



SNAP SHOT OF FINDINGS FROM VOLUNTEER REACTIVATION SURVEY

September 2020

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Introduction

1. The survey was active online between 18 August and 14 September 2020.
2. The survey provides a snapshot of the experiences of VWA member organisations rather than the sector as a whole.
3. WA financial members, affiliates and regional affiliates were invited to participate. 78 responses were received.
4. Not all survey responses were complete. The number of responses to each question varies and is shown with the response data.
5. VIOs of all sizes participated in the survey. VIO's with turnover between \$10,000 and \$500,000 were most strongly represented, making up 45% of responses. (N=62)
6. 70% of respondents were located in Perth Metro, 25% in the Regional Areas (Pilbara and Wheatbelt) and the rest either 'state wide' or in Perth inner or outer areas. (N=77)

Summary of findings

1. Business confidence is mostly high, with 80% extremely or very confident of achieving pre COVID levels of business activity. However, 20% are not confident.
2. There was widespread full or partial closures of volunteering programs during the COVID restrictions affecting 86% of respondents.
3. Volunteering programs are getting going again, with 61% fully operational and 31% partially operational.
4. There is a high level of optimism that volunteers will return, with 75% expecting that 75% or more of their volunteers will return and 49% of these anticipate 91-100% of their volunteers will return.
5. More respondents agreed that those not returning are likely to be older (45%), or have other reasons for not returning (29%) such as health concerns or finding other activities, than those who do not have access to a computer or email (11%).
6. 36% have retained new volunteer roles introduced during the COVID restrictions. These are likely to be virtual or remote roles, or relate to new online services or content.
7. Of those actively recruiting, 51% have noticed an increase in younger people wanting to volunteer.

8. Of those actively recruiting, 43% have noticed more people wanting to volunteer as a pathway to employment.
9. More have redesigned volunteer role have for greater awareness of risk, than virtual forms of delivery, or younger volunteers. (69% 33% and 24% respectively). However, decisions on virtual roles and roles for younger people are pending (20% and 10% respectively), so it would appear respondents are giving this consideration.
10. The main challenges now and going forward are redesigning volunteer roles for the new environment (53%), and training volunteers for this (49%) which indicates that redesigning roles is on the radar and is also seen as a challenge.
11. Organisational sustainability/funding is also a main challenge (49%).
12. 48% would find a state wide advertising campaign to recruit volunteer very, or extremely, valuable to their organisation, if VWA could obtain the funding.

Detailed findings

1. 80% of respondent were either extremely or very confident of being able to return to pre-COVID levels of business activity. 20% were not so confident. (N=77) **(Table 3)**

Comments from those that are more positive indicated they have adapted their services, experienced increased demand during COVID, have received emergency funding, work outdoors, can accommodate social distancing requirements or are managing to attract volunteers to fill roles.

“The whole COVID experience has shown us that we can actually deliver more and better services to much wider community than we had previously considered. We will come back bigger and better, with greatly enhanced, if different, service offerings.”

Those that are less positive commented that they dealt with vulnerable cohorts or aging volunteers, were in financial difficulties, or finding it difficult to attract volunteers.

“Our organisation was in a tricky spot financially before COVID, this has deepened since then.”

2. 86% shut down all (51%), or some (34%), of their volunteer programs between March and July 2020. (N=74) **(Table 4)**

Comments indicated those partially running are restricted by social distancing requirements, and those yet to start up are face to face, or pending opening up of facilities or events.

3. 92% have reactivated all (61%), or some (31%), of their volunteer programs (N=74) **(Table 5)**
4. 75% expect 75%-100% of their volunteers to return to volunteering once reactivated. Of these, 49% expect 91-100% of their volunteers to return. (N=69) **(Table 6)**
5. Non returning volunteers **(Table 7)**
 - a) 45% respondents expect those not returning are likely to be 'older'. (N= 62)
 - b) 29% expect other reasons will prevent volunteers from returning. (N=62)
 - c) 11% respondents expect those not returning are likely not to have access to a computer or email. (N=62)

Comments suggested older volunteers may not return because they felt '*unsafe*', were '*cautious*', had been '*scared off*' or '*stressed by COVID*'; the requirement to have a flu vaccine could also have been '*off putting*' for some. Other reasons for not returning included other '*health conditions*' that compromised immunity, finding '*other activities*', '*reassessing their life*', '*deciding to retire*', or '*moving on*'. Lack of email or computer had been factored in to volunteer engagement activities through COVID, by using '*snail mail*' '*phone calls*' and '*newsletters*' to keep in touch. It was acknowledged that the move to online engagement and services may not appeal to older volunteers and affect their decision to return.

6. 36% have retained new volunteer roles introduced during March – July whilst COVID restrictions were in place. (N=71) **(Table 8)**

Comments indicated that roles being retained are virtual or remote, or leverage new digital content such as online training programs, or website content, developed during COVID restrictions, or include more phone communications rather than in person.

7. Of those actively recruiting, 51% have noticed an increase in younger people wanting to volunteer. (N=57) **(Table 9)**
8. Of those actively recruiting, 43% have noticed more people wanting to volunteer as a pathway to employment. (N= 63) **(Table 10)**
9. Redesigning volunteer roles **(Table 11)**
 - a) 69% have redesigned volunteer roles for the greater awareness of risk to health, 6% pending. (N=68)
 - b) 33% have redesigned volunteer roles for virtual forms of delivery, 20% pending. (N=66)
 - c) 24% have redesigned volunteer roles for a younger volunteer cohort, 10% pending. (N=63)

Comments indicated respondents are further ahead in redesigning volunteer roles for increased health and safety awareness, for example introducing “*new online training modules health related*” which volunteers need to complete.

If they have not already, several respondents are considering if and how their volunteer programs can “*better support virtual opportunities*”, though some commented, virtual roles cannot replace their face to face roles, as personal relationships are the foundation of their services. Adapting volunteer roles for the new environment was a main challenge going forward (see 11.) and an area where additional support from VWA would be appreciated:

“As a volunteer coordinator, I would greatly benefit from learning more about designing, inducting and supporting virtual volunteer roles and being more inclusive. Currently, our organisation mainly supports traditional face to face roles.”


Initiatives to engage young people to volunteer, include a ‘young guide’ program. One commented they have developed volunteer roles “*as a pipeline to paid work*”, and another has introduced a new volunteer program “*to provide support and mentoring to job seekers.*” One commented that supporting volunteers looking for work, can be ‘*problematic*’ when it comes to training decisions or how much to rely on them as they may only stay for a short time,


10. 48% would find a state wide advertising campaign to recruit volunteer very, or extremely, valuable to their organisation, if VWA could obtain the funding. (N=71) (**Table 12**)


11. The main challenges now and going forward (**Table 13**):


- a) Adapting volunteer programs for new environment 53%. (N=72)
- b) Training volunteers to cope in new ways of volunteering and communicating 49%. (N=72)
- c) Managing organisational sustainability / funding issues 49%. (N=72)


Data tables


	1. What is the size of your organisation (by \$ annual turnover)?		
	Less than \$10,000 turnover	11	18%
	\$10,000 - \$500,000 turnover	28	45%
	\$500,000 - \$1.5 million turnover	8	13%
	\$1.5 million and over	15	24%
	62	100%	


	2. Where are your operations / services mainly located?		
	WA Perth Metro	54	70%
	WA Pilbara	11	14%
	WA Wheatbelt	7	9%
	Other	5	6%
	77	100%	


	3. How confident are you of your organisation's ability to recover to pre COVID levels of service delivery and business operations?		
	Extremely confident	23	30%
	Very confident	39	51%
	Somewhat confident	13	17%
	Not so confident	2	3%
	77	100%	


	4. During March to July 2020 did you shut down your volunteering programs?		
	Yes, all	38	51%
	Yes, some	26	35%
	No	10	14%
	74	100%	


	5. Have you reactivated your volunteer programs?		
	Yes, all	45	61%
	Yes, some	23	31%
	Not yet	5	7%
	No	1	1%
	74	100%	


	6. What proportion of your volunteers do you expect to return?		
	1-25%	4	6%
	26-50%	2	3%
	51-75%	11	16%
	76-90%	18	26%
	91-100%	34	49%
	69	100%	

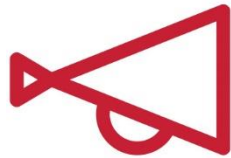
	7. Are those not returning likely to be:									
		Yes		No		Possibly		No response		Total
	Older	28	45%	11	18%	10	16%	13	21%	62
	Without access to a computer or email	7	11%	19	31%	10	16%	26	42%	62
Other	18	29%	3	5%	1	2%	40	65%	62	


	8. Have you retained any of the volunteer roles that were introduced during March to July 2020 (eg virtual roles)?		
	Yes	25	36%
	No	41	59%
	Decision pending	4	6%
		71	100%

	9. Have you noticed an increase in younger people wanting to volunteer?		
	Yes	29	41%
	No	28	40%
	Not actively recruiting yet	13	19%
		70	100%

	10. Have you noticed more people wanting to volunteer as a pathway to employment?		
	Yes	27	37.5%
	No	36	50%
	Not actively recruiting yet	9	12.5%
		72	100%

	11. Have you redesigned your volunteer programs for...							
		Yes		No		Decision pending		Total
	The greater awareness of risk to health	69%	47	25%	17	6%	4	68
	Virtual forms of delivery	33%	22	47%	31	20%	13	66
	A younger volunteer cohort	24%	15	67%	42	10%	6	63
Other	14%	3	81%	17	5%	1	21	

	12. If VWA can obtain the funding to develop a state-wide advertising campaign to recruit more volunteers would this be of value to your organisation?		
	Extremely valuable	15	21%
	Very valuable	19	27%
	Somewhat valuable	20	28%
	Not so valuable	12	17%
	Not at all valuable	5	7%
	71	100%	

	13. What are your main challenges now and going forward? Tick all that apply.		
	Adapting volunteer programs for new environment	38	53%
	Training volunteers to cope in new ways of volunteering and communicating	35	49%
	Managing organisational sustainability / funding issues	35	49%
	Recruiting new volunteers to make up for those not returning	30	42%
	Reactivating volunteers safely	28	39%
	Retaining volunteers who were stood down	16	22%
	Retaining volunteers who joined during March - July	15	21%
	Other	12	17%
		72	100%