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# Volunteer Strategy

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Berrigan Shire  
Council

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2012 - 2016

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# 1 Background

The development of this *Volunteer Strategy* reviewing Section 355 Committee member volunteers, community volunteers engaged by Committees of Management and Home and Community Care volunteers recognises that:

- a. The nature of volunteering is changing
- b. The community benefits significantly from its active volunteer complement
- c. Volunteer management of recreational and community facilities and delivery of associated services is needed to reduce the associated costs to Council, sports clubs and the broader community
- d. 'Volunteers are ageing and not being replaced' (Berrigan Shire Council Corporate Plan 2010/12).
- e. Council needs to review the operation of its model of volunteer management in particular in relation to Committees of Management operating pools, recreation reserves and associated facilities with the assistance of, and volunteers recruited from user groups.

Council values the contribution of volunteers and in accordance with its *Volunteering Policy* (2003) volunteering is an activity that provides an opportunity for individuals and groups:

- to be involved in activities of benefit to the community and the volunteer; and is
- Undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- For no financial payment;
- In a position not designated as paid; and
- Underpinned by the Volunteer Australia 'Principles of Volunteering'

Council's support of volunteering is particularly evident in that Volunteer Committees of Management control and

manage Council assets with a replacement value of \$23.844 million.

## 1.1 Strategy Objectives

This strategy aims to:

1. Safely maintain existing service levels provided by volunteer management of Council recreation assets
2. Optimise utilisation of Council assets and facilities
3. Maintain existing service levels measured in volunteer hours delivered by Council auspice of Home and Community Care services
4. Develop an action plan that will increase the number of younger volunteers with governance skills
5. Identify (recruitment, training, compliance and retention) resources needed by Volunteer Management Committees
6. Recognise that volunteer participation and recognition of volunteer effort is intrinsically valuable because it fosters community ownership and welling.

## 2 Review Methodology

This strategy and its development have been informed by:

- An literature review of the sustainability of volunteering in regional and rural Australia
- Desk top review of current Council services and facilities managed by Volunteer Committees of Management and or community volunteers.
- Survey of Council endorsed Section 355 Committees of Management and their members
- Focus group and survey involving Council staff responsible for supporting and or

coordinating Section 355 Committees and or the recruitment and support of HACC and Library Services program and activities volunteers.

### 3 Literature Review

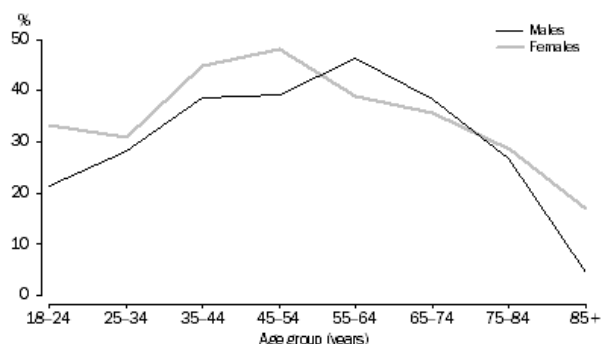
Nationally volunteering is recognised as fundamental to the sustainability of rural communities<sup>i</sup> and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Voluntary Work Survey 2006*<sup>ii</sup> volunteers on average spent 136 hours per annum volunteering. Moreover, the estimated value of volunteering to the economy in 2006 was \$70 billion per annum.

In 2006 33% of New South Wales residents volunteered, lower than the national average of 34%. 'In 2010, 6.1 million people (36% of the Australian population aged 18 years and over) participated in voluntary work, with women (38%) more likely to volunteer than men (34%)<sup>iii</sup>. This is an increase of 2% however the margin for error in counting of national volunteer data is high suggesting that any increase should be treated with caution.

Volunteer rates across the states and territories are similar to the national average, and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics volunteering is more common among those living outside of a capital city with the 2010, outside capital cities volunteer rate being 41% compared with 34% for capital cities.

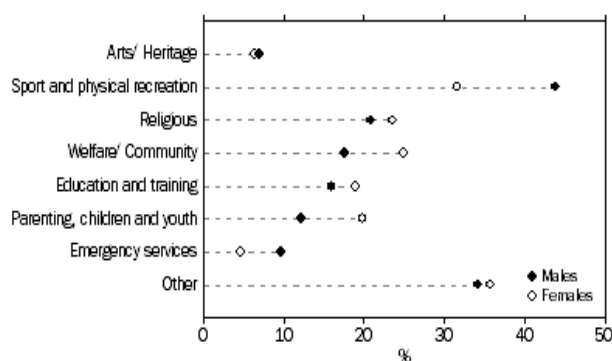
Volunteer rates varied across different age groups in the population, and particularly varied with life stage. People in the middle age groups (35-44 years to 65-74 years) were more likely to volunteer than those in younger and older age groups. This broad pattern existed for both males and females<sup>iv</sup>

Figure 1: Volunteer rate, Sex by age - 2010



As our communities age and the percentage of young people (aged 15 years to 34 years) living in our communities continues to decline<sup>v</sup> age related and type of volunteer activity undertaken will begin to have a significant impact on the sustainability of volunteer management of Council and community owned recreational facilities and assets.

Figure 2: Types of organisations volunteered for by sex - 2010



(a) Volunteers may have volunteered for more than one type of organisation.

The age groups with the highest proportions of volunteering engaged in recreation and sporting organisations were 35-44 years and 45-54 years (47% and 46% of volunteers respectively). People aged 65 years and over most commonly volunteered for welfare and community organisations (37%)<sup>vi</sup>.

Suggesting that, social support services coordinated by Council and delivered by

volunteers are less likely to experience difficulty with recruitment. Though, no less likely to experience difficulty with training, issues related to compliance, and the retention of volunteers.

In addition to the issues normally associated with maintenance of volunteer services (age of volunteers, recruitment, retention, compliance and training) the Commonwealth Government's *National Volunteering Strategy* 2011 and the New South Wales Government's *Volunteering Strategy* 2012 note that emerging trends include:

- A generational shift in volunteering styles and preferences. For example older volunteers who had an ongoing commitment to a particular organisation are being replaced by younger volunteers who are more interested in episodic volunteering
- Online (virtual) volunteering;
- Time banking;
- Corporate volunteering;
- International volunteering and or 'voluntourism' – volunteers with a special interest in visiting an area and who also want to contribute toward humanitarian and or environmental projects in a isolated or disadvantaged communities<sup>vii</sup>

This *Strategy* is Council's framework for meeting the challenges posed by the need to foster contemporary volunteer opportunities responsive to emerging trends. While meeting the social and budgetary challenges inherent in the maintenance of volunteer management of Council owned recreational facilities and assets.

## **4 Council: Volunteer Management and Support**

### **4.1 Section 355 Committees**

Our communities enjoy through (Section 355 Committees of Management) the benefits of community management and control of significant Council and community assets. However, as our communities' age and trends in how services are delivered and how we volunteer change, we need a volunteer strategy that facilitates sustainable volunteer management of significant Council assets - pools, recreation reserves and public halls.

Under the *Local Government Act* 1993 (Section 355) Council has delegated some of its functions to committees of Council that include community members who are appointed to manage Council facilities or activities in accordance with Council delegations.

These committees are a volunteer opportunity for people with an active interest in the provision and or the day-to-day operation of Council facilities or services. Our communities and Council benefit from this arrangement in that:

- The Committee and its volunteers are covered by Council's insurance, volunteer policies and its Section 355 Guide to Operations Manual; and
- Council benefits from community involvement and assistance in the carrying out of its functions.

Table 1 lists current Section 355 Committees, the functions undertaken by the Committee. The number of committees, the diversity of the services and facilities managed reflects diversity of interests and facilities managed by volunteers.

**Table 1: Council Section 355 Committees**

Committee of Management	Committee Function
<b>Mary Lawson Wayside Rest Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves Management Committee
<b>Barooga Recreation Reserve Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves Management Committee
<b>Finley Recreation Reserve Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves Management Committee
<b>Finley Community Help Group Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Tocumwal Railway Preservation Committee</b>	Community Service
<b>Barooga Community Botanical Gardens Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves Management Committee
<b>Barooga Advancement Group Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Boomanoomana Landcare and Drainage Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Tocumwal Foreshore Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves Management Committee
<b>Finley Showgrounds and Sporting Complex Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves Management Committee
<b>Australia Day Committee</b>	Community Service
<b>Berriquin Community Toy Library Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Retreat Public Hall Committee of Management</b>	Public Halls Committee
<b>Berrigan War Memorial Swimming Pool Committee of Management</b>	Pool Management Committee
<b>Finley War Memorial Swimming Pool Committee of Management</b>	Pool Management Committee
<b>Finley War Memorial School of Arts</b>	Public Halls Committee
<b>Finley Tidy Towns Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Finley Pioneer Rail Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Tocumwal Swimming Pool Committee of Management</b>	Pool Management Committee
<b>Berrigan Sportsground Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves Management Committee
<b>Tocumwal Friends of the Library Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Berrigan Conservation and Tidy Towns Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Tocumwal Historic Aerodrome Committee of Management</b>	Community Service
<b>Finley Tidy Towns Committee</b>	Community Service
<b>Berrigan War Memorial Hall Committee of Management</b>	Public Halls Committee
<b>Tocumwal War Memorial Hall Committee</b>	Public Halls Committee
<b>Tocumwal Railway Station Committee of Management</b>	Recreation Facilities and Reserves

Committee of Management	Committee Function
	Management Committee
<b>Tocumwal Aerodrome Committee of Management</b>	Council Enterprise Committee of Management
<b>Finley Friends of the Library Committee</b>	Community Service

## 4.2 Home and Community Care (HACC)

Council also delivers, to frail aged and disabled residents, social support services through its Home and Community Care (HACC) program. The program is designed to assist aged and disabled people (and their carers) to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

Managed by a Co-ordinator with meals and transport services provided by volunteers, the Home Support Service is located at the Finley Hospital and services the towns of Finley, Berrigan, Tocumwal, Barooga and Jerilderie.

Meals on Wheels volunteers in each community participate in a roster and use their own cars – donating their time and incidental costs incurred from the use of their vehicles for meal pickups and delivery.

Community transport drivers, use either a HACC vehicle or their own car and are paid a kilometreage allowance to cover costs.

**Table 2: HACC and Meals on Wheels Volunteers**

<b>Meals on Wheels</b>	
<b>No. of Volunteers</b>	84
<b>No. of Meals per month</b>	280
<b>No. of Clients</b>	21
<b>Total Volunteer Hrs per month</b>	40
<b>Community Transport</b>	
<b>No. of Volunteers</b>	19
<b>Total Transport Hrs per month</b>	225
<b>Total HACC Volunteer Hrs</b>	
<b>HACC Volunteer Hrs per</b>	265

## 4.3 Volunteer rates Berrigan Shire

According to the 2011 Census, 29.5% of the Shire's residents over 15 years of age or 1,969 people – regularly volunteer compared to the New South Wales state percentage of 17% of residents aged 15 years and over.

The estimated economic value is \$5.5 million per annum.

This conservative figure is based on the number of people aged over 15 years in the Shire who volunteer, hours spent volunteering (national rate of 136 hours per annum) and the average hourly rate payable (Berrigan Shire Household Income \$20.50) if the volunteer had spent their time in paid work: the opportunity cost.

**Table 3: Section 355 Committee Volunteers**

<b>Section 355 Committee Volunteers</b>	
<b>No. of Committees</b>	29
<b>No of Volunteers</b>	287
<b>No of Volunteers on 2 or more Committees</b>	30

The benefits to the Shire and broader community of high rates of volunteerism are manifest and also evident in the extent of community involvement in Council Committees of Management, the delivery of Council HACC Services and the extensiveness of the voluntary service clubs, sporting clubs and recreation listed (over 120) in the Shire's Community Services Directory.



It is not intended that this review or strategy further quantify the extent of the social and economic return of our communities' investment in volunteerism. Rather the social and economic 'good' of volunteerism is assumed and the corroborating evidence for this assumption is national and state volunteering literature backed up by local knowledge and experience.

## 5 Survey and Focus Group Results

### 5.1 Volunteer Survey

Section 355 Committee volunteers and Home and Community Care (HACC) volunteers were invited to complete a survey designed to identify:

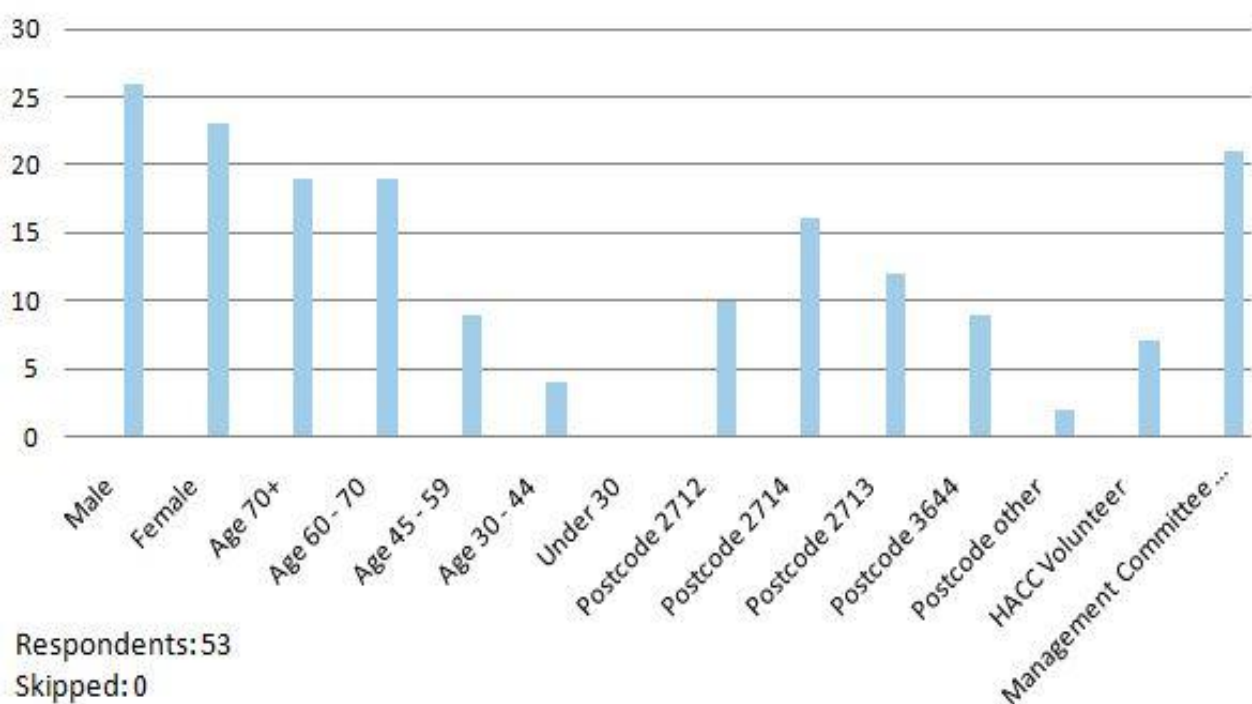
- Support needed by volunteers; and
- Volunteer motives

Survey respondents received a copy of the survey by mail and provided with the option of responding on-line, or completing the survey and returning it by mail and or in person to Council's office / their local Library.

Of the 287 volunteers who received an invitation to complete the survey 53 volunteers responded to the survey: a response rate of 18% of survey recipients.

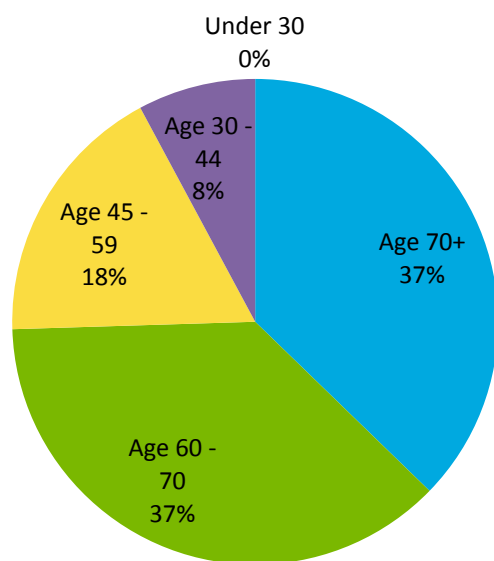
Forty nine (49) respondents identified their sex: 26 were male and 23 were female (Figure 4).

Figure 3 - Survey Respondents



There were no volunteers who responded to the survey under 30 years of age and no difference in the response rate of volunteers aged 70+ and those aged between 60-70 years of age with 19 respondents in both age groups: a total of 36 respondents or 73% of respondents aged 60+. Only 28 respondents or just over 50% of survey respondents identified as being either a Council Committee and or HACC volunteer.

Figure 4 Age Profile Survey Respondents

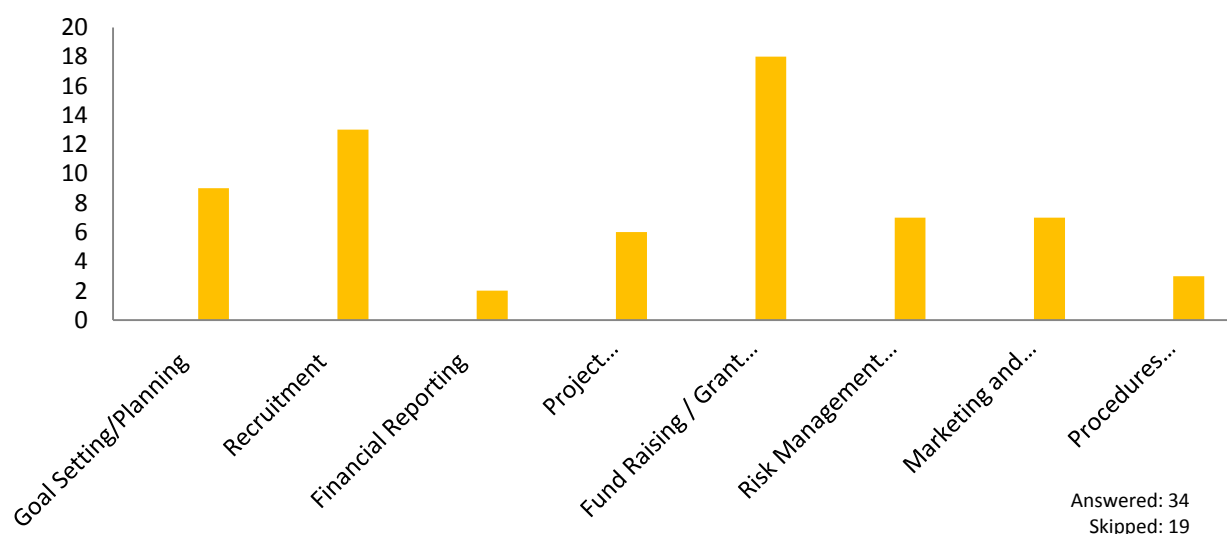


A key element of the distribution and design of this survey was that respondents self selected or chose to respond to Council's invitation. There was no follow up phone call nor were reminders sent. Advertising was limited to the initial invitation and respondents needed to mail or hand deliver their survey if they did not complete an online survey.

Self-selected sampling in this instance increases the likelihood that survey respondents are engaged not only in their volunteer role but also why they volunteer. A design element reinforced by survey respondents having the choice to opt in or out of responding to any and or all questions.

The positive bias of the survey and the decision to not survey the challenges volunteers experience in their role was mediated by two questions about 'the skills a committee needs but does not have' and 'how Council could improve its in-kind support' – the survey provided a number of unweighted responses to these questions.

Figure 5: Skills Needed

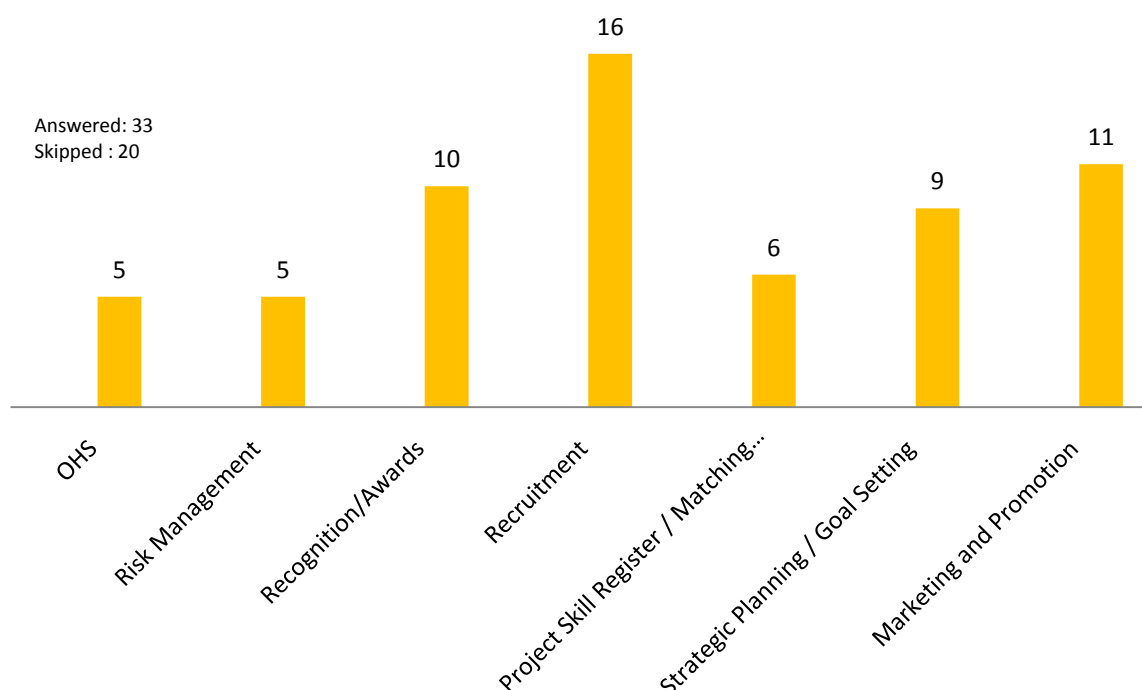


Fund raising / grant writing and skills related to recruitment of new volunteers were viewed by survey respondents as skills needed but which volunteer committees did not already have. Compliance related skills: risk management, financial reporting and project management skills were not viewed by survey respondents as skills needed by their Committees to the same degree as fund raising and recruitment.

This finding was corroborated by the results of the questions which asked how Council could improve its in-kind support.

Based on these results Council volunteers are concerned about recruitment. They would like support from Council that would assist with marketing and promoting their activities and which, also recognises the contribution of volunteers.

Figure 6: In-kind Support Needed from Council



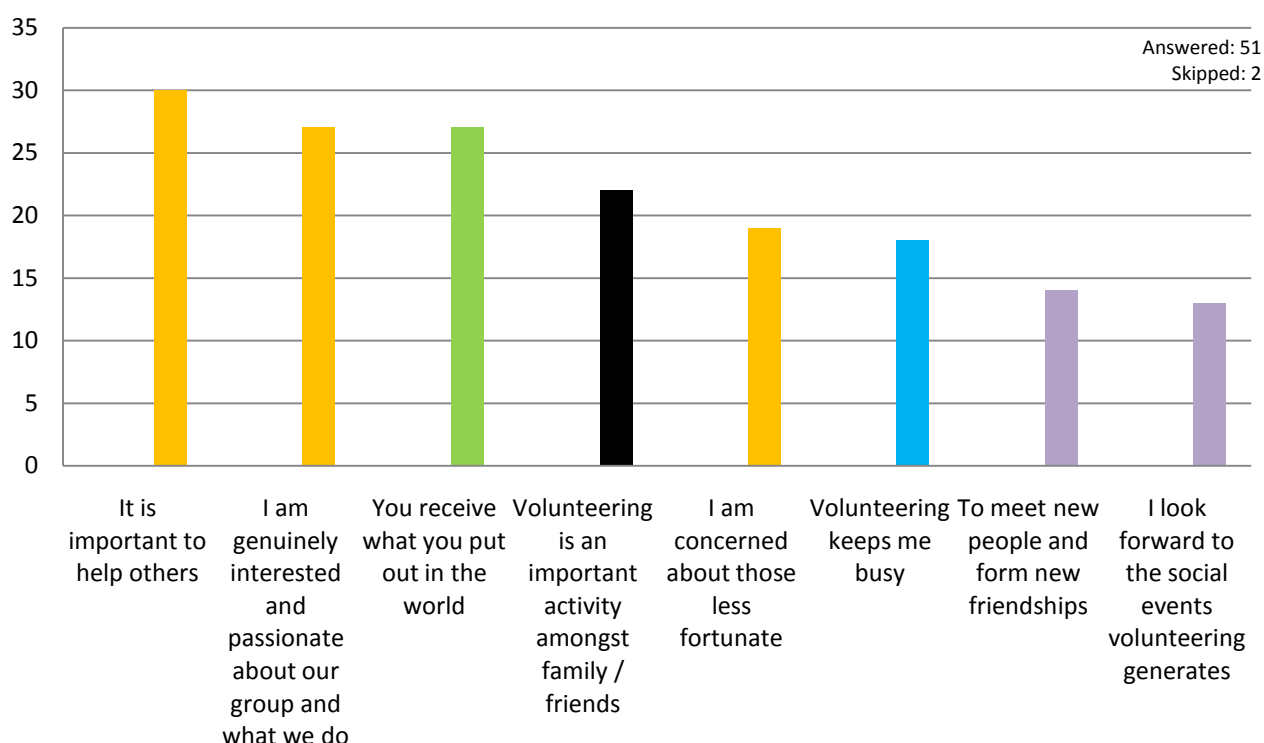
In response to the question 'why do you volunteer?' the optional responses were adapted from McEcwin, Jacobsen-D'Arcy's *Volunteer Motivation Inventory* (2002) which suggests that volunteers are motivated by:

- Values
- Reciprocity
- Recognition
- Self Esteem
- Social Interaction; and

- Social (Norms)

Information on volunteer motivations is used to attract volunteers by matching recruiting messages to the motivations of potential volunteers. It is also used by volunteer committees and organisations to match volunteers to roles that meet the needs of the volunteer.

Figure 7: Volunteer Motives



### Key to interpreting Volunteer Motives

**Values:** high support suggests that volunteers are motivated to help others for the 'sake of helping' low support suggests that the volunteer is less interested in volunteering as a means of helping others

**Social Interaction:** high support indicates that volunteers do so to meet new people and make friends. Low support for this as a reason suggests that the prospect of meeting new people is not motivating a volunteer

**Reciprocity:** high support for this response suggests that a volunteer is motivated by the prospect that volunteering work will lead to good things. Low support for this response suggests that the prospect of volunteer work leading to a good outcome is not as important

**Self esteem:** high support indicates that a volunteers is motivated by the prospect of feeling better about themselves through volunteering. Low support suggests that volunteers do not view volunteering as a way to improve self esteem

**Social (Norm):** high support indicates that the volunteer has family and friends that volunteer. Low support suggests that the volunteer has few friends or family that volunteer



Survey respondents are primarily motivated by their values, secondly by the notion of reciprocity and thirdly by volunteerism as a social norm. The exceptionally high response rate to this question (96% of respondents) increases the likelihood that volunteer activities and recruitment strategies that match the motives of potential volunteers are more likely to be successful than recruitment and volunteer activities that are not targeted to the motives of potential volunteers.

In the context of this *Volunteer Strategy* it is significant that 'self esteem', 'social' or 'norm'

and 'social interaction' motives are not ranked as highly by Council volunteers as the value based motives of 'helping for the sake of helping' and the motive of reciprocity i.e.: that volunteering will lead to good things' – that *you receive what you put out*.

Consequently, recruitment for Council activities is more likely to be successful if it targets potential volunteers who 'value' helping or an existing 'connection or interest in the activity'.

For example, a regular pool user is more likely to be successfully recruited to a Pool Management Committee than a long term resident that has family or friends who volunteer and who may be looking for something to keep them busy.

On the other hand a new resident who believes it is important to help others and who is looking to meet new people is likely to be a very successful new recruit.

Not because volunteering provides them (as a new resident) with social interaction but because they are motivated by a belief that 'it is important to help others'.

Taken further, a new volunteer with a lower level of interest in helping others (but with an interest in meeting new people) who volunteers in a group that is focused on 'helping others', 'helping for the sake of helping' and or who have members who are also strongly motivated by 'you receive what you put out' will very likely not have their need for social interaction (meeting new people) met.

The likely outcome of this scenario will be that the experience will not have been productive or positive for all concerned.

In an environment where volunteering is experiencing generational change (short term, episodic and virtual volunteerism) successful volunteer recruitment and retention strategies are those that match volunteer motives and interests to volunteering opportunities.

From a Council perspective Volunteer Committees of Management operate and liaise with the users of a number of Council facilities. The skills Committee Volunteers

need are many and varied and include those identified by survey respondents:

- Recruitment;
- Fundraising / grant writing; and
- Marketing and Promotion.

Equally important if not more important from a Council perspective are the skills volunteer respondents a) *believe they already have* or b) *do not believe they need*. Namely,

- Risk management;
- Goal setting / planning;
- Project management; and
- Financial management.

A number of respondents also chose to skip the questions related to skills and the types of in-kind support that Council could offer.

This suggests that 38% survey respondents do not equate or do not wish to equate volunteering with skill development or use.

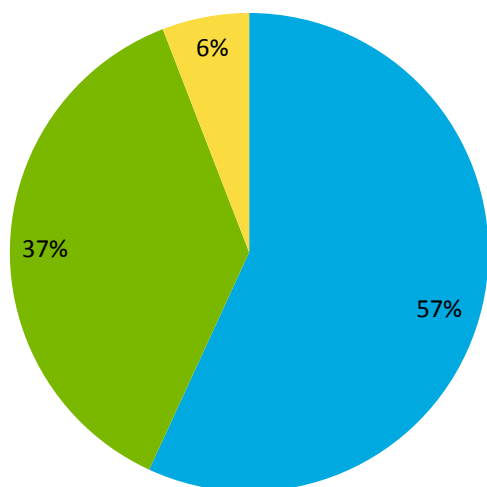
If this is the case there is a fundamental mismatch between Council expectations / compliance requirements and the expressed expectations of volunteers.

The survey also asked volunteers to report on the number of hours a week they volunteered in addition to whether or not they would increase their volunteer commitment.

Based on this survey 57% of Committee and HACC volunteers volunteer between 1-5 hours per week (Figure 9) and 24% of volunteers (Figure 10) would not increase their volunteer hours if there were more volunteers or resources.

Figure 8: Volunteer Hours per Week

■ 1 - 5 hours ■ 5 - 20 hours ■ 20+ hours



It is significant to note that whether or not to *do more* (56% of volunteers surveyed) is dependent on the project – not on there being more volunteers or resources.

On reflection this finding is consistent with the strength of the earlier finding that surveyed volunteers are motivated by their values – personal interest in the project.

Moreover, the age of volunteers does not appear to be a significant factor in whether or not volunteers can or will work longer hours.

For example, consistent with the view that retired persons may have more time to volunteer the majority of volunteers are aged 60 +. However, instead of the number of hours worked by volunteers reducing as they age it is apparent that is no appreciable age difference across the 60 – 70 yrs and 70+ yrs cohorts for volunteers who volunteer more than 5 hours per week.

Figure 9: Would do more

■ Yes ■ No ■ Depends on the project

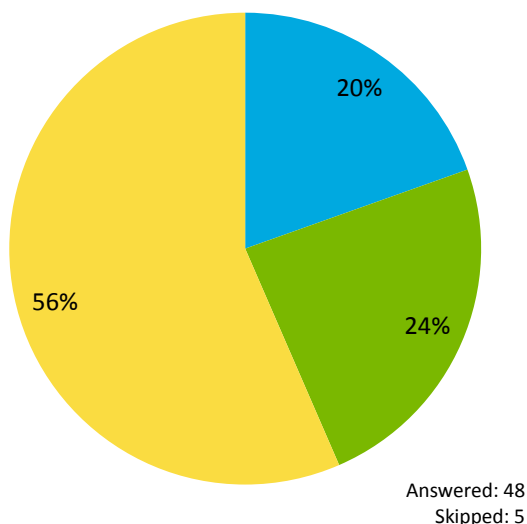
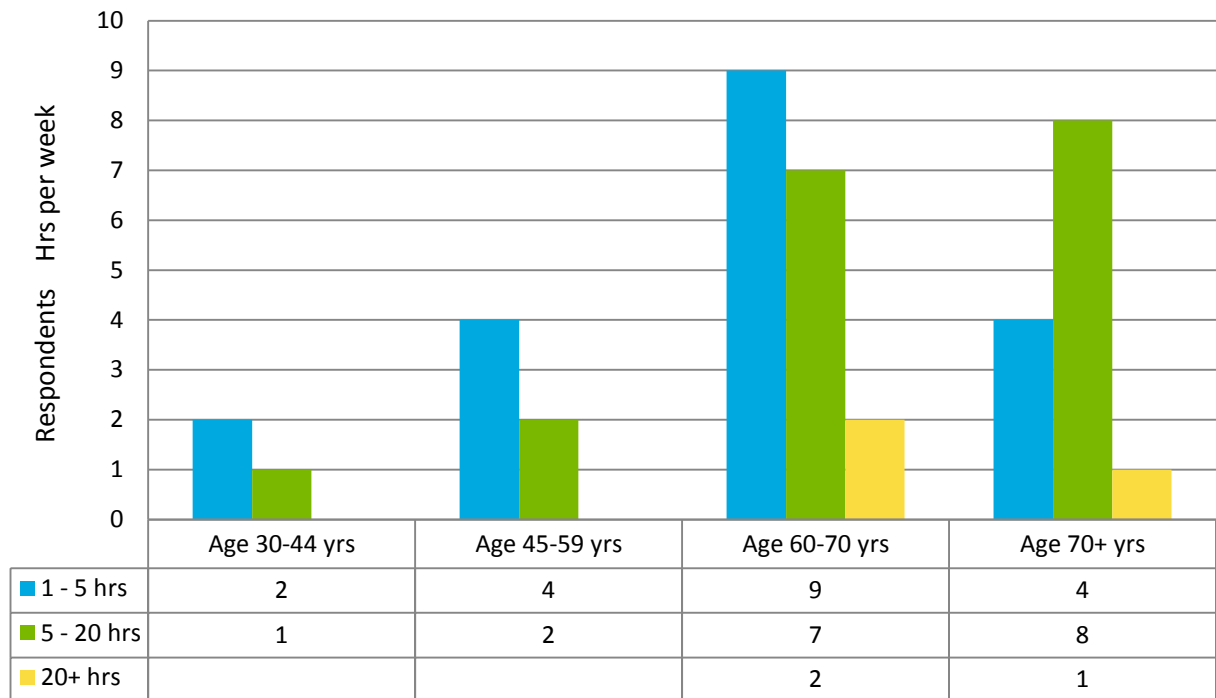


Figure 10: Age of Committee Volunteers x Volunteer Hours Per week



## 5.2 Staff Focus Group

The Community Service Coordinator (HACC) is the only staff member who, as part of their role is required to actively recruit, train and coordinate volunteers.

Administratively, the Director of Corporate Services has nominal responsibility for Council Committees and is the contact person for Committee members needing to notify Council of issues related to facility management, Committee membership, insurance, grant applications and financial reporting.

Council's Enterprise Risk Manager, works in a consultant capacity with volunteer Committees on issues related to risk management and occupational health. This role does not include conducting routine risk audits or being responsible for ensuring Committee compliance with Council's legislative obligations toward volunteers.

Council's Community Planning Officer also acts as a point of contact and resource for Council Committees and the broader community engaged in volunteering and needing support with strategic planning; research/data; community engagement; and grant writing.

Technical Services staff advise and assist volunteer Committees of Management with issues related to facility maintenance/ re-development, development applications and associated activities.

As part of a focus group, Council officers working with volunteer Committees of Management and or coordinating Council's HACC volunteers identified a range of issues related to their role and volunteers. These included:

- Age of volunteers
- Compliance issues
- Recruitment and retention
- Different expectations Council vis a vis volunteers

- Role of volunteers in the delivery of services

Internally, there was also agreement that issues related to volunteers engaged in Council activities were, if problematic, referred to the Director of Corporate Services.

### **5.2.1 Age of volunteers**

On the issue of the age of volunteers there was common agreement and recognition that there did not appear to be a new generation of volunteers for a number of Committees – particularly Hall Committees.

The age of volunteers was also seen to be a challenge and a risk for Council particularly for those Committees engaged in facility, pool or recreation reserve maintenance.

The age of the volunteers and the work undertaken by Friends of the Library volunteers, Land Care, and Toy Library volunteers has limited to no impact on day to day operations other than issues related to financial compliance.

HACC volunteers are ageing but there were no age specific issues reported either by HACC volunteer respondents or the Coordinator Community Services. It is more likely, consistent with research and volunteer literature, that the HACC volunteer role is contributing positively to the overall health and wellbeing of the volunteer as well as the individuals who access Meals on Wheels, Community Transport and social support provided by HACC.

### **5.2.2 Compliance and volunteers**

There is a significant tension between the nature of volunteerism – i.e.: most people who volunteer do not think about what they do as being ‘work’ or ‘employment’.

On the other hand, Council and its Committees of Management must regard

what volunteers do as ‘work’ albeit unpaid work or ‘employment’.

Compliance issues therefore, were the main issue of concern for Council staff. All agreed that ageing volunteers were not interested in skill development or extending their role to assume responsibility for compliance.

Moreover, it was felt that this was a major challenge. A challenge likely to increase as the ‘pool’ of Council activity related volunteers: age, becomes smaller, and trends toward episodic volunteering become more evident within Shire communities.

### **5.2.3 Recruitment and retention**

Based on focus group feedback and comments it is evident that Council staff are aware of the issues Committees experience with recruitment and retention of volunteers.

There is also a degree a concern about the reasonableness of compliance expectations and the impact this has on a Committee’s capacity to recruit or retain its volunteers.

From a HACC perspective much of this is managed by the Coordinator Community Services assisting volunteers with compliance and through targeted recruiting and matching skills and interests of volunteers with volunteer role.

There is also some capacity within the HACC service model to reimburse additional expenses incurred, particularly the volunteers who transport residents to medical appointments in Albury, Shepparton or Melbourne.

There is according to staff no capacity nor is it part of the current model a responsibility of Council officers to assist volunteer Committees with recruitment or retention of volunteers.



#### **5.2.4 Different Expectations**

That Council Officers and volunteers have different expectations is not surprising. What became particularly evident in focus group discussions is the impact of incremental change contributing toward an ever increasing 'gap' between Council staff expectations and those of volunteers. This change in expectations is being accelerated by the changing nature of volunteerism, statutory compliance on facility management and service provision by Section 355 Committees, and a shift to strategic planning and asset management by all levels of government – Integrated Planning and Reporting.

For example, Council has traditionally worked with communities, built and maintained community facilities and assets (recreation reserves, public halls, pools) on behalf of and in partnership with local communities. This work has been undertaken irrespective of the life cycle cost and maintenance issues that accrue and inter-generational demand.

And while, there are a range of different arrangements in place regarding legal ownership or management for the most part these are facilities that Council must include in its asset register and asset management plans. On the other hand, there is with this model also no expectation or obligation that Council fund or deliver services that use these facilities/assets.

Therefore, while the swimming pool may be a Council asset that needs consideration in its asset management planning the service of opening and operating the pool is not a Council service. The service that Council funds and provides is 'water testing', 'recruitment and employment of life guards' and this service is to the pool Committee which operates the pool on behalf of the broader community.

Similarly, just because Council provides a public meeting space via Council Halls or meeting rooms. The day to day operation and hiring out of Council owned public halls / facilities are not a Council activity.

The service delivery function associated with the **use of** Council recreation assets and facilities is provided by community groups that either lease the facility from Council or operate a service in accordance with their Section 355 Committee delegation.

The corollary of this expectation is that if a pool committee wanted to open only on a Sunday between 6 pm and 8 pm it could choose to do so. A Hall Committee could choose to make the Hall available for hire only if Committee members were available to open and close the Hall.

Council does not have nor does it require adherence by Volunteer Committees of Management or community groups that use Council facilities the operation of services / or facilities in accordance with a minimum standard of service in terms of the hours of operation, service delivery, episodes of use, access or availability.

As our communities age and trends in volunteering change concurrent with legislative change it is inevitable that the expectations that underpin Council's current approach toward Council owned and recognised Community facilities' and assets and volunteer management and service delivery from these facilities and assets will also change.

#### **5.2.5 Role of volunteers**

Council's volunteer policy provides the broad framework for Council Officers interaction with volunteers.

It defines volunteering and makes provision for the recruitment of volunteers and the

matching of volunteer roles and position descriptions. It is broad enough to be used for volunteer work experience, HACC and Library Volunteers.

Reference in the policy is also made to Section 355 Committees and Independent Volunteer Groups eg: local service clubs or groups that work with Council to provide a service.

Council also has developed a manual for Section 355 Committees describing:

1. Committee Powers
2. Function
3. Responsibilities
4. Volunteer Principles
5. Financial Operations
6. Meeting Procedures

Focus group comments in this regard could best be summarised that not all volunteers and Committees are equal.

Meaning, that some Committees need higher order skills, knowledge and support and the accountability tools described in the Section 355 Manual and Volunteer Policy. While, on the other hand a Friends of the Library Group meeting twice a year does not need to formally induct volunteers and prepare position descriptions.

Council staff attending the focus group agreed that the role of volunteers in all circumstances needs to be clear and that documentation describing this needs to be volunteer friendly.

## 6 Staff and Councillor Survey

Council's management team and Councillors also completed a survey (results appendix I) that canvassed the extent to which Council staff and or Councillors supported actions that as part of the *Volunteer Strategy* would:

- Recognise that volunteering is a two way process which benefits Council and volunteers
- Identify the extent of resources needed to support volunteers and their management or delivery of service using Council recognised community assets
- Reflect the diversity of volunteer and community needs and interests
- Offer roles to volunteers that are important and valued by volunteers
- Ensure, as far as is practicable, that volunteers are protected from harm
- Promote equity and consistent recruitment of volunteers

- Ensure that procedures developed are put into action

There was strong support from this survey for the following actions to be included in the Volunteer Strategy and its associated action plan.

1. Volunteers , like staff should have equivalent human resources and work health and safety related policies and should only be included in general policies if appropriate
2. That Council's annual operational plan include objectives for volunteer involvement and the material cost or resources needed either by Council or its Committees for volunteer management
3. That volunteers with relevant knowledge and experience are recruited

4. That Committees are supported by Council to identify the variety of tasks on offer and that Council assess the risk inherent in volunteer roles and facilitate in accordance with legislation a safe working environment
5. That volunteers and Volunteer Committees are provided with clear information on volunteer opportunities, recruitment and what volunteers can expect from the Committee, Council staff and Council expectations.

## 7 Summary Analysis

It is evident given, the results from the survey of volunteers, that issues/skills related to Committee governance and the skills generally recognised as being needed when recruiting to management Committees e.g.: project management and planning, financial management, risk management are not recognised as skills needed by respondents to the volunteer survey. Nor do volunteer survey respondents see these skills as an opportunity for in-kind support from council.

If Section 355 Committees and community management of significant recreation and community assets is to be sustained the issue of the impact of Council operations, trends in volunteerism, the skills needed by volunteers, statutory compliance and its impact on volunteer recruitment and retention needs to be addressed.

As it is evident that there is no capacity and little interest among the diverse group of volunteers in the recruitment, induction and training of volunteers that will:

- Meet Council expectations;
- Respond to trends in volunteering; and
- Be effective in recruiting volunteers with skills needed for effective contemporary volunteer management of community facilities.

There is also limited to no capacity in Council's current model of operation to actively support oversight or coordinate Volunteer Committee and Council volunteer recruitment, induction and training.

Moreover, a significant case can be made that if Council were to: formalise volunteerism, oversee recruitment, require attendance at training and induction. That this would, at least in the short-term, compound the recruitment and retention issues experienced by Section 355 Committees managing Council and community facilities: public halls, reserves, show / recreation grounds and swimming pools.

Primarily because the volunteers, at least those that responded to Council's survey, are not motivated by using their skills and the social aspects of volunteering but by personal interest i.e.: 'passion for the activity', 'self interest' i.e.: reciprocity and because they want to help 'for the sake of helping'.

Motives that need consideration when planning volunteer recruitment strategies or considering the sustainability of reconciling volunteer motives and expectations with Council's operational and statutory expectations and obligations.

## 8 Volunteer Management Framework

Volunteers are people who live and usually work in the Shire and its communities.

The majority have a sense of connection to or personal interest in the volunteer role they undertake or attracted to. How Council responds to the management of volunteers engaged in Council related volunteerism has evolved over time. In order to:

1. Safely maintain existing service levels provided by volunteer management of Council recreation assets
2. Optimise utilisation of Council assets and facilities
3. Maintain existing service levels measured in volunteer hours delivered by Council auspice of Home and Community Care services
4. Develop an action plan that will increase the number of younger volunteers with volunteer committee of management and governance skills
5. Identify (recruitment, training, compliance and retention) resources needed by Volunteer Management Committees

It is proposed that Council take a more active role in the management of volunteers engaged in Council related volunteer activities.

The following volunteer management framework and action plan will inform Council decision making, planning, implementation and evaluation of Council related volunteer management of facilities, programs and activities.

Volunteer Management Framework	... contributes to Berrigan Shire 2022 outcomes
<p>Council investment (human, physical and financial) in volunteer management of Council assets or service delivery using Council assets will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be strategic;</li> <li>• Be financially sustainable;</li> <li>• Be evidence based</li> <li>• Support risk management; and</li> <li>• Facilitate lifecycle asset planning and management</li> </ul>	<p><b>Good government</b></p>
<p>Sustainable volunteer management recognises that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteering is a two way process which benefits volunteers and Council</li> <li>• Volunteer roles need to reflect the needs and interests of volunteers</li> <li>• Volunteer recruitment needs to screen and match volunteers to roles</li> <li>• Volunteers require induction, ongoing support and direction</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supported and engaged communities</b></p>

## 9 Volunteer Strategy 2012 – 2016 Action Plan

### Berrigan Shire 2022: Good Government Volunteer Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2016

**Berrigan Shire 2022 Strategic Objective:** 2.2 Ensure effective governance by Council of operations and reporting

**Delivery Program Objective:** 2.2.2 Council operations support, ethical, transparent and accountable corporate governance

**Operational Plan Action:** 2.2.2.7 Maintain and sustainably re-develop existing infrastructure and community assets

#### Volunteer Management Decision Making Framework

Council investment (human, physical and financial) in volunteer management of Council assets or service delivery using Council assets will:

- Be strategic;
- Be financially sustainable;
- Be evidence based;
- Support risk management; and facilitate
- Lifecycle asset planning and management.

What we want to do	How are we going to do it?	What will be the outcome	Lead Responsibility	Cost/Other Resources	Commencing
1. Safely maintain existing service levels provided by volunteer management of Council recreation assets	Review status of Council Committees in accordance with Volunteer Management Framework	Appropriate governance structure based on each Committees activities will be identified	Director Corporate Services	Community Planning Officer Enterprise Risk Manager	January 2013
	Assist Committees that are not managing inherently higher risk facilities and activities to transition to a more appropriate governance structure	Identified Sec 355 Committees will be revoked and their activities will be outside the scope of this Strategy	Director Corporate Services	Community Planning Officer	

**Berrigan Shire 2022: Good Government  
Volunteer Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2016**

<b>What we want to do</b>	<b>How are we going to do it?</b>	<b>What will be the outcome</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>	<b>Cost/Other Resources</b>	<b>Commencing</b>
1. Safely maintain existing service levels provided by volunteer management of Council recreation assets	a) Implement the Berrigan Shire Council <i>Volunteer Management System</i> addressing the human resource and workplace health and safety requirements of Council and Section 355 Committee management and training of volunteers	Volunteer Committee Management and Council management of volunteers will be in accordance with Volunteer Management Decision making framework and Council's WHS obligations	DCS / Chair Sec 355 Committees	In-kind Council	April 2013
		Volunteers will be protected from foreseeable financial, emotional, ethical and physical harm	Director Corporate Services & Sec 355 Committee Executive	Enterprise Risk Manager	February 2012
2. Optimise utilisation of Council assets and facilities	a) In conjunction with Council Committees develop systems that identify current patronage and use of Council assets and facilities	Council assets and facilities meet user requirements and baseline requirements x facility for Asset Management Service Levels and Planning	Director Corporate Services	Community Planning Officer	February 2013
	b) Engage Committees of Management in the Review of Corporate and Community Services Asset Management Plan	Council and Volunteer Committee Asset Management Planning and expectations are aligned	Director Corporate Services	Community Planning	November 2013
	c) Develop and fund an annual Volunteer Skill Development Program	Volunteers attend locally provided training in: Fund Raising Volunteer Management Marketing and Promotion Strategic Planning / Project Management	Director Corporate Services	Partner TAFE or Similar RTO specialising in Volunteer Training  Budget to be determined	

Berrigan Shire 2022: Good Government  
Volunteer Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2016

What we want to do	How are we going to do it?	What will be the outcome	Lead Responsibility	Cost/Other Resources	Commencing
3. Maintain existing service levels measured in volunteer hours delivered by Council auspice of Home and Community Care services	a) Meet program management and service delivery requirements HACC	HACC volunteers recruited, inducted and supported by dedicated and fully funded volunteer coordinator/manager	Director Corporate Services  Coordinator Community Services	NSW Dept Family Community Services funding	Ongoing
4. Develop an action plan that will increase the number of younger volunteers with volunteer committee of management and governance skills	a) As part of <i>Volunteer Management System</i> develop position descriptions for key positions in Volunteer Committees of Management	Position descriptions and skills needed developed for Key Committee roles	Section 355 Committees Director Corporate Services	Enterprise Risk Manager	February 2013  August 2013
	b) Advertise Council website volunteer opportunities and in Council Bulletin advertise Committee vacancies	Volunteer opportunities are advertised	Volunteer Committees	In-kind Council	January 2013
	c) As part of Council marketing and advertising of Annual Volunteer Skill Development Program promote volunteering opportunities in the Shire.	Increased participation in Volunteer Skill Development program Younger people develop skills in volunteer Committee of Management governance	Director Corporate Services	<b>\$1,000 recurrent</b>	June 2013

## Berrigan Shire 2022: Supported and engaged communities Volunteer Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2016

**Berrigan Shire 2022 Strategic Objective:** 3.2 Support community engagement through lifelong learning, culture and recreation

**Delivery Program Objective:** 3.2.1 Provide opportunities for life-long learning, cultural expression and recreation

**Operational Plan Action:** 3.2.1.2.2 Implement Council *Volunteer Strategy 2012*

Sustainable volunteer management recognises that

- Volunteering is a two way process which benefits volunteers and Council.
- Volunteer roles need to reflect the needs and interests of volunteers.
- Volunteer recruitment needs to screen and match volunteers to roles.
- Volunteers require induction, ongoing support and direction.

What we want to do	How are we going to do it?	What will be the outcome	Lead Responsibility	Cost/Other Resources	Commencing
5. Identify (recruitment, training, compliance and retention) resources needed by Volunteer Management Committees	In conjunction with Committees that participate in <i>Annual Volunteer Skill Development Program</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead the development of Committee specific annual recruitment, training and compliance plan</li> </ul>	Recruitment and training plan matched to the needs of Committee and its volunteers	Director Corporate Services	Community Planning Officer  Other resources identified in specific Committee Recruitment and Training Plan	August 2013
		Council assessment/ ongoing annual review of Committee governance skills / knowledge and extent of resources needed to facilitate volunteer induction, and ongoing support and direction	Director Corporate Services	Enterprise Risk Manager	October 2013



Berrigan Shire 2022: Supported and engaged communities  
Volunteer Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2016

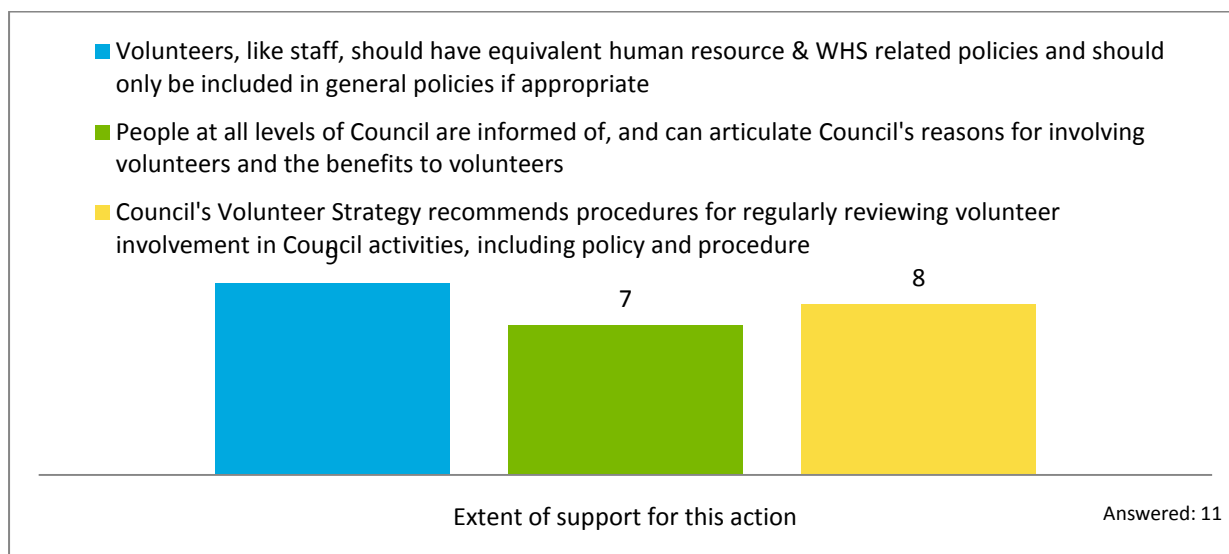
What we want to do	How are we going to do it?	What will be the outcome	Lead Responsibility	Cost/Other Resources	Commencing
6. Promote the development of a Berrigan Shire area volunteer and mentor register	<p>As part of the Shire's <i>Liveability and Ageing Strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with community organisations on the development and maintenance of a local volunteer register</li> </ul>	<p>Older volunteers will be matched to volunteer and mentoring opportunities – episodic and long term</p> <p>Community groups can register</p>	Community Planning Officer	<p>In-kind Council HACC Library Services Council Committees Berrigan Jerilderie Shire Community Services Network</p>	July 2013

## 10 Appendix I

### 10.1 Staff and Councillor Survey Results

Respondents to this survey supported the notion that the *Volunteer Strategy* recognise that volunteering is a two-way commitment which, needs to be supported by procedures and process that regularly review volunteer involvement. Support was also strong for the action that volunteers should have equivalent Human Resource and WH&S policies.

**Figure 11 Volunteering is a two-way commitment**



**Figure 12: Resources needed to support volunteers**

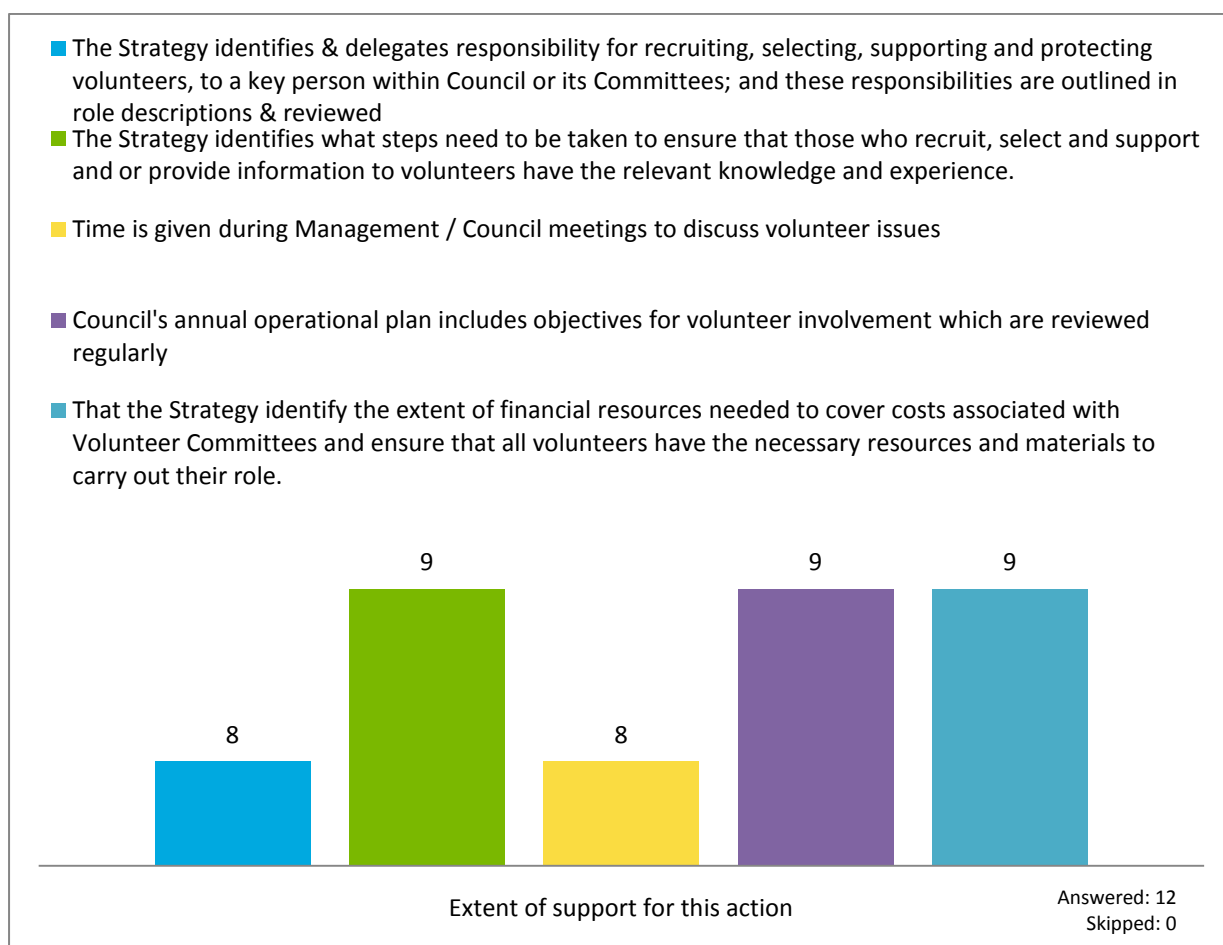
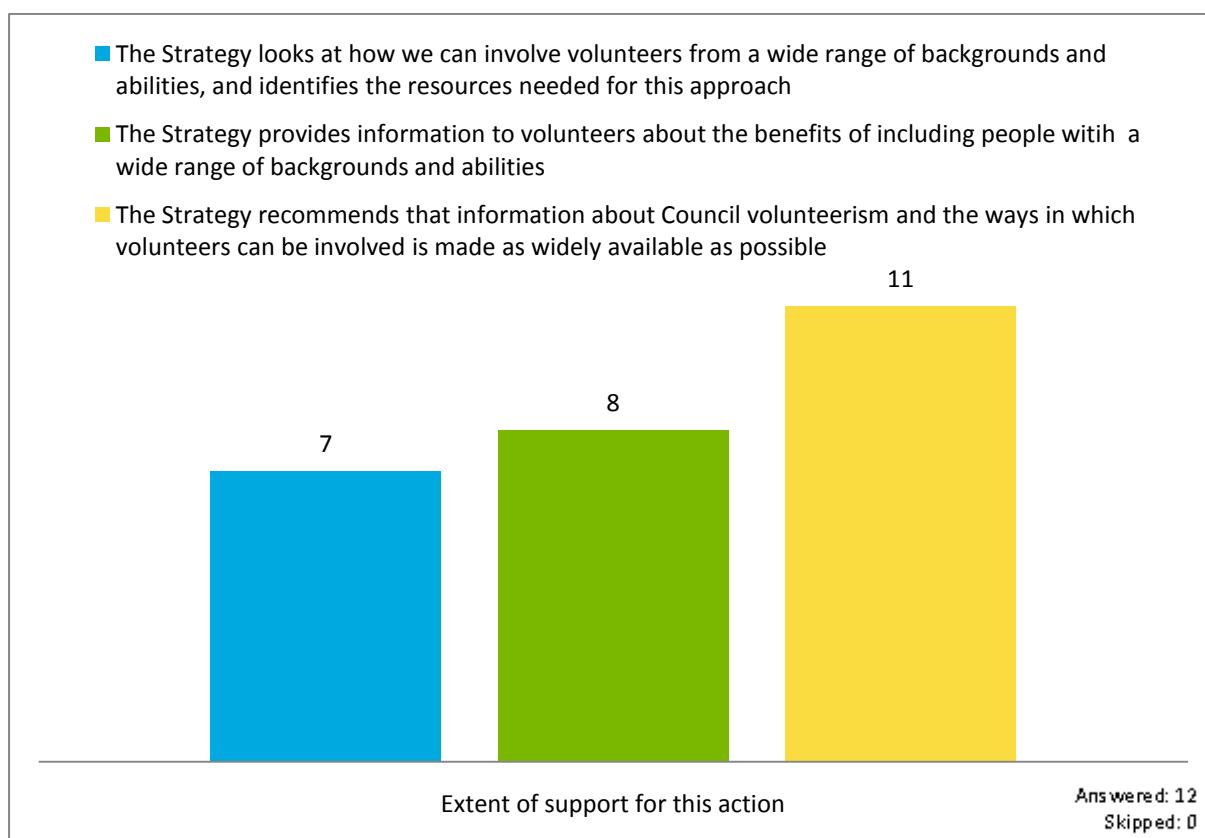


Figure 2 describes the extent of staff support for Council to be involved in offering a diverse range of volunteer opportunities matched to community needs and volunteers interests.

There was limited support for Council to extend and resource the matching of volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds.

Consistent with Council's volunteer model and core activities there is support for widely disseminating information about volunteer opportunities. This could be achieved via a 3<sup>rd</sup> party hosted volunteer register or similar hosted by Council.

**Figure 13: Volunteerism reflects diversity of Council / Volunteer Interests**



The importance of volunteer role descriptions is highlighted in literature related to best practice volunteer recruitment and training.

Figure 3 provides an overview of Councillor and staff response to whether or not the Volunteer Strategy should make provision for the development of role descriptions and if so to what extent should volunteer roles be described and how this should be progressed.

According to the Councillors and staff surveyed Committees should be supported to identify the variety of tasks on offer. There was limited support for the notion that Committees be supported to map or identify the needs, abilities and interests of individual volunteers.

**Figure 14: Volunteer roles are described**

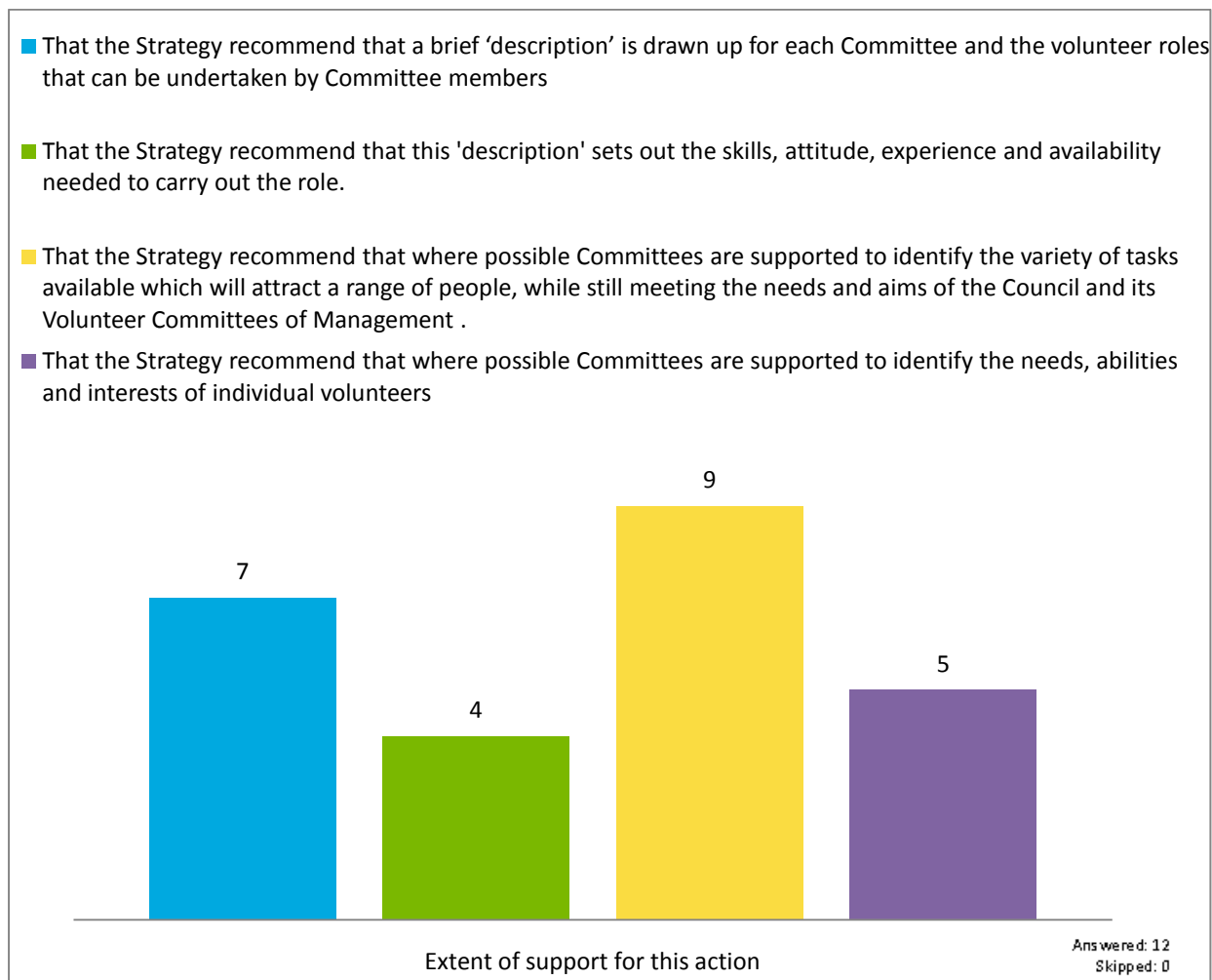


Figure 4 suggests that there is strong support for Council action which:

- Assesses the risk to volunteers inherent in volunteer roles
- Ensures appropriate insurance for volunteers; and
- Protects volunteers personal information / details

The issue of recruitment and retention of volunteers is one that is of critical importance to Council and the Committees that operate as Section 355 Committees. Volunteer literature highlights the importance of task lists, position specific recruitment, induction and support.

Few Section 355 Committee's have volunteer role descriptions or formal induction processes that describe roles, responsibilities and boundaries and which can be used to recruit or induct volunteers. Figure 15 describes a number of actions Council staff and Councillor would like to see included in volunteer inductions. For example, there was strong support for action that ensured that there 'is clarity between volunteer, Volunteer Committee and Council about the boundaries of the volunteer's roles.

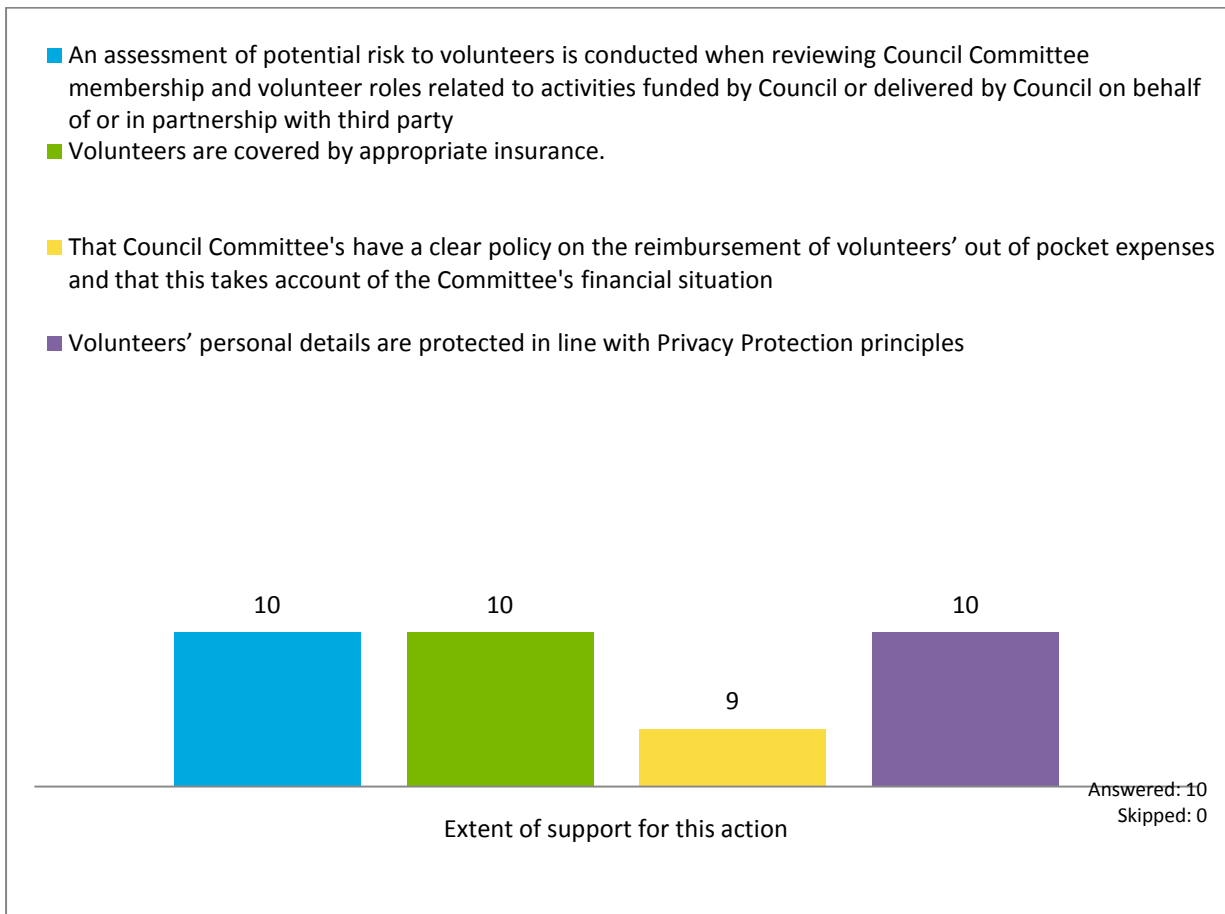
The reasons for this are manifest if viewed with a Council lens – statutory compliance, operational responsibility / risk management and the need to balance and manage budgets.

Yet the reasons why this would not occur in many circumstances are also manifest if viewed with a volunteer Committee lens. For example, few Committees provide members or new members with Committee training and policies related to their volunteer / Committee role, and its relationship to Council.

Primarily because the Committee is a volunteer committee: a loose association of community members that volunteer their time.

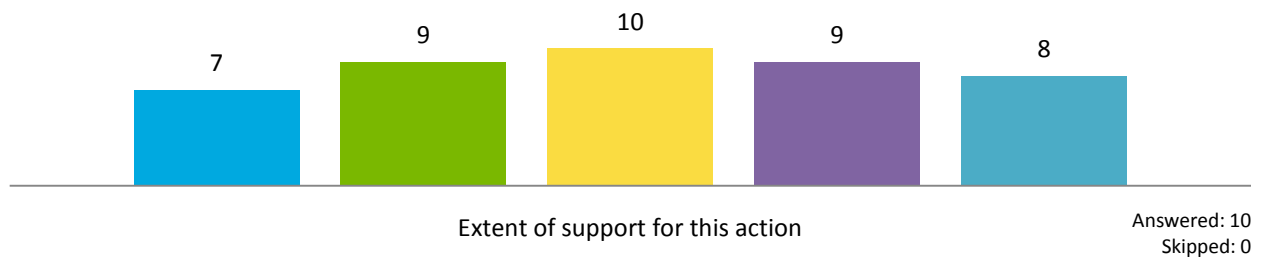
At a practical level volunteers work best in activities that match the skills, knowledge and interests of members. If no one has volunteered to write the task list and its relationship to Council and used it to assist with recruitment or the induction it is likely that this will not happen.

**Figure 15: Protecting Volunteers**



**Figure 16: Volunteer Induction**

- All new Committee members are introduced, prior to Council endorsement, to the relevant paid staff and other volunteers with whom they will come into contact.
- Volunteer Committees are provided with the necessary information and/or training to carry out their role, including any policies as appropriate.
- There is clarity between the volunteer and the Volunteer Committee and Council about the boundaries of the volunteers' roles.
- Volunteers are advised how the Committee and or Council will address situations where the volunteer has behaved inappropriately.
- Volunteers are advised of the procedure to use if they wish to complain about their treatment by Council staff, users, committee members or other volunteers.

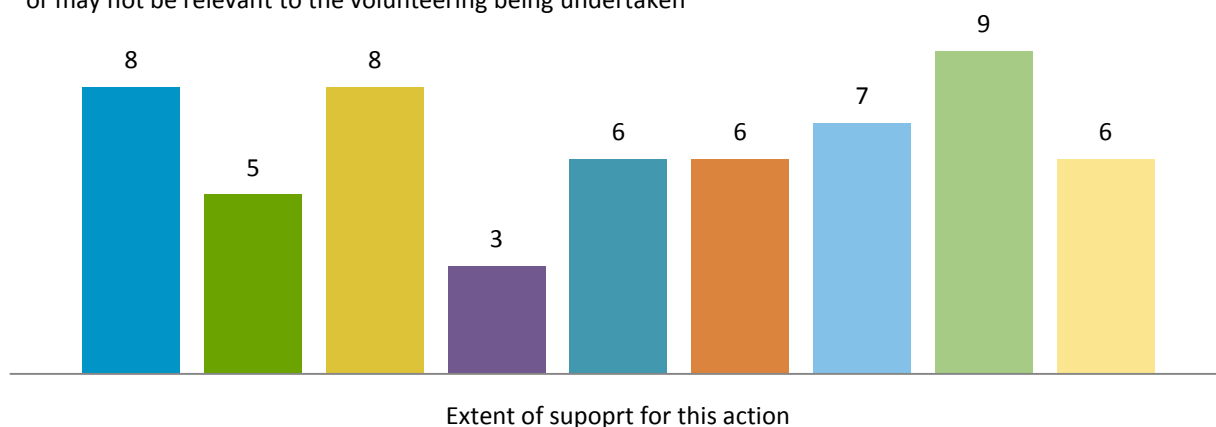


Recruitment of volunteer actions that received strong staff and Councillor support (Figure 16) included:

- Taking into account relevant government guidelines
- Providing information about volunteering opportunities, recruitment and selection, and Committee and Council expectations

**Figure 17: Volunteer Recruitment**

- People interested in volunteering are provided with clear information about the opportunities, the recruitment and selection procedure, what volunteers can expect from the Committee/Council staff, and what Council's expectations are.
- Recruitment or matching procedures are appropriate to the volunteer role(s) & individual's needs & applied consistently by Committees of Management through a brief Report to Council describing the nature of the tasks undertaken
- That Council and Volunteer Committees ask only for information needed in order to delegate responsibility / identify liability and that this is recorded in a consistent manner.
- That the Strategy recommend that recruitment or process of Council approving Committee membership that time is given to exploring the individual's reasons for volunteering.
- Volunteers are informed if Council does not accept their nomination as a member of a Volunteer Committee or HACC volunteer and are offered feedback and are signposted to other organisations as appropriate
- Where appropriate, potential volunteers are given further opportunities to find out more about the volunteering opportunities before committing themselves.
- That the Strategy identifies the pros and cons of applying a consistent and equitable approach toward referee checks for all volunteers considering the type of volunteer work and the volunteering role.
- The Strategy's approach to the use of official checks takes into account the relevant Government guidelines, and the roles in which volunteers will be placed.
- That the Strategy recommend that Council give consideration to the types of convictions/disciplinary actions may or may not be relevant to the volunteering being undertaken





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- <sup>i</sup> Edwards, A., Eyre, S., Wyatt, R., & Young, S. (2012) *Connections, Compliance and Community: The Changing Face of Volunteering in Regional Victoria*, Wimmera Volunteers and Netbalance Foundation
- Crowley, S., Kilpatrick S., Stirling, C., Orpin, P, (2008) *Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania*
- ABS (2010) 4441.0 - *Voluntary Work, Australia*, released 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 01/12/2011
- <sup>ii</sup> ABS (2010) 4441.0 - *Voluntary Work, Australia*, released 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 01/12/2011
- <sup>iii</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>iv</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>v</sup> *Berrigan Shire 2022 pg 8*
- <sup>vi</sup> ABS (2010) 4441.0 - *Voluntary Work, Australia*, released 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 01/12/2011
- <sup>vii</sup> Australian Government (2011) *National Volunteering Strategy*
- New South Wales Government (2012) *Volunteering Strategy*