



# Valuing Volunteers Study

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**The research aims to provide a better understanding of the primary motives for formal volunteering in Australian emergency services, and the broader contemporary influences on such important civic participation.**

## Research context

Volunteers are the lifeblood of emergency services in Australia, and are integral to the nation's emergency management capabilities and overall disaster resilience. The concurrence of an increase in the risk posed by climate change-related hazards and a decline in formal volunteering rates threatens Australia's emergency preparedness.

## Research findings

Values are powerful motivators, with shared values reinforcing volunteer retention, and conflicting values contributing to turnover. A survey of the values preferences of SES volunteers revealed significant variations by gender & generation. Females expressed a clear preference for altruistic values, while males and younger volunteers expressed a clear preference for egoistic values.



## Research methodology

Using a universal values framework that highlights values congruities and conflicts, the volunteer workforce of the NSW State Emergency Service was surveyed to determine their shared and contrasting values preferences.

## Research implications

In the context of a community-wide decline in altruistic values, sustaining volunteer commitment in emergency services will require strategies to satisfy the divergent and potentially conflicting values preferences of different sections of the volunteer workforce.