volunteers within Custodial Operations and Probation and Parole to optimise the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and encourage people to consider a career in corrections.

**Benefit:** The rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders will be optimised.

# Communications

3.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Enhanced communication processes for DCS volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will maintain and support improved communication strategies.**

Each division will assess their current forms of communication amongst volunteers and ensure the channels of communication are clear and supported by a communication strategy which is reviewed on a regular basis. This will include all forms of communication and resources available within the Department such as the Volunteer Portal, which is used to communicate current information to volunteers.

**Benefit:** More effective communications that will assist in sharing information and promoting initiatives to keep volunteers informed on matters such as organisational updates, training and research information and other volunteer related issues.

3.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Review of all external websites	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will maintain their external websites and undertake regular reviews to ensure the information remains relevant and current.**

EMQ has undertaken a re-structure and re-write of the existing SES website. As a component of the SES volunteer recruitment project, more comprehensive information and systems have been implemented within this website and are designed to better inform the public. The detailed information on the SES website is also a primary source of information for customer service advisers at Smart Service Queensland for SES enquiries.

An additional domain has been purchased by EMQ with the intention of promoting it as the primary website needed for information on the Queensland SES. This site does not require maintenance as it will have a direct link to the [www.emergency.qld.gov.au/ses](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/ses) website and it will provide an easier to remember site name for future recruitment campaigns and enquiries.

The external QAS website plays an important part in providing volunteers and the community with information relating to the roles, recruitment and functional guidelines for QAS volunteers. QAS will review this primary source of volunteer information regularly to ensure information is relevant and accurate to better inform the Queensland community.

Rural Operations is undergoing a re-structure and re-write of much of the existing RFS website. Included in this will be the production of entirely new recruitment section. This will be designed to compliment the existing campaign and the pages will be engaging and interactive.

The QCS will develop a volunteer section on their external website. Information within this section will be designed to better inform the public about the range of options for volunteering with QCS. It will also provide a user-friendly electronic form to assist prospective volunteers to make enquiries about volunteering opportunities.

**Benefit:** Regular reviews of the websites will ensure that materials remain current, provide an effective information tool for the community and support current and future volunteer recruitment strategies.

The Department will continue to maintain and review its external websites. The websites are a tool to inform the public and volunteers of the most current information specific to the Department's four operational divisions. They also assist in the attraction of future volunteers through providing comprehensive information about volunteer roles.

3.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
The 'New Look' DCS Volunteer Portal	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS Volunteer Portal will be redeveloped and launched to provide up-to-date and relevant information on training, policy, procedures, equipment, new developments, initiatives etc.**

The 'new look' Volunteer Portal was launched during National Volunteer Week 2009. The Volunteer Portal will provide the Department's volunteers with instant access to a range of information designed to assist them to undertake their role as volunteers. It will include organisational updates, training and research information and information specific to each volunteer division.

For example, the RFS site includes brigade essentials (forms, brigade manual etc) and, for the first time, a specific area for Fire Wardens. It will also provide a discussion board where volunteers can communicate directly with the organisation and each other. The portal is a major tool in the Rural Operations E-Learning initiative.

**Benefit:** The Volunteer Portal will be a major communication tool for volunteers, helping them to feel more involved in the organisation by providing them with timely and useful information. It will also open up options for two way communication with volunteers and facilitate information sharing.

3.4 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Area/Regional and State marketing for RFS/SES	✓	✓		

**Rural Operations and EMQ will consider implementing a range of advertising tools at the area/regional and state levels to assist with promoting the RFS and SES brand in the areas of recruitment and safety.**

Rural Operations are considering implementing a range of advertising tools to assist at an area and regional level as required. Consideration will be given to a state wide awareness campaign and the use of a well known spokesperson. If Rural Operations is successful in undertaking the campaign, a DVD will be produced for distribution to areas and used for local publicity through a range of mediums, including the training trailers which can be used as a mobile promotional tool. This work would be undertaken in conjunction with the Media and Corporate Communications Unit within DCS.

There is currently confusion amongst the Queensland public regarding the role of SES and the level of assistance they provide within the community. A state and regional marketing campaign would assist to clarify many of these misconceptions.

**Benefit:** A coordinated approach would allow Rural Operations and EMQ to promote the RFS and SES in areas of greatest need, at times of greatest need, whilst maintaining consistency and brand recognition. The introduction of a state wide recruitment campaign with a well known spokesperson would also assist with brand recognition, as well as achieving a sense of 'status' associated with the spokesperson. For RFS, running a state wide campaign would also raise awareness for the residents moving from urban areas to iZone and rural areas. This will assist with both recruitment and safety.

3.5 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Distribution of information to people moving to iZone/rural areas	✓	✓		

**Rural Operations will produce and distribute a new brochure aimed at promoting awareness for new home/land owners in rural and iZone areas.**

Rural Operations is currently working on a new brochure that will be distributed to new home/land owners in Rural and iZone areas, to provide them with need to know information about living in a RFS area, and information on how to protect their homes. This brochure would also include information on how to become a member of their local Rural Fire Brigade. This will be distributed through councils, Community Educators (both SES and RFS) and local businesses.

**Benefit:** This will provide direct communication with residents as soon as they move to an identified community and hopefully attract new volunteers.

3.6 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
RFS Bulletin circulation	✓			

**Rural Operations will expand the circulation of the Bulletin magazine to ensure that all volunteers are receiving important organisational information. Sponsors will be sourced to assist with the development and distribution of the Bulletin magazine.**

The *Bulletin* magazine is a major communication tool within the RFS. Rural Operations plans to maintain and expand the circulation to effectively assist volunteers with receiving important organisational information. The *Bulletin* magazine is distributed to Secretaries, First Officers, Fire Wardens and Firefighters. It is planned to extend distribution to include Community Educators.

Rural Operations is working with The Media and Corporate Communications Unit to ascertain if a sponsor can be sourced for this publication or an option to include the *Bulletin* with the *Emergency* magazine.

**Benefit:** The distribution of the *Bulletin* magazine to certain positions within brigades provides communication to senior positions, encouraging volunteers to develop the skills to move into these roles.

## Leadership and Governance

4.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Reward and recognition programs for DCS volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will continue to provide and enhance reward and recognition programs for volunteers.**

EMQ has developed an awards system to recognise and reward individuals for outstanding achievement, dedication and loyalty in the continued high performance of duty, long service and other acts worthy of recognition.

Currently the only mechanism Rural Operations has for rewarding and recognising volunteers are the standard National and State Awards available to all QFRS personnel. Rural Operations is in the process of developing a new rewards and recognition program to compliment the awards available through the national process.

QAS believes that effective recognition of the role played by volunteers in supporting operational ambulance services is essential to volunteer retention. QAS will investigate non-traditional ways of recognising the valuable contribution of its volunteers.

There is currently no standard awards system for recognising and rewarding QCS volunteers for their achievements and dedication in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. QCS will look at establishing a systematic approach, such as an awards program, to reward and recognise volunteers.

**Benefit:** A range of publications including The Attraction, Support and Retention of Emergency Management Volunteers – prepared by Judy Esmond, Ph.D, and the Value of Volunteering Discussion Paper – prepared by the Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth, recognise the importance of awards and recognition in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. This initiative will ensure all volunteers receive appropriate recognition for their commitment to the services, whether they are operational or support members.

4.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Enhanced quarterly performance reporting	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will enhance quarterly performance reporting internal for all volunteers.**

All divisions will monitor volunteer recruitment statistics as part of the quarterly performance report on a monthly basis. Strategic Policy Division will be analysing volunteer trends associated with all initiatives in the DCS Volunteer Management Strategy.

EMQ will review the administrative processes for quarterly reporting to ensure that volunteer executives are being supported with effective systems and procedures to provide the appropriate level of reporting.

To ensure accurate data, all Rural Operations Areas will also attend all brigade Annual General Meetings.

**Benefit:** Enhanced reporting will assist in taking a proactive approach by analysing the data and working to reverse negative trends as soon as they are identified across the Department.

4.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Enhanced workplace health and safety for DCS volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will continue to promote effective workplace health and safety within each division.**

EMQ has recently appointed a workplace health and safety (WH&S) manager and will be creating WH&S committees; developing a divisional WH&S plan; and will promote, develop and implement appropriate systems.



Rural Operations has undertaken a major campaign to promote WH&S and ZEROharm to both Rural Operations staff and RFS volunteers.

QAS has initiated comprehensive training programs for both Community First Responders and Honorary Ambulance Officers, incorporating a WH&S induction. Volunteers are now able to log incidents or hazards on a Whole of Department database. LAC volunteers will continue to champion QAS safety objectives and strategies for volunteers in their local communities.

EMQ, Rural Operations and QAS will continue to actively promote the ZEROharm strategy and develop and implement appropriate WH&S systems.

**Benefit:** Providing volunteers with a safe working environment.

4.4 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Assist RFS Brigades with incident reporting	✓			

**Rural Operations will investigate options for simplifying incident reporting for RFS brigades.**

Rural Operations is researching possible systems to simplify incident reporting for brigades. Systems that are being considered include a 1800 free call number or an electronic reporting process.

**Benefit:** The introduction of an electronic reporting system would minimise the administrative burden on brigades and provide Rural Operations with up-to-date, accurate information to assist with strategic planning, service delivery planning and resource allocation, and allow DCS to provide comparisons with other state agencies.

4.5 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Recognition for employers who support DCS volunteering	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will research employer recognition programs that acknowledge both the contribution of employers and the benefits of having DCS volunteers as staff.**

Consideration is being given to scoping and implementing a program that recognises the contribution employers make to DCS volunteers. This program would promote to employers the benefits of having staff who are DCS volunteers (i.e. training and skills).

**Benefit:** This would encourage employers to be supportive of employees who are members, or wish to become members. It would provide an opportunity to promote DCS volunteer roles through identified workplaces and recognise those workplaces who support volunteers.

4.6 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
QFRS Rural Operations volunteer conference	✓			

**Rural Operations will conduct a QFRS Rural Operations volunteer conference every two years.**

Rural Operations will seek to conduct the QFRS Rural Operations volunteer conference every two years. In 2008, Rural Operations held the inaugural QFRS Rural Operations volunteer conference, which provided over 170 volunteers from around the state with the opportunity to attend two days of information sessions on a range of topics including equipment, research, training and communication.

**Benefit:** Feedback from volunteers who attended the 2008 conference was extremely positive, with volunteers expressing a better understanding and commitment of the organisation's direction. Future conferences will ensure that volunteers are able to access new information that can be shared in Brigades and other areas of volunteering to improve QFRS volunteer knowledge and skills.

4.7 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
SES Local Controllers' conference		✓		

**EMQ will investigate conducting a Local Controllers' conference every two years.**

EMQ will investigate the possibility of conducting a Local Controllers' conference every two years for over 100 volunteers from around the state, providing the opportunity for volunteers to attend two days of information sessions on a range of topics including leadership, equipment, research, training and communication.

**Benefit:** The Local Controllers conference will provide Local Controllers with the opportunity to participate in sessions to assist them in leading SES Units.

4.8 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
QAS LAC Conferences			✓	

**The QAS will continue to support LAC regional and state conferences.**

Regional LAC conferences are convened by each region to facilitate discussion on issues impacting on QAS regional operations and LAC volunteers. State LAC conferences are held every two years to enable LAC members to discuss issues impacting on QAS and the community.

**Benefit:** LAC volunteers and QAS staff maintain close contact on issues of mutual concern to ensure effective QAS operations.

4.9 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Enhanced leadership	✓	✓		

**EMQ and Rural Operations will enhance the leadership systems for the SES and RFS.**

EMQ will enhance leadership within the SES through:

- Developing leadership training for SES executive members.
- Investigating options for leadership support programs.
- Providing clear accountability and responsibility for executives.

Rural Operations will enhance leadership within the RFS through:

- Developing leadership training for RFS Officers.
- Investigating options for leadership support programs.
- Providing clear accountability and responsibility for executives.

**Benefit:** SES executives and RFS officers will have the leadership skills and systems to ensure efficient operational response, volunteer recruitment support and retention and provide for the effective administration of SES/RFS Groups.

4.10 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
SES operations doctrine/RFS Brigade manual	✓	✓		

**EMQ will continue to develop and deliver a clear SES governance framework through doctrine. Doctrine will support volunteers with a consistent and clear understanding of how the operation of the SES is conducted and reduce member and organisational risk while enhancing community safety. Rural Operations will continue to develop and deliver clear governance through the RFS Brigade manual.**

EMQ has identified the requirement of over 230 published doctrines, of which 61 have been finalised, distributed and published on the SES Volunteer Portal and the DCS Portal.

Extensive consultation with SES executives and local government accompanied with the promotion of the policy documents resulted in quick, effective 'buy-in' and built confidence in EMQ's management of the Queensland SES.

Rural Operations currently distributes and displays on the RFS Volunteer Portal the Rural Fire Brigade manual, which provides direction and governance to RFS volunteers. In 2009/2010 this document will be updated and expanded to ensure effective assistance to RFS volunteers.

**Benefit:** Clearly defined doctrine and manuals provide sound guidelines for volunteers to effectively and efficiently perform their functions. This in turn promotes a professional management structure and culture that enhances recruitment prospects and improves volunteer retention.

4.11 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Working with local government	✓	✓		

**EMQ and RFS will continue to build on the partnership with local government to provide an environment that enhances the preparedness and response capacity of SES Groups and RFS Brigades.**

EMQ and RFS will continue to build on the successful partnership with local government through commitment to the Disaster Management Alliance and continuing to build cooperative relationships at all levels.

EMQ and RFS will remain committed to consulting and liaising with local government and local communities.

**Benefit:** Queensland's SES volunteer workforce and RFS will continue to be supported by local governments to be ready to respond to emergencies and disasters.

4.12 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Emergency Service Units – evaluation and enhancement	✓	✓	✓	

**The Strategic Policy Division will lead the evaluation of the Emergency Service Unit (ESU) pilot program making recommendations to improve service delivery in rural and remote areas.**

The ESU evaluation will assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the ESU pilot program in performing the required functions of SES, firefighting, fire prevention and Community First Responder functions in rural and remote areas.

**Benefit:** Enhanced and streamlined emergency service delivery to rural and remote communities.

## Financial Support

5.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Identify, maintain and secure sponsorship for DCS volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will identify, maintain and secure sponsorship to continue to support our volunteers.**

DCS will continue to work with Media and Corporate Communications Unit to identify and secure further sponsors to support the activities of volunteers.

NRMA is currently the major sponsor of SES in a 12 month contract ending June 2010.

Due to the geographic and demographic diversity of the RFS, DCS may look at identifying two sponsors, one for western areas (such as Reliance Petroleum) and one for South East area (such as Energex).

DCS will further investigate options for sponsorship through community and business organisations for the promotion and distribution of emergency service recruitment brochures and information.

**Benefit:** Sponsors will provide volunteer organisations with access to a range of benefits including funding, raised profile, status and external resources.

5.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Mitigate personal costs to volunteers	✓	✓		

**EMQ and Rural Operations are investigating strategies to mitigate the personal costs incurred to volunteers undertaking specific activities.**

Rural Operations is investigating strategies to mitigate the out of pocket expenses to volunteers undertaking specific activities such as training. Rural Operations would work closely with EMQ and the Strategic Policy Division to identify an appropriate policy and to establish an affordable program. If so, this program may be applied to SES volunteers.

**Benefit:** Reducing the out of pocket expense for volunteers will assist with recruitment and retention for both the SES and RFS.

5.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Grants and subsidies for DCS volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will continue to improve funding volunteers through taking advantage of available grants and subsidies programs.**

EMQ will conduct a review of the current SES non-recurrent subsidy program to ensure the most strategic and operationally effective allocation of subsidies to SES Groups.

The Federal Government's Attorney-General's Department provide access to the National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund (NEVSF) to agencies that have a defined role in state or territory Response or Recovery Plans. The NEVSF provides funding for projects that boost the recruitment, retention, skills and training of volunteer organisations. Grants of up to \$50 000 are available. Rural Operations will submit an application for funding to support the recruitment of volunteers to the volunteer community educator role.

QAS will review grants programs available to LACs and operational volunteers and QCS will source grants and subsidies to increase access to funding.

**Benefit:** Grants and subsidies will assist volunteer groups through providing extra funding to purchase required resources to assist with their volunteer roles and response capacity.

# Training and Development

6.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Career development and progression for SES and RFS volunteers	✓	✓		

## EMQ and Rural Operations will promote the career progression of volunteers.

EMQ and Rural Operations will promote the career progression available through the volunteer ranks (e.g. for RFS – from Trainee Firefighter through to First Officer and for SES – Community Member through to Local Controller) as well as promoting the opportunity to progress from a volunteer to a paid employee.

EMQ has developed a page on the SES Volunteer Portal announcing all advertised positions within EMQ.

Currently over 94% of RFS Brigade Training Support Officers (BTSO's) come from within the volunteer ranks.

**Benefit:** This initiative offers a range of benefits which includes targeting the under 35 years of age category for volunteer recruitment, as research shows this age demographic are interested in the self-benefit aspect of volunteering. This initiative will also assist both volunteer organisations in targeting volunteers who are driven and interested in eventually moving into the permanent ranks of EMQ and Rural Operations.

6.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Delivery of training to SES volunteers		✓		

## A. EMQ will continue to provide quality training for SES volunteers in accordance with functional requirements.

EMQ has reviewed the SES quality volunteer training framework, to ensure that volunteer training based on the functional roles within SES, is streamlined and optimises the use of volunteer time through innovative modular training programs and utilised Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) where appropriate.

The 2006 Election Commitment 4246, Safeguarding Cyclone Communities, enabled EMQ to appoint six additional positions to enhance the development of training and training compliance. Volunteer safety will remain the primary focus of all functional training programs.

**Benefit:** Flexible delivery ensures that training of SES volunteers occurs using the most suitable and effective methods.

## B. EMQ will continue to deliver training to volunteers in the most effective and efficient manner.

The 2006 Election Commitment 4246, Safeguarding Cyclone Communities, enabled EMQ to appoint thirteen additional Regional positions to enhance the delivery and coordination SES volunteers training. This has enabled EMQ to recruit SES volunteers to deliver training on a casual basis which supports delivery of training at local levels.

EMQ's School of Emergency Management is implementing changes to its delivery mechanisms which include:

- Implementation of new learning and assessment material that reflects current VET industry best practice.
- Implementation of client focussed approach to RPL process as opposed to portfolio-based RPL.
- Implementation of holistic and scenario based assessments.
- Implementation of a trainer and assessment development pathway.
- Recognition of accreditation from other organisations.
- Development of streamlined and user-friendly Registered Training Organisation forms.

**Benefit:** Flexible delivery ensures that training of SES volunteers occurs in the most suitable and effective method.

6.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Increase number of volunteer RFS trainers across the state	✓			

**Rural Operations will promote the role of volunteer trainer to RFS volunteers to increase the number of trainers and retain existing volunteers.**

Rural Operations has a volunteer trainers network across the State which assists Rural Operations staff to undertake volunteer training. Rural Operations plan to promote the role of a volunteer trainer to existing volunteers and provide volunteer trainers with access to uniforms and mitigate out of pocket expenses for training performed outside their brigade area.

**Benefit:** This strategy assists in retaining volunteers by offering them an incentive to take on the role of volunteer trainer.

6.4 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
RFS Volunteer Learning and Development Framework (VLDF)	✓			

**Rural Operations will continue to enhance its VLDF for RFS volunteers.**

The VLDF is a new training structure, linking training to volunteer roles. It has been designed by Rural Operations to make training more user friendly for RFS volunteers and reduce the time required for training.

**Benefit:** The VLDF is role specific and ensures volunteers are only required to undertake the training specific to their role, although the option is available to undertake further training if desired. Under the VLDF no volunteer will be required to re-do training they have already completed.

6.5 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
E-Learning for DCS volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

**DCS will continue to review and develop E-Learning options for volunteers.**

SES and RFS E-Learning will provide volunteers with a range of new training options including podcasts, DVD's and online courses, all which supplement face-to-face training.

On-line learning activities are currently available to operational QAS personnel. QAS will investigate options to provide volunteers with opportunities to enhance relevant skills through existing programs.

QCS will explore E-Learning options for volunteers in a variety of roles. QCS will distribute training manuals and DVD's for community service project on-site supervisors to ensure they are able to effectively supervise offenders completing community service.

**Benefit:** This will allow volunteers to access training that best suits their lifestyle and learning style, and will be particularly beneficial for those volunteers that have found it difficult to dedicate large amounts of time to face-to-face training (or to participate in training where face-to-face training is unavailable).



6.6 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Trial of Certificate II school program with selected State High Schools	✓			

**Rural Operations will trial the Certificate II school program at Kilcoy State High School and if successful, investigate rolling out the program across Queensland.**

Year 12 students are offered the opportunity to undertake a Certificate II as part of their senior studies. In 2009 Rural Operations will trial school participation with Firefighter Minimum Skills as one of the programs on offer. The initial concept was to trial the program in Kilcoy however, other opportunities are being researched that may allow a wider roll out across the state.

**Benefit:** To undertake the program, the year 12 students would be required to join the closest Rural Fire Brigade as a Registered Junior. This program will attract a range of new volunteers within one of the age brackets identified as part of Q2. This will allow Registered Juniors to be trained to a minimum standard prior to becoming a full member at the age of 18.

6.7 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Primary Producer Brigade strategy	✓			

As part of the new Brigade classification strategy, Rural Operations has implemented a Primary Producer Brigades classification. This is a discreet classification supporting 652 brigades and based on sound consultation with brigade members and the Rural Fire Brigade Association of Queensland.

**Benefit:** The new brigade classification provides dedicated programs for Primary Producer Brigades by clearly identifying their specific needs which minimises unnecessary training and administrative burden.

6.8 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Expanding peer support program for RFS volunteers	✓			

**Rural Operations will expand the existing peer support program for RFS volunteers.**

In 2007 Rural Operations undertook a trial peer support recruitment program with Fire Care and as a result, now have six volunteer peer support officers and three staff peer support officers. Rural Operations plans to expand the peer support program with the target of 50 peer support officers for the RFS.

**Benefit:** Improving the support provided to RFS volunteers after attending an incident and improving the support to volunteers' families through the Fire Care system.

6.9 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Emergency Services Volunteer Skills and Training Passport	✓	✓	✓	

The Department will contribute to the National Emergency Services Volunteer Skills and Training Passport by recognising training and accreditation across the Department's volunteer groups and with our national partners.

**Benefit:** Skills, experience and accreditations of our volunteers will be recognised across national emergency services groups.

## Equipment and Facilities

7.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
RFS, SES and QAS equipment	✓	✓	✓	

**RFS, EMQ and QAS will continue to provide appropriate equipment to enhance the effective operational capability of their volunteers.**

The EMQ SES equipment program is designed to ensure that volunteers are adequately resourced and able to respond to any emergency based on their functional requirements.

Dress and equipment are vital to the image of the SES as a professional volunteer organisation. Members take great pride in being part of an organisation that is perceived to be well organised and equipped.

This program will support:

- Replacement of major equipment including flood boats, rescue trailers, road crash rescue and vertical rescue equipment.
- Ongoing provision of general rescue equipment including tarpaulins, sandbags, generators and chain saws.
- Ongoing provision of personal protective clothing and equipment including Kevlar helmets, overalls, webbing belts, t-shirts, wet weather jackets and pants, general purpose boots and roof/flood boat shoes.
- The enhancement of regional equipment stores for the stockpiling of tarpaulins, sandbags and other general equipment.

QAS provides Community First Responders with appropriate equipment and clothing according to need and operational rosters as determined by regional area Directors.

RFS has an agreement in place to support the purchase of equipment for brigades.

**Benefit:** To ensure volunteers are provided with the equipment and clothing necessary to perform their vital emergency response safely and effectively.

7.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
RFS and SES facilities	✓	✓		

**EMQ and Rural Operations will research, investigate and analyse the most effective models for facilities to support the functions of their volunteers.**

EMQ has commenced a WH&S audit of SES facilities across the state. The audit results will determine priorities for maintenance and replacement of the facilities. In addition, EMQ is conducting research with other states to determine standard requirements for SES facilities based on the function of SES groups.

In order to recruit and retain SES volunteers, the facilities that they use must be suitable to meet their functional needs.

**Benefit:** SES and RFS volunteer workforce will have suitable facilities to enable them to respond to emergencies and disasters.

7.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Partner with community organisations to enhance response capability in a disaster	✓	✓	✓	

**Operational divisions will engage with service clubs, community and not for profit organisations to develop and maintain partnerships which will enhance response capability and strengthen a coordinated approach to a disaster situation.**

The Department will further investigate opportunities where operational divisions can develop and maintain partnerships with service clubs, community and not for profit organisations for the benefit of utilising their facilities and equipment during a disaster. These facilities may be used as an evacuation and/or coordination centre, emergency shelter/relief centres or centres to support volunteers during response activities.

These partnerships will assist the operational divisions in the identification of suitable equipment and facilities available in local communities. Engaging with community organisations will also encourage communities to develop and implement disaster mitigation and management plans in consultation with key stakeholders such as local government. This will reinforce the significance of communities working together, towards a coordinated approach to plan, prepare for, respond to and recover from disaster situations.

**Benefit:** Engaging with community organisations will provide facilities and equipment for operational divisions to establish emergency centres promptly and promote a coordinated approach to enhance the response capability in an emergency situation.

7.4 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Allocate uniforms to RFS first officers and community educators	✓			

**Rural Operations will allocate QFRS uniforms to key RFS positions.**

Rural Operations is intending to provide station uniforms to all first officers and community education officers. Research undertaken by the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre identified the importance of ensuring volunteers feel part of the larger organisation. By providing first officers and community education officers with uniforms, volunteers are ensured they are a valued part of QFRS. Currently, Rural volunteers can purchase QFRS station wear at their own or brigade's expense.

**Benefit:** The provision of uniforms free of charge to high ranked volunteers offers an incentive for volunteers to train so they can advance through the RFS ranks into these positions. As funding becomes available this could be rolled out to other ranks of volunteers.

7.5 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Kit bags provided to Firefighter members and SES volunteers	✓	✓		

**Rural Operations will provide RFS specific kit bags to volunteers who complete the Firefighter Minimum skills training. EMQ will investigate options to provide a kit bag to SES volunteers who deploy to other areas of operation.**

Rural Operations will provide a kit bag to all volunteers who complete Firefighter Minimum skills training. The provision of kit bags is an issue that has been raised by volunteers over a number of years in relation to storing and protecting their personal protective clothing and ensuring uniformity on interstate or intrastate deployment. Rural Operations is in the final stage of sourcing RFS specific kit bags.

EMQ will provide a kit bag to all SES volunteers who deploy both inter and intrastate. EMQ will seek to identify a suitable bag in late 2009.

**Benefit:** This initiative would be an incentive for volunteers to complete their Firefighter Minimum Skills as they would receive a tangible benefit, with the kit bag being presented at the end of the course. It would also encourage volunteers to apply for the deployment register. The benefit for SES volunteers will be utilising the kit bag for the storage and transportation of their personal protective equipment during deployments while also enduring uniformity amongst SES volunteers.

## Supporting Systems

8.1 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Volunteer Information Management System (VIMS) for DCS	✓	✓	✓	

**The 2006 Election Commitment 4246, Safeguarding Cyclone Communities, provided funding to develop and implement a VIMS for the Department. This is currently being developed and will be rolled out within the divisions.**

The Department will provide a VIMS in the form of a database for managing all volunteer information across the organisation. It is the aim that this system will be maintained within operational and departmental systems and be consistent with business and legislative requirements.

**Benefit:** The VIMS will provide accurate reporting, improve information collection, retrieval and analysis as well as the function of flexible reporting capabilities.

8.2 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
Request for Assistance (RFA) Online		✓		

**EMQ will implement RFA Online within the SES.**

EMQ will implement within the SES RFA Online which is a tasking management system for SES teams. RFA Online manages and reports on job allocation, fatigue, travel, job type and resources used.

**Benefit:** Introduction of the software into all regions would significantly enhance Queensland in disaster management response and reporting capability.

8.3 Initiative	RFS	SES	QAS	QCS
SES TARDIS Project		✓		

**EMQ will introduce a time and attendance monitoring system (TARDIS) for SES volunteers.**

EMQ will be introducing a system which will allow SES members, using current issue membership cards, to use electronic swipe cards to record the time they are donating to SES for both training and operational activities. This will reduce the amount of paperwork required by SES Executives and enhance the quality and timeliness of data in relation to the SES commitment to administration, training and operations.

**Benefit:** The system will provide enhanced reporting including the hours undertaken by SES volunteers, events attended and assist with managing fatigue.



