Engaging young people in volunteering: what works in Tasmania?

by Lindsey Moffatt
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Lindsey Moffatt
April 2011

Message from the Chair of VT

Welcome to Volunteering Tasmania's (VT) latest research report: *Engaging Young People in Volunteering: what works in Tasmania*. VT is committed to building a robust picture of volunteering in our State, to shape VT services, inform our role as a peak body, provide an evidence base for our advocacy work with government and become an information resource for the volunteer sector.

The *State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010* gave us a broad view of our volunteer sector to help us understand where our strengths lay and where, as a state, we need to work together to build our volunteering capacity. And we have been pleased with the feedback you have given us about how useful this information has been.

This new report offers us a spotlight on one area of volunteering – what works in engaging young people in Tasmania. Given our State's demographic profile, it is crucial that we understand how to continuously engage with the diversity of our younger Tasmanians and support them to build the foundations needed for a lifelong career as an active citizen, of which volunteering is a core part. And we have a great platform to build on; with the most recent national statistics showing us that just over a third of our young people already engage in some form of volunteering; the highest youth rate in Australia.

This report draws on the experiences of three very different organisations that have successfully engaged young people to volunteer; it helps to clarify the particular challenges our young volunteers face, what might motivate them to volunteer, the all important issue of how best to reach young Tasmanians through media, language and networks, the rich and diverse skills that young people gain from volunteering, both personally and vocationally, and what management issues volunteer-involving organisations need to consider to be 'youth ready'; all issues pertinent Tasmania's social inclusion and economic development agendas.

We are very excited about the messages this report gives us. The most important message we want organisations to take from this report is that there's not one approach that suits all; there are lessons that all organisations can take from this report – no matter what it's size, scope and focus might be. And there are clearly social policy dialogues that we can enlighten through the findings presented here.

I invite you to read the *Engaging Young People* report and encourage you to draw on the lessons pertinent to you. We welcome feedback about these findings, so we may continue to build on Tasmania's understanding of how to fully engage with the diversity within our younger residents.

FRANCES HEALY, Chair, VT Board

on Gen Y…

"Generational issues are a perennial favourite…

With more generations co-existing than ever before,…the interest has never been more so than today. Indeed, media on generations, particularly the younger, emerging generations, abounds in an attempt to appease our desire to better understand and engage with each other: our employees, colleagues, students and children…

Caution is needed because generational stereotypes and conjecture find their way into workplace and the press. We've all heard the hype that 'Young people today do not have any sense of commitment.'

But these are feelings, not findings."

[McCrindle, 2011:ix-x, The ABC of XYZ]

on Tasmanian volunteering…

"Sustainability, I think, is really important. If you don't get the next generation of volunteers involved, then there's a big danger – and I do think it is a big danger, especially with our ageing population – that there's not the numbers to replace [older volunteers].

But if there's also not the culture and the value placed on volunteering, you lose even more people…the pool is even smaller.

There's lots of organisations out there that need volunteers; if they're all drawing from a smaller pool, there's gonna be issues!"

[From research case studies, Peak body B]

Executive Summary

1. WHAT WILL THIS RESEARCH TELL US?

Given the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Unit's current interest in youth volunteering,[1] this *'Engaging Young People'* research was developed to complement Volunteering Tasmania's (VT's) State of Volunteering Report[2] by offering a spotlight on what works in youth volunteering in Tasmania. It provides an original contribution to research by building on existing Government-funded Tasmanian research that focused on youth volunteering in Home and Community Care (HACC) organisations[3] and rural volunteering.[4]

The research explores:

a) ***What approaches do Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations use to successfully engage and retain young people as volunteers?*** Do these 'fit' with models of good practice in youth engagement in Tasmania, Australia and the UK?

b) ***Are there similarities and differences in these approaches across sectors?*** If so, what part is played by organisational cultures, strategies and practice?

c) ***What recommendations can be made to other Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations to engage and retain young people successfully?***

2. HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?

The research was conducted between June and October 2010 and focused on case studies of three Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations that currently recruit young people and two peak bodies representing volunteering and young people in Tasmania.

Each case study included:

- ***semi-structured interviews*** with a member of senior management and, where available, a separate interview with a staff member responsible for youth volunteer recruitment and retention. For peak bodies, one person was interviewed in each organisation. Six people were interviewed in total;
- ***focus groups*** with up to five young volunteers from each organisation. Eleven young people participated in total;
- self-completion of an ***organisational culture tool*** for volunteer managers to reflect on their management and leadership values in seven areas of their practice.

The literature review and the final report are divided into the three elements VT identify as essential for a healthy volunteer sector to develop:[5]

- ***Willing volunteers*** – what it takes to cultivate interest in volunteering amongst young Tasmanians and to successfully recruit them;
- ***Meaningful roles*** – what it takes to develop volunteering roles that are appropriate for young people;
- ***Effective leadership*** – what characteristics might be present in successful youth engaging organisations.

This research defines young people as *16 to 24*[6] and it defines volunteering as it is defined by VT's State of Volunteering Report survey research. i.e.: young people who, ***"willingly give unpaid help, in the form of time, service, or skills, to or through an organisation or group."***[7]

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1 Adams, D., 2009, A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania

2 Webb, M. and Bird, L., 2010, *State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010*

3 Adams, N., 2009, *Generation Y Volunteer: an exploration into engaging young people in HACC funded volunteer involving organisations*, Volunteering Tasmania

4 Crowley, S., Stirling, C., Orpin, P., Kilpatrick, S., 2008, *Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania*, University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania.

5 The three-legged stool is taken from Andy Fryar, www.ozvpm.com. Cited in Volunteering Tasmania, 2009a, Positioning Paper for the *State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010*. p.8 and was used to structure the findings in VT's State of Volunteering Report (Webb, M., et al, 2010, *ibid*).

6 See *appendix 1* for an explanation of why we have chosen this age range.

7 Webb, M., et at, 2010, *ibid.*, State of Volunteering Surveys. This definition was used to aid comparison with VTs' SOV report. However, please note that within its work, VT follows Volunteering Australia's definition of volunteering, which includes reference to volunteering taking place in the not for profit sector and being in a designated volunteer position. See *appendix 2* for a more detailed exploration of volunteering definitions and how the recommendation was made for the definition used in this report.

3. THE FINDINGS

Creating young willing volunteers

Being 'youth ready': making roles accessible and speaking 'Generation (Gen) Y'

Comparing this fieldwork to previous Tasmanian, Australian and United Kingdom (UK) research,[8] findings suggest that these young Tasmanians are not particularly different to other volunteers in experiencing the challenge of making time to volunteer, and no different in what motivates them to volunteer; although their motivations may be held in different priorities to older volunteers, with more value for most young people on ***skill development***, as well as giving something back to the community/pursuing personal interests/being with friends. But there may be particular issues to address in creating young willing volunteers, like ***reassuring their confidence*** through offering ***peer ambassadors and mentors***, accessing their ***influencers*** (including ***schools*** and other educational institutions, ***families*** and ***peers***), adapting the ***length or regularity of their volunteer role*** to address their ***transient time commitments***, addressing their ***access to transport***, and understanding how young people ***prefer to communicate*** – in terms of media and styles. *(More info — see full report, sections 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7; Figs 4.3-5, 4.10-12).*

Tasmanian challenges: keeping up volunteer momentum and confidentiality

For Tasmanian organisations, there seem to be some Tasmanian-specific challenges within the size and scale of the state, particularly in ***maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity*** when volunteering within smaller communities, and ***maintaining volunteers' momentum*** between the infrequent state event-based opportunities and between the relatively short volunteering 'seasons' for sports and outdoor volunteering activities compared to other Australian states. *(More info — see full report section 4.1).*

Volunteering in the digital age: embracing websites and social networking

Understanding how to effectively use digital communication media to target young volunteer audiences is clearly a huge development area for Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations; although this is by no means unique to Tasmania, the current ***lack of consistently provided web-based information and application processes*** and the ***under-use of social networking***, such as Facebook, for keeping volunteers updated, is clearly showing as a disconnect with Gens Y and Z. *(More info — see full report sections 4.5 & 4.7)*

Targeting recruitment is key

To successfully recruit more young people, most volunteers suggested that ***application processes need to be kept as short as possible***. Targeted recruitment was essential to attract young people into the organisations. ***Digital and non-digital recruitment mixes***, using existing ***peer networks, schools, colleges, universities, youth centres and VT's Volunteer Connect*** were essential for state-wide organisations to recruit young volunteers and ***a web presence was key as a first port of call*** for marketing information; ***personal approaches*** through ***peer networks, schools and families*** were more successful for the local, community focused organisation. Using ***young people as ambassadors***, talking about what they get from their roles, helps potential young people to put themselves in volunteers' shoes. Having a ***personal point of contact*** within the organisation was key for maintaining young people's interest once they had made contact. *(More info — see full report section 4.5).*

Creating meaningful volunteer roles for young people

Young volunteers without boundaries

This fieldwork and previous Tasmanian research[9] suggest there may be a disconnect in Tasmania between what young people say they are looking for from volunteering and organisations' confidence that what they have to offer could be a fit for young people. Certainly the young Tasmanians in this research did not have any boundaries around the type of activities they would consider in Tasmania, as long as they felt they were ***able to contribute***, it was a ***positive volunteering experience*** and was a ***practical fit*** for their abilities and their lifestyle. *(More info — see full report section 5.5)*

8 Tasmania - Adams, N., 2009, *ibid.*; Crowley et al, 2008, *ibid.* Australia - Ferrier, F., Roos, M., Long, M., 2004, *Passions, People and Appreciation: making volunteering work for young people*, National Youth Affairs Research Scheme: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australia. UK - Hill, M., and Russell, J., 2009, *Young People, Volunteering and Youth Projects: a rapid review of recent evidence*, London: V; Pye, J,. Lister., Latter, J., Clements, L., 2009, *Young People Speak Out: attitudes to and perceptions of, full-time volunteering*, IPSOS MORI and V Research: London; V Informed, 2008, *Youth Volunteering: Attitudes and Perceptions*, V Informed: London; V, 2007, *Barriers Preventing Passionate Young People Acting on the Concerns: a report from the V youth volunteering charity detailing the findings of a survey of 1000 16-25 year olds*, V Informed: London

9 Adams, N., 2009, *ibid.*; Crowley et al, 2008, *ibid.*

Creating positive experiences: understanding volunteer motivations, role asks and benefits

Experience from these case studies suggests that to create a positive volunteering experience for young people, organisations need to understand, not only what is inhibiting young people from volunteering (for example, time, transport, confidence), and what is motivating their volunteers to want to contribute (personal or community-based reasons, or a mixture of both), but also what their volunteers want from their experience; whether it be some of the main personal features, such as ***flexibility***, having ***interesting tasks*** and opportunities for ***skills development***, ***being listened to*** and feeling acknowledged, ***enjoyment***; or some of the main community-orientated features, such as ***making a difference to their community***, ***being with friends***, ensuring ***opportunities for co-working***, and ***seeing outcomes*** for themselves and others; or a mixture of both.

Using volunteers' motivations and role asks, this research has started to distinguish volunteer 'types' (which could be applied to volunteers of any age group), which – after further research - may help organisations to target their volunteer marketing, role design, support and development. *(More info — see full report sections 5.1 to 5.4 and Figs 5.1 to 5.3, 5.5 to 5.7).*

Learning and development: a key selling point and benefit

The range of personal and vocational skills volunteers had gained through their experiences – all ***key skills for young people in their transition to adulthood and in becoming active citizens*** – highlights that ***all organisations have something to offer young people***; the issue is identifying these and articulating them effectively to the volunteer market. Vicarious learning through experiences was the most common way to learn. ***Peer mentoring*** was valued by these young volunteers and, where formal training was necessary, the key was to make it ***brief, fun and as practical as possible***. *(More info — see full report section 5.6).*

Measuring success in youth volunteering: developing the volunteer habit for life

Very positively all young volunteers in this sample felt they would continue to volunteer after their current role, so they were all on the way to making a habit for life. And the case study organisations all saw this in itself as a success; engagement was often more important than retention in gauging success with this age group and was measured not simply with numbers of volunteers, but also diversity in volunteers through to the quality of interactions and positive exits. *(More info — see full report section 5.7).*

Effective leadership for young volunteers

Organisational success = positive attitude to young people + understanding Gen Y and Z challenges

The findings suggest that organisations that are successfully recruiting young people seem to fit with Ferrier et al's (2004) leadership profile; most importantly, they see ***young people's volunteering contributions positively*** (or are in the process of ensuring this culture is developing/spreading across their organisation); and they ***understand the challenges*** faced by their young volunteers (usually through consultation/conversation) and, where this is causing an issue, ***develop specific strategies*** to tackle these. They also work within models of ***social inclusion*** and ***community development***. *(More info — see full report sections 6.2-3).*

Towards understanding organisational culture: balancing leadership control with flexibility in volunteer management?

The case study organisations all seemed to strike a balance within their organisational culture between ***controlled adherence to regulation*** (steered from strong leadership) and offering ***flexibility and development to the volunteers*** (steered within their volunteer management approach). This needs exploring further with other organisations. *(More info — see full report section 6.4).*

The need for community coaching

Although organisations felt most volunteer management skills are the same for all volunteers (***communication***, ***empathy***, ***flexibility***), there is one area of development that stands out – the need for an ***effective model of community coaching***, that enables adults to work with and develop young people on terms that work for both of them. *(More info — see full report section 6.5.b).*

Strengthening the Tasmanian volunteer community

There is a clear need to develop ***more effective Tasmanian volunteer sector links***, to enable organisations to develop coaching and other important skills, and to help open up facilities and assets within local communities and to encourage debates about how to build volunteering capacity and social inclusion locally. There are key facilitation roles here for peak bodies and local councils. *(More info — see full report section 6.2.c)*

4. CONCLUSIONS

What's unique about the Tasmanian experience?

Tasmanian challenges and assets

The Tasmanian experience looks similar to the national picture in youth volunteering, except for a few important local factors:

- ***having a declining proportion of the Tasmanian population who are young***, compared to those nearing retirement. This may have a significant effect on where resource-strapped Tasmanian volunteering organisations choose to target their recruitment;
- ***the significant gender difference*** in Tasmanian youth volunteer participation, which needs to be better understood before it can be effectively addressed;
- ***the tendency for some volunteer-involving organisations to undersell their benefits to young people and underutilise communication media*** that young people commonly look to, such as emails and texts, websites and on-line applications and social networking. These need to be prioritised as areas for development within organisations' youth volunteer recruitment and retention strategies;
- ***the temperate climate and size and scale of the state*** causing a challenge for organisations to keep up volunteers' momentum in between activity seasons and between state events, compared to other Australian states;
- ***the poor public transport system*** and mainly regional and rural residents limiting volunteer choices for some young Tasmanians;
- ***the need to be mindful of maintaining confidentiality*** when volunteering in small communities;
- despite having a very strong and active peak body, having an ***under-developed Tasmanian 'volunteering community'*** between organisations and between volunteers, leading to challenges in sharing sector information and good practice across the state and potentially inhibiting volunteer referrals between organisations.

Tasmania also has huge advantages:

- in its ***strong sense of community cohesion***, as highlighted within the Social Inclusion Strategy;
- with its size and scale offering the ***potential ability to share lessons and resources across the state*** and trial new thinking; with some very ***successful organisations engaging young people as volunteers***, through which good practice can be cascaded;
- ***a very strong and active volunteering peak body***, willing and able to capture good practice and able to support the sector to develop, which is *supported by federal and state governments* that understand the important role of volunteering. [10]

These advantages give Tasmania a great foundation from which to develop a healthier volunteer sector and attract more young people into voluntary activities. But, given the prevalence of traditional views of young people being too hard to engage, the agenda needs to be driven.

Recommendations for organisations

To create willing young volunteers and meaningful roles for young Tasmanians, findings suggest that Tasmanian organisations need to:

- ***see young people's participation in volunteering positively*** and see that their organisation has something to offer young people;
- ***recognise that young people are not that different to other potential volunteers*** in many aspects. But there may be issues to recognise about what their challenges are (particularly in the transient nature of their commitments, their lack of confidence and access to transport), what is motivating them to participate (particularly in their need to develop their skills and experience, as well their desire to contribute to community), or what they want to gain from their role, how they prefer to be communicated with (in terms of media and styles) and what skills the organisation has to support young people effectively;

10 Current VT government funding includes federal grants from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Department of Health and Ageing through the Home and Community Care programme (HACC). Current state policy agendas that support volunteering include Supporting Tasmanian Volunteers Programme, the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy and Tasmania Together.

- *talk to young people* about their perceptions/ experiences of the organisation; understand what attracts young people to the organisation; familiarise themselves with how young people's challenges impact on potential and existing volunteers' participation and consider appropriate consultation methods;
- *make strategic decisions about who they can effectively recruit* (and that might include a limited range of young people, or for limited activities, or not recruit young people at all in the short term, whist they are developing appropriate support); specifically target their resources and activities around these identified groups;
- *embrace opportunities for new thinking and different ways to communicate* and be open to learning and using new media and language styles, to ensure the organisation can maintain itself as being 'youth ready';
- *understand and utilise local networks* for volunteer recruitment and organisational development, including schools, families, existing peer networks, employers, peak bodies and state networks;
- *consider whether their organisational culture is fit for purpose*. For example, strike a balance within their organisational culture between control of the regulatory environment, but offering flexibility and development opportunities for young volunteers within leadership and volunteer management; *embrace the breadth of volunteering roles* – from more traditional formal ones to more informal, short-term/sporadic opportunities;
- *capture all activity* (informal and formal) in reporting on volunteering;
- *share knowledge* about what works.

Recommendations for further research

There are a number of areas where further research would be useful within Tasmania. For example:

- exploring the types of volunteering young Tasmanians are involved in and, for potential volunteers, those they would be interested in;
- case studies of those young people who have stopped volunteering;
- exploring reasons for the gender gap in young Tasmanian volunteering;
- exploring the scope and diversity of informal volunteering in Tasmania;
- effective use of IT and social networking in volunteer recruitment and retention;
- roles of public and private schools, faith and CALD networks in cultivating volunteering amongst young people;
- the potential role of corporate volunteering in boosting a healthier volunteer sector in Tasmania;
- the challenges and potential solutions to transport issues in facilitating volunteer access;
- strategies to boost social inclusion in volunteer recruitment and retention;
- is a model of volunteer typologies useful in helping organisations understand what Tasmanian volunteers need?
- exploring the skills needed by adults to work effectively with young volunteers;
- further explore whether there are aspects to organisational culture that are effective in developing a healthy Tasmanian volunteer sector.

I

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

1. Introduction: why do this research?

2. Research questions, definitions and methodology

3. Case studies: characteristics

1. Introduction: why do this research?

1.1 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION: UNDERSTANDING TASMANIAN YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering Tasmania (VT) has conducted groundbreaking research for the first *State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010*, which was launched in November 2010.[11] The VT research took a 'floodlight' approach. i.e. surveying as many individuals and organisations as possible[12] and exploring issues in more depth through regional focus groups.[13]

Given the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Unit's current interest in youth volunteering,[14] and the federal government's development of a National Volunteering Strategy, this *'Engaging Young People'* research was developed to complement VT's work by offering a spotlight on what works in youth volunteering in Tasmania.

It provides an original contribution to research by building on existing Government-funded Tasmanian research that focused on youth volunteering in Home and Community Care (HACC) organisations (Adams, N., 2009)[15] and rural volunteering in Tasmania (Crowley et al, 2008).[16] Both of these reports concluded that:

- there is a widely held myth within volunteer-involving organisations that young people are not interested in volunteering and are hard to recruit and retain;
- young people are, in fact, very motivated by the idea of volunteering and are interested in volunteering, provided that it fits with their time commitments and their interests and there is some demonstrable impact from their contributions;
- volunteer-involving organisations need to consider how to adapt their marketing strategies and volunteer 'offer' to attract and then retain young people

Crowley et al (2008:8) also recommend that there is as much to be learnt from exploring case studies of good practice within volunteer-involving organisations as there is from looking at individuals' motivations. So, this research was designed to do exactly that; to move the debate about involving Tasmanian young people in volunteering into the positive by exploring what works through focusing on a small number of Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations that recruit and retain young people and the young volunteers who work for them.[17]

11 Webb, M., et al, 2010, *ibid*. This follows a positioning paper that sets out the issues and challenges for Tasmanian volunteering in November 2009 (Volunteering Tasmania, 2009a, *Positioning Paper for the State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010*. Available from http://www.volunteeringtas.Organisation Au/index.php?id=246). The State of Volunteering Report was aimed at helping us understand the scope and health of volunteering across Tasmania by considering primary research with Tasmanians who were either current volunteers, had previously volunteered, or had never been a volunteer. It explored motivations for and barriers to volunteering, the type and extent of volunteering, and their experiences of volunteering. The State of Volunteering report also explored the experiences of Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations across all sectors; their successes and challenges with recruiting and retaining volunteers, their volunteer strategies and policies and who their volunteers are. The report is available at http://volunteeringtas.Organisation Au/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/SOVR-Report-Final.pdf.

12 The research surveyed 1538 current, or previous volunteers and 523 people who had never volunteered, together with 335 people who represented volunteer-involving organisations. Random and snowball sampling was used to encourage individuals to complete an online or paper survey. (Webb, M., et al, 2010, *ibid.*, p.10).

13 There were three sets of focus groups – in the North, North West and South of Tasmania. Each region included two focus groups with current volunteers and one group with volunteer-involving organisations (Webb, M., et al, 2010, *ibid.*, p.10).

14 Adams, D., 2009, *A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania*

15 Adams, N., 2009, *Generation Y Volunteer: an exploration into engaging young people in HACC funded volunteer involving organisations*, Volunteering Tasmania

16 Crowley, S., Stirling, C., Orpin, P., Kilpatrick, S., 2008, *Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania*, University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania.

17 Following discussions with VT, we decided to define 'success' as those organisations that appear to have a consistent team of young volunteers. VT has helped to identify organisations that fit this bill within Tasmania.

1.2 THE POLICY CONTEXT: TASMANIAN VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

With the number of Tasmanians nearing retirement age expected to exceed the number of young people starting in the labour market for the first time in 2010 (Adams, D., 2009:10),[18] potentially there is a huge social and economic policy challenge for Tasmania – to continually maintain and develop the impressive Tasmanian community cohesion, young people must be continually encouraged to participate in civic, community and family life, as well as within education and the labour market, whilst they are here. And this effort needs continuous renewal.

So engaging Tasmania's young is at the forefront of many policy solutions offered by Tasmania's Social Inclusion Strategy; volunteering being just one strand.

The Strategy defines social inclusion as:

"a fair go at a decent education, skills, meaningful work, access to services, good relationships and a say on what matters to us. It's about the relationships in life that make us healthy, happy and productive."[19]

The Tasmanian State Government's approach to creating social inclusion is comprehensive. It seeks to simultaneously tackle the barriers to social inclusion, which exclude 13 per cent of Tasmanians from having, *'a fair go'*,[20] whilst building the *protective factors* against social exclusion.

The strategy positively positions volunteering as being a part of the community structure necessary to achieve the big social and economic outcomes desired for Tasmania, i.e. sustainable Tasmanian communities and building Tasmania's competitive capacity.[21] But simultaneously recognises the need for the sector to develop in order to contribute effectively to achieving social inclusion.

This research will contribute to the debate on how to tackle Tasmania's volunteer sector challenges, so will be of interest to Tasmania's social policy makers and influencers, as well as to volunteer-involving organisations aspiring to engage young volunteers more effectively.

1.3 UNDERSTANDING GENERATIONS Y AND Z IN TASMANIA

In McCrindle's (2010) very useful generational research, *The ABC of XYZ*, he pinpoints the very different styles of education experienced by our currently co-existing generations in Australia; from how different generations were taught to read and write, to how our different experiences of education styles and digital technology have affected our learning preferences (2010:97-121). Intrinsic within these experiences are the very different uses of language and communication styles preferred by different generations; from the relatively formal, structured communication styles of Builders and Baby Boomers, through to Generations Y and Z,[22] who, McCrindle argues, are, **"post-lifestage, post-milestone, post-linear, post-literate, post logical, post-structured, post-segmented."** (2010:99-107). What he means by this is summarised in *Table 1.1*.

18 The strategy cites the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008 *Population Projections, Australia*, 2006-2101, Cat No 3222.0, ABS, Canberra. Based on Series B population projections for Tasmania.

19 Adams, D., 2009, *ibid.*, p.8

20 Adams, D., 2009, *ibid.*, p.8. Based on the following data: *"In 2005-06, 13 per cent of the Tasmanian population were living below the '50 per cent median' poverty line. Based on an analysis of ABS Survey of Income and Housing data for 2005-06 in Saunders, P, Hill, T, and Bradbury, B, 2008 Poverty in Australia: Sensitivity Analysis and Recent Trends, commissioned by Jobs Australia on Behalf of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), SPRC Report 4/08, Social Policy Research Centre, Sydney."*

21 See *appendix 3* for a summary of Tasmania's Social Inclusion Strategy Framework.

22 McCrindle's generational definitions include Gen Y as being born between 1980 and 1994 and Gen Z being born from 1995 (McCrindle, 2010:6-7)

Table 1.1: McCrindle's presentation of Gen Y and Z's experiences, attitudes and behaviours and their potential implications for volunteer-involving organisations

	What does McCrindle say?	Potential implications for volunteer-involving organisations
Post-lifestage	*"People, even in their late 20s, remain at home, delaying the traditional markers of adulthood."* (2010:99)	Any volunteering opportunity might be attractive – If it fits and suits an individual's lifestyle
Post-milestone	*"Rites of passage, such as 18th and 21st birthdays, which once signified that a young person was old enough to enjoy adult rights and freedoms, are now more about having fun than celebrating a milestone."* (2010:99)	Freedoms and independent choices come earlier for Gens Y and Z. They're making the decision about what they do, not their parents/guardians.
Post linear	*"For Generation Y, education is life-long and retraining for new careers takes place throughout life…Life today is not linear but a mosaic of reinvented roles and opinions."* (2010:99)	*'What's in it for me?'* is a crucial consideration in promoting a volunteering role.
Post literate	*"In this digital era, communication is not restricted to the spoken and written word, but is multi-modal…Today, an electronic document is perceived to have more currency (and therefore more accuracy) than the printed page. Books give way to DVDs. Written word is replaced by PXTs (picture text). A letter is replaced by a text message complete with emoticons and new forms of spelling."* (2010:100)	Getting the right language style and using the right media are crucial for communicating with Gens Y and Z.
Post-logical	*"The age of reason has given way to the age of participation. It's not an era of experts, but an era of user-generated opinion…statistics don't influence with the same power as story."* (2010:102)	It's not enough to ask for help. They need to hear what impact it will have.
Post-structured	*"We test academic knowledge and memory in examinations yet they, with the always-on internet, are living in an open-book world, only ever 20 seconds from any piece of information."* (2010:105)	Digital media are crucial points of information for Gens Y and Z.
Post-segmented	*"Wherever they are in the world, Y-ers and Z-ers are logged on and linked up. From Sydney to Shanghai, Melbourne to Madras, they are influenced by the same movies, music, fashions and food. In this wireless world their technology knows no boundaries and nor do their blogs, chat rooms, friendships and vocabulary."* (2010:105)	They may consider volunteering opportunities beyond their local community. So appealing to their sense of local, as well as global community is crucial.

Source: McCrindle (2010:99-107).

This differential use of language, relationship with digital technologies and preferences for certain learning styles potentially have huge implications; from how marketing and any other communication needs to be structured and directed at different volunteer audiences to how different volunteers may prefer to be trained, supported and recognised; so McCrindle's model formed a useful basis on which this research could hypothesise on potential implications of engaging with Gen Y for volunteer-involving organisations (see *Table 1.1*).

This research sought to test whether young Tasmanian volunteers exemplified McCrindle's Gen Y typological preferences for informal language styles and experiential learning and being up for anything, as long as it fits with their values and lifestyles and whether Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations have taken these traits on board in the approaches they took to communicating with their Gen Y volunteers.

1.4 BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER SECTOR: A MODEL AND STRUCTURE FOR THE REPORT

VT (2009a:8-9) has put forward a model, developed by Oz VPM, of what an effective volunteer sector needs. It argues the volunteer sector needs three co-dependant 'legs' (see *Figure 1.2*):[23]

- ***willing volunteers*** – the sector needs a continuous supply of willing volunteers, due to the natural lifecycle of volunteering. This is particularly the case for young volunteers, who may move on swiftly, due to the likely changes and transitions that will take place in their lives. And, for young Tasmanians, the likelihood is that they may leave the state.
- ***meaningful roles*** – VT emphasise that no matter how large the willing volunteer pool is, they need meaningful roles to benefit and indeed to remain a volunteer; and
- ***effective leadership*** – As VT state, *"the contribution of willing volunteers in meaningful roles will go un-tapped, underutilised and unrecognised without effective leadership and management in place to support them."* .[24]

So the research literature review and this final report are divided into these three elements VT identify as essential for a healthy volunteer sector to develop:[25]

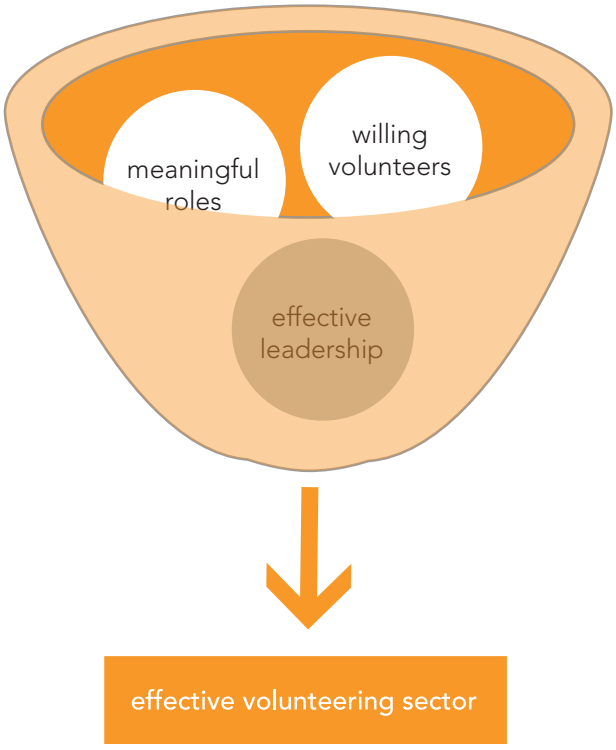
- ***Willing volunteers*** – what it takes to cultivate interest in volunteering amongst young Tasmanians and to successfully recruit them;
- ***Meaningful roles*** – what it takes to develop volunteering roles that are appropriate for young people;
- ***Effective leadership*** – what characteristics might be present in successful youth engaging organisations.

The researcher chose to use this division to help VT, volunteer-involving organisations and government to flesh out what specifically needs to be considered under each of these volunteer 'legs' to encourage and sustain more young people within Tasmanian volunteering.

In part II of the report – 'the findings' – each chapter is colour-coded to help the reader navigate where they are in the report. To further help the reader, each chapter starts with some key quotes that sum up the chapter and lays out the sub sections that the chapter covers. Each subsection explores the research findings and then summarises what we have learnt at the end of each subsection. Finally, each chapter ends with conclusions that have emerged from the field to help us further understand each of the three legs of the volunteer stool.

The final conclusions include recommendations for further research that emerged through the fieldwork's discussions.

Figure 1.2: VT's model of an effective volunteer sector: the 'three legged stool'



Source: VT, 2009a, Positioning Paper, p.8, taken from Andy Fryer, OZVPM.

23 VT, 2009a, *ibid*, p.8 The three-legged stool is taken from Andy Fryar, www.ozvpm.com

24 VT, 2009a, *ibid*, p9

25 The three-legged stool is taken from Andy Fryar, www.ozvpm.com. Cited in Volunteering Tasmania, 2009a, *Positioning Paper for the State of Volunteering Report: Tasmania 2010*. p.8.

2. Research questions, definitions and methodology

2.1 WHAT WILL THIS RESEARCH TELL US?

The research explored:

- ***What approaches do Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations use to successfully engage and retain young people as volunteers?*** Do these 'fit' with models of good practice in youth engagement in Tasmania, Australia and the UK?
- ***Are there similarities and differences in these approaches across sectors?*** If so, what part is played by organisational cultures, strategies and practice?
- ***What recommendations can be made to other Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations and to the government to engage and retain young people successfully?***

2.2 RESEARCH DEFINITIONS

This research defined young people as *16* ***to*** *24*.[26] So this broadly fits with the younger half of McCrindle's (2010:6-7) Gen Y, plus the oldest of his Gen Z. See *Figure 4.9* for a full list of McCrindle's generational birth dates.

The research defined volunteering as it is defined by VT's State of Volunteering Report's survey research. i.e. young people who, *"**willingly give unpaid help, in the form of time, service, or skills, to or through an organisation or group**."*[27]

2.3 HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?

The research was conducted between June and October 2010 and focused on case studies of three Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations that currently recruit young people as volunteers.[28]

The researcher gave VT selection criteria, to ensure that the case studies covered organisations within different volunteer sectors, age mixes of volunteers within programmes, a geographical spread of activities and levels of infrastructure support. [29]

Each case study included:

- ***documentary analysis*** of the organisation's strategy and operational practice in relation to youth engagement (where available);
- ***semi-structured interview*** with a member of senior management about the organisation's strategic goals and delivery plans in relation to youth volunteering, and about the organisational culture;
- ***semi-structured interview*** with a staff member responsible for youth volunteer recruitment and retention (where available) about what works in terms of youth volunteering and why and what the main challenges are;[30]
- a ***focus group*** with up to five young volunteers about their paths to volunteering, their motivations and their experiences of volunteering and what works. Participants were asked to complete ***individual volunteer journey maps***, to provide individual pen portraits of their motivations, volunteer experiences, perceived impact. As a group, they discussed their journeys and their ideas on how to get more young people volunteering in Tasmania.[31]

26 See *appendix 1* for an explanation of why we have chosen this age range.

27 Webb, M., et al, 2010, *ibid.*, State of Volunteering Surveys. This definition was used to aid comparison with VTs' SOV report. However, please note that within its work, VT follows Volunteering Australia's definition of volunteering, which includes reference to volunteering taking place in the not for profit sector and being in a designated volunteer position. See *appendix 2* for a more detailed exploration of volunteering definitions and how the recommendation was made for the definition used in this report.

28 See *appendix 9* for research timescales.

29 See *appendix 5* for the case study selection criteria and final choices.

30 Where only one organisational member was available, they covered all of these topics in one interview.

31 See *appendix 4* for the respondent information sheets on how the focus groups were conducted.

- an ***organisational culture tool***, adapted from Cameron and Quinn's (2006:26-29) framework, was completed by all three case study organisations' managers, to explore their organisational values in seven operational areas.[32] This helped to gauge whether the organisations approached strategy, leadership and volunteer management in a similar manner.

In total, six organisation representatives were interviewed and eleven young volunteers.

To help address the issue of limited data validity (Seale, 2001:134-5)[33] due to the small sample, the research held ***semi-structured interviews*** with **peak bodies**[34] that represent youth volunteering issues in Tasmania, either at a local, national or sector level – Volunteering Tasmania and the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNoT). This assisted in 'triangulating' and 'checking' responses.[35]

The research started with an extensive review of relevant social policy, research literature and professional 'good practice' in engaging young people in volunteering in Tasmania, Australia and the UK.[36] From this review were formed the fieldwork topic guides for young people, volunteering-involving organisations and peak bodies[37] and the organisational culture tool.

2.4 RESEARCH STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

As case study research, this offers an in depth insight into a small number of young volunteers' experiences, meanings, suggestions and of organisations' strategies, practices and reflections.

The research draws on previous research as a way to 'check' the applicability of responses to broader groups, but it does not attempt to make generalisations about what will work for all Tasmanian young people or all Tasmanian organisations; neither can it make definitive statements about causal links. Therefore, organisations are invited to consider lessons that may work for them within their context and there is an extensive list of further research that falls out of the issues raised within this fieldwork.

32 See *appendix 7* for the organisational culture tool and section 6.4 of the report for the analysis.

33 In Sarantakos, S. 1998, *Social Research*, Macmillan Press Ltd: London

34 Peak bodies are organisations that represent sector issues to government – perhaps know as 'representative bodies' or 'campaigning organisations' in the UK. Throughout this research, such organisations will be referred to as 'peak bodies'.

35 Planned interviews with social policy makers, such as the Social Inclusion Unit, did not happen, due to time constraints. These would have explored the social policy context: long-term vision for youth volunteering, the policy challenges, solutions, and funding the infrastructure.

36 See *appendix 8* for the literature review.

37 See *appendix 6* for research topic guides.

3. Case studies: characteristics

3.1 VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

Due to time constraints, three, rather than the desired four, case studies of volunteer-involving organisations were agreed. Within this sample, diversity was achieved within (***see*** *Table 3.1*):

- ***the type of volunteer activity*** each organisation was involved in – from welfare and community activities (including welfare advice and support services, aged care and community media broadcasting), to youth services (community mentoring) to sports and recreation and state emergency services;
- the volunteer ***programmes' geographical locations*** – from metropolitan (Hobart) to regional community based;[38]
- where volunteer ***programmes' activities were focused*** – from purely metropolitan (Hobart) to regional to statewide;
- ***age mix of volunteers*** – from programmes where all volunteers were young people to those where there was a mix of ages;
- the ***infrastructure support*** the organisations receive – from a standalone organisation with total responsibility for its funding and strategy, to those with national or international infrastructures.

Table 3.1: Case study volunteer-involving organisations: characteristics

Organisation	A	B	C
Activity type*	Community/ Welfare	Community/Welfare Parenting/children/youth HACC	Sports and recreations /State Emergency Services
Geographical location(s)	Metropolitan – Hobart	Statewide – regional/ metropolitan locations	1 regional location
Beneficiary focus/ age range	Hobart community 15 to 30s or 'youth of all ages'	Some – statewide Some – local community Some all ages; some youth focused	Local community/ regional All ages
Volunteer age range	All ages	Some programmes – All ages Other programmes – young (16-24)	All ages Has specific programmes for young people
Infrastructure support**	Stand alone organisation	Part of state/national/ international organisation	Part of state/national organisation
Number of volunteers within organisation	Approx 107 Plus 20 students	2300	Approx. 250
Proportion of volunteers aged 16 to 24	Less than 50% of volunteers	Less than 10% of volunteers	Approx 20% of volunteers at the club

* Categories taken from ABS Voluntary Work (2006a) volunteer activity types

*** 'Infrastructure' refers to core organisational functions, such as governance, strategic and operational planning, financial and legal compliance.*

38 Due to the fourth organisation not participating, the research did not cover an organisation with a purely rural/remote focus.

This diversity was designed to help consider the similarities/differences in experiences across sectors/activities/support structures.

The scale of volunteering varied within the three organisations, from organisation A with just over 100 volunteers to organisation B with 2300 volunteers. But all organisations attracted a mixed age range of volunteers; young volunteers made up from just under 10 per cent (organisation B) to under 50 per cent (organisation A) of the volunteer workforce within these organisations.

3.2 PEAK BODIES

Two peak bodies were interviewed. 'Peak body A' focused on the interests of volunteers in Tasmania. 'Peak body B' focused on the interests of young people in Tasmania. Both represent local and state issues and have links with sister organisations nationally.

3.3 YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

Although the fieldwork aimed to work with up to eight young people in each of the three groups, recruitment proved to be challenging within the timescale. The fieldwork involved eleven young volunteers across three focus groups (See *Table 3.2*); one group (from organisation B) contained five young volunteers, four in the group from organisation C, and two in organisation A's group. Whilst this is disappointing, the in depth nature of the focus groups and volunteer journey maps has enabled useful insights on experiences and views to emerge.

Table 3.2: Volunteer characteristics

Volunteer characteristics	Categories	Number of volunteers in sample
Age	16-17 18-20 21-24	1 7 3
Gender	Male Female	6 5
Residential area: socio-economic profile*	Deciles 1-2 (areas of higher disadvantage) Deciles 5-6 Deciles 7-8 Deciles 9-10 (areas of lower disadvantage)	1 1 4 5
School**	Private sector Public sector	9 2
Volunteering activity***	Community and Welfare Parenting/children/youth Administration Search and rescue	5 1 1 4
Length volunteering in current role	Under 1 year 1 year -23 months 2 years – 35 months 3 years + Missing response	0 4 0 6 1
Volunteered before	Yes No	6 5

* Socio-economic profile has been measured through the state deciles within the IRSAD = the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage. 1 = most disadvantaged; 10 = most advantaged within the state (ABS, 2006b).

** 'Private school' includes independent and Catholic-led schools. 'Public schools' are those funded through state government.

*** Activity types taken from ABS, 2006a, Voluntary Work assessment categories.

Table 3.2 provides a summary of volunteers' characteristics. The sample's age distribution was low on under 18s. There was a gender balance in the overall sample, although two of the groups were very much weighted in favour of one gender or another.

The majority of volunteers lived within areas ranked as relatively advantaged within the state;[39] the majority had attended schools within the private sector.

For volunteers in two focus groups (organisations A and B), all but one had previously volunteered, and this was mainly through their school. In the other group (organisation C), all the volunteers had joined the organisation as young children along with their families. So, the majority had had an early introduction to the volunteering culture.

In two of the focus groups (organisations A and C), participants had similar volunteer roles – in search and rescue (organisation C) and in community and welfare roles (organisation A). The third focus group (from organisation B) had volunteers who undertook a range of activities, from administration, to working within the local community (with schools or within aged care), to working with the Tasmanian community on a state-wide basis, either aimed at just young people as beneficiaries, or all ages.

Only four of the volunteer roles were specifically youth-focused in terms of the beneficiaries; and even within these, volunteers within the programmes were all ages.

39 The research used the Australia Bureau of Statistic's (2006) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas' Postal Code Area Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD). National postcodes are ranked in deciles, with the 10 per cent of areas with the most disadvantage in decile 1, up to the areas in the highest 10 per cent of advantage given a decile of 10.

II

THE FINDINGS

4: Creating young willing volunteers

5: Creating meaningful volunteer roles for young people

6: Effective leadership for young volunteers

4. Creating young willing volunteers

on Gens Y & Z...

"Employers are [dealing] with a generation who don't see themselves as employees who need a job, but as entrepreneurs who have options."

[McCrindle, 2010:38]

On creating young willing volunteers...

"To engage with any demographic, an organisation needs to develop an understanding of what it takes to involve different…age groups, …particularly in terms of management and…roles you might offer and rewards and… in terms of thinking about what would motivate a …person to want to be involved with that organisation."

[Peak body A]

"If you don't have connections with schools, or other youth organisations, you're in big trouble."

[Peak body B]

"One thing that's been highlighted to us is that people are much more likely to volunteer if they're from a family of volunteers."

[Peak body A]

"Until it's on Facebook, it's not official!'

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"We haven't embraced the spontaneity of what volunteers can contribute."

[Organisation B]

"They volunteer with conditions, based on their other needs."

[Organisation B]

"If it can't be Googled, it can't be done."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

VT (2009a:8-9) reminds us that the sector needs a continuous supply of willing volunteers, due to the natural lifecycle of volunteering. And we know that there are particular challenges for renewing the pool of young, engaged volunteers in Tasmania. To further understand what it takes to create willing young volunteers, this chapter explores:

4.1	Understanding Tasmanian volunteer challenges	23
4.2	Understanding attitudes to volunteering	34
4.3	Understanding young people's motivations to volunteer	40
4.4	Who encourages volunteering in Tasmania? The critical role of networks	43
4.5	Recruitment processes	49
4.6	Inductions	56
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4.8	Conclusions: creating young willing volunteers	64

4.1 UNDERSTANDING TASMANIAN VOLUNTEER CHALLENGES

In their very useful study of young Australian volunteers, Ferrier et al (2004:63-71) list the features they found within successful Australian youth engaging organisations. The overarching approach within these organisations has been to understand challenges to volunteering and to address them in ways that work for their target youth volunteering market. So the strategic approach was about ensuring organisations have the appropriate management information to understand their youth volunteering market and designing their strategies based on this.

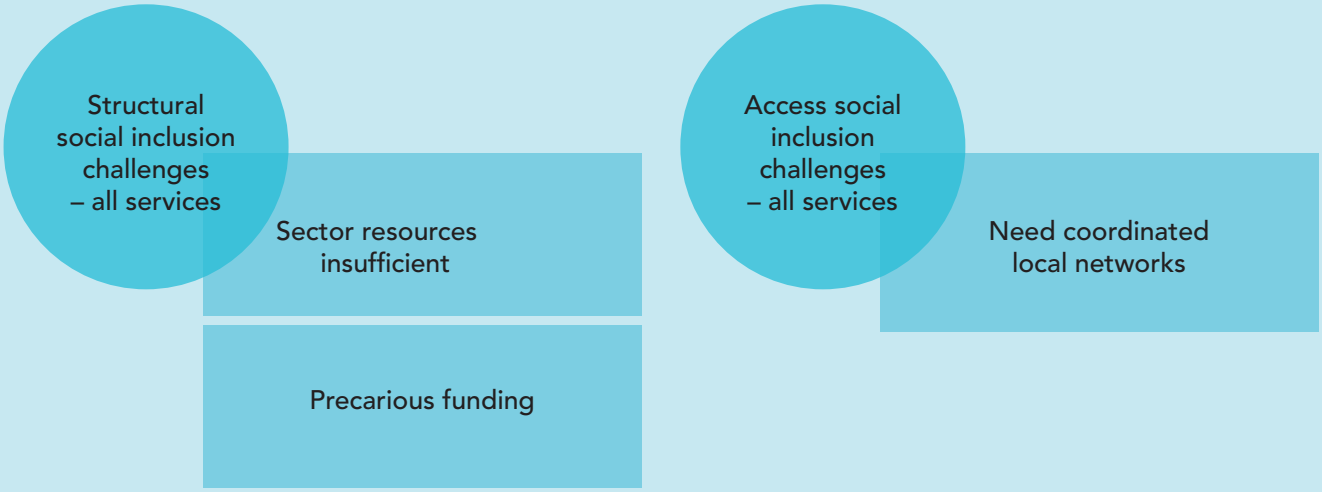
So the starting point for this study was exploring what organisations and volunteers saw as challenges Tasmania needs to tackle in order to engage young people in volunteering; and whether these fit with what we already know from the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy and existing Tasmanian, Australian and UK research.

4.1.A TASMANIAN VOLUNTEER SECTOR CHALLENGES

The Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy recognises that there are significant challenges for all areas of service delivery within Tasmania (from housing, education, and health services to volunteering) to ensure that they are more inclusive (Adams, D., 2009:8-12). These challenges include (*Figure 4.1*):

- Structural issues, such as the challenge of being able to undertake long-term service planning and provide short-term delivery under the pressure of inconsistent funding and inadequate resources;
- Service access issues, such as ensuring a more joined up approach within local communities, so that service users can be easily referred on to all the facilities and services they need in their local area without having to find numerous services themselves.

Figure 4.1: Summary of the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy's challenges across all service areas



Source: Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy (Adams, D., 2009:8-12).

Additionally, the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy identifies a number of specific sector challenges to making Tasmanian volunteering more inclusive (Adams, D., 2009:8-12, 54-57), including:

- broadening the range of volunteering activities young Tasmanians engage in;
- harnessing community networks more effectively;
- effectively using IT and social networking within volunteering;
- addressing the access issues that prevent participation in volunteering. (see *Figure 4.2*)

Figure 4.2: Summary of the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy's challenges for the Tasmanian volunteer sector

Source: Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy (Adams, D., 2009:8-12, 54-57).

Our young volunteers and case study organisations elaborated on these challenges for young Tasmanians and for organisations and identified a number of additional challenges (not mentioned by the Social Inclusion Strategy or within previous Tasmanian research) for Tasmanian organisations in engaging and retaining young volunteers (see summary in *Figure 4.3*).

4.1.B PERSONAL CHALLENGES TO THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

Cost: time and financial

Time – an issue for everyone

As reflected in previous Tasmanian, wider Australian and UK studies (Adams, N., 2009; Crowley et al, 2008; Ferrier et al, 2004; V, 2009), young volunteers nearly all mentioned that time was the main issue that made it difficult to think about volunteering before they found their current role.

As one organisation stressed, **"time is a factor across the board"** for volunteers; and another:

"Having a time commitment does seem to be a problem for some people."
[Organisation A]

Figure 4.3: Volunteers' challenges when thinking about whether to volunteer

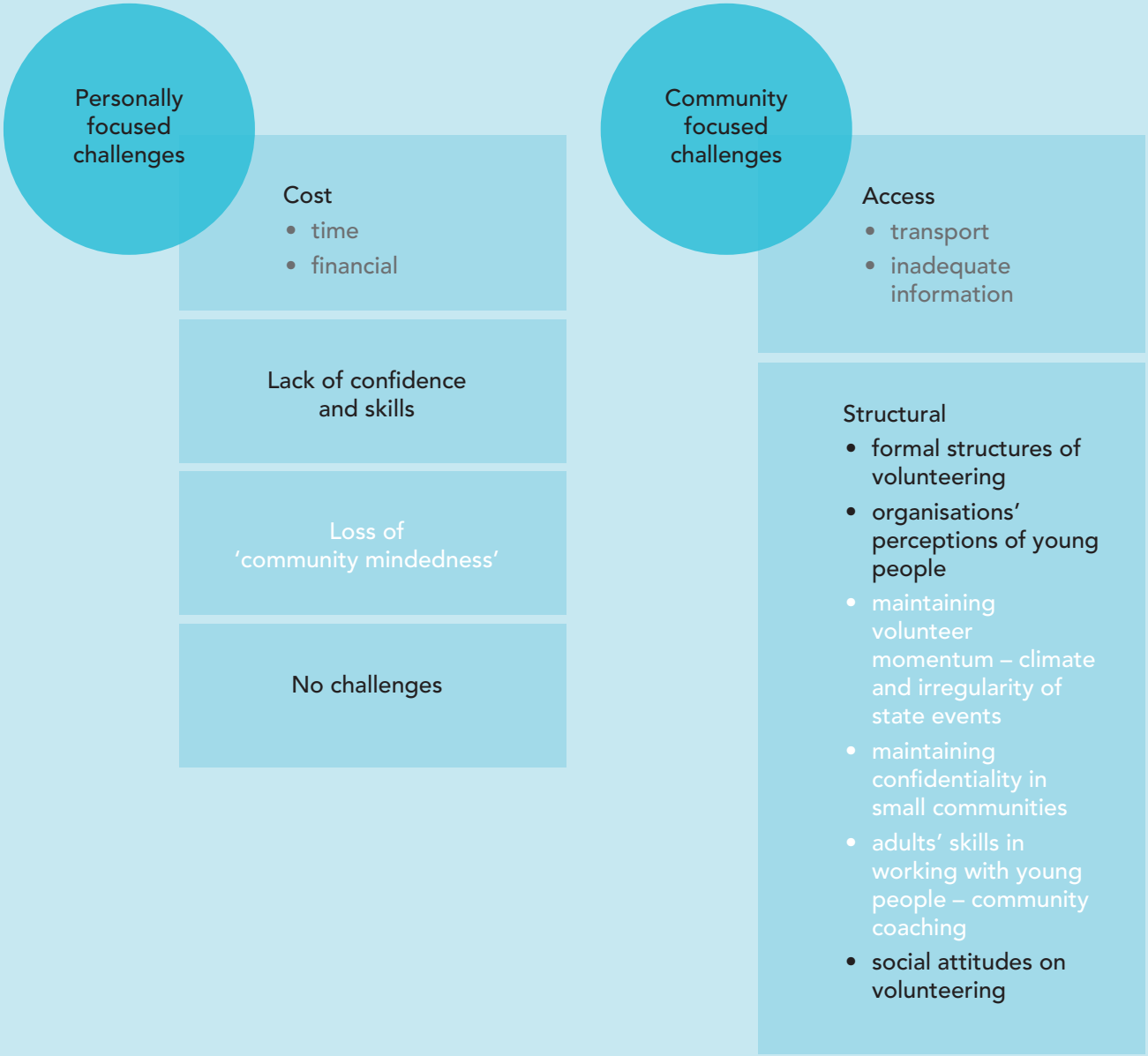


Figure 4.3 key: Grey font – main challenges for volunteers within this research
White font – challenges identified in this research, not identified in previous research [Adams, N., (2009), Crowley et al (2008), Ferrier et al (2004), Hill et al (2009), Pye et al (2009), V (2007, 2008, 2009)].

This is not a challenge unique to young people. But it is a very real challenge that organisations need to address; the challenge being convincing people why they should dedicate their hard pressed time to volunteering – and volunteering with their organisation – rather than doing something else:

"People are time poor these days. They have got a lot of other commitments and young volunteers especially have work and…in Tasmania they tend to be involved in a lot of things. So they've only got a specific amount of time. So if they think of your organisation in a negative way…they're just going to say, 'Well, I'm not going to bother; I'll just give my time to something else.'"

[Peak body B]

Young people's time – transient commitments

Balancing volunteering with school/university and paid work was the main challenge for young volunteers, as one volunteer highlighted:

"It's a really hard group to engage – to get them to volunteer consistently, because there's a whole lot of other things going on, like school and work."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"Time limitations with school/ family/uni/etc…"

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Not lack of time, but lack of time during office hours, due to uni studies."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

One organisation talked about this challenge in terms of opportunity costs:

"A number of young people need to secure part time jobs. So if it's the difference between four hours volunteering, or four hours at McDonalds, there's a dilemma there. The income could drive it."

[Organisation B]

And the upshot of this, is that many young people can not commit to volunteering regularly, because they are waiting to hear from work about their forthcoming shifts:

"They volunteer with conditions, based on their other needs."

[Organisation B]

"My timetable's changed; I can't do that time slot anymore."

[Organisation A]

This can present a major challenge to organisations that only offer formal programme opportunities that demand a regular, structured time commitment:

"Everything's transient for young people; university is for a few weeks, part-time work…Whereas if you are in a full-time job, you're more likely to commit…I find young people more unreliable. There are a lot of organisations that don't want to involve young people because of that…"

[Organisation A]

Putting work in at the volunteer recruitment stage had paid off for organisation A in minimizing the risk of people just 'dropping out:'

"We've adapted that flexibility…We need the commitment from people who are [beneficiary facing], because we design the…entire schedule around [them]…If they just disappeared after two months, that's really quite unhelpful if you've done marketing…So we want people to be reliable, dependable in that sense. But, yeah, I've created flexibility with the other roles… Even with the higher responsibility roles,…I don't put a time limit on it. Usually people are pretty good in those roles to tell me, 'I can't handle doing this anymore,…I'd rather someone who has the time do it.' We usually attract those type of people to that role."

[Organisation A]

Organisation C suggested that being outside of the metropolitan areas was a turn off for young volunteers, as they would prefer to be spending time in the city. So organisations are potentially competing with young people's desires to spend more time socially, as well as with study and paid work.

Prohibitive costs

The financial costs of participating were also flagged by two organisations:

> **"We think financial is one barrier… It'd cost a kid to get involved…perhaps $170 to $180 for uniforms, membership, books; all that sort of stuff."**
>
> [Organisation C]

Ways forward

For all these organisations, committing to wanting to involve young volunteers and then understanding where regular commitment and where flexibility can be built in was the key to offering appropriate roles for their volunteers. *Section 5.2.a, 5.7.c* and *organisations' tips #10* and *#13* will explore how some of these organisations are seeking to overcome this barrier through innovative home based, or short term volunteering opportunities and *section 4.2.b* and *organisations' tips #2* to *#4* focuses on reaching the hard to reach.

Lack of confidence and skills - - - - -

Unfamiliar territory

One volunteer flagged confidence as a challenge when they thought of volunteering:

> **"Daunting phase of life: nerves – stepping outside the boundary…Unknown territory…Not knowing what to do."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B]

As the volunteers in this sample discussed, this is often about volunteers' perceptions of not being able to do a role effectively, which may be overcome once someone is in a role and sees the impact of their contribution:

> **"That's why some people don't try [the activities offered by organisation C], 'cos they don't think they'd be capable of standing up, because they don't actually know what it is. It's so much about educating people on what these things are. That would go with not just [organisation C], but other things."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

It may also be about lacking the confidence to enter into an environment with which they are not familiar:

> **"Commitment – how much was expected."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation A]

This is an issue explored in previous Australian and UK research (Ferrier et al, 2004:31, 35-37; Hill et al, 2009:12; National Youth Agency, 2007:26; V, 2007:7).

For some roles, of course, a level of physical fitness is required. Clearly, this can present a barrier for some young people to participate and may play into the confidence issue.

Ways forward

This can be overcome through recruiting groups of young people who know each other or families, or by offering peer recruitment or mentoring. These issues will be explored further in *sections 4.4, 4.5.d* and *5.6.b* and illustrated in *organisations' tips #5* and *#7*.

Lack of 'community mindedness' - - -

Finding a place in our local community

Thinking about our place in community came across as an important cog in creating a willing volunteer. For organisation C, the involvement of families was key to attracting young volunteers, so lack of parental support was seen as a potential barrier to volunteering.

For the representative from Peak body B, the issue was more fundamental. Despite the strong sense of community cohesion flagged in the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy, voicing a personal opinion, they felt that there was a potential problem with sustaining this community strength with the younger generation:

> **"People in Tasmania are quite comfortable just to sit and not express what they feel about issues; or express it in their own living rooms. But actually going to a community forum, people are quite hesitant to do that…I think the older generation…are quite community minded, but I think we've lost that in our individualisation of culture…We've really become in our own little world and we don't think outside of it."**
>
> [Peak body B – personal opinion]

Addressing this was suggested as a key to creating a sense of community:

"People get so isolated and if you're disadvantaged and don't have many opportunities, it's a very lonely existence and I see community involvement as a way to get to know people."

[Peak body B]

No challenges

But the striking commonality across volunteers and the case study organisations was that, once motivated to volunteer, these challenges were overcome. And for some motivated young volunteers, they were clear that there was nothing challenging about them thinking about volunteering:

"It's not hard to get involved…It's fun and everyone looks after you."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"No, there isn't really anything. It's quite easy to sit…with friends watching the water!"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"No, it was always something I wanted to do."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Only hard if you're rostered on at work and you have to take a paid day off (but it doesn't bother me much)."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

This is of course, the important message about challenges for organisations thinking of involving young people; that, with thought and planning, they can often be overcome.

4.1.C STRUCTURAL AND ACCESS CHALLENGES TO THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

Transport

Poor public transport links

All organisations and most volunteers mentioned that poor public transport facilities within Tasmania prevented volunteers from thinking about volunteering and then made it difficult for them to get to activities, particularly outside of the metropolitan areas if they don't have a driver's licence:[40]

"Transport."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Distance."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"We take a lot of volunteers from university and from 'early corporate' – transition into workplace. We don't see a great deal of volunteers…from…on the periphery of major areas. We believe a lot of that is linked to their ability to actually connect in…have the transport."

[Organisation B]

"We have little spots all over Tasmania – the hubs. If you don't live in a central area,…there's no transport…There's people who have one bus a day and they're only half an hour out from town. And forget it on the weekends! And we see that as a huge issue for our volunteers, because if they can't get to our forums, they miss the chance to say what they really want to say. And their opinions are so valuable – especially on transport!"

[Peak body B]

40 There is no Tasmanian public rail system and a limited bus service. This issue is also discussed extensively in Crowley et al's (2008) study of rural volunteering in Tasmania.

This meant that organisations had to design activities around this and it limited what young volunteers were able to do:

"Anything that was travelling too far, I wouldn't be able to do it….So festivals and things were out for me. [Current volunteering role] was good because I could mostly do it from home."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"If I'm offering a time slot that's 10pm to midnight, they'll be like, 'Aah, the last bus leaves…at 11.30.' You know, 'Is there an earlier one?'"

[Organisation A]

Ways forward

There were various strategies for overcoming these transport issues. For some, the solution was families car sharing or making a family commitment to get young volunteers to sports activities – often organised by the young people themselves via mobiles; for example, one volunteer at organisation C:

"There's a young bloke,…he travels [48km]. He comes down to training, 'cos his mates at [school] live here and there's six of them in the…club. And he just loves it. And his father and mother bring him down to training during the week, bring him down at weekends; they'll go back to town and they'll come back down at the end of the day…Huge family commitment… That's a huge expense for them."

[Organisation C]

Other strategies included young volunteers focusing their volunteering locally, or activities they can do from home, to minimise travel (see *organisations' tips #10 and #13*); to organisations considering offering transport as part of social inclusion scholarships (see *organisations' tips #2*) and ensuring access to statewide initiatives by hosting regional events (see *organisations' tips #4*).

However, even regional events were not always the solution, due to what one organisation referred to as a 'regional mentality'; in other words, having a mental boundary over which they were not prepared to cross for events:

"Tasmania has such a regional mentality… We want to have [an event] in a central location and people say, 'Well, that would be Hobart.' But it's not for people who live on the West Coast, or the North West; it's a huge journey down to Hobart. So we have it in Launceston, but then people in the South are like, 'I don't want to go to Launceston.' Even though it's only two hours away."

[Peak body B]

One suggested 'must' to overcoming transport and access issues was to ask young people what their issues are:

"Consider access. How do young people get involved or work in programmes that may not be centrally located?"

[Organisation B]

Consultation methods are further explored in *section 6.3*.

Organisation B had decided to be **"place based"** for administrating some volunteer programmes, which had helped them to understand the barriers and significance of locational disadvantage:

"Our experience being out there; recognising the distance to travel, the connections in – they are quite significant. I find myself scheduling my appointments… in Hobart…to stop the inconvenience for others…Helps understand the barriers."

[Organisation B]

Where potential volunteers are already convinced or committed, they will, **"find ways to get over this."** But it is another barrier for those yet to be convinced of volunteering and, as one organisation stated:

"It reinforces disadvantage in regional communities."

[Peak body B]

Inadequate information

Youth-targeted Tasmanian advertising

Fitting with existing Tasmanian (Adams, N., 2009:19) and Australian (Ferrier et al, 2004:34-35) research, the majority of young volunteers talked about the inadequacy of volunteering information when they were looking for their role, suggesting that they got their current roles *in spite* of the marketing and information, citing websites not being updated regularly, or email addresses being incorrect:

> **"Unsure what to get involved in/how to start."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B]

> **"For me who was motivated and has initiative, it was quite easy. But youth advertising could be a lot better for those not so."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B]

> **"How you get involved, I think's, really important, because, yeah, you might be advocating for this amazing opportunity for volunteering, but then people go, 'How do I get into that?'…Obviously Google would be my first option."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

And this view was supported by organisations and peak bodies:

> **"From what we've seen anecdotally and from our own research,…one of the barriers to young people volunteering… is…either that young people don't know the organisations exist, or [that] there are opportunities out there."**
>
> [Peak body A]

There was a unanimous opinion within organisations; that, in general, many volunteer-involving organisations do not promote their opportunities **"beyond their small group,"** which often does not include many young people. So young people tend to go to what they know. And added to this is the general lack of awareness of the diversity of volunteering opportunities amongst young people. One organisation felt that the 'high profile' Tasmanian volunteer roles may not appeal to young people, so that stifles any further interest:

> **"There are some well known volunteering roles that are public and there may be an aversion to people participating in those types of roles. By the nature of that, they don't explore elsewhere."**
>
> [Organisation B]

Using youth-appropriate media

Another major information challenge is the shifting means of communicating with different generations:

> **"If you're not keeping yourself up to date…and using the right mediums of communications, then you'll just miss people."**
>
> [Organisation B]

Ways forward

These issues are, of course, closely linked into using appropriate communication media, as well as targeting marketing, both of which will be explored in later sections *(4.5* and *4.7)*.

Formal structures of volunteering

Lengthy application processes

The lengthy application process within some organisations was 'tolerated' by young people in this sample, but was recognised by organisations to be a barrier to some young people participating:

> **"My experience is that young people want to enquire, sign up and volunteer very quickly. And if you can't meet that need, then they've gone and they'll find someone who can."**
>
> [Organisation B]

Overcoming this can be challenging for organisations, who are required to undertake such a, **"disconnected process, driven by legislation,"** including police checks, taking up references etc. But, all of the organisations had at least started to look at how to make their application and induction processes faster and more welcoming (see *sections 4.5* and *4.6*).

Working within legal and policy frameworks

Legislation was mentioned by all three case study organisations as presenting a challenge to youth engagement and was described by organisation B as,

"the one barrier we can't break through."

Requirements, such as police checks, age restrictions on participating in some activities, health and safety requirements, insurance requirements, programmes and activities subject to volunteers being able to drive, all need to be adhered to for the organisation to meet its responsibilities. This was likely to either slow down induction processes, or cut off opportunities for young volunteers. To minimise risk of volunteers losing interest, the keys here were keeping in contact with volunteers, or in the case of prohibitive barriers, considering what other opportunities are available either within the organisation or elsewhere (see *'organisations' tips #1'*)

If the barrier to youth participation was due to an organisational policy, rather than legislation, the key was being open to potential changes. Organisation A had a current policy not to offer under 18s their own broadcasting opportunities. This was due to the organisation having formalised schools' involvement with their programmes, by requiring it be part of a structured curriculum offer. Whilst this had been useful in offering those 18 and over a thorough pathway to opportunities within the organisation through their college, it had stifled spontaneous involvement from under 18s, many of whom did not have a curriculum offer they could access which enabled them to take part. Organisation A felt this may be a policy they needed to revisit and was open to finding ways in which under 18s could contribute to activities.[41]

Needing regular commitment

Accommodating flexibility in commitment and attendance, due to young volunteers' other personal commitments can be a major challenge for organisations. But all three organisations had found ways to accommodate this. For two organisations (A and B), this was by identifying which roles needed a regular commitment and which ones could offer flexibility and selecting people on that basis:

"You've got to have some give and take. There was a woman…she had really severe health problems…and she'd been knocked back by another organisation… There was nothing wrong with her skills, she just couldn't commit to coming in at the same time every week, because of doctors' appointments…I don't have a problem, as long as people are able to tell me beforehand, so I'm not expecting them to come in."

[Organisation A]

See *organisations' tips #10* and *#13* on flexibility and offering different levels of engagement.

organisations' tip #1

OVERCOMING LEGISLATIVE BARRIERS

Organisation B suggested that if it's about processes being slowed down, the important issue is maintaining contact with potential volunteers whilst this is happening, so they don't lose interest. If it's a clear 'no' to participation, (for example due to age restrictions), it becomes, "about how we filter that interest into another area." And that may be finding another role within the organisation, or referring the volunteer to another, more suitable, organisation.

Organisations' perceptions of young people

Seeing young people as 'challenging'

Organisations B and C, both of which had a mixed age range of volunteers, recognised that there were still internal perceptions about young people as volunteers that needed to shift into a more positive mindset – from one about challenge to one about possibilities:

"There are some long standing organisational beliefs or barriers… young people are loud or unreliable. Or 'we can't have someone with a skateboard or pierced nose.'"

[Organisation B]

41 Since the fieldwork, organisation A has indeed revised this policy. It has now restructured that particular program so they are able to include people under the age of 18 and give more young people opportunities to have experience in the media.

Ways forward

A common feature across all three case study organisations was that they saw young people's potential volunteering contributions positively and, even where they could see there were significant cultural shifts that they needed to make, had started to reflect on their own challenges and how they could address these. (see *section 6.2.a and b* for more discussion on strategic focus).

This shift into the positive is significant and has been identified in previous research Australian literature (Ferrier et al, 2004:3) and UK literature (V, 2008:8) as a consistent feature in organisations that successfully engage young people in volunteering.

Maintaining volunteer momentum: seasonal activities and irregularity of state events

An issue not highlighted in previous research literature is that of maintaining young people's momentum to volunteer, either due to the seasonal nature of activities or the scarcity of events. This will not, of course, be completely unique to Tasmania, but there are specific elements to the Tasmanian experience that deserve close attention.

Tasmanian climate: short season for outdoor activities

For some sports and recreational activities, the Tasmanian climate was seen as a major challenge. For organisations with some outdoor sports and recreational activities that depend on a favourable summer season, the season is small compared to other Australian States (January to March for organisation Cs' main activities):

"In summer, all I do is [this volunteering role]. But it's a bit different in the winter; there's not as much stuff on…No-one's down here…So I play water polo."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

As **"only elite train over winter,"** [Organisation C], it can be difficult to re-engage young volunteers every year and an issue Tasmanian organisations need to consciously address to sustain their supply of young volunteers in sports and outdoor volunteering roles.

Ways forward

See *section 6.2.c and organisations' tips #16* for ways forward.

Regularity of state opportunities

The **"size and scale"** of the state presented a challenge to organisation B. All three organisations are engaged in state music events, which are a significant draw for young people as volunteers. Organisation B had volunteer programmes specifically focused on these events. They described how, to participate, there was **"a significant contribution"** upfront for volunteers, in terms of at least two and a half days training, in addition to the sign up process. As there are only two significant Tasmanian music events for volunteers to contribute to each year, this left this organisation with the challenge of keeping these young volunteers engaged for the rest of the year. The organisation flagged that they needed, **"a number of opportunities that keep young people feeling like they are contributing and their volunteering contribution is valued."**

[*Organisation B*]

As there are more music events in other states, this organisation suggested that keeping up this momentum may be more of a challenge in Tasmania than elsewhere.

Maintaining confidentiality in small communities

Organisation B highlighted that, given Tasmania's mainly regional and rural population, if people volunteer locally, it is likely that they will know their beneficiaries. So there is a challenge of maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity if the activity is within a sensitive welfare area:

"In small communities you could be volunteering, and, as a result, exposing yourself and others to information that might make you feel uncomfortable, or may make others uncomfortable."

[Organisation B]

This could particularly be the case in the context of services where trust needs to be established between volunteers and beneficiaries and there is a degree of disclosure. Although this could go either way, there is a risk that beneficiaries may be more reluctant to engage with the service if they already know the volunteer. Organisation B gave examples of working with underprivileged families, or young people with literacy problems; volunteers may be helping someone they go to school with, or see frequently.

Although this issue may not be unique to Tasmania, as a mainly regional and rural state it is perhaps an underexplored issue for engaging volunteers of any age.

Developing adults' skills to work with young people

Organisation C was very articulate about the challenge of developing adults' skills to deal with young volunteers effectively. This is not an issue widely explored in youth volunteering research literature to date and, whilst not an issue unique to Tasmania, is clearly crucial for building a healthy volunteer sector.

This is explored further in *section 6.5.b*.

Social attitudes

The image of volunteering was raised by a number of the volunteer involving organisations and the peak bodies as a barrier to participating. Whether that be tackling the view that, **"volunteering isn't sexy."** [Organisation B], or **"peer pressure"** not to participate [Organisation C], or addressing **"the all round…confidence"** to undertake volunteering [Organisation C], or helping young people to recognise that they are already volunteering:

> **"a number of young people wouldn't recognise that they are already volunteering…It's not an immediate recognition that helping out at the local sports club where you already play sports is volunteering."**
>
> [Organisation B]

This feeds into perceptions of volunteering, further explored in *section 4.2*.

4.1.D CHALLENGES NOT RAISED IN THIS RESEARCH

Disaffection with volunteering, or not thinking of it

Research that has included samples of non-volunteers and former volunteers, unlike this study, have found other barriers to participation for young people that are worth considering here.

Ferrier et al's Australian research found that some young people had been put off volunteering, due to 'guilt-focused' advertising, or advertising that makes the problem look too big, or they had a bad experience (Ferrier et at, 2006:31-38).

Adams' Tasmanian research adds that, for those who had never volunteered, they simply had not thought of it or had not seen the opportunity to (Adams, N., 2009:19).

Both of these issues relate to appropriate communication with young people and will be explored further in *sections 4.5 and 4.7*.

4.1.E TASMANIAN VOLUNTEER CHALLENGES – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

Specific Tasmanian challenges

- Poor Tasmanian public transport limits what young people can consider doing and where they can do it when thinking about volunteering. (Ways forward: offering flexible roles and a range of engagement levels – *sections 5.2.a and 5.7.c*; youth consultation – *section 6.3*);
- The lack of youth-focused Tasmanian volunteering advertising using appropriate media may limit the number of young people coming forward. (Ways forward: recruitment – *section 4.5*, communication – *section 4.7*, using young ambassadors – *section 4.5*);
- For volunteers of any age in certain outdoor or seasonal activities, volunteer momentum is hampered by Tasmania's climate and by the limited number of state events to use volunteers for. (Ways forward: role of families – *section 4.4.a*, using professional networks – *section 6.2.c*);
- For volunteers of any age, with Tasmania being a mainly regional and rural state, maintaining confidentiality in small communities is an important issue for organisations to address. (Ways forward: learning and development – *section 5.6*).

Challenges specifically about young volunteers

- Although time and cost are issues for everyone in thinking about volunteering, young people's challenges were likely to lie in both the number of commitments they had and in the transient nature of their commitments – between studies/work/social life/family. (Ways forward: flexible roles – *section 5.2.a* and a range of engagement levels – *section 5.7.c);*
- Young people may lack confidence to volunteer, because of going into unfamiliar territory and because of perceiving they do not have the skills.

(Ways forward: schools and families - *section 4.4.a*, recruitment – *section 4.5*, using young people as ambassadors – *section 4.5*, selling benefits – *section 5.3*, learning and development – *section 5.6*);

- Adults may lack the skills to effectively work with and develop young people. (Ways forward: volunteer management skills – *section 6.5*).

Generic challenges

Slow recruitment processes, legal and policy restrictions may hinder youth recruitment. (Ways forward: recruitment and induction – *sections 4.5 and 4.6*, flexible roles – *section 5.2.a*, professional networks – *section 6.2.c*);

- Having a negative attitude towards young people's involvement within an organisation is likely to hinder success in recruiting them. (Ways forward: strategic focus and guiding leadership principles – *sections 6.2.a and 6.2.b*);
- Peoples' attitudes to volunteering may restrict what they consider doing. (Ways forward: attitudes towards volunteering – *section 4.2*, using schools and other networks – *section 4.4*, recruitment – *section 4.5*, using young ambassadors – *section 4.5*).

If young people are determined to volunteer and organisations are purposeful about changing, these challenges can be overcome.

4.2 UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES TO VOLUNTEERING

As explored in 'challenges', having a positive attitude about young people's involvement in an organisation is an important part of successfully engaging them. Organisations' perceptions about young people and their attitudes towards volunteering may prevent them from attempting to market opportunities to young people, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy and cutting off a valuable resource to these organisations:

"There's a misconception about young people being hopeless and not having a strong work ethic and that they don't care…and don't want to contribute to the community…My experience…of seeing young people out there in the community is that…[they] are really inspired and energetic around volunteering. They may want to do things in slightly different ways, but I see that as a good thing. We can learn a lot from what they're doing."

[Peak body A]

So this next section explores these attitudes within the case study organisations and their implications.

4.2.A WHAT VOLUNTEERING MEANS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people's views

Doing things for others – and for yourself

Young Tasmanians' views of volunteering in this sample compared well to those in Australian and UK literature (Ferrier et al, 2004; Pye et al, 2009:16) and with VT's research definition – i.e. young Tasmanians in this sample had a broad view of volunteering, based on activity that is not for profit – or **"not for monetary profits."** [Volunteer, Organisation B] And is about doing things for others:

"We're always volunteering... Doing something that's not for you. Putting someone else before yourself."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"When I think about volunteering, I always think of it as giving back."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

However, most volunteers were clear that volunteering could also be about doing things for yourself:

"But we still get our qualifications out of it."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Doing something, not for nothing, but not for financial benefit."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Sections 4.3.a and *b* and *5.1.a* explore this further.

Can 'compulsion' be volunteering?

Some took the view that it must be of *"free will"*[42]:

"It's doing something because you ..want to. [Donating money that's tax deductable] is not really donating, because you get your money back… If there was no such thing as tax deduction or if nobody on the street asked you to donate money, if you did, that would be volunteering."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

For these volunteers, compulsory school volunteering was ruled out for this reason. Whereas others saw school volunteering as an integral part of the volunteering experience and being where the volunteering seed is planted.

Giving time is more meaningful than giving money

Whoever the activity was being done for and whether it was of free will or not, there was a very strong recognition that volunteering your time is more challenging than contributing through money:

"…time is a lot more expensive than giving money. And it's more beneficial"

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"It's your time."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Organisations' responses

This latter point is one not made strongly in previous literature. But is important; firstly for organisations to acknowledge that young people recognise that there are different ways of contributing – i.e. by giving time or money and that time is precious – and volunteering will be competing with their other commitments.

Secondly it is important for social policy makers in recognising that young people (and others) may be contributing their time or their money informally, in a way that isn't currently measured or acknowledged as volunteering in official statistics, thus underestimating the extent of volunteering in Tasmania and indeed elsewhere.

Volunteering as community and personal benefit

Organisations held similar views about volunteering to their volunteers – i.e. **'helping out with community activities," "giving something back"** and a **"social benefit to yourself."**

Embracing informal volunteering

However, the inclusion of 'informal volunteering' challenged one peak body's current working definition of volunteering, which currently referred to 'formal' volunteering.[43] The peak body was aware of this disparity and planned to hold discussions about their volunteering definitions with the wider community to check their appropriateness.

And organisations B and C had changed their view of volunteering due to experiences with their young volunteers. Most notably, in having to relax the structured nature of volunteering activities; rather recognising that volunteering is also an opportunity for young people in communities to **"hang out"** and therefore have this as a retention tool, particularly for community-based clubs.

One organisation was in the process of encompassing more informal forms of volunteering in response, not only to what young people thought, but in a wider recognition of the opportunities that could bring:

"We haven't embraced the diversity and spontaneity of what volunteers can contribute [outside of programme areas]."

[Organisation B]

They were interested in capturing the informal volunteer, for example:

"'I have some spare time, would you like me to help fold some letters and put them in envelopes?' Or ' I've just noticed the outside of your building is really dusty and cobwebbed. I've just pulled up outside with my window cleaning kit. Do you want me to give you an hour?"

[Organisation B]

See *organisations' tips #10* and *#13* as examples of how the informality was being embraced within the case study organisations.

However, facilitating a less structured approach to volunteering can cause tensions, particularly with some older volunteers, who may hold the view that

42 This fits well with Volunteering Australia's, 2005 definition, which is also the definition adopted by VT. See *appendix 2* for more details.

43 Peak body A currently adhere to Volunteering Australia's definition of volunteering, contained in *appendix 2*.

volunteers should be constantly 'on task'. So, for volunteer managers, it may be a matter of deciding what the organisation's volunteer management culture is and making a judgment about the level of flexibility that is workable, as one leader commented:

"You've got to work out if it's worth dying in a ditch."

[Organisation C]

Recognising time is precious

After shifting from being a volunteer to being a manager of volunteers, one staff member had shifted their understanding of differing commitments to volunteering and what it takes to engage based on that:

"Now that I'm having to go from the other side…I've realised it not as easy as I thought it was…because I was always willing to get involved. But some people,…I need to really work at keeping them engaged."

[Peak body B]

Section 5.7.c and *organisations' tips #13* explore ways of doing this.

Volunteering in the private sector

Along with the informality of volunteering, peak body A flagged another issue they were particularly interested in reviewing – how volunteering in the for-profit sector fits with current definitions of 'volunteering' used in the sector.

4.2.B. PERCEPTIONS OF WHO VOLUNTEERS IN TASMANIA

Reflecting previous research literature (Ferrier et al, 2004; Crowley et al, 2008; V, 2009), most volunteers in this sample thought others volunteer more than them, because they had more free time and/or were looking to meet like-minded people, either due to a critical transition point, such as retiring, or the death of a partner.

'Typical volunteers'

As noted in *section 3*, nearly all the volunteers in this sample were from areas of low socio-economic disadvantage (see *Table 3.2*) and many – although not all - had attended private schools. As a qualitative study, we cannot draw any inferences from this alone, but the case study organisations' experiences suggested that the volunteers were not untypical of those they usually recruited.

Mainly low socio-economic disadvantage

Organisation A actively recruited young and older volunteers from diverse backgrounds, to ensure they meet their operating license conditions around community inclusion. This meant that, more than the other two organisations, they had a range of volunteers representing minority and special interest communities, for example volunteers from African and gay and lesbian communities.

Organisation B described their typical young volunteers as being enrolled at university, or just entering the workforce and from a higher socio-economic group (and this was reflected in the research sample – see *Table 3.2*). And organisation C tended to recruit mainly from the local community where the club was based. Although the local community included families from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, most young people involved in the club were from middle-income families.

Confident

And there was a general agreement that many volunteers who came forward had a healthy self-image:

"There's almost a socio-economic thing around it. Typically,…[the young volunteers] are very social, they're usually not inhibited physically or emotionally, they tend to be quite confident. Especially if they've come through the ranks."

[Organisation C]

"I think a lot of people who volunteer are probably fairly confident…They've got a good self image. They're happy with themselves and don't mind putting themselves out there."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Across the board, organisation A felt that their volunteers tended to be, **"outgoing people who are motivated."**

This would, of course fit with a lack of confidence being a ***perceived*** barrier to volunteering (see *section 4.1*).

Hard to reach volunteers

In terms of who was hard to engage, organisations B and C were in step with some of the groups identified through the Social Inclusion Strategy (Adams.D, 2009:8):

- those with lower educational attainment;
- entering youth justice;
- young parents;
- those with low literacy;
- those who lack confidence;
- those in isolated communities, or living outside of the usual volunteer recruitment area;

Reaching the hard to reach – the crucial role of mentoring

organisations' tip #2

REACHING THE HARD TO REACH

Organisation C has recognised there was a lack of young volunteers from disadvantaged families within their club. They have also recognised there are barriers to participating in their volunteer activities, due to the cost of training and transport issues, as well as being unfamiliar with the club culture and not having whole family involvement. They have also identified that older volunteers do not currently have the skills to coach and support young volunteers through mistakes and difficulties.

To address these issues, the organisation plans to develop links with RecLink Australia[44] to offer social inclusion scholarships for transport, support and counseling. The club will supply equipment.

As a result, the aim is for the profile of young volunteers to become more diverse over time and potentially to increase the inclusion of families from more diverse backgrounds.

Organisations B and C were either considering or actively trying to break through to some young volunteers who had previously been hard for them to reach – either socially or geographically. And the key for both was recognising the need for mentoring and support to encourage access and participation, as well as overcoming any financial barriers.

Approaches included working with third party organisations that specialise in supporting disadvantaged families and extending existing programmes to young people outside of the school system through working with local councils. For organisation B, this was through mentoring programmes that they hoped would then lead to further involvement in volunteering (see *organisations' tips #3*). For organisation C, this was through considering introducing social inclusion scholarships, to help young people meet the travel and other costs and working with an organisation that specialises in supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (see *organisations' tips #2*):

"We're going to set up a scholarship…and sponsor perhaps four or five local kids,… cos we know there's a family here and the kids just desperately want it. Dad's on his own, working his butt off. Three kids… and just no money; he couldn't put three kids, which would cost him…well…He's up around $500 maybe just to get his kids into it…But we've got to talk about how do we apply it, how do we identify people."

organisations' tip #3

REACHING THE HARD TO REACH

Organisation B is trialing a programme that supports teams of young people to make positive social change through the development of community projects. The programme matches teams with an adult mentor and supports them to plan a project, deliver it and recognise young people's achievements and then feed that energy through to other volunteering programmes. The organisation is trialing a move away from school environments, where there are other similar programmes happening, towards community centres and Police and Community Youth Clubs, to work more with those young people who are less engaged with their education and communities. Through this, the organisation is starting to see more diversity in the young people who feed through into their volunteer programmes.

Work in progress

But all organisations acknowledged that extending volunteer membership was a work in progress. Organisation C was acutely aware of the number of local young people who did not get involved in the club and with whom the club was yet to make in roads with:

"There are a lot of people who live here that don't come…that's very difficult. I haven't looked into it, why they don't flock here in their hundreds…Maybe… they just don't like the idea."

[Organisation C]

Include the 'mainstream'

Peak body B reminded us not to neglect, "**the really mainstream";** those at school who think, **"its dodgy to be involved in the community."** By 'mainstream', this organisation meant people involved in a broad range of activities at school and university; those young people who, **"are connected and have lots of networks."** For Peak Body B, these groups were seen as important groups to engage in volunteering; being the majority, they are pivotal in changing the image of volunteering:

"If you are able to engage with young people who are well connected within the school community and have them promote and motivate other young people to get enthusiastic about your activity, you are more likely to engage with young people who might be hesitant to get involved. A key is sourcing a few dynamic and personable volunteers that you can send out on your behalf"

[Peak Body B]

Bridging the gap between regions

Peak body B was acutely aware of regional disengagement from their volunteering opportunities. They offered transport from regional and rural areas to attend events within metropolitan areas and having more 'north' and 'south' events, to tackle accessibility.

organisations' tip #4

ADDRESSING REGIONAL INCLUSION

Peak body B, which operates statewide, has been conscious of including young people's voices from all areas of Tasmania, to ensure the diversity of Tasmanian experiences are captured within their consultative forums. To make this happen, they have offered busses from different regions (West coast, North West and islands, Midlands) to Hobart-based events. However, even free transport has not always led to successful take up. So they are now considering having parallel events in the north and south of the state, to ensure more accessibility.

Gender differences in young volunteers

There was unanimous surprise from respondents that young male Tasmanian volunteers are nearly twice as likely to volunteer than young Tasmanian females (ABS, 2006a).[44] This seemed counter-intuitive to volunteers and to organisations, as:

"Girls seem more interested in our programmes."

[Organisation B]

"I didn't think that teenage boys would think that volunteering is the thing to do!"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

And the organisations had not experienced gender disparities amongst their young volunteers over which they were concerned. So none of the organisations had gender-specific recruitment strategies related to their volunteers; for example:

"I've never thought of the gender issues within the club, because…the power is shared evenly; I mean, there's women as Treasurer…Secretary…Vice President. So the representation for women there, the example for women is positive."

[Organisation C]

Even though no organisation had gender-specific volunteer objectives, there were differences in gender experiences within volunteering and how the organisation responded to this. Organisation B

44 ABS, 2006a, *ibid*, p.23. See *section 4.e* of literature review (*appendix 8*) for further details.

observed that there were more girls in **"emotionally connected programmes."** Organisation C, involved within sports and recreation, observed that boys were easier to retain after 14 compared to girls:

"Girls hit 14 and go…those that choose to patrol do so for a year and go. They get older and come back as family members."

[Organisation C]

"I see the girls drop out of competition… and the boys keep going. More boys patrol because they *have to* patrol [to compete]. Whereas more girls patrol but don't compete."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Although the reasons for this had not been explored as yet, organisation C had established separate training for females, speculating that the drop out might be to do with being uncomfortable with competition or joint training:

"There's an intimidation, I suppose, around boys in a sporting context and training with boys."

[Organisation C]

"There's not as much support and structure [after the age of 14]. You just go train when you want."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"With girls, it's sometimes their self confidence. Like, their image of themselves. Some might not want to get on the beach when they get to a certain age in their bathers, because they don't feel confident enough about it."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

And had found success in gender-segregated training:

"I started a girls'…training session – Specifically for girls only. And…taught some girls to coach…That's been very successful; it's been going for two years now and the girls are flocking to it…I think…tailoring things for girls' needs is important."

[Organisation C]

In organisation A, although there was a gender balance in non-broadcasting roles, there was an over-representation of male broadcast volunteers. But, along with every organisation and all volunteers in the sample, no insights came to the fore on why this gender disparity might exist for younger volunteers. Comments from all organisations and those volunteers who offered them, were along the same line, for example:

"It's quite easy if you think about women who are a bit older – 'I've got kids'…A lot of older people involved in the [organisation] are male. But, yeah, I don't know why there would be a barrier with younger people."

[Organisation A]

Interestingly, later in the focus groups, volunteers from organisation C talked about how they had noticed bias in the local newspaper's sports coverage - in a tendency to over-report male participation compared to females:

"Very male orientated…I did my sociology IP on the representation of females in the media…Over a week what I did was go through the sports articles in the newspaper…and there was like 50,60,70 male articles to like 6 female ones."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

This of course does not mean that local media gender bias has led to the under-representation of young females in volunteering! However, an exploration of Tasmanian gender volunteer representations in the media and advertising would certainly be worth considering.

So clearly more research is needed to explore the reasons for the gender disparities in Tasmanian youth volunteering. And, taking the case study organisations as an example, organisations would be wise to keep an eye on where specific gender-based programmes would be useful.

Locational issues

The majority view from volunteers and from organisations in this sample was that metropolitan areas would be easier for young people to access volunteering:

"The more rural you get, the worse the opportunities…People are always going to be at a disadvantage outside Hobart, because this is the central place; it's where the businesses and main offices are."

[Organisation A]

However, it is worth noting that many of the volunteers in this sample were volunteering locally, and that was outside of Hobart within regional areas. Given the poor

transport identified in Tasmania, locational issues would seem to be about a combination of finding appropriate opportunities and the practicalities of getting to those opportunities. Being outside of metropolitan areas, such as Hobart and Launceston, does not have to be, in itself, a problem within Tasmania.

4.2.C ATTITUDES TO VOLUNTEERING – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Young volunteers viewed volunteering as a way to give back to their community and to gain something for themselves;
- Giving time was seen as more valuable than giving money;
- The concept of informal volunteering is crucial for organisations to embrace if they are to appeal to a broader volunteer market – And ways to measure this need to be considered;
- To embrace social inclusion objectives, organisations need to ensure strategies are in place to engage 'mainstream' volunteers' and those hard to reach. Such strategies need to involve peer mentoring, as well as financial support to overcome barriers of confidence, culture shock and costs;
- More research is needed to understand the disparities in volunteer participation between young Tasmanian males and females and organisations need to be mindful of where gender-specific volunteer training or provision may be needed;
- Being outside of a metropolitan area did not in itself pose a problem for young people volunteering; the key issues were the availability of local volunteering opportunities and/or transport.

4.3 UNDERSTANDING YOUNG PEOPLE'S MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER

For successful volunteer-involving organisations, once challenges have been identified and addressed, the next step to understanding willing volunteers is exploring what and who is driving them to want to volunteer.

Figure 4.4 key: Grey font – main motivations for volunteers within this research; White font – elements identified in this research, not identified in previous research [Adams, N., (2009), Crowley et al (2008), Ferrier et al (2004), Hill et al. (2009), Pye et al (2009), V (2007, 2008, 2009)].

Figure 4.4: Volunteers' motivations for volunteering – personal and community drivers

4.3.A COMMUNITY MOTIVES TO VOLUNTEER – ABOUT YOU

For the majority of young Tasmanians in this sample, primary volunteering motivations were within community driven areas (giving back to community, social interaction with other young people, helping people). (See *Figure 4.4*). And there was one volunteer for whom giving something back was what it is all about:

"It is my belief that there are some youth that volunteer in the community as selfless acts with the fact that they can add that to their resume/cv being a very minor consideration."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"An environment like this gives so much to you, so I think it's nice to give something back to the club. There's so much you can do…to give something back."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Organisations also had some volunteers who used the opportunity to meet friends or new people, or to hang out with their existing friends; for organisation B, this was particularly the case for international students. For volunteers at organisation C, this had been a major driver:

"I had friends who did it and prompted me to join."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

4.3.B PERSONAL MOTIVES TO VOLUNTEER – ABOUT ME

But for the majority, significant personal drivers were also important (see *Figure 4.4*), particularly personal interest and developing their skills/experience.

Peak body A suggested that values about a particular cause may have a stronger pull for some young people than holding general values about volunteering per se and this was supported by the views of the other organisations:

"[young people might] be more attracted to a particular cause or person or group out there in the community that might light them up in some way."

[Peak body A]

"I've heard a lot of stories about young people volunteering in an organisation because they feel like they have some kind of connection, you know, whether it's the Leukemia Foundation, because their uncle had leukemia, so they feel they need to support that organisation."

[Organisation A]

"The guys that do the [special interest] programme are so passionate about what they do, that they want to tell people how they feel about policies; even though they don't really have the time, they do it anyway."

[Organisation A]

And developing their skills and career was a strong motivation for the majority of volunteers:

"Outside of what you're doing day to day, giving something back and gaining personal experience."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"It's good for your resume…the primary reason for volunteering in [my school]. Doing college applications, they ask for extra-curricular activities – it's the sort of thing that gets you in the door."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Because you gain skills, qualifications… Looks good on your resume, helping you to get jobs."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"We get all the qualifications and we don't have to pay to do any of the courses, because we use all of those qualifications throughout summer."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"We've got some [volunteers] who specifically want to go into government when they're older and they see this as a great opportunity. Because we meet with politicians and bureaucrats…[they can] see how it functions inside government."

[Peak Body B]

These dual personal and community-focused motivations to volunteering were neatly summed up by Peak Body B; volunteers thinking:

"I want to give my time to something I'm passionate about, but I want something at the end."

[Peak body B]

And this fits well with what we know motivates young people to volunteer from existing literature (Adams, N., 2009:17; Crowley et al, 2008:27-29; Ferrier et al, 2004:23-24; Pye et al, 2009:20-22).

4.3.C ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S MOTIVATIONS DIFFERENT TO THOSE OF OLDER VOLUNTEERS?

All three organisations and peak body A held the view that young people's motivations were unlikely to be that different to older volunteers:

"We complicate things too much… The similarities are more common than the differences…we all want to make a difference…that's a bit of a leveler."

[Peak body A]

But there were a couple of areas in which organisations felt the lure of volunteering was stronger for young people compared to other volunteers.

A way to develop skills and experience

Both peak bodies and all organisations contemplated that there may be more emphasis for young people on skill development, as well as community-minded motivations:

"That's a distinction for me; that older people volunteer to give something back, whereas young people volunteer to put something on their CV."

[Organisation A]

"We've become very individualized in our culture. Whereas in past generations volunteering was seen as the way to get involved in the community and get to know people. I think there's still that element now, but people are also interested in, 'What can I get out of volunteering?'…Volunteer-involving organisations have to be mindful of that."

[Peak body B]

This concern was also raised in Crowley et al's (2008:30) Tasmanian research.

But, none were clear that skills over-rode community drivers for young people. In fact, the majority of organisations and peak bodies *'talked themselves out of'* drawing distinctions between older and younger volunteers' motivations, with another concluding:

"I don't always know what drives young people to do this."

[Organisation A]

The lure of festivals

One potential area of distinction highlighted by one organisation was that young people may be more interested in volunteering opportunities at state music festivals:

"A ticket for an event is sometimes the lure that gets them through the door… That's OK for us. To get the ticket, they still have to complete the same training… Is it true volunteering?..Yes…they do do the volunteering component. It's just something else that sparked their interest."

[Organisation B]

This research can not answer definitively whether young people have the same motivations as older volunteers; responses suggest that their motivations may be similar, but may be held in different priorities, with skills being a major potential benefit for young people, even if it is not the prime motivator, which reflects previous Tasmanian (Crowley et al, 2008:27-29) and Australian research (Ferrier et al, 2004: 23-25). Understanding where these motivations lie is crucial for relevant marketing and role development.

4.3.D TOWARDS A VOLUNTEER TYPOLOGY: USING OUR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT MOTIVATIONS

Given this, emerging findings suggest there may be three potential 'groups' of motivated volunteers:

- *"You"s* – those with solely community based motivations – i.e. those who want to volunteer to contribute to their community, 'make a difference', or for social interaction;
- *"Me"s* – those with solely personally based motivations – i.e. those who want to volunteer for personal reasons, such as to develop their skills, to enhance their career prospects, or to pursue a personal interest.
- *"Us"s* – those with mixed motives – i.e. those who want to volunteer partly for community reasons and partly for their own personal reasons.

In this fieldwork, all our volunteers had primary motives that are community based. But taking their motivations as a whole there were:

- *1 "you"*
- *10 "us"s*

This is important for how an organisation shapes its marketing and recruitment campaigns. Promoting community impact to a potential volunteer who also wants skill development is unlikely to capture them.

This model is further developed when we look at what volunteers said they want from their current role. See *sections 5.1.b* and *5.4.*

4.3.E YOUNG PEOPLE'S MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- All young volunteers were motivated to volunteer by community-driven factors, such as giving something back, or socializing. But the majority were also looking for something for themselves – usually developing their skills or experiences and/ or to satisfy a personal interest, such as a family connection or to gain a free festival ticket.
- Developing skills/experience and the lure of free festival tickets may distinguish what drives younger volunteers compared to older ones.
- Understanding these motivations are important for organisations to be able to target their marketing and recruitment drives effectively and they form the first dimension in creating our volunteer typology.

4.4 WHO ENCOURAGES VOLUNTEERING IN TASMANIA?

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF NETWORKS

The Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy highlights the importance of Tasmanian organisations developing stronger links between organisations and within communities in order to cultivate a healthier volunteer sector (Adams, D., 2009:57) (see *Figures 4.1* and *4.2*)

One peak body spoke eloquently about how the way we come to volunteering has changed:

"In the past, people came to volunteering in more informal ways than we do now… the pathways to volunteering were part of the fabric of our world already."

[Peak body A]

They cited family and the workplace as common ways we used to drift into volunteering, **"almost through osmosis."** They argued that due to changes in demographics and work patterns, this has all changed:

"Now we have to develop an understanding of how we can nurture modern communities, so we don't let them go, including fostering and maintaining pathways to volunteering."

[Peak body A]

The influence of networks in referring people into volunteering, whether informally or formally, is still significant. All the volunteers in this sample – whether *"you"s* or *"us"s* - were encouraged to do so by someone else in their community; whether it be a family member, or a peer (workmate or friend), or school/college offering opportunities (see *Figure 4.5*).

Figure 4.5: Who influenced young volunteers to volunteer – personal and community drivers

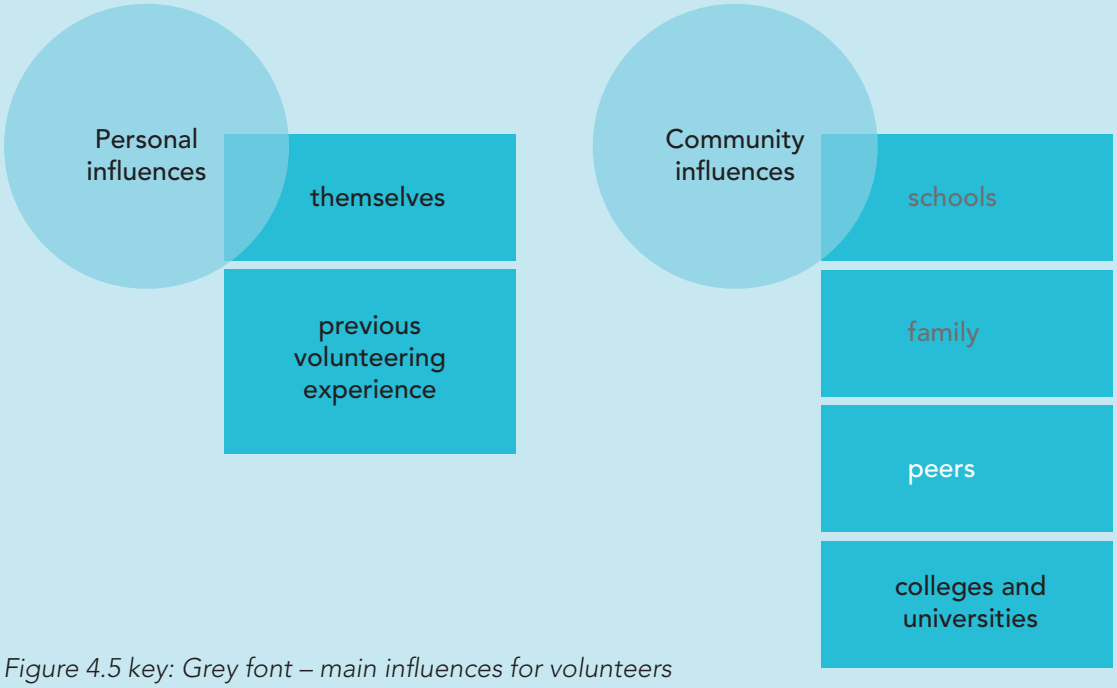


Figure 4.5 key: Grey font – main influences for volunteers within this research; White font – influences identified in this research, not identified in previous research [Adams, N., (2009), Crowley et al (2008), Ferrier et al (2004), Hill et al, 2009)].

4.4.A COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

Schools

All but two of the volunteers in this sample had attended private schools (see *Table 3.2*); of these, most of them had previously volunteered:[45]

"Schools got me thinking about volunteering. At [my school], volunteering was promoted."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

Amongst this volunteer sample, there was a disputed perception that in public schools, it is more about individual teachers promoting the concept of volunteering than it being promoted, **"... as part of the whole person."** This is a hypothesis beyond the scope of this research to explore. But it would certainly be worth exploring the experience of volunteering within different school sectors in Tasmania.

Utilising the already strong school networks were universally mentioned by volunteers and organisations as the key to changing young people's attitudes about what volunteering can offer and the range of roles available:

"Us[e] existing services that regularly go out to schools to strongly reinforce the message of what [this organisation] do[es]... With my work as a mentor with the...programme, I know that the particulars of [the organisation] were largely unknown, but thanks to the young people's involvement with us they now do know more than they did."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

All the organisations utilised school networks in some way to recruit. This usually involved (at least initially) some form of school talks:

"At my school,...they were doing this thing in Year 8 PE where they were having all these different sports, so they asked me to do a 'Get to know [Organisation C]' thing. It was really cool, because it was something that none of them has ever seen before...I got my [equipment out]. Got them to have a go...With [Organisation C],...so many people don't know what it is in Tasmania; it's just finding out what this thing is..."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

45 Those who had not previously volunteered were in Organisation C, where they had joined from a very young age.

Using young people as ambassadors was widely recommended by volunteers and fits with recommendations in previous Tasmanian research (Adams, N., 2009:25,30). (see *sections 4.2.b* and *4.5.d* and *organisations' tips #5* and *#7*).

Both peak bodies worked closely with schools. Peak body A had recently developed a schools project aimed to change young people's attitudes towards volunteering and to support schools and organisations to make adjustments to be youth-ready.

And Peak body B routinely recruited young people for events and for consultation through schools. To do this effectively, they had built up personal relationships with teachers, who they could call to follow up on emails. Peak body B saw this personal contact as crucial for getting schools to respond:

"If you don't have connections with schools, or other youth organisations, you're in big trouble. Because it might be hard to get kids to events…To get kids [to events]… we have to personally ring every school…- there's hundreds - a few times, to say, 'Have you got our flyer?' And then following up a few days later. If you don't put in the hard yards, you don't get bums on seats."

[Peak body B]

organisations' tip #5

DEVELOPING SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY NETWORKS

Peak body A has established projects to link with schools and universities to encourage more young people to volunteer in Tasmania.

They are working with selected high schools and volunteer-involving organisations across Tasmania. It provides best practice support and advice to the participating volunteer-involving organisations to better engage with young people as volunteers by, for example, looking at the volunteer role descriptions organisations are offering young people, looking at what skills and benefits young people will gain and clarifying how organisations will support young volunteers. It provides students with a supported and meaningful volunteering experience, by helping them to reflect on their experiences and what they have gained and encourages their interest and commitment to volunteering beyond the lifetime of the project through offering them opportunities to be young ambassadors to recruit further young people.

Peak body A has also developed a project bringing together college and university students of migrant or humanitarian visa backgrounds in the latter part of their studies with volunteer involving organisations within education, community, welfare and humanity sectors, in partnership with the University of Tasmania, Tasmania Polytechnic and the Migrant Resource Centre. The aim was to use volunteering as a pathway to employment and community connection (two of the main motivations for young volunteers in this research). The project trained prospective volunteers to understand potential volunteer benefits and to fully participate in volunteering to aid self-development. The project also trained volunteer-involving organisations to create a welcoming and supportive environment. Although there were challenges in keeping in contact with prospective volunteers, there were very positive expected and unexpected outcomes from the project, including raising students' confidence in linking volunteering with future workplace prospects and seeking out their own volunteering opportunities, students understanding what constitutes 'community' in Australia and students starting to act as informal volunteering ambassadors with their student peers. And for volunteer-involving organisations, there was a heightened appreciation of the value that CALD volunteers can bring to their organisation in term of skills and life experience.

Of course, the downside of this was that recruitment for activities during school holidays was significantly hampered by school staff not being around; so planning ahead for this was also crucial:

"We're running a peer education programme. Because it's the school holidays, we can't call the schools…we have a lot of personal connections with specific teachers, but because they're not there, we can't have a chat and say, 'Oh, do you want to send kids, because do you remember that last forum?' So it's just going into the email world and it just gets deleted, because you don't have that personal contact."

[Peak body B]

Again this of course points to the crucial role of organisations' community networks in creating willing volunteers, as highlighted within the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy (see *section 4.1.a*). Schools play a massive role in Tasmania in generating initial interest, but families and peers must also be targeted.

Families

One peak body claimed:

"One thing that's been highlighted to us is that people are much more likely to volunteer if they're from a family of volunteers."

[Peak body A]

And one organisation claimed that neglecting families is, **"a big mistake that most clubs make."** [Organisation C].

Indeed, all the case study volunteers in organisation C had been influenced by family to get involved, as had the majority of volunteers in organisations A and B:

"They would volunteer if it's part of their culture; if they've grown up with it. To us, it's normal to do that."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Bringing on board families is clearly crucial in local community-based organisations for on-going recruitment of young volunteers and for volunteer retention:

"If parents stay actively involved, the kids stay actively involved."

[Organisation C]

And the strong links between families within a community can clearly have a snowball effect for successful community-based organisations:

"Word of mouth promotion is just huge; like one family's involved and they've got friends and they say, 'The kids love it. Bring the kids down.' They bring them down and all of a sudden, they're into it."

[Organisation C]

Importantly, for organisation C, it appears to have helped young volunteers in overcoming confidence issues about coming into a new environment and helps the organisation to get young people to buy into the organisation's culture and expectations, as well as helping with volunteer retention in between seasonal activities – all challenges flagged in *section 4.1.b*:

"We focus on involving the whole family… because it's hard to come in as new...First thing – get kids in a room and talk about basic ground rules and how it's going to happen. Be clear about those up front and communicate those to parents and guardians."

[Organisation C]

But it's clear that organisations cannot just rely on families to generate young willing volunteers. One peak body stressed that this is not the strong route into volunteering it used to be:

"Parents are not volunteering in the way they would have done in the past and that's due to a whole range of issues, from changing demographics to work structures, to family structures; so we know that a lot of young people aren't influenced in the way they would have been in the past. So… we need to start creating new innovative pathways for young people to volunteer."

[Peak body A]

Peers

Most of the volunteers in organisation C and both in organisation A had been encouraged to become a volunteer by friends. For local community based organisations, focusing on the social element of volunteering can be an important recruitment and retention tool:

"If we can get enough in a group, they'll come."

[Organisation C]

And this group approach might help to tackle the perception that *"volunteering isn't sexy"* to young people.

Colleges and universities

Both peak bodies and two organisations recruited through the University of Tasmania, with one peak body implementing a project in partnership with the university to encourage more student participation in volunteering (***see*** *organisations' tips #5*).

Organisation A had close ties with the university, as they were based on one of the main campuses.

Organisations B and C used the university through its career hub, or noticeboards to recruit young people (see *section 4.5.c* and *Table 4.7* and *organisations' tips #5*).

Role models

Close links with staff within community organisations had also led a minority of young people within this sample to their current roles, holding community workers as role models. This route had been highlighted in previous Australian research as influencing young volunteers (Ferrier et al, 2004:25).

Other Organisations

Peak body B highlighted the importance of links with other volunteer sector organisations to recruit young volunteers.

For Peak body B, these links were well formed and were used effectively to recruit young volunteers:

"Ensure you keep your connections strong and check…with other organisations…'Are you doing a project?' Would you like to help us out? Have you got volunteers that might be interested in this specific programme?"

[Peak body B]

Organisation C ran a biannual safety programme for about 200 young people with another voluntary organisation. This has initially boosted youth membership within the club:

"The first time we did it, about 14 kids joined. And most of them are still here."

[Organisation C]

Such liaisons were infrequent amongst the organisations in this study, but this was due to their acknowledged relatively weak links with other organisations, rather than them dismissing the potential of this method of recruitment.

4.4.B. PERSONAL INFLUENCES

Themselves

One volunteer was strongly personally motivated. However, as a gap year student who came from a family of **"community minded individuals"**, one could argue that the influential seed was firmly planted by the family.

4.4.C POTENTIAL INFLUENCES NOT MENTIONED IN THIS RESEARCH

There were a number of drivers that have been flagged in previous research as influencing young people to volunteer that were not mentioned in this research. Some of them are explored below.

Faith and CALD networks

Faith networks were not mentioned as important to encouraging youth volunteering in this fieldwork. But, given their place in other Australian literature (Ferrier et al, 2004:25-28), this should not be dismissed as a potentially significant influence in Tasmania, along with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) networks.

Peak body B suggested that faith networks were important gateways to volunteering for older generations as part of practicing their faith, but that these networks needed to adapt to the motivations of younger volunteers to continue to attract them into roles:

"I think older generations…just did [volunteering], because…they went to church on the weekend and this was their outreach as part of their belief system. I think people have moved away from that. And I think churches have to be mindful of that…If you're not getting anything out of [volunteering], you just don't go."

[Peak body B]

Offering a personal opinion, faith-based youth programmes, such as those run by the St Vincent de Paul Society, were flagged as examples of how some faith-based networks have adapted their offer to suit a young volunteers audience:

"Vinnies are quite successful because they do lots of outreach camps and camps with different groups, and generally young people like being involved in leadership roles and meeting other young leaders. But also the camps…are fun. You do fun things with kids, but it hasn't got so much that faith dimension. It's just because they want to develop themselves as young leaders and be part of a programme that can give them that, but they also enjoy."

[Peak body B – personal opinion]

Employers

No volunteers within this sample mentioned work as being the route into their volunteering. However, nearly all the volunteers were working at least part-time and the case study organisations did recruit volunteers who undertook paid full and part-time work.

All organisations and the two peak bodies reflected on employers currently being an underutilised source of recruiting volunteers:

"Corporate volunteering is a great market; a great opportunity. And there are a lot of organisations that have young people who would corporate volunteer, particularly if they get a paid day…But my experience is… we don't have a lot of opportunities where people can come one day as a group."

[Organisation B]

And, for this organisation, private sector companies were seen as a potential source for developing new ideas within their strategy and practice:

"There's amazing opportunities to link into organisations about marketing, brand and corporate volunteering."

[Organisation B]

Given the huge development and growing importance of Corporate Social Responsibility agendas within for-profit organisations[46] and community development agendas within the public sector, employers are clearly going to be an important network for volunteer-involving organisations to 'tap' into. It is outside the scope of this research to explore this issue further, but from the fieldwork interviews, it seems the current challenges for Tasmania include how to engage companies within that agenda and offer both companies and individual employees something that is meaningful for them (both in terms of group and individual opportunities) and opportunities that fit with volunteer-involving organisations' missions and goals.

Relevant advertising

Unlike in previous Australian literature on youth volunteering (Ferrier et al, 2006:28), advertising was not a route into volunteering mentioned by any volunteer in this sample. Given that inadequate information

46 For an overview of UK and international corporate social responsibility issues, see http://www.volunteering.org.uk/WhatWeDo/Projects+and+initiatives/Employer+Supported+Volunteering/Employers/CSR+and+CCI/CSR/What+is+Corporate+Social+Responsibility and the UN's report, http://www.unglobalcompact.org/

was flagged as a prominent barrier to participation (see *section 4.1.c*), it may be that Tasmanian volunteer advertising is not yet 'youth ready'; it may not be appropriately pitched at the youth market in a way that convinces those not already convinced to volunteer through another source to take action.

4.4.D WHO ENCOURAGES VOLUNTEERING IN TASMANIA – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

Specific Tasmanian influences - - - - -

- Advertising had had no impact on recruiting young volunteers in this study.

Specific influences on young people - -

- Schools play a crucial role in influencing young people to volunteer and need to be part of any volunteer-involving organisation's network, if they wish to attract young people;
- Friends can be an important influencer on whether young people come forward to volunteer.

Generic influences - - - - - - - - - -

- Families are an important recruitment ground, particularly for community-based organisations;
- Other networks that are currently under-utilised by organisations include universities and colleges, other volunteer-involving organisations, faith and CALD networks and employers.

4.5 RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

4.5.A WHAT ATTRACTED YOUNG VOLUNTEERS TO THEIR ORGANISATIONS

Having an understanding of what it is that is attracting young people to the organisation and to the volunteer role was a major piece of advice given by the case study organisations to organisations that are struggling to recruit young people:

"Mak[e] the position attractive; hav[e] something attractive about your organisation. If you're offering specific skills to young people, because a lot of them are trying to put something on their CV, they're going to be attracted to something… that will help [them get a job]."

[Organisation A]

All the case study organisations were able to articulate what their attractions were, which were mirrored by what the volunteers said attracted them. For example:

"Excitement, challenge,…friendship,… social aspects,…gaining all those qualifications – it helps kids get jobs."

[Organisation C]

"The relationship between, like, us older members and, like, the [younger kids]…we have, like, a really good relationship; it's such a family club… We all mingle and muck around together…and play games of soccer."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Everyone is here because they love the same thing and so you find you have common ground…everyone's friends."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

The challenge was in communicating these attractions and benefits effectively in the recruitment process and ensuring that the process itself remains youth friendly.

4.5.B YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF RECRUITMENT

Figure 4.6.a: Volunteers' recruitment satisfaction ratings by organisation

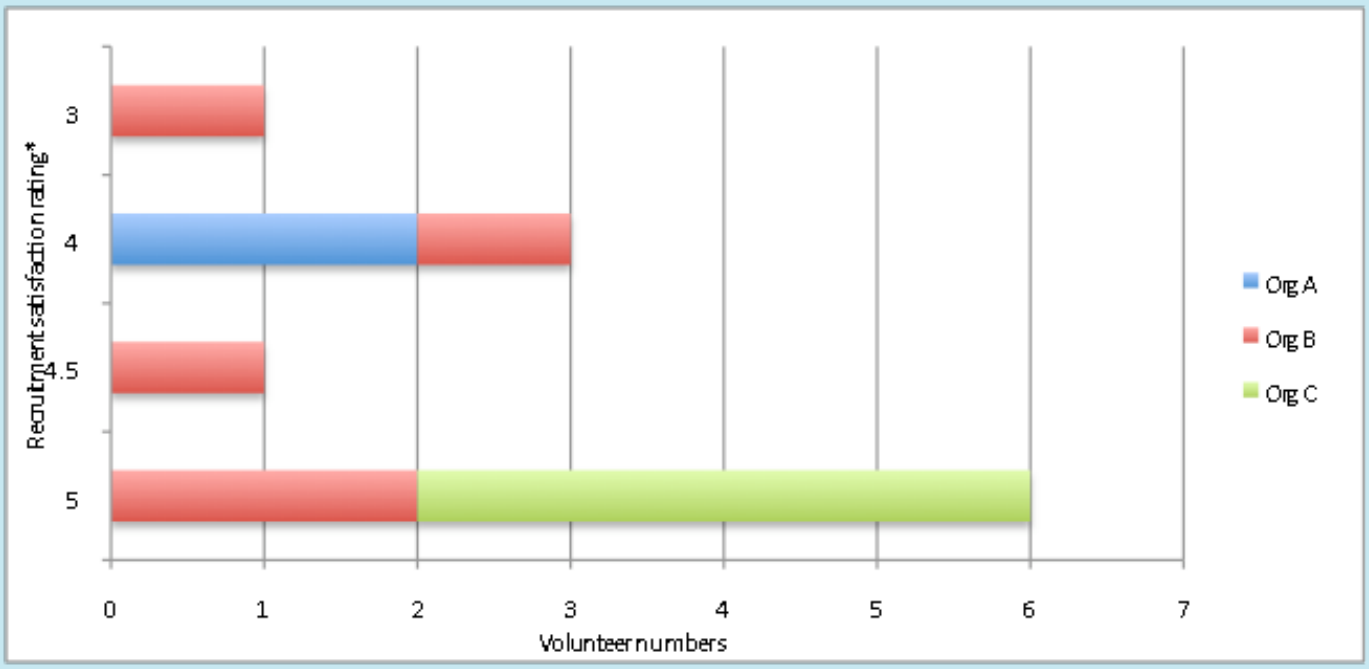


**Figure 4.6.a key: 5 = very satisfied; 1 = very unsatisfied*

Most volunteers were satisfied or very satisfied with their recruitment process (see *Figure 4.6.a*).

Their entry points to finding their current role varied from word of mouth and through their family or school, to the majority, who had searched for a position via the internet and email, or having an informal chat with the organisation (see *Figure 4.6.b*).

For organisations A and B, then a formal application process was standard, involving online/paper forms, interviews, police checks and references. For organisation C, the entry was informal, through a visit to the club to get to know the ropes, often with their family, but there was still a formal registration process:

"I just turned up."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"You pretty much come to the club… and have a couple of trial days to see if you like it and you register."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

All had had personal contact with a staff member, or another volunteer early in the process, which they all valued.

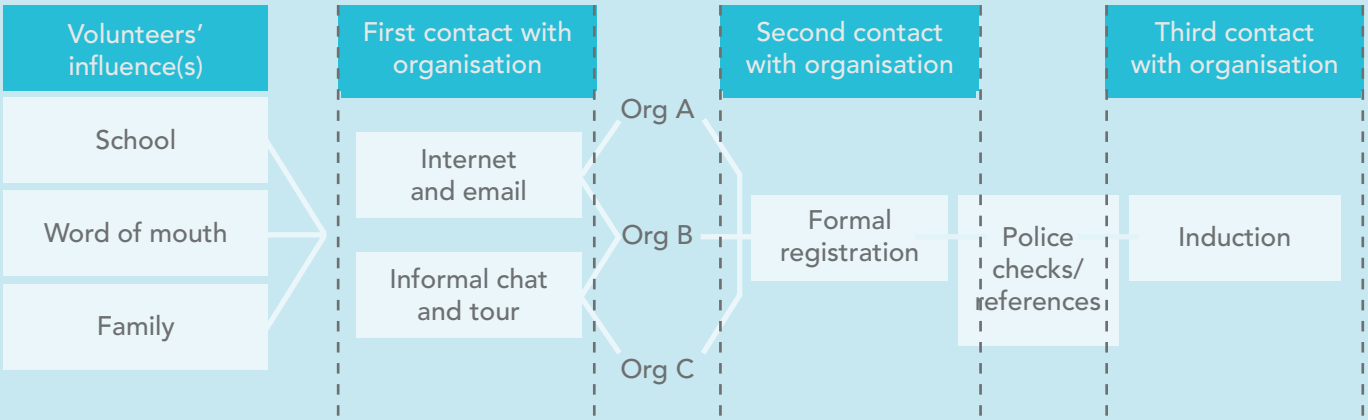
There was general agreement amongst volunteers within one organisation, that momentum needs to be kept up during the recruitment process, or there is a danger that less determined potential volunteers will lose interest:

"Quite a long recruitment process, some stuff (references?) could be streamlined?"

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

As referee checks can take a long time, there were suggestions that when a young volunteer first applies, they could be passed straight onto a service co-ordinator to get in touch with the young person, so they do not, **"lose a potential volunteer in that process,"**; again emphasising the importance of personal contact here.

Figure 4.6.b: Volunteers' experience of finding their organisation and their recruitment process



4.5.C ORGANISATIONS' RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Identifying who to target: *young people aren't essential for everything* - - - - -

All organisations and peak bodies were aware that their challenge and the key to success was understanding how to sell their organisation to their chosen market:

"We're bombarded with so much information everyday, that you really need to make it attractive for people to go, 'Oh yeah, I wanna be involved in *that*.'"

[Peak body B]

"We're quite individual in out culture now and people really have to be pushed to care about things. Especially for a long time…People have so many interests, they might be interested for…a year in an issue. But if you don't… continually engage with that person, they might move onto something else."

[Peak body B]

Two of the case study organisations (B and C) and both peak bodies stressed the need for organisations to be clear who they can effectively recruit within their resources. And it might be that young people are not part of that group:

"There has to be a willingness to want to really involve young people in their organisation and I don't necessarily think it's a bad thing if they don't. It's actually OK to have an organisation that appeals to one demographic."

[Peak body A]

Although this advice came with a word of warning about ensuring long term sustainability:

"I guess one of the downfalls of not involving young people in an organisation is that, at some point, those people are going to get too old to volunteer. So it will jeopardise the future of that organisation."

[Peak body A]

Organisation C did not currently have an active recruitment policy for young people, as it was conscious of its capacity to support additional numbers:

"It was becoming too big to manage. So we stopped recruiting. Focused on building up capacity with the parents and getting them involved in [becoming qualified], so they can help."

[Organisation C]

Organisation A did not specifically target young people either. However, it did use a number of recruitment media which attracted young people (see *Table 4.7*).

Organisation B did have an active youth recruitment strategy, in recognition, as Peak body A had pointed out, that young people were key to the organisation's long term sustainability and to actively change the organisation's image and increase diversity. As an organisation with the support of a national infrastructure, research and resources were available to dedicate to this. And the organisation was clear that active recruitment required such insights. Organisations with less resources should take heart here – there are many lessons that can be learnt and applied on a smaller scale to attract young volunteers (see *section 6.3*).

Getting the right recruitment mix: organisations' digital and personal approaches

The case study organisations were all clear that there is a need to move beyond 'usual,' generic recruitment methods if organisations want to target any specific group.

For young people, the case study organisations' recruitment media varied (see *Table 4.7*).

Table 4.7: Recruitment media used by case study organisations for young volunteers

	Recruitment media for young volunteers									
	Non-digital							Digital		
	Word of mouth	Young people as ambassadors	School talks	Posters	University notice boards	Radio announcements	TV adverts	Websites	Email distribution lists	VT's Volunteer Connect
Organisation A					Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Organisation B	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y
Organisation C	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			

Organisation C – national TV branding and local community recruitment

Organisation C benefitted from a strong national brand. Very effective generic recruitment materials/ media were produced by the national body through posters and TV adverts, with the focus on there being a role for everyone in keeping our communities safe. Of note here in relation to volunteers' motivations is how this message appealed to the critical role the organisation plays in creating Australian communities and the difference volunteers' participation can make – the 'being part of' and the 'giving back' within volunteer motivation (see *sections 4.3*.a and b). And the volunteers at organisation C suspected that TV was a medium that attracted some young people to their organisation; helped through more subliminal messaging from programmes related to their volunteering area:

> **"As [a related] TV show…I mean we all love it because we understand all about it… But just like my friends, they all like it, 'cos they think it's really interesting and stuff. So I guess that's like an education and an awareness thing without even realising it. At least they're putting it out there."**
>
> **[Volunteer, Organisation C]**

This national and state level promotion did generate interest, but any targeted local volunteer recruitment was handled by the club:

> **"Enquiries come through [the central state organisation]. And, depending on where people live, they just direct them to the clubs…I suppose that comes from the branding. But for us to recruit, we need to go to the schools."**
>
> **[Organisation C]**

So for specific youth recruitment, the club was usually reliant on family recruitment through word of mouth and, occasionally, school talks.

Orgs A and B – Mixing state and local digital and non-digital campaigns

But a combination of 'non-digital' and digital recruitment media were more common across the other case study organisations, who had a more city or state-wide volunteer recruitment net (see *Table 4.7*).

Although organisation A did not specifically target young people, it did use a number of recruitment media which attracted young people, including their own website, radio announcements, university boards, volunteer and bi-weekly public e-newsletters and Tasmania's Volunteer Connect.[47] If they wanted to target a particular community, they often used special interest websites and newsletters, such as *Arts Tasmania*[48] (for arts specialists), or *The Dwarf*[49] (for music specialists). These avenues had proved to be particularly fruitful in recruiting young volunteers and, interestingly, these media were seen as part of the same 'community' (see *section 6.2.c* for more networks).

Organisation A successfully also used Volunteering Tasmania's Volunteer Connect database to advertise and recruit to volunteer positions for older and younger volunteers. The organisation was in fact surprised how many university students had come forward via that media, compared to those coming directly from advertisements within the university. They found that such students were particularly interested in developing their CV.

Organisation B also used it's website extensively. This organisation has recently reviewed youth recruitment media and had pushed itself to move toward targeted youth recruitment (see *organisations' tips #6* and *#8*). So, for this organisation, their website was a key point of reference for initial volunteer information and was an application portal. But to get young people to their website in the first place, they used a mixture of digital media (such as viral campaigns, the university career hub and existing volunteer email distribution lists) and non-digital media (including posters and talks in youth centres and schools).

47 See http://volunteeringtas.Organisation Au/for-volunteers/volunteer-connect/

48 See http://www.arts.tas.gov.au/

49 See http://www.thedwarf.com.au/

organisations' tip #6

TARGETING RECRUITMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

As part of their youth engagement strategy, organisation B had overhauled its recruitment processes for targeting young people:

"Quite typically [the organisation] relies on a sandwich board outside the office, saying, 'volunteers wanted', or quite formal adverts in the paper.
So we try to use other means of recruiting [young people]:
— through the career hub – a web page at the university;
— we go through youth centres and put colourful posters on notice boards;
— we use existing youth volunteer email distribution lists, 'if you know someone who might be interested, get them to email or text this number'"

The same organisation had also addressed literacy issues by working with Council Youth Workers to facilitate the application process for their programmes.

For peak body B, personal contact was crucial to support any email/web-based recruitment materials. Without this, they felt that their information just got lost in a sea of other emails and would lose its point of difference:

> **"Because there's so many things being sent out to schools."**
>
> **[Peak body B]**

4.5.D ENHANCING RECRUITMENT TACTICS: VOLUNTEERS' SUGGESTIONS

Using young people as ambassadors

When asked how to encourage more Tasmanian young people to volunteer, volunteers in all focus groups suggested using more young people as ambassadors to go into schools to talk to pupils; reinforcing the strong influence of schools and peers raised in *section 4.4.a* and fitting with Adams' Tasmanian findings (Adams, N., 2009:23).

The key messages to convey for these volunteers was showing that volunteering is fun, emphasise the social aspects and that it brings friendships, as well as building skills. And they emphasised that any talks should be interactive:

"I suppose what you could really do is go round to schools…and just…talk to [pupils] about [volunteering]. Not so much a formal like sit down in assembly and…you speak to them; but,… just have them, like, in a classroom and just have…a general conversation about, like, what they think [their volunteering activity] is…and have videos and pictures and stuff like that… and just, like, [a few volunteers], we could all go and show them the friendships that we have. Cos we're all pretty good friends in the end. We'd pretty much do anything for any of us…Going and showing what we've done…Also showing, like, the pictures of the social side – end of season dinners, where you get dressed up…to show it's not, like, all…wearing bummy clothes… It's something that we look forward to."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"In the local area to start…but definitely go into town, because there'd be, like, a lot of different people, because it's a bigger area. But definitely start locally, because once you get one kid, you get their friends and so on…"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Two organisations used young people prominently within their national or state recruitment campaigns (see Table 4.7). For one of these organisations, this was about using young volunteers' stories in order to break down the image that only, **"goody two shoes… and older ladies"** [volunteer, Organisation B]; for another it was about broadening the youth volunteer membership by taking the focus away from competition onto the huge community role a volunteer could offer [Organisation C]. *See organisations' tip #7.*

The *"us"*s from the volunteer sample suggested that promoting benefits to young people of volunteering may help to change attitudes towards it and increase participation. Particularly the benefits to them in terms of skills development and career prospects:

"[Promote] what young people are doing and what benefits they're getting."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

There was also a suggestion to make volunteering more transparent for young people, to help them understand what's involved for them, thus overcoming the 'confidence' and 'time' issues (see *section 4.1.b*):

"Easier access to the structure, so you can see what's happening first hand."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

organisations' tip #7

MAKING VOLUNTEERING 'COOLER' – USING YOUNG AMBASSADORS

"If you're going into schools and…speaking in assembly,… get a volunteer who's already involved and is really personable along, so they can see…it's open to everyone. Or a few volunteers who have different life experiences, so they can say, 'Look,…this is what we get out if being a volunteer…'Using the strengths of your organisation and being able to sell it in a way that [young] people respond to."

[Peak Body B]

Using TV, radio and newspapers

Although two organisations already used TV and radio adverts as part of their recruitment campaigns, volunteers, particularly those at organisations C were advocates of using broadcast and print media for free publicity, in order to drive up young people's interest in volunteering. And as part of this, ensuring organisations have a person responsible for media liaison:

"Its really a good idea, like, within your clubs to have someone who's there for the media and to be that person who emails radio and television and says, 'We've got a carnival.'…Once that happens and they come down and you get on TV, it's out there."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"If I saw my friends on the news, I'd be, like, 'Oh, that's exciting!'"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"I go up North a bit. Their papers up there have so much to do with [organisation C]; every time [organisation C] have something, ...their newspaper people came to Barrington and that's a decent drive. But they came and took photos and there was a big picture in the paper the next day and a write up."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

4.5.E USING INCENTIVES

UK literature recognises that incentives can have an important role in recruiting young volunteers (V, 2009:10-11). Skills and training are clear incentives (V, 2009:10; Ferrier, 2006:23-26), although conclusions are less clear about the role of other incentives, whether financial or other (V, 2009:10-11)

Incentives to participate as deliberate 'sweeteners' were not widely used by any of the organisations in this study to encourage young people to volunteer, with the exception of one programme that offered free entry into a major music festival. And in this instance, the organisation felt that without this incentive, they would still attract volunteers, although the recruitment process might look different.

Recognising contribution

However, all organisations considered, or were considering, how they recognise participation and contribution. The main issues in doing so were understanding the role played by recognition and providing appropriate recognition within limited resources.

One organisation argued that recognising a volunteers' contribution is crucial and often something the volunteer actively seeks; whether through 'products' (for example organisation A gives away CDs to volunteers), or through affirmation.

Organisation C acknowledged volunteers' achievements with a uniform after they had passed their basic qualifications, which was unanimously welcomed by the volunteers in the sample:

"It's cool, because I felt like you were part of something bigger...were important."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"People could see you do something from what you wear."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Organisation B reflected that, although they used products, such as drink bottles, to attract young people to stalls at events, they had not offered such products to potential or existing volunteers. The same organisation also reflected that some volunteers asked if they would receive an organisation t-shirt as part of their contribution; although these were not something this organisation regularly gave, they were aware that other organisations did.

All three organisations offered development opportunities to volunteers who had excelled, or for whom development goals had been identified, or who sought a different experience; these varied from attending leadership residentials, or having the opportunity to deliver training within the state, including being given the use of an organisation car and accommodation, or having opportunities for outside broadcasting.

See *section 5.b* for more on learning and development.

Including incentives in funding bids

None of the case study organisations included the costs of incentives or recognition in funding bids, although there was wide acknowledgement that they needed to understand more about the role of such incentives/recognition:

"Can't be low cost all the time before it becomes high cost. You need to look at why and what will attract [volunteers]...Needs to be further thought from [the organisation] about how to incorporate recognition in future."

[Organisation B]

Given the potential development of Tasmanian Compacts,[50] the potential role of incentives and recognition in funding bids could be something for both organisations and Government to consider in developing a healthier sector.

50 At the time of writing this report, Compacts between the Tasmanian State Government and the third sector are just starting to be discussed, following the introduction of a national Compact – http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/communities/progserv/nationalcompact/Pages/default.aspx. Discussions are at embryonic stages at present, including decisions about who may be involved (for example, all state government departments, or selected departments). Therefore, references made to Compacts in this report may later prove to be useful, or, indeed, irrelevant.

4.5.F RECRUITMENT PROCESS – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Organisations need to be clear who their target audiences are and if young people are part of that, what attracts them to the organisation;
- Targeted recruitment was essential to attract young people into an organisation;
- Digital and non-digital recruitment mixes were essential for state organisations to market and recruit to young volunteers and a web presence was key as a first port of call; personal approaches were more successful for the local, community focused organisation and were also key in the others for maintaining young people's interest once they had made contact;
- Application processes need to be kept as short as possible;
- Using young people as ambassadors, talking about what they get from their roles, helps potential young people to put themselves in volunteers' shoes;
- Recruitment incentives may currently be underutilised as a way to recruit young people and their role in retention is unclear.

4.6 INDUCTIONS

4.6.A YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF INDUCTION

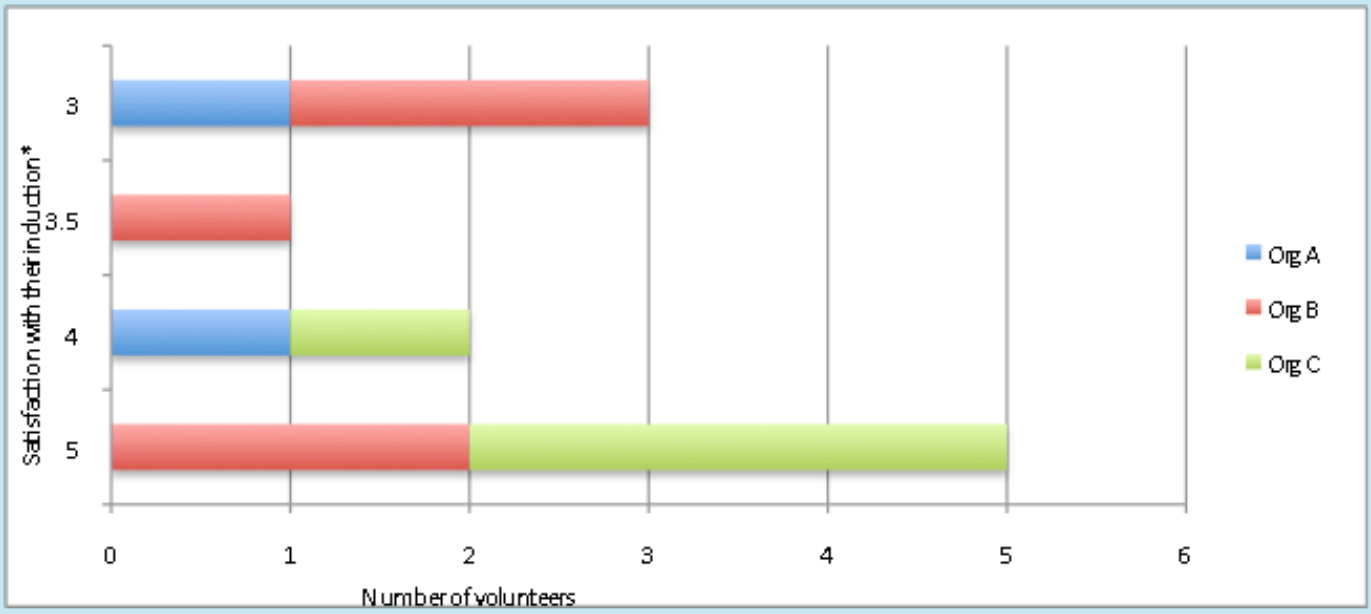
Most volunteers felt quite neutral about their inductions, or were very satisfied (see *Figure 4.8*). This was not linked to whether they were a *"**you**"* or *"**us**"* in their orientation towards volunteering.

The negatives mentioned by volunteers included wanting less on the organisation's history and more on their role. And the challenge of making time for this. For example, volunteers in organisation C suggested rather than training for their core certificates for two hours over a number of weekends, they could have done it more intensively over two days, **"to get it done and dusted."**

Again, this fits well with the need to move quickly to the 'doing' for young people.

The positives about their inductions were very positive and related to learning specific skills and setting clear expectations for the roles (see *section 5.6* on those).

Figure 4.8: Volunteers' satisfaction ratings for their induction by organisation



** Figure 4.8 key: 5= very satisfied; 1= very unsatisfied*

4.6.B ORGANISATIONS' INDUCTION STRATEGIES

All case study organisations' inductions were compulsory and had covered the regulatory environment.

But the key for all organisations was how to make the induction and subsequent training interesting and dynamic for young people. See *section 5.6* for more on this.

To ensure engagement is timely in organisation B, if a potential young volunteer enquires and there are no opportunities at that point, they are sent a DVD about the organisation as an introduction and momentum is kept up with them by sending them regular emails.

4.6.C INDUCTIONS – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

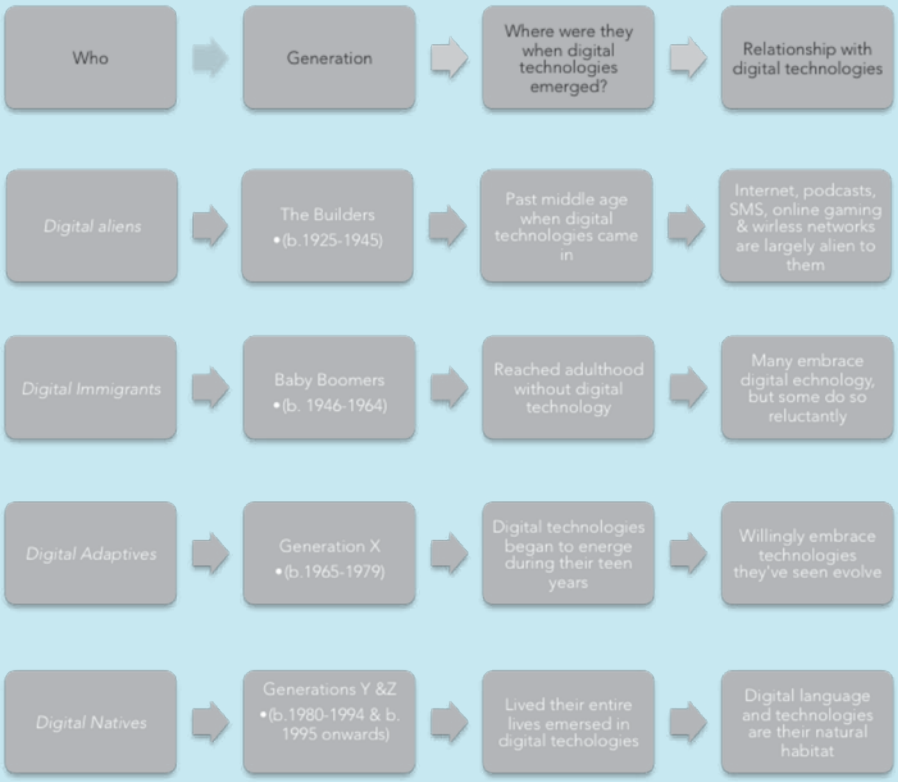
- Young volunteers understood the importance of inductions, but wanted to move to the 'doing' of their volunteering as quickly as possible.

4.7 COMMUNICATING WITH GENERATIONS Y AND Z

4.7.A COMMUNICATING WITH DIGITAL NATIVES

In his very useful research, *"The ABC of XYZ"* (2010), McCrindle references Marc Prensky's popular paper, *"Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants"* (2010:52-53). This model succinctly highlights the very different relationships our generations have with today's digital technologies – from Builders as *'digital aliens'* to Gens Y and Z as *'digital natives'* (see *Figure 4.9*) and, hence, alludes to the significant implications that has for how we need to adapt our communication for different generational audiences.

Figure 4.9: Digital Immigrants to Digital Natives: Prensky's model of generations' relationships with digital technology



Source: Marc Prensky, 2001, 'Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants' in On the Horizon, vol.9, no.5, pp.1-2, in McCrindle, (2010:52-53).

The prominence of digital technologies is an important factor to understand in how to communicate with Gen Y – and, indeed, the already relevant Gen Z – and was a common point of discussion with volunteers in this sample. Their insights help to put some flesh on the bones of the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy's ambitions to more effectively use IT and social networking within volunteering (see *section 4.1.a*).

Developing online volunteer-engaging strategies

All the organisations were aware of their need to review their use of IT and social networking. One organisation, through their national strategy, had developed an online engagement strategy (see *organisations' tips #8*) in recognition that:

> **"Young people operate in a different way and have different expectations to other generations and for us to continue to grow as an organisation, we need to move with that new generation."**
>
> [Organisation B]

This strategy is being acted upon through a state implementation plan that will focus on how to use these methods within recruitment, engagement and activities.

With the support of a national body, such a huge overhaul in communication is clearly easier to resource. But there could be some very useful lessons from any evaluation of such strategies that could be shared with the Tasmanian volunteering sector and applied in differing degrees within a range of organisations.

organisations' tip #8

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Following a six-month consultation with young people and staff, the national strategy for one organisation included:
— Regularly refreshing volunteer information available through the website;
— Online enquiry and induction;
— Using viral campaigns for recruitment and engagement;
— Using Facebook for ongoing information.

Table 4.10: Organisations' communication media with young volunteers

	Non-digital dialogue				Digital dialogue		Digital Media			Other Media			
	Face to face	Phone	Fax	Letter	Email	SMS	Website	Facebook	Twitter	Media releases	Newspaper advertising	Radio advertising	TV advertising
Peak body A	B			B	C		B	B	B	B	B	B	R
Peak body B	B	R			B	C	B	B	B	B		B	
Organisation A	B			R	C	C	B	B				B	
Organisation B	B	R			B	B	B	B		B			
Organisation C	B	B			C		R						R

Table 4.10 key: R – For recruiting volunteers, C – For communicating with existing volunteers, B – For both

Using websites – crucial first point of information

A clear message came from the young volunteers and the organisations in this study – the importance of a good web presence to help inform potential young volunteers about volunteering opportunities. As one volunteer said:

> **"These days, if it's not on Google it doesn't exist – if information isn't there, won't phone to find out."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B]

> **"How would I get involved with [another volunteering organisation]? Obviously Google would be my first option."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

> **"I'd Google it and try to find out what it's about."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

> **"If it can't be Googled, it can't be done."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

Although the young volunteers were broadly satisfied with their own organisation's website as a source of information about opportunities and as a gateway to the application process, they were also aware that not all Tasmanian organisations have such a web presence.

> **"A lot of smaller organisations – it's hard to have good websites sometimes."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation A]

The majority of volunteers in this sample felt that websites would be the first stop for finding out about new volunteer organisations, whereas Facebook would be the preferred way of getting information once they were in the organisation:

> **"But if you actually want people to get involved in [organisation C]…I mean I probably wouldn't go to FB, I'd go to an official website that actually has who does what."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

More on social networking, such as Facebook later. Supporting Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations to either have their own effective web presence or have their information and application process available through a third party website is clearly a development priority for the Tasmanian volunteer sector; and potentially a great community development project for IT-minded volunteers.

Using emails and texts – can we rely on them?

Texting and email were both mentioned frequently by organisations, but not consistently by all young volunteers, as the main means of communicating effectively with younger volunteers (see *Table 4.10*).

All the organisations communicated with existing young volunteers via email, but were not convinced of its effectiveness:

> **"Half the problem is getting them to open the email."**
>
> [Organisation A]

The mixed response from young people on whether or not they used this, highlights the challenge.

In organisation A, where volunteers were sent regular volunteer e-newsletters, some volunteers automatically opened all volunteer emails. But some never did. The organisation had experimented with changing the type font, stating that it was the organisation's volunteer newsletter, not the public one, being clear on if there is action required in the title (for example, completing a compulsory programme report). However, in their experience, responses were sporadic.

Volunteers in organisation C were keen to suggest more use of SMS messages for reminding young volunteers about events. They pointed out Tasmanian surf store Red Herring's[51] successful use of texting to encourage people to visit their stores. And felt this was something more volunteer-involving organisations should consider:

> **"You know, like when you go into Red Herring, 'Sign up for our blah, blah, blah.' And you sign up and they send you text messages, you know, 'Red Herring having a sale. Btwn 7 and 9 70% off.'" " I always go to them."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

Indeed, organisations A and B and peak body B already used such approaches to communicate with their existing volunteers (see *Table 4.10*).

So emails and texting were important ways to get messages to existing volunteers for organisations, and,

51 See Red Herring's website - http://www.redherringsurf.com.au/

with emails, potentially to find new volunteers. But emails and SMS messages may need to be part of a wider communication package for Gens Y and Z; for many of the volunteers in this study, they had moved away from emailing to social networking – particularly Facebook.

And one thing was clear - letters and phone calls were *not* the way to communicate to young people:

"So many people at my school would not pick up the phone."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

Social networking – the missing piece

Facebook – tapping into the current information channel for Gens Y and Z

A missing piece flagged by young volunteers in all three organisations was a more prominent Facebook presence for their organisation. When asked what advice they would give to Tasmanian organisations struggling to attract more young people, the young volunteers saw Facebook as a way of informing existing and potential volunteers about volunteering opportunities and events:

"Facebook and social networking sites are a free way of getting info across about what volunteering opportunities there are. Everyone's on FB now, pretty much."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"I think, for young people,…you've got to keep with the times…I don't know if it's Facebook forever, but at the moment it is Facebook. Just a way of us socialising. And so, like, you find out a lot on there… This is a kind of joke, but until it's on Facebook, it's not official!...People say that all the time…It kind of just goes to show that people find out a lot on there."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"I suppose what we could do…is make a video and stick it on Facebook and stick it on YouTube and stuff…and just like put it out through Facebook."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"You could do things like, 'Don't forget the Ulverston Festival!'"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"We have our website that was launched earlier this year. But sometimes it's hard with websites, 'cos, like, you have to update them so often; it's, like, such a process to update the website. But with Facebook, it's just, like, click, blah, blah, blah, done."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

In fact both peak bodies and two organisations (A and B) used Facebook, mainly to recruit volunteers, promote events and encourage volunteer involvement in projects (see *Table 4.11*):

"Facebook's a big one for us;… everyone uses Facebook nowadays. If you don't have one, you miss that opportunity to put up events."

[Peak body B]

"Recently, Minister X was having a live chat…So we blasted all over our Facebook and our…members did too about, 'at this time, Minister X's going to be online if you want to talk about transport, go to this link."

[Peak body B]

Table 4.11: Organisations' Facebook membership* and how they used Facebook for volunteers

Organisation	Facebook members at 7 April 2011	Use of Facebook				
		Recruit volunteers	Promote events/ training	Display photos of events	Engage in competitions	Direct to website
Peak body A	271**	Y	Y	Y		Y
Peak body B	314 & 737***	Y	Y	Y		
Organisation A	1288**	Y	Y		Y	Y
Organisation B	194****	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Organisation C	n/a					

** Membership taken from numbers of members or 'likes' on the organisations' Facebook group page.*
*** Open group Facebook page.*
**** The organisation has two group Facebook pages – an open page for the peak body and an open page specifically for a youth forum.*
***** Closed Facebook page for young volunteers in Tasmania and one other state.*

However, use of Facebook came with a number of warnings and reservations. One volunteer pointed out the challenge of engaging with young people via this medium – the need to make opportunities stand out in order to prompt considered and meaningful action, rather than just getting an automatic response from young people:

"Young people are consuming so much they don't know what they're consuming. On FB they just 'like' but don't touch it. Need to make it different."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

All three organisations were aware of the need to understand this medium and think about how they might use it more effectively, to make the resource input worthwhile, compared to the return in membership (see *Table 4.11*) and outcomes. The major barriers to using Facebook were understanding how it might add to their volunteer recruitment and marketing techniques, having the skills to do this and having the resources to maintain it:

"It's a huge challenge for organisations that don't have the capacity, or the mindset...I think age is a big thing…For myself, that uses it, I'm familiar with it. But if you…don't have your own account, or don't know how to use it, it becomes quite intimidating to know what to say and what not to say…or how to post things."

[Peak body B]

"Need someone to drive it. Need to influence our peak body to decide how to use Facebook."

[Organisation C]

"You have to be committed to it…A few weeks is a long time in the virtual world…if you don't keep updated. I have to check it everyday and there are so many notifications from people who are interested in our organisation, but if I don't keep on top of that, then the message will be forgotten by them, or they'll be, like, 'Oh, they obviously weren't that interested, because they haven't replied to me…Trying to sell that to a Board might not be that easy. They'll say, 'Oh, it's just a waste of time.' But it's important to people for who that's their real way of engaging socially."

[Peak body B]

"Because it's so time consuming, we've done the bare essentials at the moment…There's definitely scope to expand how much we put on."

[Peak body B]

Twitter – information bursts

Table 4.12: Organisations' Twitter followers and how they used Twitter for volunteers

Organisation	Twitter followers at 8 April 2011	Use of Twitter				
		Recruit volunteers	Promote events/ training	Promote opportunities	Engage in competitions	Direct to website and Facebook
Peak body A	129	Y	Y	Y		Y
Peak body B	95		Y			
Organisation A	n/a					
Organisation B	n/a					
Organisation C	n/a					

Both peak bodies used Twitter to, *"blast out information"* for the same purposes as they used Facebook; none of the three case study organisations currently used Twitter (see *Table 4.12*).

Keeping up with new media

There was a degree of skepticism from managers and from peak bodies about the sustainability of Facebook and Twitter as sources of engaging young people; they felt that it would not be long before young people move onto the next innovation in media communication.

This may indeed be the case. However, as more older users - i.e. Prensky's Digital Adapters to Digital Immigrants (McCrindle, 2010:52-53) - take to Facebook and Twitter and other social networking media, such as LinkedIn, as many currently are (Smith, J., 2009),52 and as more social technology develops that *Digital Natives* take up, getting to grips with how all these media can engage a range of volunteers is crucial.

52 Smith, J., 2009, Number of US Facebook Users Over 35 Nearly Doubles in the Last 60 Days, http://www.insidefacebook.com/2009/03/25/number-of-us-facebook-users-over-35-nearly-doubles-in-last-60-days/.

4.7.B PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR GENS Y AND Z

Communicating with Builders and Baby Boomers to Gens Y and Z

Gens Y and Z – embracing informality and 'emoticons'

As highlighted in *section 1.3*, McCrindle's (2010) *ABC of XYZ* also pinpoints the very different styles of education experienced by our different generations; from how different generations were taught to read and write to how our different experiences of education styles and digital technology have affected our learning preferences (2010:99-107). Intrinsic within these experiences are the very different uses of language and communication styles preferred by different generations; from the relatively formal, structured communication styles of Builders and Baby Boomers, through to Generations Y and Z, who prefer more informal, 'egalitarian' and brief styles (see *Table 1.1*).

This is captured by his following observation:

"Young people (and many older people) have adapted their written communication to modern technology… Today, young people adopt the casual style of the spoken word in much of their written communication, while the formalities of written communication are

oftentimes ignored. In order to accelerate communication, correct spelling and the rules of grammar do not apply to them in their daily use of SMS and chat. Words are abbreviated and shortened,…Young people use emoticons to convey emotion or emphasis. Instead of opening with 'Dear John', they commence with more casual salutation such as 'Hi', 'G'day', 'Hello', or 'HAWU' (hello all, what's up?).''

[McCrindle, 2010:100-101]

This differential use of language, relationship with digital technologies and preferences for certain learning styles of course has huge implications for how marketing and any other communication needs to be structured and directed at different volunteer audiences. And Prensky's portrait of Gens Y and Z as *Digital Natives* (see *Figure 4.9*) with preferences for informal language styles and experiential learning and being up for anything, as long as it fits with their values and lifestyles was exemplified by the young volunteers within this study and in the approaches organisations took to communicating with their Gen Y and Z volunteers.

Communicating with young volunteers: mind your language

Unanimously for organisations and peak bodies, using the right language was highlighted as a crucial part of getting communication with young people right. And this was acknowledged as being quite a skill:

"One of our staff members is quite good at writing…as if she's walking passed a group of people and engaging in conversation. And I struggle sometimes. I look at it and say, 'you should've…'. But the response we get to that is much better."

[Organisation B]

"The [Training Officer] always finds every year that they have new words… and you'll hear it on air; it comes across really clearly on their shows…We're providing a platform for young people and if that's their lingo…and that's how they're speaking to other young people… to us, that's representing…youth culture"

[Organisation A]

Comments to this effect were made in every interview with organisations and peak bodies, ensuring language is informal being key here:

"I suppose when I have conversations, like personally,…I'm not complex in any way in giving them information…I don't use great long burbs with them, 'cos they just look at me, 'What did you say?'"

[Organisation C]

"I feel a bit of pressure that when we're putting out public newsletters, they have to be hip and cool…I'm trying to be very upbeat and speak to people in a certain way…It takes me a really long time to write them!...If you just sent out an email, saying, you know, 'We've now changed this policy and burr, burr, burr.', they'll just see a block of text. No-one is going to read it. Even less if you're a young person… It's important to try to engage people."

[Organisation A]

And organisations had different approaches to trying to keep this informality within their communications (see *organisations' tips #9*).

organisations' tip #9

COMMUNICATING DEMANDS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

"I try to make things a bit funny…Or try to include things that make it seem like I'm not trying to tell people off. Like…I'll send people emails…and really I'm saying, 'You have a legal obligation to provide this report,… because we have to submit it to the [governing] body… I'm getting a bit uptight, because this was due a month ago and you haven't given me the form.' But I'll make a joke and say, 'You know, if you can send it to me, that would be great, otherwise, I'll have to chase you with a wooden paddle!'"

[Organisation A]

Keep it brief and visual

Other tactics the case study organisations used in communicating with Gens Y and Z included making sure information is to the point and that volunteers are not 'over emailed':

> **"Short, sharp information. If they want more, they'll ask for it. But if you give them too much,…they won't get beyond the first few words."**
>
> [Organisation B]

> **"They can't concentrate for longer than 15 minutes. You've lost them after 10. If you haven't got them in the first minute, you probably haven't got them at all."**
>
> [Organisation C]

Dynamic, multimedia presentation, preferably including graphics, was also emphasised to engage an IT-savvy younger market.

4.7.C COMMUNICATING WITH GENS Y AND Z – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Organisations need to develop a digital communication plan on a scale appropriate to the organisation, its resources and its target volunteer audiences;
- To communicate effectively with Gens Y and Z, organisations need:
- A website as the first port of call for volunteer information – particularly for potential volunteers;
    - To consider the role of social networking to promote volunteer opportunities and to communicate with existing volunteers. The main media currently are Facebook and, to a lesser extent, Twitter, but this may evolve quickly;
    - To understand the role of emails and SMS messages for ongoing communication with volunteers, instead of phone calls and letters. But, these should be part of a package of communication tactics, along with those above;
    - To ensure that messages are language-appropriate, to the point and preferably using multimedia.

4.8 CONCLUSIONS: CREATING YOUNG WILLING VOLUNTEERS

Being 'youth ready': making roles accessible and speaking 'Gen Y'

Comparing this fieldwork to previous Tasmanian, Australian and UK research,[53] emerging findings suggest that these young Tasmanians are:

- not particularly different to other volunteers in experiencing the challenge of making time to volunteer (although their time commitments may be more transient), and keeping up momentum outside of volunteering seasons; and
- potentially no different in what motivates them to volunteer; although their motivations may be held in different priorities to older volunteers, with perhaps ***more value for some young people on skill development***, as well as giving something back to the community/pursuing personal interests/being with friends.

But there may be particular issues to address in creating young willing volunteers, including:

- *reassuring their confidence* through offering ***peer ambassadors and mentors***;
- accessing their ***influencers*** (including *schools* and other educational institutions, ***families and peers***);
- adapting the ***length or regularity of their volunteer role*** to address their ***transient time commitments***;
- addressing their ***access to transport***; and
- understanding how young people ***prefer to communicate*** – in terms of media and styles.

53 Adams, N., 2009; Crowley et al 2008; Ferrier et al 2004; Hill et al., 2009; Pye et al., 2009; V 2008, 2009.

Tasmanian challenges: keeping up volunteer momentum and confidentiality

And for Tasmanian organisations, in addition to handling the above challenges for their volunteers, there seem to be some Tasmanian-specific challenges to do with the size and scale of the state, compared to other Australian states, particularly in:

- ***maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity*** when volunteering within smaller communities; and
- ***maintaining volunteers' momentum*** between the relatively infrequent state event-based opportunities and between the relatively short volunteering 'seasons' for sports and outdoor volunteering activities.

Volunteering in the digital age: embracing websites and social networking

Understanding how to effectively use communication media to target young volunteer audiences is clearly a huge development area for Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations; although this is by no means unique to Tasmania, the current ***lack of consistently provided web-based information and application processes*** and the ***under-use of social networking***, such as Facebook, for keeping volunteers updated, is clearly showing as a disconnect with Gens Y and Z.

Targeting recruitment is key

To successfully recruit more young people, most volunteers suggested that ***application processes need to be kept as short as possible***. Targeted recruitment was essential to attract young people into the organisations. ***Digital and non-digital recruitment mixes***, using existing ***peer networks***, ***schools***, ***colleges***, ***universities***, ***youth centres and VT's Volunteer Connect*** were essential for state-wide organisations to recruit young volunteers and ***a web presence was key as a first port of call*** for marketing information; ***personal approaches*** through ***peer networks***, ***schools and families*** were more successful for the local, community focused organisation. Using ***young people as ambassadors***, talking about what they get from their roles, helps potential young people to put themselves in volunteers' shoes. Having a ***personal point of contact*** within the organisation was key for maintaining young people's interest once they had made contact.

Lessons for organisations

So, from what we know about what motivates young Tasmanians to volunteer through this research, successful youth volunteering campaigns need to:

- ***see the organisation through young people's eyes*** – get young people's perspectives on what the organisation is about, what opportunities they think are available to them and how they would get them, what they would like to be able to do that fits with the organisation's goals;
- ***decide who their volunteer market is*** and what activities are attractive now and may be in future; target recruitment campaigns accordingly;
- ***understand potential volunteers' motivations*** – are they *"you"s*, *"me"s* or *"us"s*? and target recruitment accordingly;
- ***understand and address access challenges*** – such as transport, lack of confidence and handling transient time commitments, through marketing, as well as in how roles are designed, supported and rewarded;
- ***get smart about information*** – raise awareness about what volunteers can do; provide tailored information for young people in language and formats that are familiar to them; promote the benefits and outcomes of volunteering; ensure that recruitment emphasises the flexibility in the volunteering role; understand the roles of media, such as texting, emails, websites and social networking within potential volunteer markets for marketing, recruitment processes, alerting volunteers to opportunities and in creating volunteer communities;
- ***use and develop peer and community volunteer networks*** – use young people volunteering as ambassadors; make connections with local schools and have guest speakers;[54] cultivate local networks, including with schools, colleges, universities, families, youth and community centres, faith and CALD networks and with other volunteer-involving organisations and online social networks; consider the potential role of employers both as volunteer providers and as partners in contributing to community goals and developing good management practice;
- ***keep up momentum*** – ensure volunteers remain engaged, even through lengthy application processes and out of volunteer season, through maintaining personal contact and involvement in other community events.

54 Also recommended in Adams, N., 2009.

5. Creating meaningful volunteer roles for young people

"It's important to know I'm helping people…and important for me that it's interesting…important to be learning something new and contributing to raising awareness."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Young people can embrace any function of volunteering, if the legislative requirements allow it."

[Organisation B]

"Volunteers are very strategic in what they choose, which is why some organisations aren't doing so well; because they're not designing their projects with that in mind."

[Peak body B]

"Without these [benefits] for myself and others the entire point of volunteering as I see it, disappears"

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"I wouldn't volunteer somewhere I didn't feel comfortable;… Where you feel accepted and where you feel it's a safe place to be and that you're treated equally"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Emphasise all the different things you can choose from. There's something for everyone."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"The time thing's massive for me…If I didn't have a flexible role, I couldn't do it."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"There's a sense that you want to benefit the wider community. So I was looking for that in a role."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"Getting them in the door in January and not having anything for them to do til June… you're not going to keep them. They'll go and find something else."

[Organisation B]

VT (2009:8-9) emphasise that no matter how large the willing volunteer pool is, volunteers need meaningful roles to benefit and indeed to remain a volunteer. If we are to sustain Tasmanian volunteering, we need to understand what young volunteers want from their roles to make them meaningful and to encourage them to remain.

To further understand what it takes to create meaningful roles for young volunteers in Tasmania, this chapter explores:

5.1	What young people want from their current volunteering role	67
5.2	What makes a positive role for young people	70
5.3	Benefits from volunteering	75
5.4	Volunteer types, potential threads and differences	79
5.5	What activities are young volunteers interested in?	83
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5.8	Conclusions: creating meaningful volunteer roles for young people	93

"The philosophy is we'll take what you can give."

[Organisation C]

5.1 WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT FROM THEIR CURRENT VOLUNTEERING ROLE

In *section 4*, we explored with volunteers what had motivated them to volunteer in general – both personal and community focused drivers (*section 4.3*). To further understand how to design meaningful roles, it is also important to understand the personal and community 'asks' they have from their particular current volunteering role and be aware that these asks may change during the course of their experience.

The importance of understanding these 'asks' was highlighted by one peak body:

"You might be passionate about foreign aid, but you might choose an organisation that doesn't help develop your understanding of the issue, or can't help you develop in that area, you could be…doing a secretarial role…but not understanding the broader issues…Volunteers are very strategic in what they choose, which is why some organisations aren't doing so well; because they're not designing their projects with that in mind."

[Peak body B]

5.1.A PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER ROLE ASKS

Personal volunteer role asks - - - - -

Within this sample, most volunteers were looking for one or two 'asks' from their current role. Most were personally driven and very practical (see *Figure 5.1*); either needing fast and easy recruitment, support, flexibility in hours, or a long-term commitment:

"For me …it was something that was convenient around uni….and I wanted something that was long term ... I wanted something I could do regularly…It ended up being something with older people…I found that good – talking to different people."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Something that you actually enjoy. For example, if you want work for the RSPCA, you obviously love animals…Because we're young, we love being [where they volunteer], so it makes sense to do this."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Or it was about their personal or career development - experience, using skills:

"Insight into how an organisation is run."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

These follow through from the challenges explored in *section 4.1* and in motivations to volunteer (*section 4.3*). So those who were tight on time wanted things like flexibility, those lacking confidence were looking for support or skill development and so on. See *section 5.4* for more on these threads.

Community volunteer role asks - - - -

There were a minority of volunteers who were also looking for community-focused asks from their current role – involving other young people:

"Working with my peers or younger people that I enjoy working with"

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

Or, they were looking for some form of community outcome:

"There's a sense that you want to benefit the wider community. So I was looking for that in a role."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

(See *Figure 5.1*)

Figure 5.1: What young volunteers wanted from their role

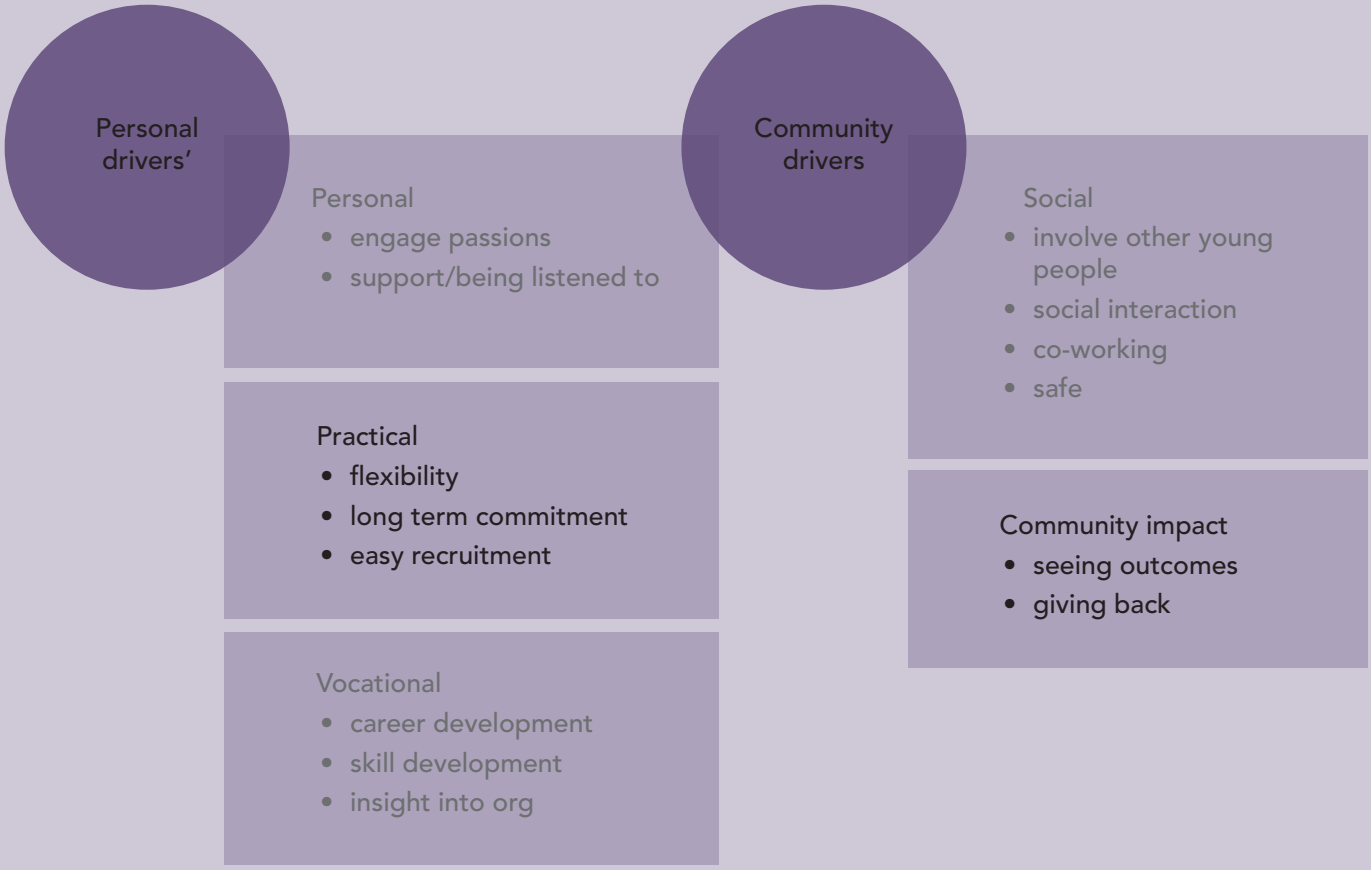


Figure 5.1 key: Grey font – main volunteer role asks for volunteers within this research

Multiple volunteer role asks - - - - - -

Most volunteers looked for both personal and community driven asks in their current role. For example, all the volunteers in organisation C were personally interested in sport, but were aware that by channeling their interest into their local area they could contribute to their local community:

"Because I compete in the club, I might give something back to the community using that."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Volunteers in the local community-based organisation C also highlighted that their families had asks of the organisation – predominantly that it was a trusted organisation, as they were leaving their kids there:

"They know that they'll be safe."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

5.1.B DEVELOPING THE VOLUNTEER TYPOLOGY: USING OUR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT MOTIVATIONS AND VOLUNTEER ROLE ASKS

So, emerging findings suggest that, similar to what motivates an individual to want to volunteer, there may be three potential groups of 'asks' people have from their current volunteer role:

- ***"You"s*** - Solely community based asks – i.e. those who want to use this particular role to contribute to their community, 'make a difference', or for social interaction;
- ***"Me"s*** - Solely personally based asks – i.e. those who want to use this particular role for personal reasons, such as to develop their skills, to enhance their career prospects, or to pursue a personal interest;
- ***"Us"s*** – Mixed asks – i.e. those who want to use this particular role partly for community reasons and partly for their own personal reasons.

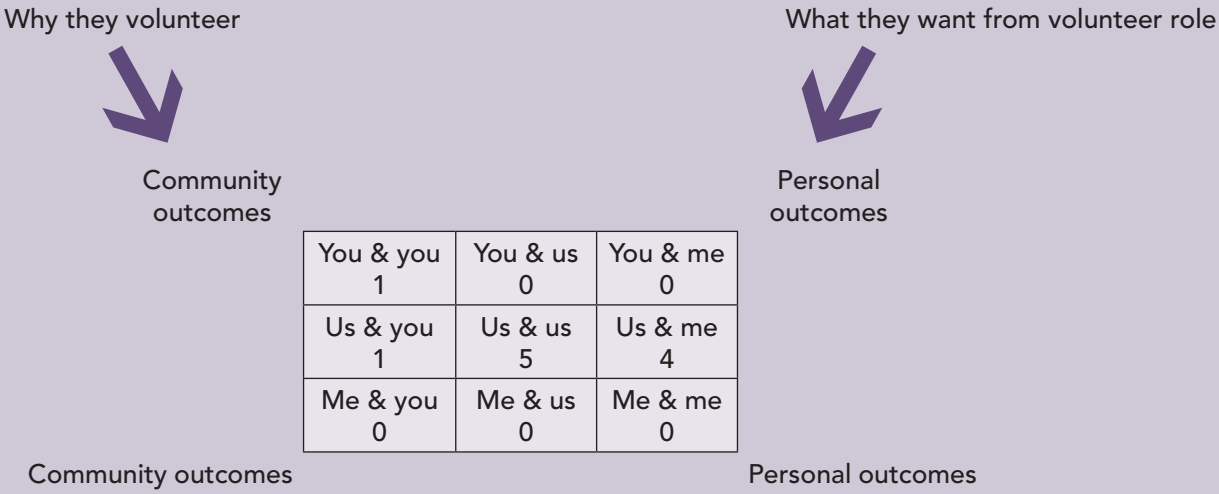
In terms of volunteer role asks within this sample, there were:
2 "you's"
4 "me's"
5 "us's"

So, considering these two dimensions together – motivation to volunteer and role asks – emerging findings suggest there are a number of potential volunteer 'types' for organisations to understand for their marketing and recruitment through to how they design their roles, support mechanisms, training and development packages (see *Figure 5.2*) from:

- those with consistent motivations in why they want to volunteer and what they want from this role – for example, *"you and you"'s* – i.e. those who are motivated to volunteer for community reasons and are looking for community impact from their current or potential role; *"me and me"s* and *"us and us"s*;
- to those whose motives to volunteer in general are slightly different to the focus they have for their next particular role – for example, *"you and us"s* – those who are generally community focused in their volunteering motives, but who are looking for a role that both contributes to their community and develops their skills.

In terms of this volunteer typology, within this sample, there were (see *Figure 5.2*):
1 "you & you"
1 "us and you"
4 "us & me"s
5 "us & us"s

Figure 5.2: Potential volunteer types and the numbers of each present in this research sample, based on motivations to volunteer and what a person wants from a volunteer role



There are some important points to note about this emerging typology.

This typology may not just be limited to young people. But, it is outside the scope of this research to comment more widely. However, further work on whether this typology works for wider groups of volunteers would be useful.

Secondly, peoples' motivations for volunteering and their asks from a particular role may be fluid. What a potential volunteer wants from a specific role may change with each role and might change whilst they are in that role, as they understand more about the impacts they can have; for example, one volunteer commented:

"Realising what volunteering was about probably came later to me."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

For example, a young person may be motivated to volunteer to benefit their local community. And might look for a role where they can learn food preparation skills and make a difference in their community (be a *"you & us"*). And then move onto a role where they can make sure local community members who are homeless are fed (move to a *"you and you"*).

So this typology may be useful to help organisations to describe what motivates their volunteers to volunteer in the first place and then what their volunteers are looking for at that point in time from their volunteering role, so that the organisation can market roles appropriately (*'it will make a difference to the educational opportunities of children in Cygnet'*, or *'it will develop project management, team and communication skills, critical to include on your resume'*). It may also help to tailor elements within that role that are appropriate for a particular individual, in terms of activities, support and opportunities for review, personal and vocational development and outcomes.

5.1.C VOLUNTEER ROLE ASKS – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Most volunteers wanted both personal and community-focused asks of their current volunteer role. Most of the personal asks were about engaging their interest, practical (easy recruitment), or vocational (develop skills);
- So, considering motivation to volunteer and role asks together, emerging findings suggest there are a number of potential volunteer 'types' for organisations to understand for their marketing and recruitment through to how they design their roles, support mechanisms, training and development packages, from:
    - those with consistent motivations in why they want to volunteer and what they want from this role – for example, *"you and you"s* – i.e. those who are motivated to volunteer for community reasons and are looking for community impact from their current or potential role; *"me and me"s* and *"us and us"s*;
    - to those whose motives to volunteer in general are slightly different to the focus they have for their next particular role – for example, *"you and us"s* – those who are generally community focused in their volunteering motives, but who are looking for a role that both contributes to their community and develops their skills;
- Peoples' role asks are mostly linked to the challenges they raised around volunteering – (so, those with time restrictions needed flexibility; those lacking confidence needed support/skill development).

5.2. WHAT MAKES A POSITIVE ROLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

All of the already motivated young volunteers in this sample agreed that any volunteering experience was a positive one:

> **"The experience itself is positive, whether it's good or bad."**
>
> **[Volunteer, Organisation B]**

But to pin that down further, there were personal and community driven factors to creating positive roles for Tasmanian young people (see *Figure 5.3*). Findings within this sample suggest these criteria may follow through from their volunteer typology (as an *"**us and us**"* and so on) and shape the benefits they see within their role. See section 5.4 for more on these threads.

Figure 5.3: What makes a positive role for young volunteers: personal and community drivers

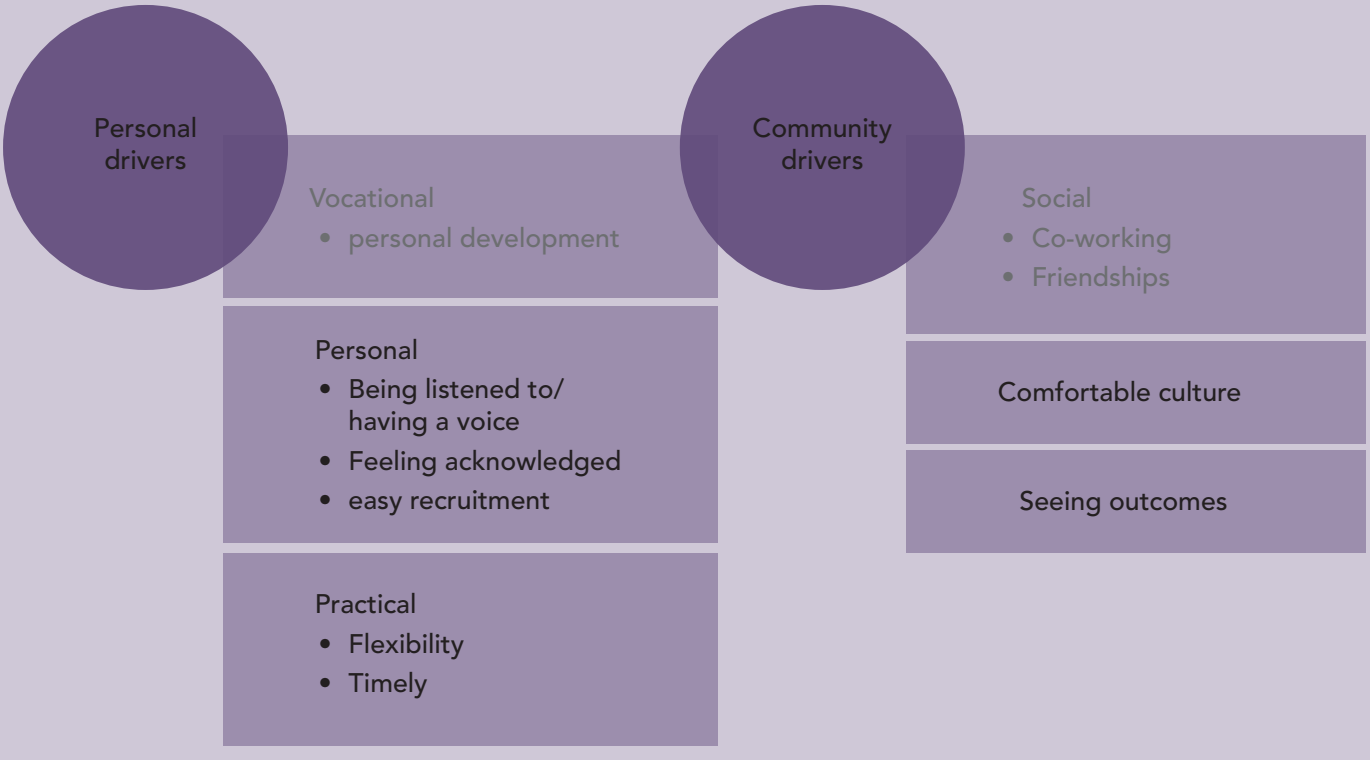


Figure 5.3 key: Grey font – main elements that made a positive volunteer experience within this research

5.2.A PERSONAL DRIVERS

Unsurprisingly, what volunteers saw as a positive volunteering experience mainly fitted with their personal, practical and vocational role asks.

Vocational

A positively good experience for volunteers in this sample usually (but not exclusively) involved elements of personal development – either:

> **"Learning something new."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B]

> **"Self gain – you get out of it what you've put in."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation A]

> **"All the people who are willing to help guide you, train you and generally make sure you know what you're doing… Make sure you're on the right track."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

Or offering diversity of roles as young volunteers progress:

> **"There's so much you can do."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

> **"Even if you don't want to compete, you can, like, help with the [younger kids] and training and things like that…Or you can go over to the other side…and do…all your awards and help training for the awards."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

Personal

Being listened to

Being appreciated or being consulted was important to most volunteers in this sample. This was the case for all those with *"us and us"*, *"us and me"* and *"us and you"* profiles. Although those with a *"you"* in their profile seemed more concerned about *personal support* to ensure they are doing a good job, rather than to *develop their skills*:

> **"To be appreciated and be consulted about what you're doing, so you know what you're doing is right."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B]

This fits with previous research findings around a largely supportive management style preferred by Gen Y volunteers in general (McCrindle, 2010:172) and Gen Y Tasmanian volunteers (Adams, N., 2009:22).

Organisations were aware that consultation with volunteers was important, even if this was informally, so their, *"needs have been met and their voice has been heard."* [Organisation B]. And given that motivations may shift in role and the reasons that volunteers want support may differ, consultation is an important tool to ensure that volunteers continue to feel supported, appreciated and engaged. This is explored further in *section 6.3.*

Feeling acknowledged

Again, fitting with other research on Gen Y (McCrindle, 2010) and Gen Y Tasmanian volunteers (Adams, N., 2009), a common part of a positive volunteering experience was to feel:

> **"Valued as a volunteer."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

For organisation A, young people were often those who came forward to do additional volunteering roles, such as merchandising stalls at fundraising events. To acknowledge their contributions and what they had achieved, the organisation felt that it was important to make sure they were publicly acknowledged for their contributions:

> **"We'll make a point in the next e-newsletter,…if there's a photo, we'll include a photo; we'll have a thanks to such and such for helping out, so that they're being rewarded in front of everyone else."**
>
> [Organisation A]

Organisation C was aware that although recognition was important to some young volunteers, others did not like public recognition. So they had developed a range of ways of acknowledging their volunteers, from the Volunteer of the Year Awards, through to simple praise that recognised peoples' efforts at the clubhouse.

Practical

Flexibility

For those volunteers who had time as a challenge, flexibility in their role was an important part of a positive experience for most volunteers:

> **"The time thing's massive for me. Sometimes I do 43 hours of work on top of uni. So if I can't pick my own time, I can't do it. If I didn't have a flexible role, I couldn't do it."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B.]

This was also important in previous Tasmanian (Adams, N., 2009:19; Crowley et al 2008:76) and UK research (Pye et al, 2009:28, 33, 54).

Although there were some roles in the club that required minimum hours, organisation C succinctly summed up the attitude needed to overcome time issues:

> **"The philosophy is we'll take what you can give."**
>
> [Organisation C]

And all organisations had addressed this in simple and innovative ways (see *organisations' tips #10* below).

organisations' tip #10

OFFERING FLEXIBILITY

One organisation has embraced the challenge of offering more informal volunteering opportunities in an innovative manner. They have considered the tasks within their organisation that get put on the not urgent pile, either because staff do not have time or do not have skills (for example, designing leaflets, archiving). They have recognised that these are tasks that could be done at home, or in a couple of hours at someone's convenience. They have developed a list and task description for each of these tasks, so that:

"Anytime a young person comes in, they can go to the tray, pick up a task with a description, complete, leave and feel their contribution." [Organisation B]

Timely

Complementing flexibility, organisation B talked about recruitment and volunteering activities needing to be clear, efficient and timely. This organisations' advice to others who were struggling to recruit young volunteers was to be *"youth ready"*: have a clear idea about what young people can do in the organisation and make sure it's timely:

> **"Getting them in the door in January and not having anything for them to do til June…you're not going to keep them. They'll go and find something else."**
>
> [Organisation B]

This issue is alluded to more in previous Australian than Tasmanian literature (Ferrier, 2006:68)

5.2.B COMMUNITY DRIVERS

Both volunteers and organisations described community aspects of a positive experience as being about offering an appropriate social environment and ensuring the activities are clearly purposeful (see *Figure 5.3*), similar to the volunteer role asks.

Social

Co-working and friendships

Complimenting other Tasmanian research (Adams, N., 2009:18), Australian research (Ferrier et al, 2004:57) and UK research (Pye et al, 2009:22,28, 32-34), for volunteers in this sample, community drivers were mostly about having a collective experience; either being part of a team, or having an opportunity to *"hang out"*:

> **"I wouldn't do it if I didn't have friends...Why would you want to go somewhere where you're by yourself."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

> **"If you can get enough of them in a group, they'll come. So for this specific activity, working with other young people is critical."**
>
> [Organisation C]

> **"Be part of a team or group."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation A]

"I think a lot of people want to be part of a community."

[Organisation A]

And this connection often led to more engagement and peer support:

"I've found that volunteers that will come to…fund raisers, quiz nights, that kind of thing,…the volunteers that will put a team together and get excited are the ones that have spent the most time with us and have had that interaction and can have a personal joke with us…So it's probably those who pop into the office…[who will] be more interested in the organisation."

[Organisation A]

"It's their networks, isn't it? That's what engages them. Not hanging out with us old blokes! Although they enjoy our company and we teach them a lot. But when they become teachers themselves, that's when we stand back and go, 'Yeah, we've succeeded there.'"

[Organisation C]

But creating this community is not always straightforward and offering a 'communal experience' is not always possible. For organisation A, although they were acutely conscious of needing to create a community of volunteers, the organisation's building has no communal space to help facilitate this:

"That's something we really struggle with here, because we don't have a communal space for young people who are volunteering together. For me, if someone gave us a million dollars, I'd make it different to the set up we have now…I've been to [comparable organisations] on the mainland, where they've had big communal areas and at any given time, there's a whole bunch of people there…I mean, part of it is meeting other [volunteers], having a chat…I think it's really important for a lot of people; it's more of a community; whether they're young or not, to kind of feel like they're a part of something with other people."

[Organisation A]

This had led to some issues for this organisation with engagement:

"People get very upset if they do their [activities] by themselves and the only contact they have is with the person on the [shift] before and after them. If one person just keeps pre-recording their [slot] and the other person doesn't turn up, they get really despondent, because they're not seeing any other human; they're just doing their thing."

[Organisation A]

Therefore, they made a point of highlighting this to some volunteers whose roles had the potential for 'isolation':

"I'm quite wary when I'm putting people into rosters, if they are going to be sitting down there in the office all day, cos I don't think that's very enjoyable and I will say to people beforehand, 'Look, if you do do that, you may be by yourself,…is that a problem for you?'"

[Organisation A]

Comfortable culture

Also, having an informal/comfortable culture was important for some young people:

"Feeling like you're safe."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"You know everyone. You're always gonna come down here and know everyone."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"An environment they feel comfortable in."

[Organisation C]

Without this, volunteers at organisation C thought they would, **"feel awkward"** and **"it wouldn't be fun."**

But this was not necessarily about being around people of their own age; all volunteers were content in mixed age environment, breaking that myth that young people are only interested in working with young people. For volunteers at organisation C, this was a crucial element of the community experience:

"It's about having people you know. Our club is pretty much a family club. You can see on the meals nights and stuff like that, there's always…the little kids… running around and then, like, there could also be…a group of, like, older people and younger people playing basketball, or…down on the beach playing soccer… It's not so much, like, age group."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"If I came down here and I didn't know anyone my own age, if there was older people that I still knew I would like stay and talk."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Creating an engaging community was a major piece of advice given by the case study organisations to organisations that are struggling to recruit young people – the key being creating *commonality*:

"People like to come in and be part of a fun environment and part of a community. So if you're an organisation where you're all over 60 and all you do is talk about your grandkids,…that's not appealing to young people, because they're not a part of that community…It's too disjointed…I guess people are drawn here, 'cos they're interested in music; they'll talk about music, or something."

[Organisation A]

Seeing outcomes

Common to nearly all volunteers was understanding the benefits/outcomes they get and others get from their volunteering (see *section 5.3*):

"If young people can see the benefits of what they put in, it might entice them to come back."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

These criteria have all been flagged as important to young people in previous Tasmanian research (Adams, N., 2009:18) and, to a lesser extent, UK research (Pye et al, 2009:28). And all the organisations were aware of this need:

"There's an expectation from young people that they want to be able to measure what impact they've had… Whether that comes from a tangible activity; so 'I served 400 sausages at the sausage sizzle.', or comes from knowing the phone call they made to somebody, or the three hours they contributed to packing health promotion bags means that 2000 other people get something."

[Organisation B]

Although, again, being aware of different volunteer 'types' was flagged as important here:

"I think it comes down to personality… Like [one volunteer]…who was made redundant,…he's in here for hours, because I think he just wants to get something done…:'I finished the process.' Whereas… other people are happy to take part."

[Organisation A]

"It's expected for [volunteers] to look after gear…So outcomes from that are a well managed club…We rescued 23 people… last year on one weekend. Now that's an outcome of this whole place existing… And the kids were in the paper and… talked to the media. They were actively involved in that process…A 14 year old boy actually the next day when he wasn't on patrol…went and rescued two people… The outcome for him was enormous – at school and the recognition. And he won the patrol person of the year…Proud as punch – his parents and he was too. So the outcome for him…was fantastic, but also the whole group benefitted and saw what we were doing is positive."

[Organisation C]

Feeding into the sense of volunteers feeling acknowledged, the case study organisations had a range of ways of communicating outcomes to volunteers, from immediate feedback and thanks after an event, to producing summary impacts (***see** organisations' tips #11*):

"Addressing that sense of 'this is how important you are.'"

[Organisation B]

organisations' tip #11

GIVING FEEDBACK ON OUTCOMES

After an event involving a number of volunteers all working on the same project, to help everyone understand their bigger contribution, organisation B debriefs with all volunteers to get their feedback on how it was for them. This is then compiled into a summary impact report, including how many people were helped, what went well, what could be improved. And this is sent to volunteers with a thank you, so they understand the scope of their impact and that they have been listened to.

5.2.C A POSITIVE VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Development, being listened to/acknowledged, friendships and a comfortable culture were the most important elements of a positive volunteering experience for this volunteer sample;
- All volunteers were content in mixed age environment, breaking that myth that young people are only interested in working with young people.

5.3 BENEFITS FROM VOLUNTEERING

All volunteers – whatever their profile - stated that the benefits they and others get from their volunteering are extremely important to their volunteering:

"Very important. Without these [benefits] for myself and others the entire point of volunteering as I see it, disappears"

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"They're pretty important. They're the sort of thing that sets you up for life."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

And they all rated the benefits they get highly (see *Figure 5.4*).

Figure 5.4: Volunteers' satisfaction ratings for the benefits from volunteering they get and others get

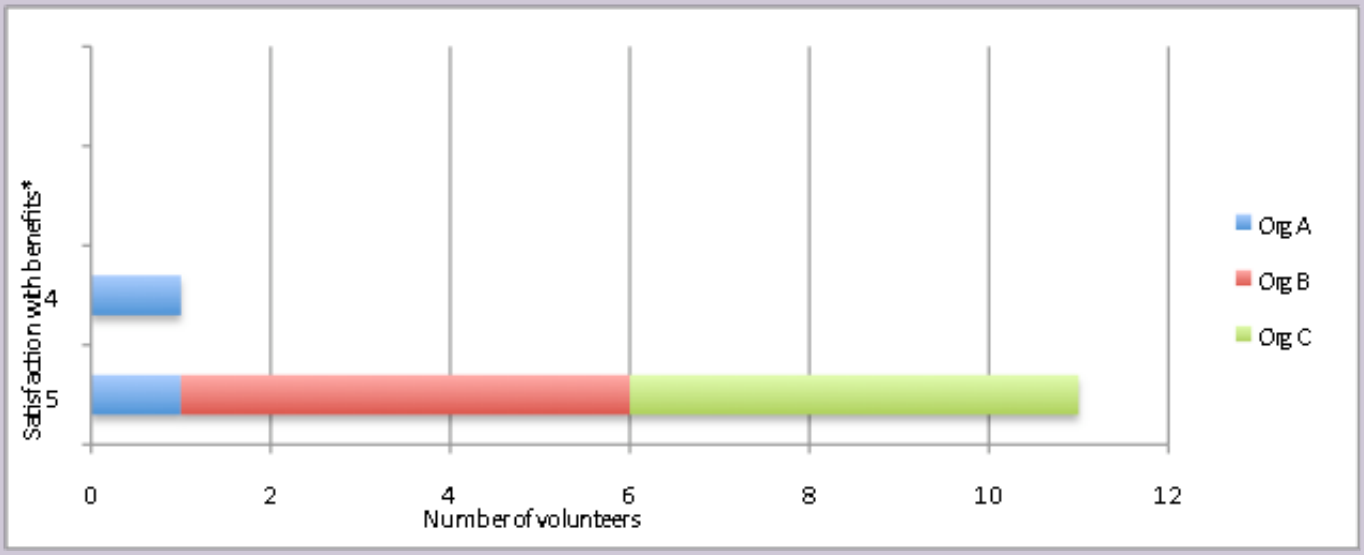


Figure 5.4 key: 5 = very satisfied; 1 = very unsatisfied

Peak body A spoke about benefits as, *"an emotional pay cheque."* And something that organisation needed to understand if they were to ensure their volunteers kept coming back.

5.3.A BENEFITS YOUNG VOLUNTEERS GET

The most striking characteristic of the personal benefits volunteers flagged were that they are the key elements needed for the transition from dependent young person to independent adult, such as confidence, feeling trusted, independence, appreciation, skills, qualifications and work experience; and those needed to develop effective citizenship, such as empowerment and being able to act for others (see *Figure 5.5*). This fits well with Tasmania's Social Inclusion Strategy's ambitions for volunteering helping to achieve Tasmania's big social and economic outcomes – sustainable Tasmanian communities and building Tasmania's competitive capacity (see *section 1.2*).

For this sample, the personal and community driven benefits for young people broadly reflected what makes a positive experience (see *Figure 5.3*) and indeed, the volunteers' motivations to volunteer and role asks (see *Figure 5.7*), although *'empowerment'* and *'acting for others'* were strong additional features here. Perhaps illustrating their ability to reflect on their impact once they have been in post:

> **"Felt very empowered, because I've been given an opportunity to make a change with myself and young people I'm working with. And knowing that, gives me a great sense of achievement. It's selfless acts like that that I really like doing."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation B]

There is no doubt that a significant benefit of volunteering for young people (whether they are looking for it, or not) is often skill development and very useful experience for their resume. Due to where they are in their lifecycle, more than for any other age group, skills and experience gained through volunteering was recognised as giving them an advantage over their non-volunteering peers:

> **"It helps kids get jobs. A number of kids from here have got jobs because on their resume; they've got [their volunteering organisation] – medallions, first aid certificates and all those things."**
>
> [Organisation C]

Figure 5.5: Benefits young volunteers gain from their experience

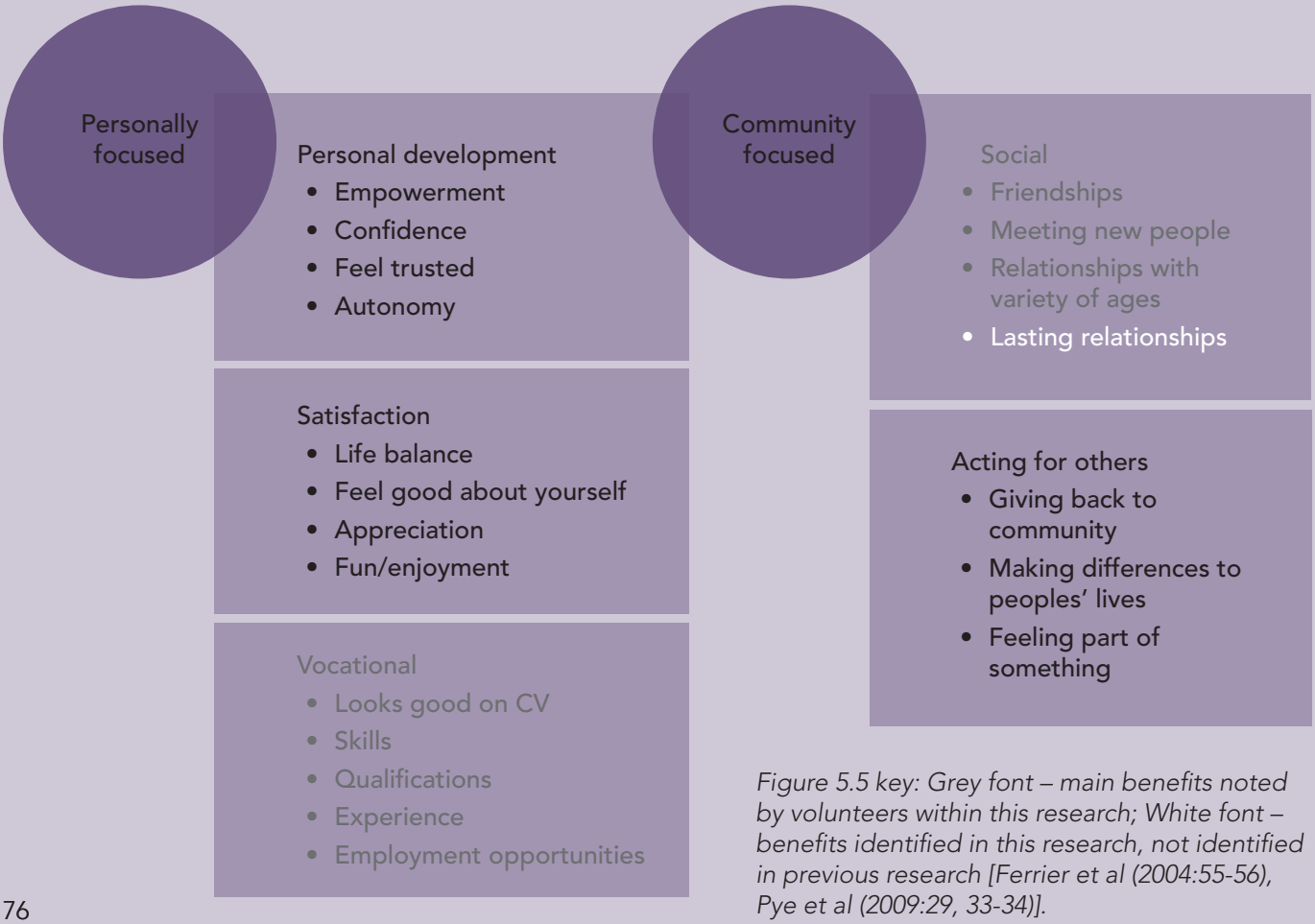


Figure 5.5 key: Grey font – main benefits noted by volunteers within this research; White font – benefits identified in this research, not identified in previous research [Ferrier et al (2004:55-56), Pye et al (2009:29, 33-34)].

All volunteers rated the benefits they got extremely highly (see *Figure 5.4*) and without exception, stated that these benefits were valuable to them:

"They are vital to me."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Very important. Without these [benefits] for myself and others, the entire point of volunteering as I see it disappears."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"I've learnt how important it is by experience."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"I think it's a part of what we do, so it's good to have as many benefits as we can. The skills, the friendships and knowledge will stay with us for life."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

All volunteers – regardless of their 'type' – articulated personal benefits gained from their experience across personal and community focused areas, with vocational skills and social connections being the most popular, although all benefits in *Figure 5.5* received multiple mentions:

Mixed benefits

"It's important to know I'm helping people…and important for me that it's interesting…important to be learning something new and contributing to raising awareness."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

Personal benefits:

"Important to me that people can trust me."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Looks good on your CV."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

Community-focused benefits

"Small differences to someone's life/sense of fulfillment from helping someone else."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Done my bit for…providing to the community. Nice to feel you are part of something that's owned by the community."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"Using welfare skills for others."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Meet large variety of new people,"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Yeah, quitting would like be I'd never see them. How do I keep in contact with my friends."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Especially with now finishing Grade 10, like, some people, like, X and stuff, are going to Guildford and X is going to Rosny with me, but we'll probably still see him here."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

5.3.B BENEFITS OTHERS GET

All young volunteers were able to articulate clear benefits for others from their acts. All of which were in line with their organisations' programme objectives – from personal beneficiary benefits, such as empowerment and learning, to whole community focused benefits, such as improving social inclusion (by combating isolation and loneliness and developing talent), and practical support for the community (community safety and jobs done) (see *Figure 5.6*).

Figure 5.6: Benefits others gain from young volunteers

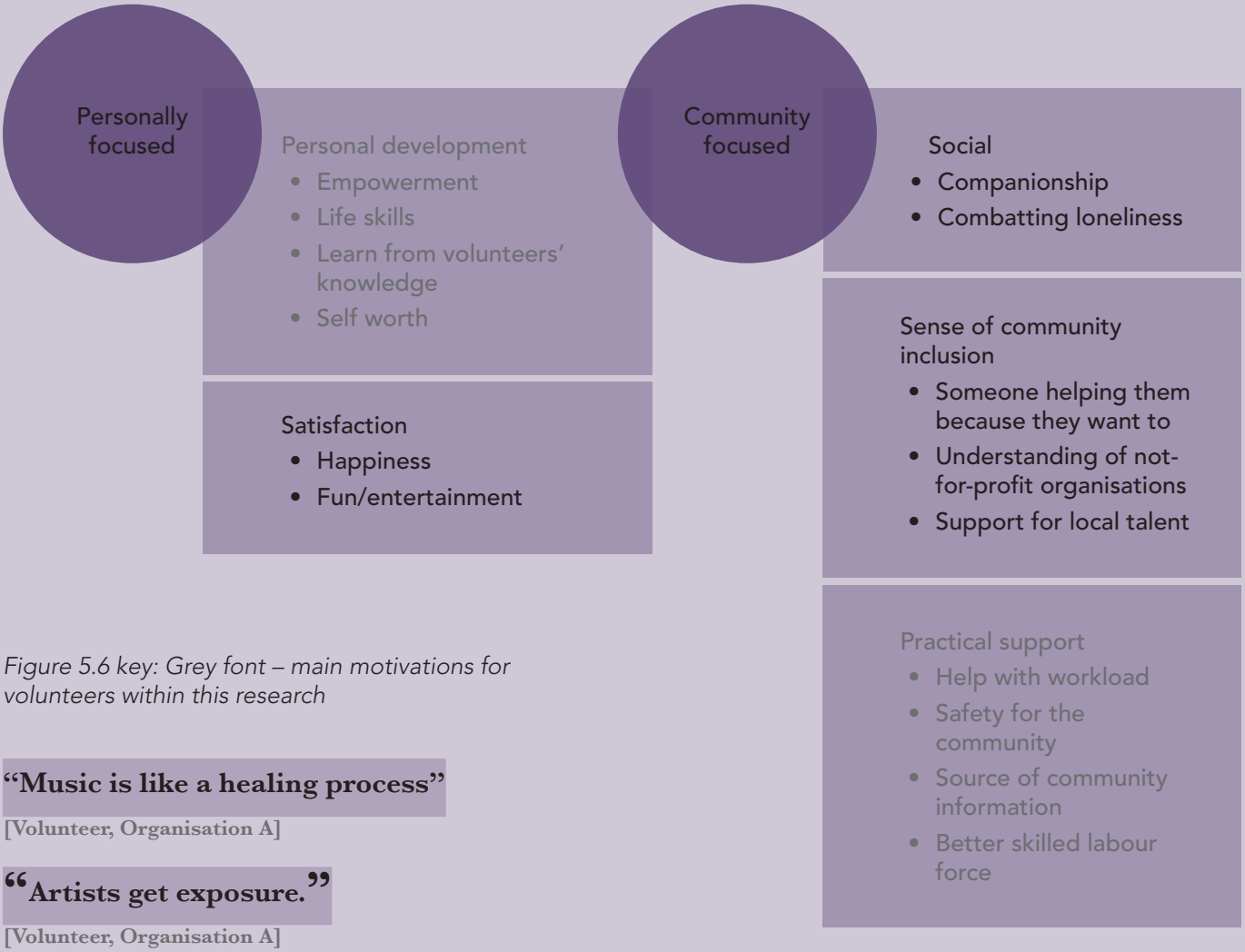


Figure 5.6 key: Grey font – main motivations for volunteers within this research

"Music is like a healing process"

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"Artists get exposure."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

One volunteer pointed out the benefits that employers get from volunteering – i.e. they get a more skilled labour force:

"With employers…For them, you might have the same qualifications as...someone else, but you have got [a range of additional certificates]. And that's a benefit for them, because they may have got someone in their working environment that has that…

They don't have to worry about it."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

But a core element for many volunteers was still the contribution to community development or social inclusion for beneficiaries:

"Someone to help them because they WANT to, not because they're PAID to."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

Volunteers most recognised the personal development their volunteering gave to beneficiaries and the practical impact their contribution had on the organisation or local community:

"Learn from our knowledge"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Safety."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

5.3.C BENEFITS FROM VOLUNTEERING – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Young volunteers held the benefits that they and others get from their volunteering highly – they were their raison d'être;
- Volunteers mostly recognised multiple benefits for themselves from volunteering, particularly personal and vocational development and that they were making new friends/meeting new people of all ages. But also important to many was that they felt they were contributing something within the community;
- The benefits young people gained included many of the key elements needed for the transition from dependent young person to independent adult and those needed to develop effective citizenship;
- Volunteers most recognised the personal development their volunteering gave to beneficiaries and the practical impact their contribution had on the organisation, the local community, or indeed for employees, who were getting a higher skilled labour force. But helping achieve community inclusion for others was also a prominent benefit that volunteers saw from their work.

5.4 VOLUNTEER TYPES, POTENTIAL THREADS AND DIFFERENCES

Given that the research has identified potential volunteer 'types' within this small sample (see *sections 4.3.d* and *5.1.b*), this section is a reflection point about our findings so far; whether there may be threads or differences that run through what different volunteer types – *"you and you's"*, *"us and us's"*, *"us and me's"* – might say about their experience as a whole – their challenges, motivations to volunteer, what they want from the volunteering role, what makes a positive role for them and the benefits they get from their volunteering.

Given the small sample here, there can be no claims of correlation, or even proven links, but simply to identify potential patterns that may warrant further research, with a view to helping organisations with how they might target their marketing and recruitment, role design, support, development and recognition structures.

In *Figures 5.7.a-d*, examples of the different volunteer 'types' found in this sample are laid out, along with what they had to say about their challenges, motivations, role asks, making a positive role and the benefits they got from volunteering.

5.4.A POTENTIAL THREADS FOR MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Challenges, motivation, volunteer role asks, positive experiences and benefits

Within this sample of young Tasmanians, challenges volunteers experienced in thinking about volunteering tended to be reflected in the elements that made up what a volunteer wanted from volunteering in general and then specifically from their current role. These threads then tended to drive what they saw as a positive volunteering experience[55] and/or shaped the benefits they were looking for from their role for themselves and for others (see *Figures 5.7.a-d*).

For different volunteer types, this thread might be *"giving back to the community"* (*Figure 5.7.a* and *5.7.d*), "*skills*" (*Figure 5.7.b and 5.7.c*), "*confidence*" (*Figure 5.7.c*), or "*friends*" (*Figure 5.7.d*).

This may read as common sense and we can not make generalisations about potential linkages from such a small sample of volunteers. But unpacking these drivers may be crucial to help organisations understand what management information is important for them to effectively design their volunteering roles, provide support and development and articulate outcomes for different 'types' of volunteers.

5.4.B THE VOLUNTEER 'TYPES' – POTENTIAL THREADS AND DIFFERENCES

You & You – community impact is key

For the *"you & you"* in this sample, it was ***community impact/making a difference*** that was the important thread through motivations, to volunteer role asks, to what makes a positive role and benefits (see *Figure 5.7.a*); this was also a thread that was important to all those "us's" in the sample (see *Figure 5.7.b-d*), but this was placed alongside some forms of personal elements.

55 Volunteers were asked, "what makes a positive volunteering experience?" as a group. Therefore, individual responses were not available for every participant. See appendix 6 for focus group questions.

Us & You – community impact and time

For the *"**us** & **you**"* in the sample, although giving something back to the community was important, the thread running through the challenges, motivations and positive aspects of the role was ***time*** (see *Figure 5.7.**b***).

Us and Me's – community impact, confidence and skills

For the *"**us** & **me's**"* in this sample, along with ***giving something back to their community*** as a general motivation for volunteering, there were other clear threads running through their challenges, role asks and benefits. These were mainly either addressing issues of ***confidence***, or, related, having a ***skills and confidence*** thread (see *Figure 5.7.c*).

Us and Us's – community impact, enjoyment, skills and friendships rule

In addition to ***giving something back to the community***, ***enjoyment*** was a clear thread that ran through motivation, volunteer role asks and benefits for most *"**us** & **us**"* volunteers in this sample – (see *Figure 5.7.d*).

Also common within this group was ***personal and skill development*** and/or ***forming friendships*** – not necessarily with those their own age. All helped to form a comfortable culture (see *Figure 5.7.d*).

Again, it is important to stress that we can not make generalisations about potential linkages from such a small sample of volunteers. But unpacking these drivers for different volunteer 'types' may be crucial to help organisations understand what management information is important for them to effectively design their volunteering roles, provide support and development and articulate outcomes for different 'types' of volunteers.

Figure 5.7.a-d – Threads running through different volunteer 'types' in this sample

Figure 5.7.a: Example of "you & you" volunteer: community impact thread

"you & you"	Thread: • community impact
Challenges	None
Motives to volunteer	"Giving back to the community, makng a difference, helping others who may not be able to help themselves, giving oportunities to others, caring"
Role asks	Benefit the wider community
Positive role	"To be appreciated & consulted, about what you're doing, so you know what you're doing is right."
Benefits	"Felt very empowered, because I've been given an opportunity to make a change with myself and young people I'm working with. And knowing that gives me a great sense of achievement. It's selfless acts like that that I really like doing."

Figure 5.7.b: Example of "us & you" volunteer: community impact and time thread

"us & you"	Threads: • community impact • time
Challenges	time constraints of university and working
Motives to volunteer	• Personal – "Gap year at uni; had more time; a personally difficult time for me." • Community – "I have always been a 'community minded' individual (coming from a large family and a country community)"
Role asks	Community – "It was very inspecific. I...just came in and chatted with the [management] about what they needed."
Positive role	"The time thing's massive for me...if I can't pick my own time, I can't do it. If I didn't have a flexible role, I couldn't do it."
Benefits	• Community – "Life long relationships; a greater sense of why volunteering is important (especially when you see the impact you can have); a sense that I can give something back to the community. • Personal – "And I would be lying if I didn't say volunteering looks good on your CV and makes you feel good about yourself."

Figure 5.7.c: Examples of "us & me" volunteers: community impact and confidence/skills threads

"us & me"	Threads: • community impact • confidence • skills/experience
Challenges	"Nerves – stepping outside the boundary; unknown territory; not kowing what to do."
Motives to volunteer	Personal – "Experience, self confidence, to gain for my CV, learning something new" Community – To give back to the community
Role asks	Personal – "Experience; insight into how an organisation is run"
Benefits	Personal – "Self confidence, fun, meeting new people, experience"

"us & me"	Threads: • community impact • skills
Challenges	"Only hard if you're rostered onto work & you have to take a paid day off."
Motives to volunteer	Personal – "Because you gain skills, qualifications...Looks good on your resume, helping you get jobs." Community – Giving back to the community;
Role asks	Personal – "Something I enjoy...gain skills and qualifications."
Benefits	Personal – "Skills qualifications, friendships, employment opportunities."

Figure 5.7.d: Examples of "us & us" volunteers: community impact and enjoyment, skills and/or friendship threads

"us & us"	Threads: • community impact • skills • friendships • enjoyment
Challenges	"Committment – how much was expected." "Distance."
Motives to volunteer	Personal – "Career oportunities; skills." Community – Giving back to the community
Role asks	Personal – "New experiences; skills; expand my knowledge about what this industry is about." Community – "New people"; "There's a sense that you want to benefit the wider community. So I was looking for that in the role."
Benefits	Personal – "Appreciation, enjoyment" Community – "Providing to the community." "Nice to feel you are part of something that's owned by the community."

"us & us"	Threads: • community impact • skills • friendships • enjoyment
Challenges	"No, there isn't really anything. It is quite easy to sit on the beach with friends watching the water."
Motives to volunteer	Personal – "Gain skills you can use elsewhere; self satisfaction; making friends of all ages." Community – "Giving something back to the community"
Role asks	Personal – "Something I enjoyed; skills that would not only help me at the beach and also in everyday life." Community – "Giving something back to the community."
Benefits	Personal – "Skills; looks good when going for jobs" Community – "Friendships - club and around the state"

5.4.C VOLUNTEER TYPES, POTENTIAL THREADS AND DIFFERENCES — WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Within this sample of young Tasmanians, challenges volunteers experienced in thinking about volunteering tended to be reflected in the elements that made up what a volunteer wanted from volunteering in general and then specifically from their current role. These threads then tended to drive what they saw as a positive volunteering experience and/or shaped the benefits they were looking for from their role for themselves and for others;
- Different threads (or thread combinations) tended to run through different volunteer types in the sample:
  - For the *"you & you,"* it was ***community impact/ making a difference*** that was the important thread;
  - For the *"us & you,"* although ***giving something back to the community*** was important, ***time*** was also an important thread;
  - For the *"us & me's,"* along with ***giving something back to their community*** as a general motivation for volunteering, there were issues of *confidence*, or, related, having a *skills and confidence* thread;
  - For *"us & us's,"* in addition to *giving something back to the* ***community, enjoyment, skills development*** and ***friendships*** were clear threads;
- We can not make generalisations about potential linkages from such a small sample of volunteers. But unpacking these drivers may be crucial to help organisations understand what management information is important for them to effectively design their volunteering roles, provide support and development and articulate outcomes for different 'types' of volunteers.

5.5 WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE YOUNG VOLUNTEERS INTERESTED IN?

The very mixed response to what sort of activities young volunteers in this sample said they would do and who they would work with challenges the myth that young people will only consider volunteering with or for other young people. And this supports previous Tasmanian Gen Y research findings (Adams, N., 2009:17-18) and helps us confirm the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy's ambition to broaden the range of volunteering activities young people are involved with (see *section 4.1.a*).

5.5.A WORKING WITHIN THEIR CAPABILITIES, NOT THEIR AGE GROUP

For those who did prefer to work with their peers, it was not necessarily because they did not want to work with older people, but because they preferred to work with people they perceived to have a ***similar level of experience***; so it was about addressing the ***confidence barrier*** (discussed in *section 4.3*):

"Working with people the same age group was a big appeal to me… work[ing] with a group my own age [rather] than people who are a lot older than me and [who have] maybe been doing it a lot longer… made it a lot easier to come in to it."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

There were no activities young people were ***unwilling*** to do. But some felt there were some things they ***could not*** do, due to lack of experience and maturity. For example, working with ex-prisoners on rehabilitation programmes. This was about where they felt they could (or could not) be productive. Again, emphasising the importance of addressing confidence and of understanding the benefits a role can give.

5.5.B COMFORTABLE CULTURE IS KEY

One organisation suggested that what a young person was willing to do would have more to do with the organisation's culture and how inclusive they are of young people:

"Not just the role, but how young people are involved and valued."

[Peak body A]

"I know from my members, they're already in lots of organisations that may all be older people. That's generally been my experience."

[Peak body B]

And volunteers confirmed this:

"I wouldn't volunteer somewhere I didn't feel comfortable;…Where you feel accepted and where you feel it's a safe place to be and that you're treated equally"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"It's got to be something you enjoy… or you won't get motivated to go."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

This highlights the need for young people to find the right opportunity for them – in terms of time commitments, personality, capability and who they are comfortable working with and what they are looking for from a role.

It also highlights the need for organisations to not cut off potential opportunities because they don't think they are right for young people (Adams, N.,2009, Ferrier et al, 2004). For organisations to look beyond the 'youth' to the reasons the volunteer wants the role – are they a *"you & me"*, or an *"us & us"*, and so on. As one volunteer stressed, organisations need to:

"Emphasise all the different things you can choose from. There's something for everyone."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

See *sections 6.2.a* and *6.2.b* for more on organisations' responses.

5.5.C WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE YOUNG VOLUNTEERS INTERESTED IN? WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Young volunteers were prepared to consider any role that they felt was within their capability, offered a comfortable safe culture and met their personal interest;
- The challenge for organisations was to make sure they did not cut off potential volunteer opportunities due to their own assumptions about what young volunteers might want to do.

5.6 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Crowley et al (2008:13) argue that training is crucial to volunteer retention[56] and point out that all learning is important – formal, informal, incidental.

And volunteers in this sample reinforced this – with them all seeing this as a crucial part of their experience and all but one rating their learning as satisfactory, or very satisfactory (see *Figure 5.8*).

56 Crowley et al, 2008:13. They use the example of Tasmanian Volunteer Ambulance Officers, Community Legal Centre Volunteers (citing Fahey et al, 2008, Melville, 2002).

Figure 5.8: Volunteers' satisfaction ratings for what they have learnt through volunteering

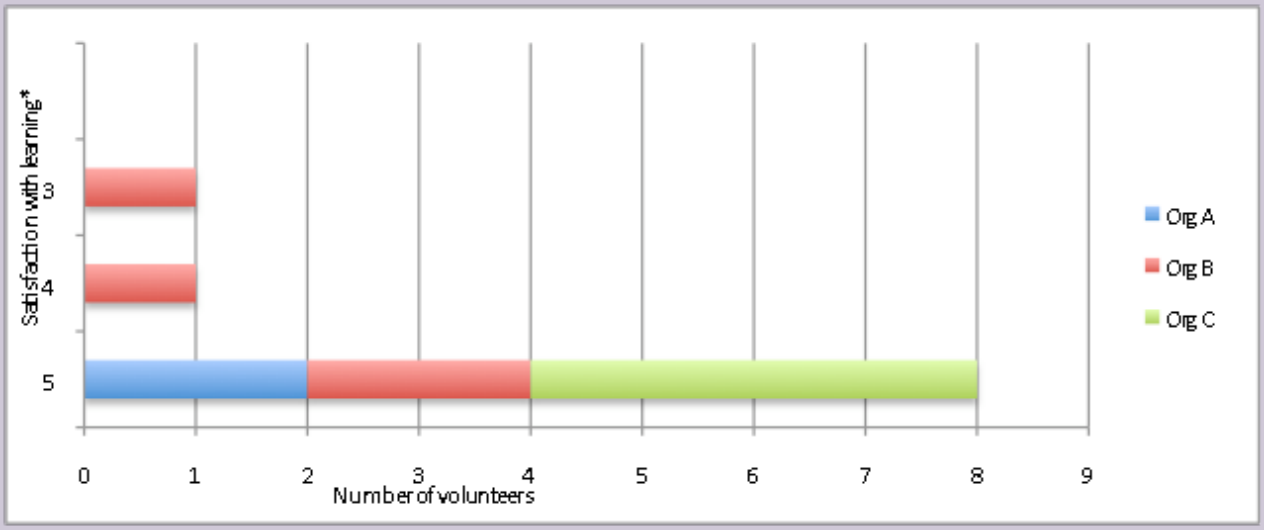


**Figure 5.8 key: 5 = very satisfied; 1 = very unsatisfied*

5.6.A WHAT THEY LEARNT

Figure 5.9: What volunteers had learnt during their volunteer roles – personal and vocational skills

Personal skills

Resilience
- Self esteem
- Overcoming anxiety
- Confidence

Social skills
- Interacting with people of all ages

Acting for others
- Compassion/selflessness
- Balancing doing things for yourself and others

Responsibility
- Being student and teacher
- Assessing problems

Vocational skills

Team skills
- Leadership • Office politics
- Working with others (who are different to you)
- Communication skills
- Time management

Problem solving
- Conflict resolution
- Assessing and dealing with issues

Specific
- Budgeting • Grant writing
- IT programs • Interviewing
- Production • First aid
- Drug and alcohol awareness

All volunteers were able to easily articulate multiple skills they had learnt through their current volunteering role. And all mentioned both personal and vocational skills (see *Figure 5.9*):

"I have learnt so many things about myself to do with socializing, working and being with people of all ages. Gained lots of confidence…, which has helped me heaps... I have also learnt how to teach kids, which has given me jobs and good credibility. We also have gained lots of skills and qualifications, which are not only useful [for volunteering], but in real life"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

Reflecting the benefits volunteers listed (*section 5.3*), the learning and development once again included many elements needed for the transition to young adulthood and active citizenship (see *Figs 5.5* and *5.9*); from building resilience and responsibility to acting for others. And a range of vocational skills valuable to young adults entering the workforce; from generic team and leadership skills to the specific task-focused skills needed for their roles:

"We've learnt so many different things: leadership qualities, physical skills, social skills, self confidence, communication, first aid skills..."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"I've learnt a lot from [the organisation] as it's my first experience in a professional environment…how to communicate thoughts and ideas. You learn a lot about people skills."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

Peak body B was keen to offer consultation opportunities with decision makers and service providers to help young people develop their relationship and leadership skills:

"It develops their…skills; how they talk to politicians…or bureaucrats, or other service providers. It develops them as young leaders;…It benefits both sides."

[Peak body B]

A valuable generic skill for many young of the volunteers in this sample was learning how to interact with people outside of their peer group – adults, younger children, as well as those outside their usual social circle:

"The biggest thing for me has been speaking to new people,… lessons about relationships."

[Volunteer, Organisation B]

"Learnt how…to communicate with a variety of…people, age groups, gender and different backgrounds."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

And as the diversity of skills in Figure 5.9 demonstrates, most organisations could offer ***some*** form of development like these; the key for the organisation is being able to identify and articulate these to volunteers and potential volunteers.

5.6.B HOW THEY LEARNT IT

Informal learning

Vicarious learning through experience was most often mentioned by volunteers:

"Learnt from being immersed in the club and all its aspects. Learnt from friends and instructions and coaches and club community."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Learnt by actually just doing it all really"

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"I've learnt from other people in the club. Older people who teach younger people how to do things."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

This 'hands on' approach to learning fits well with the way Gens Y and Z have learnt within school, with teachers:

"…going from the sage on the stage to the guide on the side."

(McCrindle, 2010:119, 148)

And was reflected in Adams' Tasmanian findings (Adams, N., 2009: 22-23).

Peer mentoring

Organisations A and C occasionally offered peer mentoring/coaching and, for organisation A, opportunities for peer observation.

For volunteers in organisation C, this was a valuable experience for them:

> **"Learnt how to be a student and also a teacher at the same time…. How to communicate with a variety of…people, age groups, gender and different backgrounds."**
>
> [Volunteer, Organisation C]

And organisation A believed peer mentoring helped with team bonding:

> **"If I have a volunteer in the music department who has been there for a while and I know is doing what they need to be doing appropriately and I have a new volunteer come in, I'll say, 'Hey, do you wanna teach this new volunteer how to, you know, do the stock listing, or whatever?' 'Cos I think sometimes people respond better to someone else who is on their level, who's gone through the same thing as them and then they get to form a bond and all that sort of thing."**
>
> [Organisation A]

organisations' tip #12

DEVELOPING AND ENGAGING YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

"We've sent three kids away to Victoria to a big… camp, where they hang out with all these young kids: these 18 to 24 years olds, and do advanced…techniques and seminars. One of the scenarios was a car crash… There were casualties all over the place. These 15/16 year olds are in there for an hour managing those situations. Those kinds of things we see as really important. Them having those opportunities…And that's about young kids being with young kids…All the young people are running these camps who have done it before. That's a fantastic model – I love that." [Organisation C]

Formal training

Type of training

All three organisations offered formal training as a compulsory part of the experience for at least some of their volunteers. In fact, this training was a basic legal/insurance requirement for each organisation, so formed part of the induction and ongoing development offer.

There was a blanket recognition amongst the organisations that reinforcing legal requirements was necessary, but not that engaging for young people. So they had all found ways to balance those tensions. (This issue of balancing control in leadership and flexibility in volunteer management is explored further *sections 6.4* and *6.5* and *organisations' tips #17*).

Balancing volunteer responsibilities and flexibilities was mentioned by all three organisations as important; the key being to understand where to focus on compliance issues. For example, organisation A made sure that, when training 16 to 18 year olds, and for younger volunteers in general, more time was spent on explaining and exploring the legal requirements around issues such as defamation, as this was a legal boundary the organisation recognised was a high risk for young volunteers to inadvertently cross:

> **"It is usually young people who don't quite know where that boundary is of having your own opinion and whether it's OK to start communicating that to people."**
>
> [Organisation A]

Two organisations (A and C) had offered either formal training to progress through stages or formal 'advanced' training for volunteers. For both, this was about volunteers wanting to further their skills and/or access specialist equipment.

For organisation C, this was part of the organisation's 'bread and butter'; it was seen as a development path and was conducted with a group of young volunteers for each stage:

> **"There's a whole range of awards that they can go and get. And…then getting involved in the management of the club – coaching kids. That 15 to 20 age group are very active in… safety and helping us coach the kids. We have an expectation of them to put on an orange vest for two hours on a Saturday and go and coach the younger kids – and they do."**
>
> [Organisation C]

And volunteers very much valued these opportunities and recognised why the training was necessary:

"You have to be proficient for each age group…But if you can't pass, you build up to it…They'll find a way around it; they'll get you to be able to [meet the requirements]… whatever it might be."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"You get your [skills certificate]; in order to be able to compete, you have to have done so many hours of patrolling; it's kind of, like, your way of paying to compete."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"They can't just have anyone out there…I guess it's all about making sure it's as low risk as it can possibly be in an environment like that."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

For organisation A, like for the other case study organisations, formal training was also about volunteers' individual development choices. And this organisation's experience illustrates some of the challenges of being able to target development appropriately:

"We used to offer 'advanced training'… We tried to make it attractive, you know, making them wine and cheese evenings… People could come along and learn how to use the portable recorders, or how to use audio editing software…But, so little people turned up that I think in the end we just didn't bother doing them… It's not something we do now. Maybe part of it's because we had such a high retention of [volunteers],…they've been here long enough to know, 'I'm not going to have time to come in and do a phone interview, so there's no need for me to learn audio production.' It would be interesting to see if we started to do training now, what the take up would be."

[Organisation A]

Presenting 'youth-friendly' training

For all three case study organisations, how the training was presented to young people was crucial:

"Having a different learning approach for young people is really important…The content's the same, but the approach is different'"

[Organisation C]

One organisation was conscious of creating a, **"supportive, collegial, fun environment"**, even in formal assessments:

"Just started a group [of young volunteers through an assessment]. Extremely tentative because they thought they're about to be tested…We make it fun – about making sure they pass – you can see straight away it eases their concerns."

[Organisation C]

Organisation C was working with a mixed age training group and found it challenging to address all volunteers' needs within one group:

"We have mixed young people and adults and it doesn't really work well for the young kids or the adults, because they learn at different rates and they have different learning styles."

[Organisation C]

"Adults tend to be self motivated and if you say, 'Go away and read this chapter.' They go away and learn it – generally. If they're motivated and want to achieve. Whereas a kid will go, 'Yeah…oh, I forgot about it; it's like homework.' They won't want to do it. So it has to be hands on, it has to be practical, it has to be engaging, it has to be here. There's a lot more time you have to put into young people."

[Organisation C]

And this need for practical reinforcement was confirmed by volunteers:

"Because you're out there doing, it just sticks in your mind."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

For organisation B, although all volunteers were offered the same basic training, the way the information was presented and the training environment varied depending on the age of volunteers. Much thought and planning had gone into ensuring that the delivery and environment was youth friendly.

For younger volunteers, the emphasis was to make the induction as quick and brief as possible, in order to get straight to training and to ensure that the training environment was as relaxed as possible:

"If their first experience with [the organisation] in face to face interaction is boring…unless they're totally committed to [the organisation], they won't come back beyond that….They arrive and there's… music going and props set up. They get the history and then straight into the nuts and bolts of what they're doing."

[Organisation B]

Another tactic for this organisation had been to adapt training times for young people – preferring evenings and weekends (compared to the usual daytime delivery) and adapt the catering – offering pizza and soft drinks (rather than focusing on tea and cakes).

Formal reviews

Formal reviews were not a common part of our young volunteers' experience.

Although the young volunteers who had a direct public audience were particularly open to more direct public review for **"accountability and improvement"** *[Volunteer, Organisation A]*, capacity to offer formal feedback on a one to one basis was flagged as an issue in two of the organisations:

"In my dream world, either someone else would be the manager and I'd just do the programming stuff, or I'd have another person who was doing the programming and be able to give actual feedback to people and help them improve."

[Organisation A]

Organisation A had offered Programme Assessment Sheets, which were used, when volunteers asked, for management to give feedback on their performance. However, staff were limited in their capacity to offer these routinely. The same organisation had also offered one to ones between volunteers and management, to review volunteers' experiences and to offer feedback, but take up had been extremely low.

Informal 'checking in' was more common:

"Constant contact who usually asks, rather then a formal hassle, which is much better."

(Volunteer, Organisation B]

Given the importance of understanding volunteers' motivations, role asks, development and support needs, ensuring that the organisation has an open culture that enables either formal or informal consultation with volunteers is clearly crucial for organisations to keep on top of their volunteers' experiences. But, clearly from these organisations' experiences, finding the right feedback mechanism for volunteers and the organisation is crucial. *Section 6.3.b* explores the many ways these organisations have made youth consultation happen.

5.6.C LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Reflecting the benefits volunteers listed, the learning and development once again included many elements needed for the transition to young adulthood and active citizenship; from building resilience and responsibility to acting for others. And a range of vocational skills valuable to young adults entering the workforce; from generic team and leadership skills to the specific task-focused skills needed for their roles;
- Vicarious learning through experience was most often mentioned by volunteers; peer mentoring was valued by volunteers and organisations alike (and also helped with team building);
- Formal training was a compulsory part of all volunteers' induction and volunteers recognised the need for this. Organisations had recognised the need to make training brief, fun and as practical as possible to keep young people engaged;
- None of the organisations offered formal volunteer reviews to see how volunteers' experiences were going, but all had some form of informal checking in, which volunteers very much appreciated.

5.7 RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Demographic data tells us that many young Tasmanians do not stay where they grow up; even though some may return at later point in their life, for studies, work or travel, they are likely to move either to another area of Tasmania (for example from rural to metropolitan areas, or from the North or North West to the South of the State[57]), or to other Australian states,[58] or, indeed, overseas.

5.7.A YOUNG VOLUNTEERS MAKING A HABIT FOR LIFE

Although the majority of the volunteers in this study had been in their post for at least a year (see *Table 3.2*), many had plans to eventually leave the state. However, all without exception felt they would continue to volunteer after their current post. So leaving their current role need not be seen as a failure, or loss:

"Once you start volunteering, it takes a while to stop – it becomes routine and something that you need to do."

[Volunteer, Organisation A]

"I don't foresee myself leaving the club. But if I happened to move to the mainland, I would join a [similar] club there and volunteer."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"I don't know what. But if something interesting came up."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Being at [Organisation C] sets you up for things like that…There are so many different qualifications you get you can apply to other areas."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

And many, due to the close community ties they felt with their current role, thought they would come back to the organisation they were currently with:

"We'll probably be, like, the future committee members and then be…the future people who run the club…Like our parents are doing at the moment."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Even if you were to leave – Say, like, you went to uni on the mainland, or you went travelling for a while – I think it's something that I personally would… come back to…You might leave for a year or two, but you'll always come back…You just know everyone."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"I don't think I will ever 'leave' my [Organisation C] role. But I may go away for a while to travel, but I think I will always come back. And its something you can bring your family to, if that's when you came back…There's always something you can do in the club."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

"Kids move away and come back."

[Organisation C]

57 Tasmania's Economic Development Plan Discussion Paper points out that Tasmania's population flows are a complex mix of intra and inter state migration (Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, 2010:14). ABS (2010b) statistics show that Tasmania's two biggest regional population growth areas in 2009-10 were Greater Hobart SD (1.3%) and Southern SD (1%) (ABS, 2010b, Regional Population Growth, Australia 2009-10 – Tasmania, Cat. No. 3218.0). Tasmania's Economic Development Plan Discussion Paper points out that Tasmania's population flows are a complex mix of intra and inter state migration (Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, 2010:14). ABS (2010b) statistics show that Tasmania's two biggest regional population growth areas in 2009-10 were Greater Hobart SD (1.3%) and Southern SD (1%) (ABS, 2010b, Regional Population Growth, Australia 2009-10 – Tasmania, Cat. No. 3218.0).

58 ABS (2010a) statistics show that in 2008-09 Tasmania lost 680 20 to 34 year olds to interstate moves and gained 670 20 to 34 year olds from interstate moves; thee statistics, together with other interstate migration statistics suggest that whilst young Tasmanians may be moving to other Australian states for work or study opportunities, families with people of this age group may by moving to Tasmania (ABS, 2010a, Migration, Australia 2008-09, Cat No. 3412.0, summary data - http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/F7CCF9ED717FF83CCA25776E00179708?opendocument).

5.7.B RETENTION OR ENGAGEMENT AS A SUCCESS CRITERIA?

Where retention matters

The fact that their young volunteers may move onto another role was in itself seen as a success in all three case study organisations. So retaining individual volunteers beyond their next move was not a huge concern in many cases.

However, retention was important to organisations in some programmes where continuity and/or incremental training was part of delivering a quality service:

"If the programme is client based, we need commitment, as we don't want young people pulling out after four visits."

[Organisation B]

Volunteer retention was a prominent strategic objective for organisation A within part of their volunteering team, to enable continuity of programme delivery and quality delivery (by enabling the organisation to develop its volunteers). Organisations A and B did find that retention could be a problem with some younger volunteers, if they did not keep them engaged:

"By the nature of young people, we sometimes find we just lose them… Somehow…they just stop responding… Once they're on board, they don't want to let us down; they often don't have the confidence,…it's important that they do notify us when they leave the programme."

[Organisation A]

Organisation A tried to minimise the risk of drop out through careful recruitment; the organisation was careful about volunteer selection into many of its roles by using a formal application process, (for some 'frontline' roles) a structured training that the volunteers paid for themselves and actively encouraged volunteers to keep engaged and refreshing their delivery through changing the schedule every six months; this enabled the organisation to keep abridge of possible disengagement.

Volunteers in organisation C suggested there may be something to learn about volunteer retention from those who had left roles. They knew why they stayed – due to community ties and friendships, but were less clear why others may have left:

"That's pretty much why we started the youth committee. Cos, like, in [the younger youth volunteer group], there's so much you can imagine to do. And then, when you get to [the older youth volunteer group] , pretty much the focus is competition. And if you're not good at competition, you don't really continue, because there's nothing else really to do. Apart from…obviously you can get involved in the first aid side of it."

[Volunteer, Organisation C]

So exit interviewing, or revisiting those volunteers who leave (where practical) was recommended by volunteers to help organisations better understand issues of retention.

Where engagement matters

But for some programmes within organisation B, which involved annual events, retention was not so much a feature of gauging success. However, this organisation reflected that if they had ways of engaging these young volunteers throughout the year, they would prefer it. But, as noted in *section 4.1.c*, regular state event opportunities are not available to help keep up momentum.

This issue of keeping up momentum in volunteers' engagement had come into sharp focus for peak body B, when the staff respondent had shifted from being a volunteer themselves to being a staff member. The importance of ongoing communication to maintain a presence in young people's busy lives was crucial to retain their volunteers:

"Now that I'm having to go from the other side – an organisation that uses volunteers – I've realised that it's not as easy as I thought it was. Maybe because I was always…willing to get really involved. But some people, you need to really work at keeping them engaged…On a personal level, making sure that everyone's, you know, see how they're going on the weekend and establishing connections through that. Because our core group… of volunteers are so busy that if you don't get them, they've got like 50 other things on, and so you really have to keep the personal connections up…You have to get in early, otherwise, they're booked out."

[Peak body B]

5.7.C STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN ENGAGEMENT

organisations' tip #13

OFFERING A RANGE OF ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

Organisation B was looking at using more viral and short-term direct humanitarian campaigns, similar to World Vision's '40 hour famine' approach,[59] so that young volunteers could feel connected to a goal, but did not have to make a long term contribution.

In one such campaign, young Australians are offered a range of levels to become involved in the campaign; they are invited to either contribute through completing a survey about their views on the matter, purchasing merchandise to fund raise, or becoming a Humanitarian partner and undertaking more in depth engagement with their local communities.

The case study organisations did not necessarily see a young person leaving as 'failure' and offered a number of strategies for encouraging successful volunteer engagement and therefore, retention; all of which are linked to what made a positive volunteering experience, or what was seen as a benefit for young people:

- *Offering a range of retention/exit points from programmes and referral to other programmes.* Organisation B offered exit interviews and referral to other programmes and organisations that might be more suitable for volunteers if they were thinking of moving on (for example, if the time commitment had become too much): **"We recognise that having a good experience in us referring them, they may later come back to us."** *[Organisation B];*
- *Offering a range of levels for engagement or timeslots for activities* to maintain flexibility in commitment where possible. Organisation A had noticed, **"We find with the majority of young people, once they've been with us for a while, they've had very different time slots. That's a big thing…Their personal circumstances or timetable changes."** See *section 5.2.a.*;
- *Offering a range of activities and development opportunities* to maintain appeal for a range of volunteers' interests and to cater for a range of fluid role asks. For example, organisation C offered a balance between volunteer duties (such as patrol) and social opportunities (such as family dinners), and a range of basic and then specialist training to ensure that young people stayed engaged in the club. See *section 5.2 and 5.6;*
- *Encouraging peer coaching* to keep informal social links developing and ensuring volunteer development is ongoing and informal. See *section 5.6.*;
- *Offering more momentum and structure in some programmes*, where appropriate. For example, organisation B maintained momentum by emailing volunteers who they had not heard from for a while. They had changed the offer, so that they asked volunteers to 'opt into' staying with the programme by a certain date (see *organisations' tips #14*);
- *Ensuring older volunteers/staff have appropriate coaching skills* to ensure the volunteering environment is comfortable and not alienating young people (see *section 6.5.b*);
- *Developing new programmes generated by young people* that address the needs of younger and older people. See *section 6.3.b.*

organisations' tip #14

OFFERING POINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS TO OPT IN AND OUT OF PROGRAMMES

Organisation B had recently reviewed how they maintain an active list of volunteers. Rather than emailing volunteers and giving them a date by which they can opt out of a programme, they now emailed volunteers who they had not heard from for a while, asking them to 'opt into' a programme by a certain date, stating, *"Thank you for your contribution. If we don't hear from you by X date, we'll remove you from our records. Please feel free to contact us in future."* This enabled volunteers, *"options to retreat and save face"*, whilst leaving the door open for them to return in future.

59 See http://www.worldvision.com.au/40HourFamine.aspx for more details.

5.7.D MEASURING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The case study organisations also offered a number of ways of 'measuring' youth engagement:

- ***Growth in youth numbers*** within programmes and around organisations' buildings, showing that recruitment and retention strategies are working. This might be measured formally, or be through casual observation from the management committee;
- ***Growth of engagement from a diverse range of young people***, not simply numbers. This was a goal for all organisations, although the focus for growth varied across the organisations. For Peak body B, focus was on regional engagement, whereas, for organisations B and C, it was on attracting more *youth at risk as volunteers* (see *section 4.2.b*);
- ***Ongoing responses***, either to email communication or in reapplying for volunteer opportunities;
- ***Positive exits***, for example, if a volunteer leaves a programme due to other commitments, rather than due to not enjoying the experience;
- ***Change to a different form of volunteer engagement***, as volunteers' life circumstances changed. So organisation C, that was aware they would lose a number of young volunteers after school/college age, saw volunteer engagement as successful if those individuals transferred to a different form of membership to keep their links to the club (for example, moving from being a young coach to returning a few years as a family member with their own young kids).

"A successful engagement is if people… have done their committed period and they engaged with it and they gave us positive feedback; that's fine with us."

[Organisation A]

5.7.E RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- All young volunteers felt they would continue to volunteer after their current role – they were on their way to making a habit for life;
- The fact that their young volunteers may move onto another role was in itself seen as a success in all three case study organisations. So retaining individual volunteers beyond their next move was not a huge concern in many cases;
- However, retention was important to organisations in some programmes where continuity and/or incremental training was part of delivering a quality service. For others engagement was the main success criteria;
- Organisations employed a range of strategies to engage and therefore retain young volunteers, from a range of levels of participation, to a range of activities through to peer mentoring and designing new programmes with young people;
- Organisations utilised a range of ways to measure engagement, from numerical growth in volunteers, to expanding the diversity of volunteers and positive exits.

5.8 CONCLUSIONS: CREATING MEANINGFUL VOLUNTEER ROLES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young volunteers without boundaries

This fieldwork and previous Tasmanian research[60] suggest there may be a disconnect in Tasmania between what young people say they are looking for from volunteering and organisations' confidence that what they have to offer could be a fit for young people. Certainly the young Tasmanians in this research did not have any boundaries around the type of activities they would consider in Tasmania, as long as they felt they were ***able to contribute***, it was a ***positive volunteering experience*** and was a ***practical fit*** for their abilities and their lifestyle.

60 Adams, N., 2009, ibid.; Crowley et al, 2008, ibid.

Creating positive experiences: understanding volunteer motivations, role asks and benefits

Experience from these case studies suggests that, to create a positive volunteering experience for young people, organisations need to understand, not only what is inhibiting young people from volunteering (for example, time, transport, confidence), and what is motivating their volunteers to want to contribute (personal or community-based reasons, or a mixture of both), but also what their volunteers want from their experience; whether it be some of the main personal features, such as ***flexibility***, having ***interesting tasks*** and opportunities for ***skills development***, ***being listened to*** and feeling acknowledged, ***enjoyment***; or some of the main community-orientated features, such as ***making a difference to their community***, ***being with friends***, ensuring ***opportunities for co-working***, and ***seeing outcomes*** for themselves and others; or a mixture of both.

And this is where the leadership challenge lies – having the confidence through management information to know what the local volunteer market wants and being able to resource and deliver targeted strategies accordingly. Even when the organisation has tight resources and capacity, it is recognising where limited resources are most effectively utilised.

Using volunteers' motivations and role asks, this research has started to distinguish volunteer 'types' (which could be applied to volunteers of any age group), which – after further research – may help organisations to target their volunteer marketing, role design, support and development.

Learning and development: a key selling point and benefit

The range of personal and vocational skills volunteers had gained through their experiences – all ***key skills for young people in their transition to adulthood and in becoming active citizens*** – highlights that ***all organisations have something to offer young people***; the issue is identifying these and articulating them effectively to the volunteer market. Vicarious learning through experiences was the most common way to learn. ***Peer mentoring*** was valued by these young volunteers and, where formal training was necessary, the key was to make it ***brief, fun and as practical as possible***.

Measuring success in youth volunteering: developing the volunteer habit for life

Very positively all young volunteers in this sample felt they would continue to volunteer after their current role, so they were all on the way to making a habit for life. And the case study organisations all saw this in itself as a success; ***engagement was often more important than retention*** in gauging success with this age group, and was measured not simply with numbers of volunteers, but also diversity in volunteers through to the ***quality of interactions and positive exits***.

Lessons for organisations

From the three case study organisations, findings suggest good volunteer management practice needs to:

- ***collect management information*** to understand young people's personal and community-focused motivations for volunteering, and what they want out of this specific volunteering role (and develop individuals' volunteering 'profile' – are they a *"you & you"*, or an *"us and us"*?). And organisations need to have the resources and processes to be able to create roles that meet these requirements, in terms of activities, support and development;
- ***regularly consult and review*** with young people on their role design, support and development needs and the impact of their activities; and facilitate beneficiary/audience feedback.;
- ***ensure there are informal and formal learning opportunities***, that are appropriate for the volunteering profile(s) and for the organisation's capacity. This may include peer mentoring, formal training (paid for, subsidized and/or free), learning on the job;
- ***be prepared to be flexible*** about the role (in terms of it's structure and the activities), to move with volunteers' needs.
- ***consider what engagement and retention means for their organisation*** and for individual programmes and develop strategies and measures appropriately.

All this will help to maximise volunteers' sense of social inclusion, help ensure volunteers are happy in their role and feel acknowledged and will provide the opportunity to check if what they want from a role has changed.

6. Effective leadership for young volunteers

"We know that … traditional pathways to volunteering are breaking down and we also know that volunteering itself…is in decline…This is a real concern for us. One of the ways we feel like we can start to impact on the future of volunteering is to encourage more young people to volunteer."

[Peak body A]

"I think the education of older people in dealing with children in an educational context is really important. If you put money into developing programmes that develop us – the managers of clubs – to relate in a positive way to young people, that would be a great advantage."

[Organisation C]

VT (2009:8-9) argue effective leadership is one of the three essential legs needed to create an effective volunteer sector:

"The contribution of willing volunteers in meaningful roles will go un-tapped, underutilised and unrecognised without effective leadership and management in place to support them."

And McCrindle (2010:146-147) describes the preferred management style of Gen Y as:

"Lead[ing] by example and involvement and not just by command and control. For those just beginning their careers, it's important to offer support, mentoring, positive feedback and public recognition. We are, after all, dealing with an empowered, entrepreneurial generation."

"One of the tasks we've done is ask young people, 'what do you know about [the organisation]?' 'What can young people do in [the organisation]?' And that was initially a very big eye opener, because if they don't know what they can do…even the best of your marketing attempts is going to fail."

[Organisation B]

To further understand what it takes to create effective leadership for young volunteers in Tasmania, this chapter explores:

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6.1 VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Crowley et al (2008:14) argue that effective management is recognised as being in the best interests of a volunteer programme and is desired by volunteers. And literature suggests that it is not appropriate to apply the same management style with volunteers as with paid employees (Paull, 2002:25 in Crowley et al, 2008:14).

But first we need to be clear about what leadership and management refer to within this research.

6.1.A WHAT IS LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?

Hudson (2004:284-85) offers a useful distinction between leadership and management for the not for profit sector:

"Management is concerned with the efficient administration of the organisation. It is about establishing the processes that make the organisation work, the creation of structures that link people together in an organised way, the development of plans, the control of budget and the costing of services…Leadership is required to clarify the mission, to motivate people, to seek new opportunities, to give organisations a sense of purpose and to focus people on the task."

And *Figure 6.1*, in a simplistic manner, helps us to identify the types of tasks which might fall under management and leadership.

6.1.B WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT SO FAR ABOUT VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT FOR YOUNG VOLUNTEERS?

In the previous two sections, the research has pointed to the management information organisations should consider for ***volunteer management*** – i.e. when designing administration, processes, structures, plans and budgets for creating young willing volunteers and meaningful roles. These have included:

- Understanding the challenges to participating in the organisation that potential volunteers face and addressing them within the organisation's resources (see *section 4.1*);
- Understanding and engaging with local networks and communities to foster interest in volunteering opportunities (see *section 4.4*);
- Being clear who the organisation's volunteer 'market' is and be able to target recruitment and communications appropriately (see *sections 4.5 and 4.7*);
- Understanding the motivations potential and existing volunteers have to participate in volunteering and understanding what volunteers want from a particular volunteering role (see *sections 4.3 and 5.1*);
- Defining what will make a positive volunteering experience within their organisation for their volunteers, within the organisation's capacity (see *section 5.2*);
- Understanding the benefits volunteers are looking for for themselves (if any) and for beneficiaries and being able to communicate these (see *section 5.3*);
- Knowing what support and development (if any) volunteers want and the organisation can deliver (see *section 5.6*);
- Be clear about how volunteer retention and engagement is defined and measured (see *section 5.7*).

6.1.C ELEMENTS OF ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE RESEARCH

So in the rest of this section, the research focuses more on the ***leadership tasks***; what overarching features of strategic management should we be looking for in effective leadership to ensure volunteer management is successful?

Figure 6.1: Hudson's distinctions between leadership and management tasks in the not for profit sector[61]

61 Hudson, 2004:285. This model was adapted from Richard Lynch, 1993, LEAD! Jossey-Bass

THE MANAGEMENT TASK

- Plan to meet current objectives
- Make the best use of resources
- Manage today's problems
- Focus on making processes work well
- Ensure people work to contract
- Seek improvements through training
- Establish standard procedures
- Focus on efficiency
- Look at the present

Crowley et al (2008:15) all argue that, *"the professional development of the Volunteer Manager and management committee is critical to sector sustainability."*[62] and that this is higher priority than volunteer training. The specific competencies needed, Boyd (2003 in Crowley et al, 2008:15) argues, are below, along with the elements this research focused on:

- *organisational leadership* – strategic focus, guiding leadership principles and professional networks;
- *systems leadership* – management information and youth consultation;
- *organisational culture* – the dominant values held by organisations in seven areas of leadership;
- *volunteer management skills* – general and specific to youth volunteering.

This research explored how these elements are led within the case study organisations.

62 Culp, Nolan, 1999, cited in Boyd, 2003, in Crowley et al, 2008, ibid., p.15

6.2 ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP: STRATEGY, PRINCIPLES AND NETWORKS

6.2.A STRATEGIC FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

All the case study organisations had either a youth-focused mission, or were considering a youth-driven recruitment strategy, i.e. had purposefully considered the roles young people could play within the organisation.

Organisation A's mission was youth-focused and, unlike some similar organisations in Australia, it had opened its doors to enable volunteers of all ages to cater to a youth-focused audience:

"As long as you are presenting something that is relevant to youth, we are not going to stop that."

[Organisation A]

So organisation A's strategic focus was on volunteer retention and development to appeal to a youth market, rather than around age-based recruitment.

Peak body B had a mission clearly focused on young people:

"To act as a voice for young people and to develop young Tasmanians… aim to be representative."

[Peak body B]

The other two case study organisations (B and C) and peak body A were aware that their organisations needed to focus on their young volunteers:

"All the stats at [our organisation] show a problem in retaining 15 to 24s."

[Organisation C]

In recognition of this need, both organisations with state and national infrastructure intended to develop state-based plans for youth volunteer recruitment, retention and development; for organisation B, this was about tailoring objectives already set through a national youth strategy.

Organisation B has developed a simple, but very effective process for all programmes, to encourage new thinking in how they involve young people in their planning and programmes (see *organisations' tips #15* below).

organisations' tip #15

YOUTH-FOCUSED PLANNING

Organisation B was trialing a new approach to thinking about changing the culture of programme development by looking to successful corporate sales approaches. Using the McDonalds value added approach, *"would you like fries with that"*, in all new programme development they were encouraging staff to consider, *"would you like youth with that?"* In this way, they have been able to think about the added value of involving young people across a range of programme areas that would have traditionally found it too hard, or would not have automatically included young people.

For organisation C, it was about refocusing the club's activities to young people and their needs, in order to attract them and their families:

> **"We took the whole focus away from the bar and put it on to the kids and families. We started having meal nights, getting people up here as groups and that's changed the whole thing back to young people."**
>
> [Organisation C]

Additionally, both peak bodies intended to refine their objectives about young people, in recognition of the importance of young people to the future of volunteering:

> **"We know that …traditional pathways to volunteering are breaking down and we also know that volunteering itself…is in decline…This is a real concern for us. One of the ways we feel like we can start to impact on the future of volunteering is to encourage more young people to volunteer."**
>
> [Peak body A]

6.2.B GUIDING LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Focusing organisational development on areas where they had both potential influence and capacity were important in all three organisations. And all were using common principles around being ***positive about young people's involvement, social inclusion and community development***.

Positive about young people's involvement

All the case study organisations were very positive about the benefits of including young people within their activities and held this as a guiding principle. So they were purposeful in how they planned to make that happen:

> **"They [young volunteers] are a huge part of our club. We know the importance of them. A lot of what we do caters to their needs…It's the lifeblood of the club. We'd be mad not to listen."**
>
> [Organisation C]

> **"If you don't continually engage people in things they're interested in… they'll just leave. I think that's what happens in a lot of organisations that deal with young volunteers…What are you doing to keep them there?"**
>
> [Peak body B]

But it is important to emphasise that this was still a work in progress within these organisations; and they recognised where work was needed. So for one organisation, this has meant a concerted effort to shift the organisation's culture; organisation B was aware it had held assumptions that young people will only work with young people, as well as there being some areas that still saw young people as 'challenging'; so had specifically examined programmes that have not traditionally been *"youth ready"*, to look at where potential opportunities might lie *using tip #15*.

Social inclusion

For all three organisations, working to a model of social inclusion was important, even if they were at different stages of developing this model.

This has already been explored as it related to recruiting hard to reach volunteers in *section 4.2*. Two organisations and one peak body were adopting different strategies to try to ensure their recruitment was more socially and regionally diverse. As already reported, key to their approaches were identifying those not included in their volunteering profile who they wished to target, recognising the need for support and mentoring, in order to address confidence and encourage participation, identifying potential partners to work with to improve inclusion, as well as addressing any financial issues.

Community development

All the organisations also worked within a model of community development:

> **"We understand for programmes to sustain in a local area, they need to be driven by people locally, so engaging them as a volunteer potentially allows that programme to grow legs and continue long term."**
>
> [Organisation B]

6.2.C PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

Table 6.2: Organisations' professional networks: 'who do you turn to for identity and ideas?'

Organisation	Networks currently used			
	National/international body	Their activity sector	Tasmanian volunteer sector	Local communities
Organisation A	n/a	Y		Y
Organisation B	Y	Y	Y	Y
Organisation C	Y	Y		Y
Peak body A	Y	Y	Y	Y
Peak body B	Y	Y	Y	Y

Activity sectors and national bodies

The Tasmanian case study organisations drew on their activity sector (for example, sports and recreation, welfare, broadcast media) or their state or nationally based organisation for identity and ideas, rather than the Tasmanian volunteer sector (see *Table 6.2*):

> **"The good thing about [the activity sector] is that we're not in competition with each other…So quite often we'll ring up other [same activity sector organisations] for advice: 'how do you do this?'…I've looked to other [sector organisations] for support; things like even down to programme application forms, what to ask people when they're applying as a volunteer."**
>
> [Organisation A]

> **"The organisation – It's a huge organisation. So there must be clubs that have done the same thing around the country. There's…310 clubs. We would just go and search. You could ring national and maybe get some information from them…So there's heaps of resources."**
>
> [Organisation C]

The Tasmanian volunteer sector

So, amongst these organisations, there was not a sense of a 'Tasmanian volunteering community' (see *Table 6.2*):

> **"There are some who are very good at making networks and there are others who work totally in a silo and not have any awareness of what's around them."**
>
> [Organisation B]

Which supports the Social Inclusion Strategy's observations that Tasmanian volunteer networks need strengthening (Adams, D., 2009:11) (see *section 4.1.a*).

However, the size and scale of Tasmania, together with having a strong volunteering peak body, makes the potential for developing a stronger Tasmanian volunteering community a realistic objective. As peak body B observed:

> **"Everybody knows each other…You get introduced to people and you can establish connections that way…It's a lot more personal. On the mainland, events are so enormous, that you…talk to people you know…It could always improve, but my impression of [the Tasmanian volunteer community] is that it's working quite well."**
>
> [Peak body B]

Local community links

The organisations' engagement with local communities was stronger (see *Table 6.2*). Although none were confident that they engaged well with other volunteering organisations in their local communities.

> **"I don't think we do enough awareness within the community of what the club's about. But…we know we need to… There's people who don't even know this is here, or they know it's here, but they don't know what it's about."**
>
> [Organisation C]

In the case study organisations' experiences, this disconnect can be due to having conflicting views on issues (for example, on local environmental management). But there was a recognition in all three organisations that stronger links with local community groups would help to strengthen community assets (people, resources and capital), help with volunteer recruitment and referral, help to hone in on local priorities. In fact organisation C had included a community consultation in a recent capital development bid, to encourage community ownership of their buildings and resources.

Organisation C held strong views on the power of such a collaboration to help local councils share and develop local resources more effectively.

> **"We want to establish a network within the local community – the footy club, the soccer club, the surf club, the basketball club – Have a network, have a link and… use each other to promote each other. To get all that happening requires a lot of work, but we've talked about it and…there's a big need there. It would be fantastic to have an overall community sporting organisation that binds all these groups together and shares resources and kids can move around within these groups. So when they've played footy, it's natural for the under 8s footy team to come down and spend summer with us."**
>
> [Organisation C]

organisations' tip #16

KEEPING UP MOMENTUM BETWEEN SEASONS – USING LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORKS:

Organisation C's volunteer activities are focused on a short season from January to March. So there is a huge risk of losing younger volunteers between seasons. To keep engagement and a sense of community through the year, the organisation offers a range of other events, such as social events in the clubhouse and leadership programmes.

They also intend to make links with other local clubs that have seasons at other times of the year to share young volunteers and keep up volunteer momentum all year round.

6.2.D ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- All organisations had purposefully considered the role of young people – either as part of their mission and/or as part of their strategic objectives;
- All case study organisations used common guiding leadership principles around being positive about young people's involvement in their organisation, social inclusion and community development;
- All case study organisations currently preferred to turn to their own activity sector and/or national organisation for ideas and support;
- Only one organisation currently turned to other Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations routinely for ideas and support, although all could see the potential in developing a stronger Tasmanian volunteer community sector. And all wished to extend their links with other organisations in their local communities to share assets, resources and volunteers.

6.3 SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP: THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Part of effective leadership involves creating more effective systems, focusing the organisation on its core services and looking to the future (Hudson,2004, see *Figure 6.1*). So core to this is giving the organisation direction on what management information is needed to provide effectively for young volunteers.

6.3.A GATHERING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Although only one of the organisations (B) had undertaken specific research on young volunteers, (on a national, rather than state basis), the two organisations with a national infrastructure (B and C) had a good intuitive understanding of what attracted young people to their organisation and of the challenges they had to tackle to engage young volunteers in Tasmania.

Key to these insights seem to be:

- *maintaining a positive attitude to involving young people*. See *section 6.2.a*;
- *understanding what attracts young people to the organisation.* See *section 4.5.a*;
- *understanding and addressing the challenges to engaging potential young volunteers.* See *section 4.1*;
- *understanding who they cannot/do not actively recruit* and where young people fit into this. See *section 4.5.c*;
- *having insights into what drives their volunteers.* See *sections 4.3 and 5.1 to 5.3*;
- *understanding where their organisation needs to (and can) develop*;
- *understanding where the critical transition points are for young people* in their particular organisation, something the Social Inclusion Strategy highlights (Adams, D., 2009:11) and therefore *understanding when retention and engagement* are appropriate key performance indicators. See *section 5.7*.

6.3.B INCLUDING YOUTH CONSULTATION

Consulting young people is key - - - -

Throughout this fieldwork, the importance of community and youth consultation to being able to develop effective strategies and to ensure volunteers feel included has been apparent.

"You need to think about sustainability… They might get really interested at the start, but if you don't continually engage them;…if [organisations] don't keep track of what [young people] are doing and what they're interested in, and where [they] can fit time in and roles that [they] would be interested in within the organisation, that may change, then you lose those people, because they think, 'Well, I'm not going to give my time to something that I can't see any benefits for me personally.'"

[Peak body B]

The most important step that all organisations and peak bodies had taken to understand issues for young people and to enable them to address these issues was to listen to young people before acting:

"Talk to young people themselves: hearing what they're thinking about volunteering… and their desires."

[Peak body A]

And organisation B had done just that, through a national six-month consultation with young people. This has helped them to reflect on their organisation's development needs and where they should prioritise change:

"One of the tasks we've done is ask young people, 'what do you know about [the organisation]?' 'What can young people do in [the organisation]?' And that was initially a very big eye opener, because if they don't know what they can do…even the best of your marketing attempts is going to fail."

[Organisation B]

The other organisations had a more informal approach – simply making sure that managers/staff/older volunteers were approachable and that young people's views were sought when needed.

However, for an organisation that has never sought young people's views, the challenges of undertaking such a task may seem daunting. So, to demystify this, the case study organisations identified the challenges they had overcome in seeking young people's views.

What are the challenges in consulting with young people?

Overcoming suspicion – completing the feedback loop

Challenges included addressing, **"'what's in it for me?' 'Why do you want to know?' 'nothing's ever done.'"** *[Organisation B]*, or the organisation needing to overcome young people feeling like they are in trouble if they are asked their views. So developing an environment of being clear on why views are being sought and feeding back any changes were important organisational principles here.

Ensuring a range of perspectives

Another challenge for two organisations had been obtaining the views and experiences of a diverse young Tasmanian population. For organisation B, formal consultation mechanisms had traditionally attracted more academically achieving young people. To overcome this, this organisation was moving away from the model of a youth advisory committee, focused on management issues, to a 'youth action group', which was to be focused on, **"doing the doing, not the governing."** In other words, recruiting a diverse group of young Tasmanians who would be focused on turning ideas into programme actions and spreading the word.

Peak body B aimed to ensure diverse views and no tokenism – i.e. not viewing young people just through the lens of a one-dimensional label:

"Unless we really work hard to get their voice represented, it's hard. You don't want them to be the 'token young person with disability.'…So there's always a fine balance of pushing hard to get someone, but not overusing them…Because everyone has multiple experiences of life and you don't want to pigeonhole people."

[Peak body B]

So peak body B reminded us that organisations need to work hard at engaging a range of volunteers, so as not to fall into the trap of tokenistic involvement:

"Although I said we aim to be representative, we also want to get the mainstream; we don't think the focus should be on 'at risk' young people, or the young 'leaders'– we want to include everyone. People need to remember that young people who are 'at risk' are more than just their problems. They want to be involved in activities that are fun; that concern the general population as well."

[Peak body B]

Being realistic about what can change

A further challenge one organisation raised was marrying young people's expectations with the organisation's strategic intent:

"If they want to paint trees blue and our strategy says trees are red, then…"

[Organisation B]

So it is important to put clear parameters around not only what young people are being consulted about, but whether there are limits on what can be changed/addressed as a result of consultations.

Forms of consultation

It is important to stress that not all organisations had formal processes for consultation and review with young volunteers, due to time and capacity issues:

"It's something I'd like to do if there was more time or resources."

[Organisation A]

Table 6.3: Organisations' use of youth consultation methods

	Formal consultation					Informal consultation and monitoring		
	Young person(s) on Board	Youth committees/action groups	Event debriefs	Youth/community focus groups	Surveys	Informal community engagement	Informal volunteer chats	Youth organisation subscriptions
Organisation A			Y				Y	
Organisation B	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Organisation C		Y					Y	
Peak body A				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Peak body B	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

There was a range of ways by which the three organisations consulted with young people, from formal and structured methods, through to very informal approaches and through monitoring relevant activities in other youth-focused organisations (see *Table 6.3*):

Formal consultation

Young person on the organisation's board
Organisation B had involved a young person on their board for strategic oversight, in order to encourage diversity within perspectives, rather than necessarily just to represent the views of young people. Peak body B had three young people on their board to represent each of the Tasmanian regions and actively encourages other boards and committees to provide young people with governance opportunities.

Youth committees and action groups
Interestingly, two organisations had tried to develop youth committees; organisation B had been concerned with organisational strategy; for organisation C, it was about giving a forum for young volunteers to bring issues to management's attention that concerned young volunteers; and for both, keeping up to date with what matters to young people and developing new initiatives. For both, momentum was a problem and both groups have been dissolved. For organisation B, this was being reconstituted as a youth action group, which would be concerned with, **"harnessing energy and interest and spreading the word"** about the organisation's programmes and opportunities.

Event debriefs
Organisation B regularly held these after events to input into how things went from volunteers' perspectives and how they could be improved in future. The crucial issue here was completing the circle, i.e. ensuring that views and planned action were communicated back to volunteers.

Youth and community focus groups and forums
Organisation B held feedback sessions from local community groups to understand local issues, usually through a facilitated event/activity before programmes and activities were developed: **"We don't see it as our role to…know each young person's risks, but…that information is critical for us before we go to deliver a …course; to have some intell that sits behind some of the behaviour of the group…What are young people finding a challenge in this location?"** *[Organisation B].*

And youth focus groups and forums were seen as extremely useful to some of the case study organisations; particularly, consultation with young people who are not volunteers, to understand how they see the organisations, their opportunities within it and how they would access them. Peak body A was currently working with pupils in schools on designing volunteer roles to, **"make sure they get their needs met."** Peak body B had a strong youth forum – a pool of young people who are consulted on key issues to inform current and future social policy and commercial directions.

Surveys
Primary research was not a popular way to gain opinion, except within the peak bodies: **"We have to keep pushing people to do it, even when we've said, 'if you help us out, we'll give you [a gift].'"** [Organisation A] Peak body B and organisation B worked with their national bodies to develop and use quantitative research to create evidence-informed policy. Peak body A was developing a research strategy that included survey work to inform their policy work and to build resources on good practice for their members.

Informal consultation

Informal community engagement
In organisation B, informal chats at community expos, **"to relate to young people to find out what's topical for them."** went back to a youth committee (currently being developed into a youth action group), to feed into ideas for programme strategies.

Informal volunteer chats
Informal chats between volunteers and staff about their progress/experiences were the most popular way of consulting with their young volunteers; again the key being that volunteers felt listened to and agreements were acted upon. For example, **"We do it generally – If kids come and say, 'Why don't we do this?' 'Can we go here?' 'Can we do training in this way?' I suppose we listen to them in that respect. We don't discount their views. But, yeah, it's not organised."** [Organisation C]

Monitoring

Subscribing to youth-focused organisations, websites and blogs
Such subscriptions were used to keep up to date with social commentary on what matters to young people. And both peak bodies liaised with youth-focused organisations to keep up to date with youth issues.

6.3.C SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Organisations all had a good understanding of young people in relation to their organisation – what attracts them to the organisation, the challenges of involvement, where young people fit in the recruitment plan, where the organisation needs to develop and what they can not tackle;
- Organisational insights were not necessarily gathered through formal consultation with young people; there were a range of ways to find out young people's views, from informal chats with current volunteers, through chats with people at community expos, to focus groups and forums and formal youth positions on boards;
- But the important issue with any consultation was ensuring this was inclusive of a range of views, it was realistic about what it could address and changes were fed back to those who were consulted and those it would effect.

6.4 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The Social Inclusion Strategy (Adams D., 2009:12) highlights the need to explore how innovation within organisational culture could successfully deliver social inclusion strategies. There is not necessarily one successful culture to aspire to, but it is helpful to unpack what values organisations may need to deliver a successful strategy that fits their organisational goals.

6.4.A COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK — A MODEL TO HELP US FOCUS

Cameron and Quinn (2006) offer a useful *'Competing Values Framework'* for analysing organisational culture. It uses two dimensions:

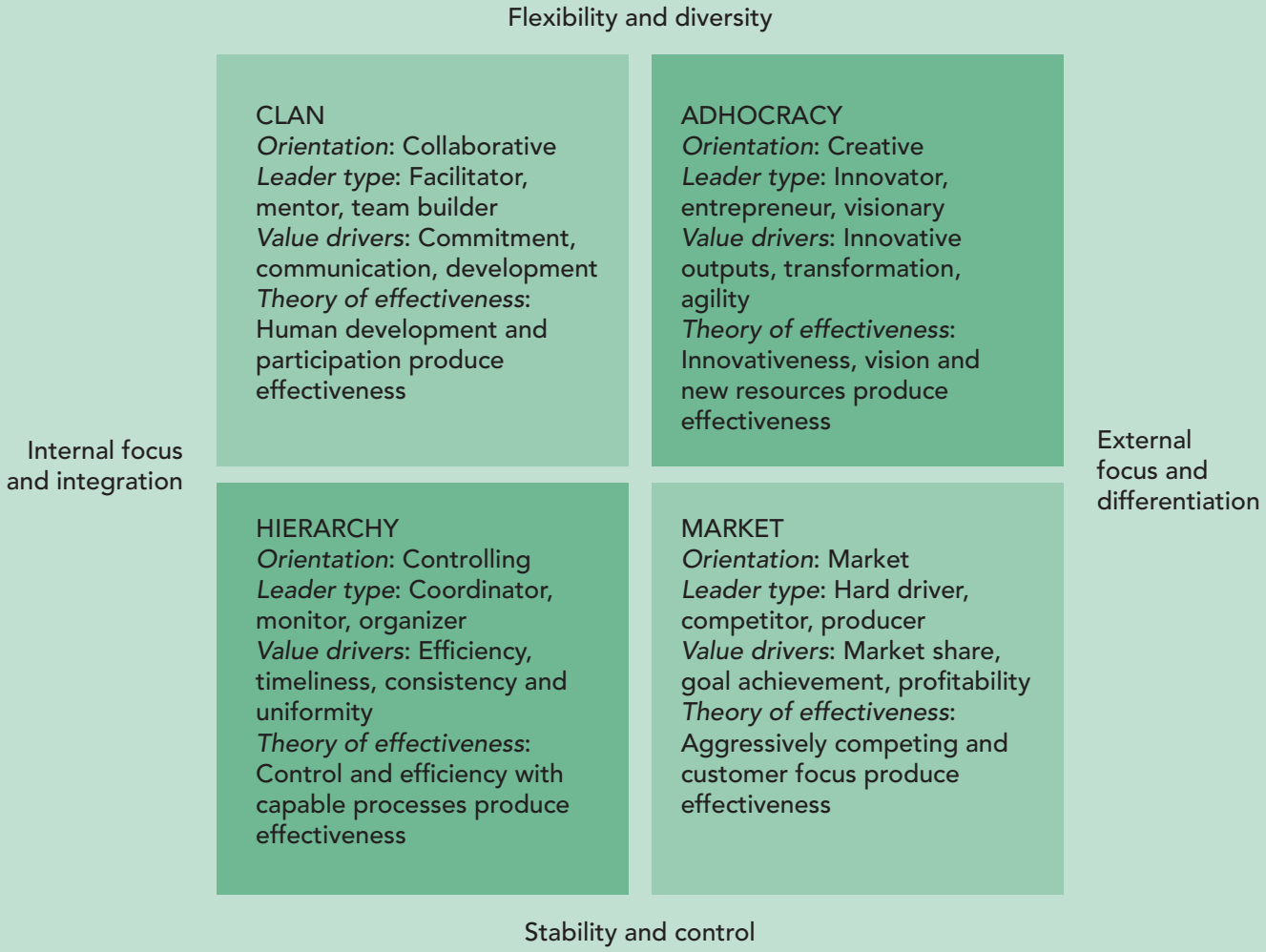
- Firstly they consider whether an organisation holds values around ***adaptability or stability***. At one end of the spectrum are those organisations that value flexibility, using discretion and dynamism, and at the other end are those that hold values related to stability, order and control. So some organisations that value adaptability are seen as effective if they regularly change and adapt to their market or regularly review their internal systems. So the products and organisational form regularly adapt. Apple would be a prominent example of a company that is known for regularly adapting new products. Other organisations that value stability are seen as effective if they have strong and stable systems and products that they adhere to; Cameron and Quinn (2006:34) use the example of conglomerates, such as Boeing.
- Secondly, they look at whether an organisation is mainly *focused* ***internally or externally***. So, some organisations are seen as effective if they have strong links or are in competition with other organisations within a similar market (i.e. are externally focused), and differentiate their practice according to where they are; so, as Cameron and Quinn (2006:34-35) cite, Honda are known for 'thinking globally, acting locally.' Whereas other organisations are effective if they have strong internal practice (i.e. are focused internally) and uniformity of practice across their organisation; Cameron and Quinn (2006:34-35) use Hewlett Packard as an example here.

These two dimensions form four quadrants (see *Figure 6.4*), which represent what people value about an organisation's performance; *"**the core values on which judgments about organisations are made**."* (Cameron and Quinn, 2006:35)

So organisations with a strong 'clan' culture are likely to value adaptability to the market, but have a strong internal practice that facilitates individual staff development and collaboration and leaders who are "warm and supportive" (2006:47) (see *Figure 6.4*); Whereas organisations with a strong 'market' culture would value strong competition, with leaders who are "tough and demanding" (2006:47) (see *Figure 6.4*).

There are no right or wrong cultures within this model. The issue is more whether the organisational culture is fit to achieve the strategic objectives an organisation has set for itself. So, for example, an organisation that is striving to provide emergency service provision in a similar manner across Tasmania may work best if the culture is skewed towards 'hierarchy'; i.e. has consistent procedures (i.e. internally focused) and is about maintaining those standards over time (i.e. stability and control). In reality, most organisations will exhibit traits across all four quadrants – perhaps in the same element of the organisation (so, for example, in their leadership style, or their success criteria).

Figure 6.4: Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework for analysing organisational culture: organisational leadership values for each quadrant

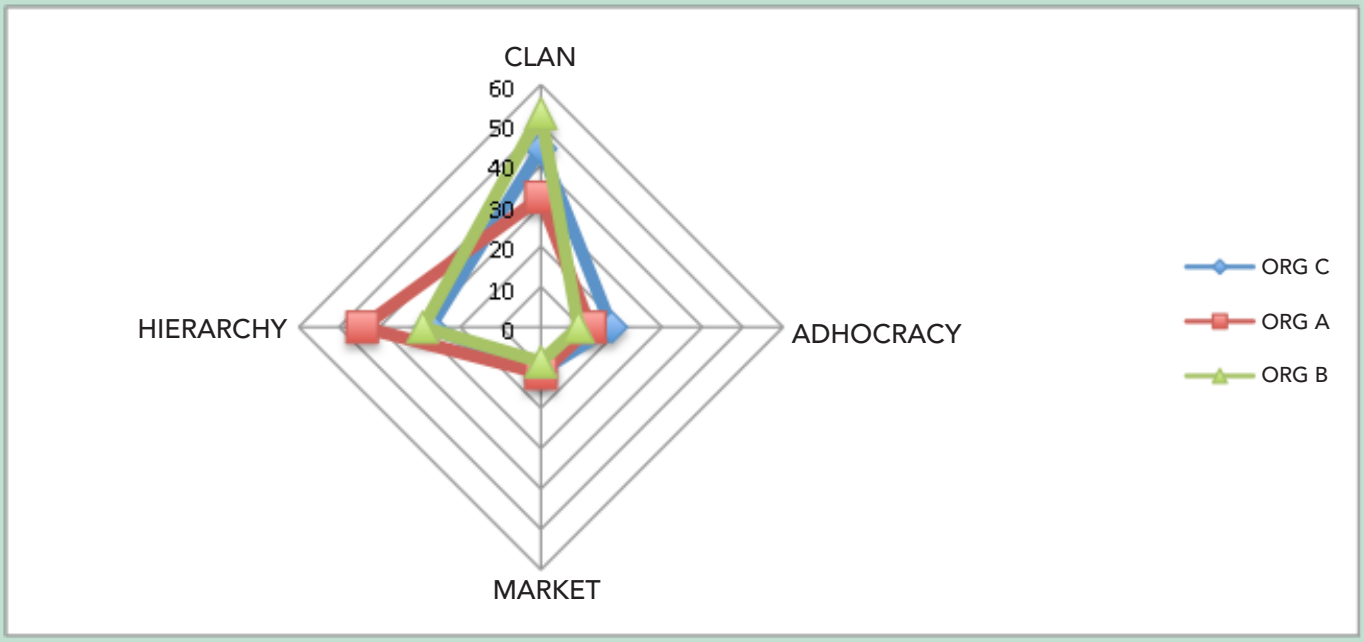


Source: Cameron and Quinn, 2006:46

This model may be focused on the overall organisation, or one element of it's provision/one team. For this research, this framework was used to articulate organisational culture within the volunteer programme(s) that involve young people. The case study organisations were asked to complete a version of Cameron and Quinn's questionnaire (2006:24-30) that had been adapted to include volunteer management (see *appendix 7*).

6.4.B OVERALL ORGANISATIONAL CULTURAL PROFILES: BALANCING FLEXIBILITY WITH CONTROL

Figure 6.5: Organisations' overall cultural profiles: balancing flexibility with control



Although we cannot generalise for all successful volunteer-involving organisations from a sample of three, it is important to note that all three organisations had similar overall cultural profiles (see *Figure 6.5*); they were all mostly '***clan*' *and* '*hierarchy***' in their orientation, i.e. about ***internal development and maintenance***. This fits well with their current focus on internal strategic change and perhaps reflects the current importance of reviewing and refreshing approaches to Tasmanian volunteering. Where ***control and flexibility*** sat within their practice defined the difference between them; organisations B and C were more 'clan' in their overall culture – i.e. they valued more flexibility and adaptability in how they developed and delivered their service and in how they developed worked with their volunteers and staff. This makes sense; organisations B and C both had successful, well-known services, but were looking to adapt these to make them even more appealing to a broader range of volunteers. So they were open to changing elements of their services (where possible) ***and*** their internal systems for organising how these were delivered.

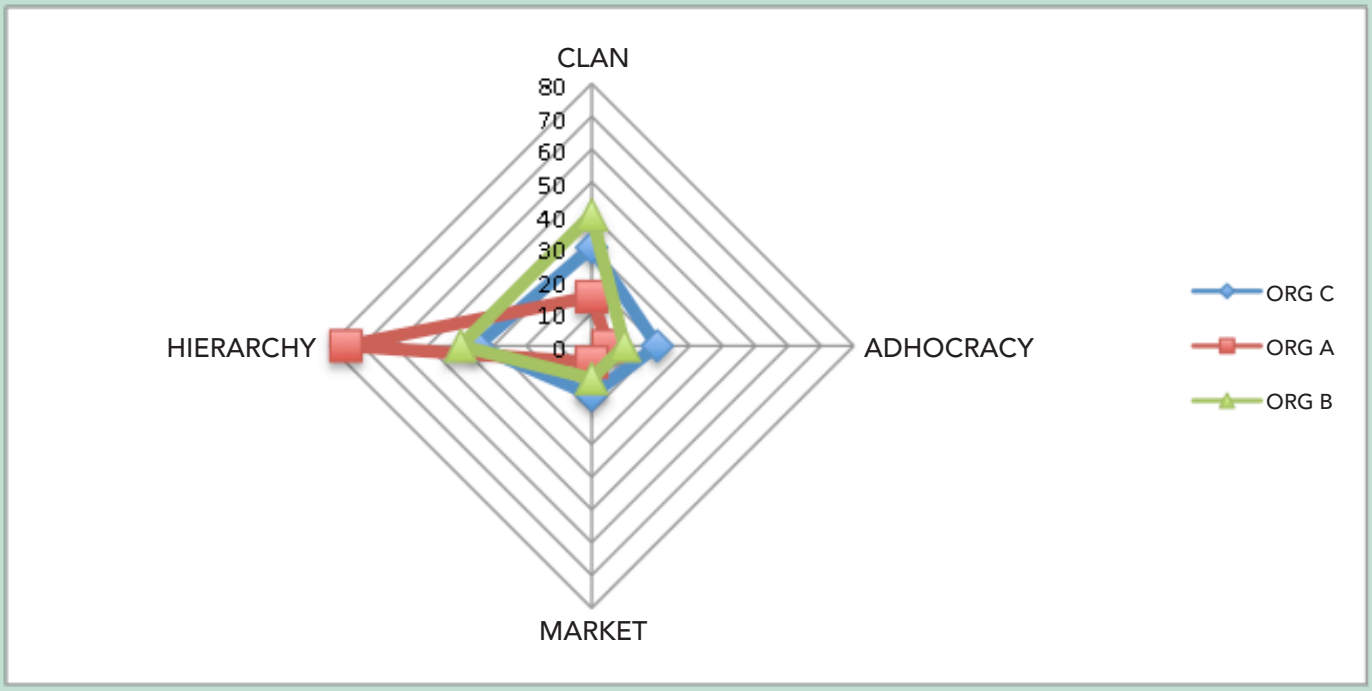
Whereas, for organisation A, the overall approach had slightly more emphasis on a 'hierarchy' culture; valuing more control and monitoring and more consistency in delivery. Again this makes some sense; organisation A had a durable, respected service, which was heavily regulated, that they were confident about delivering. For this organisation, any changes would be about the internal systems for organising how their service was delivered.

Interestingly, these profiles fit most closely with the service sector organisations in Cameron and Quinn's study (2006:78).

The fieldwork delved deeper to consider in which areas of management practice these cultures were most prominent.

6.4.C LEADERSHIP CULTURES

Figure 6.6: Organisations' leadership cultural profile



Organisation C showed a fairly balanced leadership culture across all four quadrants (see *Figure 6.6*), which fits with Cameron and Quinn's 'ideal type'; showing that the leadership within this organisation potentially had the ability to be open minded about practice and change (2006:80). Organisations A and B also had tendencies in each quadrant, but with more definite leadership preferences. For organisation B, this was within the 'clan and 'hierarchy' balance, as described in 'overall profiles'. For organisation A, leadership was clearly where 'hierarchical' preferences lay – i.e. where control and stability was steered from.

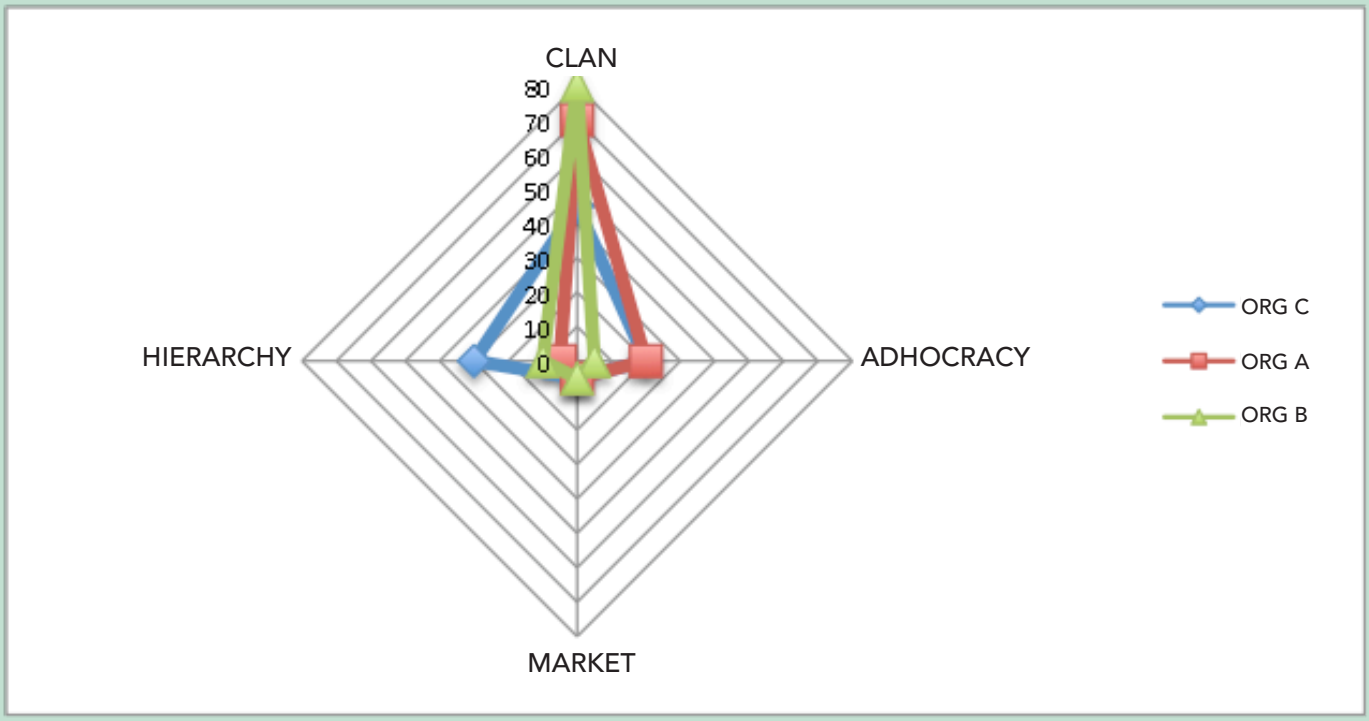
And the leadership styles dictated the 'dominant characteristics' in each organisation (see ***appendix*** *7*) and, to a lesser extent, the 'organisational glue' (***appendix*** *7*) and the criteria for success (*Figure 6.9*). So, clearly, each organisation had a strong leadership culture for volunteer services.

6.4.D VOLUNTEER AND STAFF MANAGEMENT CULTURES

Interestingly, all organisations had similar 'clan' approaches to volunteer management (see Figure 6.7), emphasising flexibility and strong support and development , which was reflected in all three case study organisations approach to learning and development and in their volunteers' appreciation of this (see *sections 5.3* and *5.7*).

Organisation C had more emphasis on a controlling 'hierarchical' volunteer management culture (see *Figure 6.7*), which again makes sense, given that volunteers needed to undertake the most rigorous and on-going training and development to maintain their ability to undertake volunteering roles.

Figure 6.7: Organisations' volunteer management cultural profiles

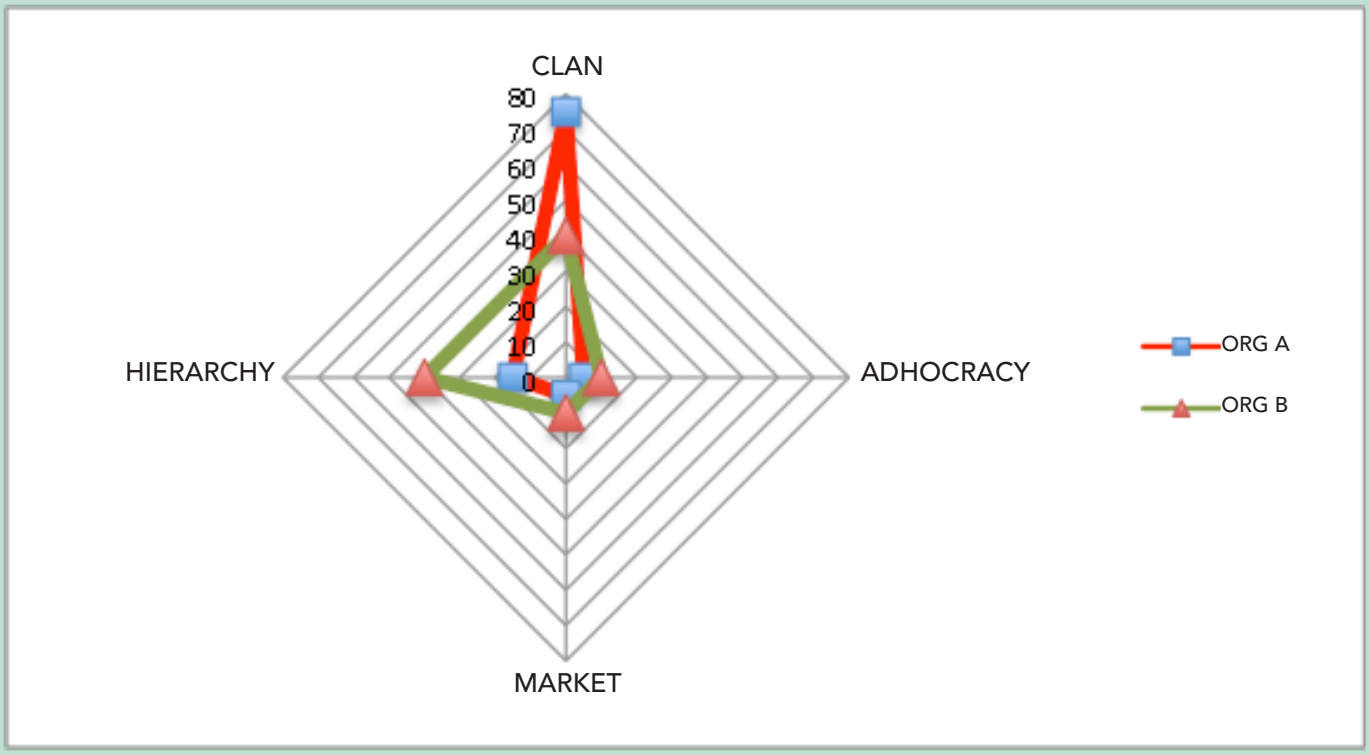


Only two of the organisations had paid employees (organisations A and B) within the activity area the fieldwork was focused on. Within organisation A, their approach to employee management was similar to that of volunteer management (predominantly one of flexibility in how people are treated within the work environment); so the control aspect came from how the organisation was led (See *Figs 6.6* to *6.8*).

Figure 6.8: Organisations' staff management cultural profiles

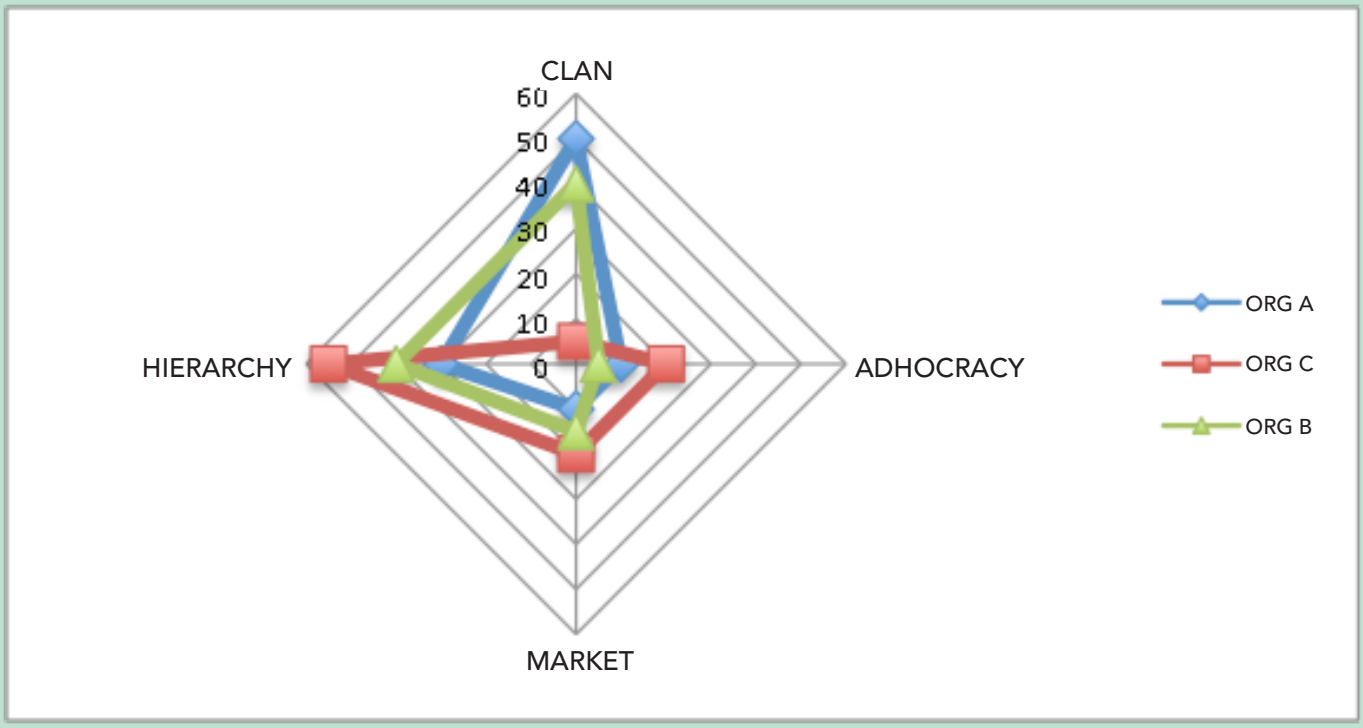
Whereas within organisation B, more flexibility seemed to sit within the clan culture of volunteer management, compared to there being slightly more elements of 'hierarchical' control within both employee management and leadership (see *Figures 6.6* to *6.8*).

This does not lead us to any conclusions about what works in terms of approaches to human resource management, other than to say perhaps the approach to volunteer management does not have to be the same as that of employee management, as Paull (2002:25) alludes to (cited in Crowley et al, 2008:14).



6.4.E CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

Figure 6.9: Organisations' criteria for success



Also, interesting to note was that, although all three organisations had a slightly different emphasis between control and flexibility within their success criteria, they all had an external eye on the market; although still a relatively minor part of their profile, all had a higher emphasis on either a 'market' or 'adhocracy' culture in their criteria for success than in any other element of their management practice (see *Figure 6.9*). This may reflect their awareness of the need to benchmark: to look elsewhere at good practice and to keep an eye on their external positioning.

6.4.F ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

- Organisations had similar overall cultural values around:
  - Flexibility, adaptability and support (a 'clan' culture), particularly within their volunteer management;
  - Internal stability and control (a 'hierarchy' culture) – particularly within their leadership style.
- All organisations had a strong leadership style that impacted on the overall culture;
- Organisations' approach to volunteer management was not necessarily the same as that to staff management;
- But, all had a strong set of cultural values that worked for them.
- It is too early to talk about there being a volunteer sector management 'culture fit'. But the potential cultural traits shown within these three case study organisations certainly demand further investigation with a wider sample of Tasmanian volunteer-involving organisations.

6.5 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Following on from the leadership principles outlined within sections *6.2* to *6.4*, this section explores the skills organisations felt are needed to operationalise these, i.e. the volunteer management skills needed to work with young people.

6.5.A GENERIC VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

In general, all three organisations felt that the same volunteer management skills applied to working with young people, as they did to older volunteers. These skills included clear communication skills, an understanding of what it takes to volunteer and flexibility:

Clear communication skills

Good people management and communication skills were mentioned by all three organisations as crucial to managing any volunteers:

> **"Often people within the sector move from administration into volunteer management. They find the biggest challenge is managing volunteer expectations and claim reimbursements, relationship disputes, variance in expectations."**
>
> [Organisation B]

As training is a major part of most volunteering inductions, the organisations all suggested that clarity was a key skill:

> **"You have to be good at explaining things to people…because nine times out of 10 it's not like someone's just gonna come into a workplace or organisation and know what to do; you're going to have to train them in some role and, you know, every organisation's going to have a different way of doing things. So if you don't have any patience, or aren't very good at explaining things to people… that's not going to get very far."**
>
> [Organisation A]

And within clarity, setting expectations and dealing with relationship disputes were flagged as key skills.

Setting and implementing expectations

Clear volunteer expectations – and being able to communicate these – were important within all three organisations:

> **"I think the biggest one's communication. It's a lot about how you communicate with people and what sort of vibe you put across, especially if you want to politely say to them, 'you're behaviour's not quite on.'…It's a bit of an eggshell with people…and developing people's skills and getting them involved in things."**
>
> [Organisation A]

Handling the variance in expectations was discussed in different ways in all organisations; whether it be about communicating what regulations demand a volunteer does versus what they want to do, or the demands the organisations have on volunteers' time versus what time a volunteer can commit, or around laying down expectations of behaviour and conduct:

> **"One of the challenges that comes with managing volunteers is that often a volunteer can bring up challenges based on the reason they're volunteering, or the assumption that, 'I'm a volunteer, so therefore you need to do this for me.' So sometimes there's a power struggle… There's an expectation that…we can't give them feedback…because they're giving their time. In the roles we look after... the expectations on volunteers is like that of staff; they're given a role description and they're spoken to about the roles and responsibilities; we invest in them exactly the same as we would with staff, so we expect a reciprocal relationship. I don't think that's necessarily across the sector."**
>
> [Organisation B]

And it's important to acknowledge that the case study organisations did not have the solutions to everything sorted. Organisation A was still grappling with how to strike a balance between volunteer autonomy and bringing them on board with organisational goals and expectations:

> **"I don't know how to deal with that…I think that is quite tricky, saying to someone, 'you're not really part of the team here.'"**
>
> [Organisation A]

In organisation A, there was more autonomy given to one group of volunteers (of mixed age), who were the organisation's 'voice'. However, it was important for the organisation that these volunteers understood the legal requirements that they and the organisation were bound by:

"Just because we're independent or community doesn't mean we're not responsible, or don't have to answer to anyone; we have a license and there are licensing conditions…you can't just go…and say what you like…It's quite reasonable; you're just asking people not to defame people, or swear, or play music with violent connotations."

[Organisation A]

Although these requirements were clearly outlined at initial volunteer training stage:

"In a round about way we are legally required to be giving people legal training…and I think it would be pretty irresponsible for us not to have a good session on what defamation is and what you can and can't do."

[Organisation A]

But enforcement remained a challenge. And it was often with young volunteers where the risk of crossing these legal boundaries was perceived as highest:

"It's possible younger people who don't have a good grasp on things…I mean a lot of it, what you can and can't say, is common sense. But young people kind of lack a bit of that sometimes; just kind of say what they think without realising that maybe they could be offending. Like talking about 'Bogans'…Usually once you point this out to people, they're like, 'Oh, shit! Sorry. I just didn't realise'"

[Organisation A]

Maintaining contact and feedback

All three organisations spoke about the need to manage contact, in order to keep volunteers connected and interested in the organisation:

"Recognising that they'll be some times of the year when you'll drop off their radar… exams…social commitments…Unless you're giving clear expectations, or checking on their engagement with you, there's a chance that you'll be disappointed."

[Organisation B]

Reiterating the importance of good communication skills and feedback mechanisms (*sections 4.7* and *6.3*).

An understanding of what it takes to volunteer

In organisation B, most paid programme staff had volunteer roles in other capacities (although this was not an organisational requirement):

"Something that makes a volunteer manager is to volunteer themselves…to understand that the best written policies, practices and approaches back at the office don't always unfold in reality."

[Organisation B]

And another organisation again flagged the importance of empathy with peoples' personal circumstances and, hence, flexibility in the volunteer offer:

"There's a certain amount of understanding and empathy you need to have…If you can't empathise with people's situation in life…Like, quite often, I have people say to me, 'I can't actually do that, cos I have a family, or whatever.' If you're not able to see people as human, you don't get very far…That whole flexibility thing."

[Organisation A]

Flexibility

All three organisations talked about the regulatory environment and the need to make a judgment between compliance and supporting and retaining volunteers.

For organisation A, this was the balance between allowing volunteers to have autonomy and ensuring they operate within sector standards; for organisation C, it was more about complying with insurance and health and safety requirements and maintaining a culture of opportunity and enjoyment (see *organisations' tips #17*).

As organisation C observed:

> **"The modern regulatory environment is not good – adults need to feel protected; kids need to feel comfortable. There are reasons why they can't [do certain activities]. But if you don't let them experience what they want, they'll walk away."**

There is clearly no one solution to this, but all organisations had set out responsibilities up front. And then 'enforcement' varied from being a central point of review to trying to encourage an environment of collective responsibility.

organisations' tip #17

BALANCING FLEXIBILITY WITH COMPLIANCE

For organisation C, there are strict legal requirements and health and safety regulations that have to be adhered to, but may put off young volunteers, as they see them as 'restrictive'. For example, being able to take out vehicles, and the need to keep up practicing emergency rescue skills to maintain insurance requirements. To address all needs, the organisation has:

- decided where enforcement is necessary as a management team and considered where flexibility/leeway is possible;
- tried to encourage a culture of flexibility within the organisation when dealing with young volunteers (for example, understanding that patrolling can also be a social opportunity);
- communicated the ground rules to young volunteers and to families involved in the club at the start of the season, so that families can support and reinforce boundaries;
- delegated responsibility to young volunteers where possible to encourage their interest and their understanding of compliance issues, such as in peer patrols, peer coaching, leadership programmes.

6.5.B YOUTH-SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Youth coaching skills

There was one area that was articulately argued within organisation C as a youth specific skill – the need for adults to develop the coaching skills to deal with young people effectively, in terms of developing young volunteers' passions and skills, offering opportunities to listen and support, being flexible where you can, whilst laying down ground rules and enforcing them without alienating young volunteers and coaching young people through mistakes:

> **"Kids undertake life differently to us. And some older members have little patience with that."**
>
> [Organisation C]

> **"Relationships with older people are so important. And older people need to be aware – and a lot aren't, who aren't; trained…to deal with kids…They can be, just by their simple demeanor, or a simple word said, that they don't even think about, can damage a young person in a club in a way that will make them not want to continue in that club. So I think the education of older people in dealing with children in an educational context is really important. If you put money into developing programmes that develop us – the managers of clubs – to relate in a positive way to young people, that would be a great advantage."**
>
> [Organisation C]

> **"That can affect young people, I reckon; the personalities of older people and clashes…And perceptions by younger people that older people don't like them; that's a pretty fragile relationship and older people don't even realise. You can have a grumpy old boy walk in and X thinks he's done something wrong, but the boy's just grumpy. The kids don't see that."**
>
> [Organisation C]

Organisation C was developing a community coaching model to address this and saw this as a tool not just for the club, but for all community organisations to support youth development within the local community:

> **"Every club needs to take that more seriously. Most coaching is skills based. Don't teach them how to deal with kids. And when they try to put ground rules in place…all goes wrong."**
>
> [Organisation C]

6.5.C VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SKILLS – WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

Organisations felt that volunteer management skills were similar to those needed for staff management, but highlighted the following as being particularly important:

- clear communication skills, particularly to set and maintain volunteers' expectations and maintain volunteer contact and feedback;
- an understanding of what it takes to volunteer; and
- flexibility in when to apply compliance versus volunteer needs.
- In terms of specific youth volunteer management skills, the key one was developing adults' ability to work with and support young people – through community coaching.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS: EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

Organisational success = positive attitude to young people + understanding Gen Y and Z challenges

The findings suggest that organisations that are successfully recruiting young people seem to fit with Ferrier et al's (2004) leadership profile; most importantly, they see ***young people's volunteering contributions positively*** (or are in the process of ensuring this culture is developing/spreading across their organisation); and they ***understand the challenges*** faced by their young volunteers (usually through consultation/conversation) and, where this is causing an issue, ***develop specific strategies*** to tackle these. They also work within models of ***social inclusion*** and ***community development***.

Towards understanding organisational culture: balancing leadership control with flexibility in volunteer management?

The case study organisations all seemed to strike a balance within their organisational culture between ***controlled adherence to regulation*** (steered from strong leadership) and offering ***flexibility and development to the volunteers*** (steered within their volunteer management approach). This needs exploring further with other organisations.

The need for community coaching

Although organisations felt most volunteer management skills are the same for all volunteers (***communication***, ***empathy***, ***flexibility***), there is one area of development that stands out – the need for an ***effective model of community coaching***, that enables adults to work with and develop young people on terms that work for both of them.

Strengthening the Tasmanian volunteer community

There is a clear need to develop ***more effective Tasmanian volunteer sector links***, to enable organisations to develop coaching and other important skills, and to help open up facilities and assets within local communities and to encourage debates about how to build volunteering capacity and social inclusion locally. There are key facilitation roles here for peak bodies and local councils.

Lessons for organisations

Based on the experiences of these case study organisations, leadership strategies need to:

- Ensure their ***values include seeing young people as possibilities***, in addition to embracing social inclusion and community development;
- Ensure their ***organisational culture is fit for purpose*** within leadership and volunteer management;
- Ensure the ***professional networks they utilise include local and Tasmanian volunteer organisations***, as well as sector and national;
- ***Talk to young people*** about their experiences, to ensure that the organisation understands how they are perceived and experienced by Gens Y and Z;
- Ensure staff and volunteers who work with young people have the ***coaching skills to support Gens Y and Z***.

III THE CONCLUSIONS

7. Conclusions

7.1 WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT THE TASMANIAN EXPERIENCE?

Tasmanian challenges

The Tasmanian experience looks similar to the national picture in youth volunteering, except for a few important factors which shape the Tasmanian experience, even if they are not unique to the state:

- ***having a declining proportion of the Tasmanian population who are young***, compared to those nearing retirement. This may have a significant effect on where resource-strapped Tasmanian volunteering organisations choose to target their recruitment;
- ***the significant gender difference*** in Tasmanian youth volunteer participation, which needs to be better understood before it can be effectively addressed;
- ***the tendency for some volunteer-involving organisations to undersell their benefits to young people and underutilise communication media*** that young people commonly look to, such as websites and on-line application processes, social networking, emails and texts. These need to be prioritised as areas for development within organisations' youth volunteer recruitment and retention strategies;
- ***the temperate climate and size and scale of the state*** causing a challenge for organisations to keep up volunteers' momentum in between activity seasons and between state events, compared to other Australian states;
- ***the poor public transport system*** and mainly regional and rural residents limiting volunteer choices for some young Tasmanians;
- ***the need to be mindful of maintaining confidentiality*** when volunteering in small communities;
- despite having a very strong and active peak body, having an ***under-developed Tasmanian 'volunteering community'*** between organisations and between volunteers, leading to challenges in sharing sector information and good practice across the state and potentially inhibiting volunteer referrals between organisations.

Tasmanian assets

The challenges of gathering relevant management information and addressing the issues identified here remain huge for organisations with limited resources. But Tasmania also has huge advantages:

- in its ***strong sense of community cohesion***, as highlighted within the Social Inclusion Strategy;
- with its size and scale offering the ***potential ability to share lessons and resources across the state*** and trial new thinking;
- with some very ***successful organisations engaging young people as volunteers***, through which good practice can be cascaded;
- ***a very strong and active volunteering peak body***, supported by federal and state government[63] able to capture good practice and support the sector to develop; and
- ***a state government that understands the important role of volunteering*** and supports its development through the Supporting Tasmanian Volunteers Programme, the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Strategy and Tasmania Together.

These advantages give Tasmania a great foundation from which to develop a healthier volunteer sector and attract more young people into voluntary activities. But, given the prevalence of traditional views of young people being too hard to engage, the agenda needs to be driven.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS

From the research findings, there appear to be two dynamics that shape what young people want from their volunteering experience – their original motivation to volunteer and what they are specifically looking for from their current (or next) volunteering role. Understanding these dynamics would further help organisations to tailor how they recruit, support and develop their volunteers.

63 Current government funding includes federal grants from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Department of Health and Ageing through the Home and Community Care programme (HACC).

But these dynamics are not likely to be unique to young people. As one organisation stressed:

> **"It's not as big a leap as we think it is to involve young people…I think it's more of a little tweak."**
>
> **[Peak body A]**

So to create willing young volunteers and meaningful roles for young Tasmanians, findings suggest that Tasmanian organisations need to:

- *see young people's participation in volunteering positively* and see that their organisation has something to offer young people;
- *recognise that young people are not that different to other potential volunteers* in many aspects. But there may be issues to recognise about what their challenges are (particularly in the transient nature of their commitments, their confidence and access to transport), what is motivating them to participate (particularly in their need to develop their skills and experience, as well their desire to contribute to community), or what they want to gain from their role, how they prefer to be communicated with (in terms of media and styles) and what skills the organisation has to support young people effectively;
- *talk to young people* about their perceptions/ experiences of the organisation; understand what attracts young people to the organisation and what areas need developing; familiarise themselves with how young people's challenges impact on potential and existing volunteers' participation and consider appropriate consultation methods;
- *make strategic decisions about who they can effectively recruit* (and that might include a limited range of young people, or for limited activities, or not recruit young people at all in the short term, whist they are developing appropriate support); specifically target their resources and activities around these identified groups;
- *embrace opportunities for new thinking and different ways to communicate* and be open to learning and using new media and language styles, to ensure the organisation can maintain itself as being 'youth ready';
- *understand and utilise local networks* for volunteer recruitment and organisational development, including schools, families, employers, peak bodies and state networks;
- *consider whether their organisational culture is fit for purpose*.[64] For example, strike a balance within their organisational culture between control of the regulatory environment, but offering flexibility and development opportunities for young volunteers within leadership and volunteer management.
- *Embrace the breadth of volunteering roles* – from more traditional formal ones to more informal, short-term/sporadic opportunities;
- *Capture all activity* (informal and formal) in reporting on volunteering.
- *Share knowledge* about what works.

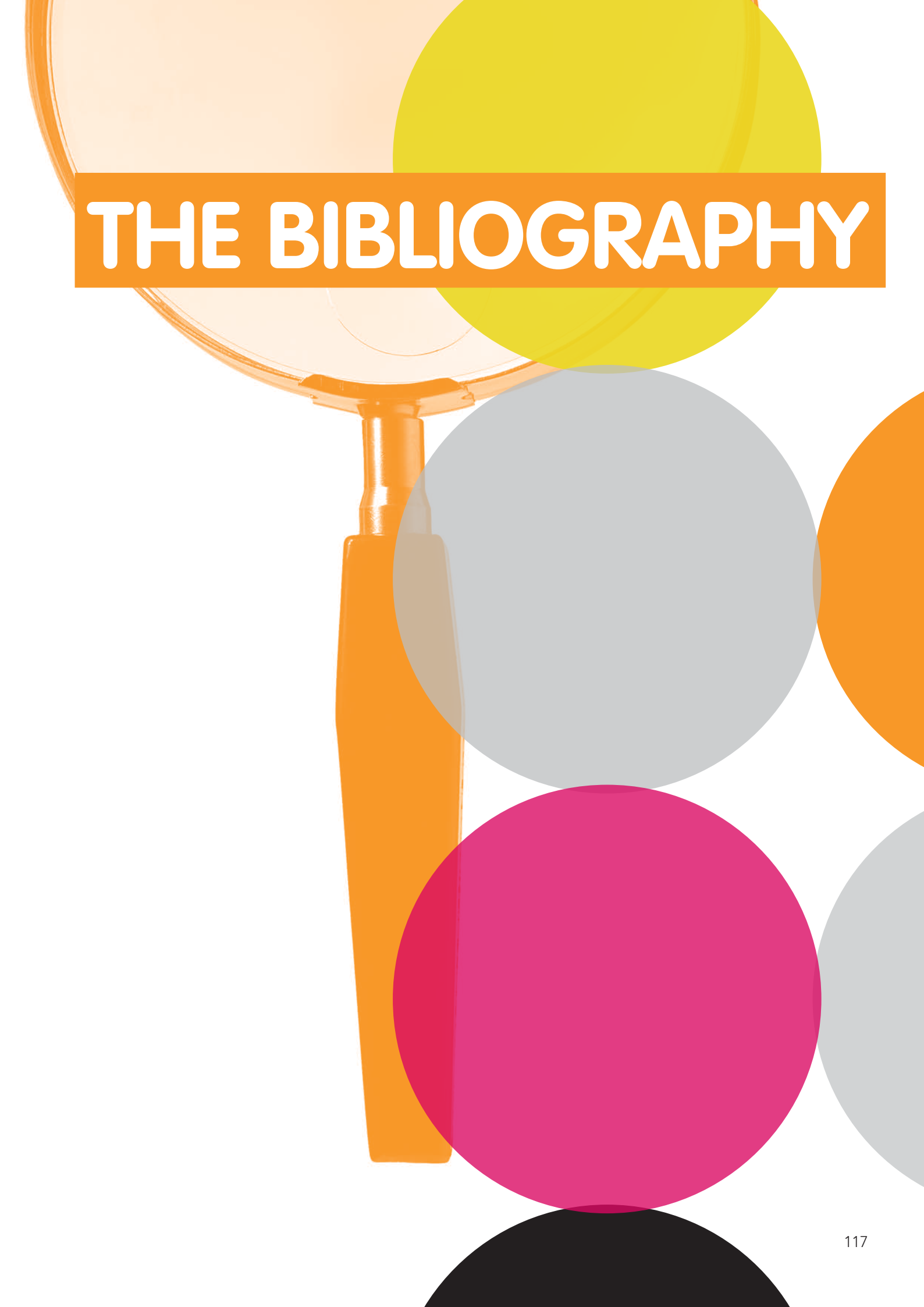
7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are a number of areas where further research would be useful within Tasmania. For example:

- roles of public and private schools, faith and CALD networks in cultivating volunteering amongst young people;
- exploring the gender gap in young Tasmanian volunteering; including an exploration of Tasmanian gender volunteer representations in the media and advertising;
- effective use of IT and social networking in volunteer recruitment and retention;
- the potential role of corporate volunteering in boosting a healthier volunteer sector in Tasmania;
- is a model of volunteer typologies useful in helping organisations understand what Tasmanian volunteers need?
- are there aspects to organisational culture that are effective in developing a healthy Tasmanian volunteer sector?
- exploring the types of volunteering young Tasmanians are involved in and, for potential volunteers, those they would be interested in;
- case studies of those young people who have stopped volunteering;
- exploring the roles of informal volunteering;
- evaluating Tasmanian youth engagement strategies.

64 VT offer a management review process that helps Tasmanian organisations through reflecting on their practice and identifying areas for development.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY



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