

Report on the management of volunteer disputes in South Australia

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Report background

In February 2018, Volunteering SA&NT sought a commitment from the major South Australian political parties on a proposal for a new statutory position - a Not for Profit and Volunteering Advocate. Their proposal contained 13 suggestions that ranged over five broad areas: the systemic organisational issues that can affect all volunteers; relationships between not for profit and government; workforce development; compliance issues and the introduction of binding resolutions to disputes with and between volunteers (Volunteering SA&NT 2018).

In response to this proposal, the Marshall Liberal Government agreed to explore how best to manage disputes involving volunteers that might include governance training, resourcing and potentially, change to the relevant legislation. This would be undertaken in consultation with the not for profit sector.

In March 2020, the Minister for Human Services gave approval to progress this matter under the auspices of the Volunteering Strategy for South Australia. A specialised Working Group was established to explore the role of a Volunteer Advocate and conduct desktop research on the nature and scope of problems experienced by volunteers and how they might be addressed.

To guide the work of the Working Group, a problem statement was developed to ensure that the work remained within scope, was true to its intent, and would achieve a common shared understanding of the work ahead. The problem statement aimed:

To help South Australian volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations prevent and mediate disputes. Where disputes fail to be resolved or other options are not available, a new mechanism that could have the power to make a binding decision will be explored.

This problem statement falls into two distinct categories. The first seeks to prevent problems arising but if they do, to identify resources, such as mediation, in the resolution of those disputes. The second part of the problem statement seeks to identify and suggest mechanisms that would result in a binding decision when other options were not available.

In line with the two aspects of this problem statement a number of methods were established to collect evidence on how best to address assertions of unfair or unjust treatment as well as identify and suggest mechanisms that would result in a binding decision. The evidence gathering included:

1. Examining data collected on volunteer rights at a national and international level.
2. Examining data on how volunteer disputes are managed across jurisdictions.
3. Examining data collected from external support organisations – SafeWork SA, Equal Opportunity Commission, Ombudsman SA.
4. Undertaking interviews with a range of Alternative Dispute Resolution experts on binding and non-binding decisions.
5. Undertaking interviews with volunteer resource centres.

6. Conducting surveys targeting volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, groups and clubs to better understand the nature and scope of conflict and disputes.
7. Cataloguing the range of tools and resources to help manage volunteer disputes.

This report provides a synthesis of the information and data gathered. It includes an analysis of two surveys carried out in 2020 which gave volunteers and organisations the opportunity to provide current perspectives and experiences of volunteering in South Australia.

In this paper the word dispute will be used interchangeably with words such as conflict, issues, problems or complaints between volunteers or between volunteers and their organisations and paid staff. The range of organisation structures is broad and includes formal organisations, groups and clubs. It should be noted that a very small group of volunteer respondents to the survey did not work within any formal structure, rather they worked collaboratively with other community members.

The situation in South Australia

Volunteering occurs in a number of sectors such as community services, emergency, the environment, the arts and, education. This is not an exhaustive list. At a government level each of these sectors may be the responsibility of different state government ministers and departments. Volunteers and organisations responsible for volunteer management may therefore have different guidelines regarding funding, training and management of volunteers.

At a structural level, there are a range of environments where volunteers work including organisations, associations, clubs and groups. Within each type of structure there is further diversity. Volunteer involving organisations can be large with HR departments and a plethora of expert help. Small organisations rely on managers of volunteers to oversee programs for recruitment, training and supervision. Alternatively volunteering occurs in small grassroot organisations and associations which operate without paid staff and are led by elected committee members. When conflict occurs the reaction and management of disputes is similarly broad. It can be determined by policies and procedures adopted by organisational management through to a reliance on constitutional rules. And this occurs prior to seeking help from external mediation bodies or arbitration. Ultimately the worse outcome is the loss of volunteers and possible harm to the reputation of clubs, groups and organisations.

Today, the population of South Australia is 1.7m. people (ABS, 2020). It is estimated that approximately 900,000 people volunteer either formally or informally¹. Volunteers who contribute to the work of government agencies is higher than 120,000 at the state government level (SAicorp Annual Insurance and Risk Management Questionnaire, South Australian Government Financing Authority 2015-16) and 11,000 at the local government level (Local Government Association of SA). Harrison Research found that, statistically, volunteering rates in South Australia are stable (Harrison Research, 2018) although the

¹ A formal volunteer is a person who provides unpaid work, willingly at the direction of an organisation, or government agency. An informal volunteer is a person who provides direct help to others (not relatives) and causes, not through an organisation, group or club.

COVID-19 pandemic has detrimentally affected the volunteering rate across Australia from 36% in 2019 to 24% in 2021 (Biddle & Gray 2021). The Biddle and Gray (2021) research also found that many volunteers had not returned to their volunteering post lockdown.

Formal and informal volunteering has an economic value estimated in 2014 to be between \$200 and \$290 billion a year (EthicalJobs n.d.). At a cultural level, volunteering has been described as an expression of the Australian ethos of 'mateship'. Indeed, helping others can be seen as quintessentially Australian (Shelton 2020). South Australia has over 900,000 volunteers and 2,000 volunteer involving organisations. In 2006, the economic value was estimated as 7.7% of the SA Gross State Product (GSP) - equivalent to \$4.9 billion (Ironmonger 2011). Supporting the work of volunteers benefits the community as a whole and individuals as an expression of citizenship.

In support of volunteering, the South Australian Government has worked with the not for profit sector to provide funding and pass legislation to protect volunteers. The Volunteers Protection Act 2001 (SA) provides protection for volunteers undertaking community work from being sued for damage, loss or injury they may have caused to others during their volunteer work. Only individual volunteers doing 'community work' for 'community organisations' are covered by this act. Within this Act, a community organisation is one that directs or coordinates volunteers, is incorporated, a co-operative, company, government department or agency. The intent of this Act is to encourage people to volunteer by reducing risk to the volunteer and transfer liability to the community organisation (Government of South Australia 2020). Other South Australian legislation that applies to volunteers includes the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) (Equal Opportunity Commission 2021). The Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA) limits the extent to which volunteers may be liable for negligence. Any liability is moved to the organisation or the Crown (Government of South Australia 2005).

To further enhance the volunteer's experience and breakdown barriers to volunteering, peak bodies, government agencies and organisations have developed volunteer standards, formalised policies and procedures with organisations providing training for both volunteers and managers of volunteers.

At a societal level the image of volunteering is positive in Australia. Volunteers and their organisations are perceived as working in harmony to achieve goals for the benefit of individuals, the community and the environment. In South Australia the esteem in which volunteering and volunteers are held is illustrated by the recognition and awards dedicated to volunteers, e.g., Volunteers Day Thank You event, the Joy Noble Medal, the Excellence in Volunteer Management Award, 'The Andamooka' Community Project Award and the Premier's Award for Corporate Social Responsibility. The awards seek to recognise and celebrate the vital role that volunteers play in the wellbeing of the state's communities through the vast range of community and charitable activities. With such recognition, one does not immediately consider that volunteering may incur conflict or end in disputes. However, when working relationships break down, managing the situation can be fraught and upsetting. This is particularly so when volunteers are confused or unaware about the paths and options available for resolving the conflict.

There is no comparable, ongoing collection of measurable data across all sectors on disputes involving volunteers.

Research in volunteering has grown and we are more aware of the volunteering experience and how volunteers are managed but without a consistent form of measurement there is no way of gauging what problems exist, in which areas they occur, and, when they occur, whether mediation was required and if resolution was achieved. Volunteers leaving an

organisation due to conflict is not a resolution, it is for the organisation, a situation waiting to recur unless change occurs. It is important to understand why volunteers leave so that, if necessary, change can be facilitated. This can include ensuring internal processes are robust and a reinforced understanding of external supports and options is available.

Comprehending why volunteers leave can be difficult to ascertain. In Western Australia Paull, Holloway and Burnett (2010) found only two volunteers out of 64 respondents admitted to personality conflicts as a reason for resigning. It was suspected that this number could be higher as dissatisfied volunteers did not confide to management why they are actually leaving (2010, p. 6). The example may be small in number, but it does point to an area in volunteering research where little is known. Thus, there is a need for more research on how conflict and disputes effect people in their volunteering experiences and their decisions to continue volunteering.

Volunteering in South Australia today - survey for volunteers and organisations, groups and clubs 2020-2021

As part of the review project, surveys to better understand volunteering in South Australia and learn about the barriers of conflict and dispute resolution were carried out. The online surveys (one for volunteers and one for organisations), *Creating a safe and positive volunteering experience* (Survey) were hosted on YourSAy, Government of South Australia, between December 2020 and January 2021. Sixty organisations, groups and clubs completed the organisational survey and 271 volunteers took part in the survey for individuals. In light of the number of responses, it is not suggested that the results of the two surveys provide a comprehensive understanding of volunteering in South Australia. However, they do provide a taste of the popularity and value of volunteering as well as pointing to some of the current problems that concern volunteers, how they are managed and how resolution could be improved.

It is noted that 83% volunteer respondents identified as working for an organisation or club. Of the 60 respondents to the organisation or club survey, 52% of respondents stated their group was incorporated while 20% did not know (only one respondent was from an unincorporated association).

It was striking that 85% of volunteers responding to the survey stated they were happy to very happy with their volunteering experience. At first glance this is a wonderful result pointing to a positive volunteering environment in South Australia. However, even though volunteers stated they had never been unhappy with their role they did raise issues and were able to point specifically to areas which could improve.

The nuanced picture of the volunteering experience in South Australia

Further questioning on the experience of volunteering and issues that had arisen over the previous 4 years found that volunteers who had never had any problems dropped to 40%. This led to a more nuanced picture of the volunteer experience. For instance, the following comments from

volunteers show that volunteers may have grievances and be upset but their experiences may not dampen the high regard in which they hold volunteering:

Despite my current grievance, my overall experience of volunteering throughout life is affirming and enhancing. I value volunteers and love to volunteer.

Accepting that these are systemic issues unlikely to change mainly because of a lack of funding and poor management. I do what I can to influence change but it doesn't devalue the volunteering experience.

Volunteering can be so amazing! But when you find yourself in a role volunteering under nasty, uneducated or untrained people it can be very soul destroying. If you invest that passion into improving the organisation but only get bullied and abused because people are stuck in 'this is the way we do things here' then it can be just awful! Similarly, when you volunteer for 'professionals' who are not professional, don't communicate and do things they know better than to do, it is very challenging. Keep investigating the Volunteer Advocate for SA! We need one to help both the volunteers and their Managers! (I work in Volunteer Management also).

It was clear that many leaders, managers and volunteers prefer to deal with problems informally. This comment highlights the importance of clear and open communication in solving conflict:

Feel that I am part of a team and working together, if a problem arises then can always go to the supervisor and am listened to.

Initially I was annoyed but spoke to the coordinator of the paid workers and our volunteer rep and the matter was resolved quickly. I was not victimised but supported and encouraged in my feelings and my role.

Any slight issues have been sorted with a quick conversation

Of concern were comments that appeared to see problems as part of the volunteer experience, some comments had an attitude of 'business as usual', almost c'est la vie:

It will always be an ongoing issue as interpersonal and staff/volunteer issues are complex.

Working with volunteers, there are always some who do more than their share and others who don't give enough.

Related to this is the patience of volunteers in trying to work through the problem, to trust that the situation will improve. Not knowing where to go or what options are available, e.g. mediation, can leave volunteers in a state of limbo, as stated by this Survey respondent:

... Council has excellent support for volunteers. Absolutely excellent. One other spot has a leader with less experience. She is trying hard, but it's a smaller organisation,

and they are learning. As a high school teacher at many different high school sites. I am prepared to wait a bit until that group gets its act together. It's ok.

The impact of conflict to the volunteer

Statistical evidence on the occurrence of conflict before it escalates is difficult to find. Without measurable evidence there is a lack of understanding about conflict, trends over time, the impact on the individual volunteer, colleagues, the organisation or the activity of volunteering. Comments made in the Survey reinforced the harm of conflict:

When it occurs the stress can impact [my] sleep and cause much upset.

I resigned and was disappointed with personal comments made after without any truth or honesty. I have now resigned from all community meetings and functions never to get involved again.

Stopped volunteering for that organisation.

Made me feel excluded and not wanting to continue volunteering.

In the Survey, volunteers were asked to comment about how their experiences made them feel - 212 responded. Seventy-two comments were positive and 112 were negative. Of this later group, feelings of frustration, disappointment and powerlessness emerged. A sample of the comments are:

Feelings of frustration -

Makes many of us feel frustrated and not valued, less inspired.

Frustrated, dissatisfied and patronised - so I left that particular role and moved on to a different charity and role.

Powerlessness (volunteering with other community members, not through an organisation)-

Powerlessness made me defensive and reduced both my capacity and desire to use my time and energy. Generally, the powerlessness caused by "management group" trying to limit what I could contribute because of age with no regard to ability or fitness.

Disappointment -

disrespected, sad, untrusting, disappointed, I looked for other volunteer roles. I think its [because] we are viewed as Centrelink volunteers and lesser citizens = under/unemployed.

Disappointed that input from volunteers did not seem to be considered or if so little or no feedback.

Problems associated with volunteering on committees and boards

Recent research in South Australia among small volunteer led associations found barriers for members to join committees, even though without a managing committee the association would flounder. The main reasons for not joining were:

- Misuse of power and internal politics: people identified bullying and malpractice as the most common reason for not joining committees.
- Lack of time: other commitments to family and work impeded committee member efforts to actively take part.
- Red tape: overly bureaucratic procedures by state and local governments to cumbersome and outdated committee procedures in accordance with their constitutions.
- Alienation and burnout: Committee members do not always feel confident of their abilities and these escalate to feelings of alienation particularly when confronted with constitutions that require a very formal structure to meetings and organisation. Some long-standing volunteers struggle with low committee recruitment as they feel they cannot resign and are left feeling trapped and possibly leading to burnout (Mex 2019, p. 66-70).

Survey comments from volunteers working on committees and boards were found to concur with Mex (2019) research findings. Examples include:

- Misuse of power and internal politics -

Following an issue where I was minuted unfairly and incorrectly accused for raising governance issues at board meetings. Minutes were not amended to suit. I immediately resigned.

- Red tape -

There was nothing I could do to reduce the bureaucratic red tape.

- Alienation and burnout -

Nobody else in the club is interested in taking on my role.

Volunteer burn out in small communities, next generation not willing to take on roles

People with no idea on procedure running committees, decisions being made without consultation.

If there is a problem with the Chair and administration of an important Government Board and committee, my experience is that all that can be done is wait for the next chair and try again.

Comments made in a submission to this Review point to the harm of ongoing conflict in a committee environment:

The underlying tension of an unresolved conflict has eroded working relationships and harmed progress of the Committee and reforms.

Such problems are detrimental to the important work of committees and boards. Committee members can feel there is no or little support internally. Therefore, there is a need for quick access to external mediation to help all stakeholders understand the problem and agree to adhere to the agreed resolution.

Responding to conflict and disputes

International experience: Volunteer Rights Inquiry, UK

In 2009, concern about unfair treatment of volunteers led Volunteering England to establish a Volunteer Rights Inquiry². Its interim report called for an independent body or ombudsman to handle disputes between volunteers and their organisations. This position was dismissed in the final report with volunteers and their organisations being asked to continue to take responsibility of managing problems themselves prior to seeking solutions through external mechanisms. The change in recommendation was a concern that the introduction of an independent body or ombudsman would result in additional regulation and legislation - more red tape. In turn it was feared this might create a barrier to people to begin and continue volunteering due to increasing bureaucratic demands. It has since been argued that focusing on better trained managers of volunteers is a short-sighted response when considering the advocacy of volunteers. Rather it is the responsibility of the whole organisation.

The Inquiry argued that the principles and management of volunteers, together with mechanisms such as existing peak bodies and the organisations themselves, should combine to provide ongoing improvement and solutions. As part of this the 3R Promise (3Rs) was introduced. It was an invitation for organisations to follow procedures when in dispute to 'get it RIGHT, offer RECONCILIATION and take RESPONSIBILITY' (NCVO 2014, p. 21). The 3Rs asked organisations to follow good management processes to prevent problems arising. If conflict did occur, the organisation agreed to appoint an individual to monitor volunteer complaints and consider external alternative conflict resolution if necessary. The final 'R' asks organisations to accept their responsibility for their volunteers and respect volunteer wishes to have a fair hearing.

To encourage organisations to sign up to the 3R Promise, a Call-to-Action Progress Group (CAPG) worked for two years to raise awareness and commitment from organisations to ensure the fair treatment of volunteers (NCVO 2014). In their 2014 report, the CAPG noted that reports of unfair or unjust treatment of volunteers continued but only 220 organisations had signed up to the 3R Promise³. The authors concurred with the interim report of the Volunteer Rights Inquiry believing there remained a need for a Volunteer Complaints Commissioner or some other centralised and external mechanism to address volunteer disputes.

In the course of preparing this report a search for the 3R Promise on the NCVO website found signatories and documents to help organisations implement good practice processes but did not provide the 3R Promise. Ultimately, NCVO webpage suggests that if

² The Volunteer Rights Inquiry was initially begun under the auspices of Volunteering England in 2009. In 2013 Volunteering England merged with the Nation Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and work continued under that organisation's banner.

³ Currently 134 signatories are listed in the NCVO website <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy/volunteer-rights>

volunteers have problems they can leave and look for other volunteer opportunities but before starting, always ask what volunteer policies and procedures the organisation has in place (NCVO n.d.).

During the period of the Volunteer Action Inquiry, a review of the Charities Act 2006 was undertaken. The report, *Trusted and Independent: Giving charity back to charities*, defined the role of the ombudsman to investigate complaints against public bodies. Therefore, dealing with internal disputes between volunteer and organisation was outside the ombudsman's scope of practice. Rather than instituting a charity ombudsman it recommended that:

Individual charities should adopt and publish internal procedures for disputes and complaints. Umbrella bodies are ideally placed to support charities with this by the development of pro-forma procedures and support in their implementation, perhaps even taking on the role of adjudicator for their members. (Hodgson 2012)

Since 2019, the Charity Commission added a specific requirement that charities implement clear policies and procedures on bullying, harassment and whistleblowing. These would apply to both employees and volunteers, and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations has published a new code of ethics to encourage charities to:

- Respect every individual's dignity and rights to privacy and confidentiality
- Commit to challenging any instances of sexism, gender inequality and other power imbalances that leave people at risk of harm
- Value and improve diversity in their governing bodies, workforce and volunteers. (NCVO 2019).

The South Australian experience

Internal mechanisms for handling complaints and grievances

In the first instance, volunteer involving organisations are encouraged to prevent disputes occurring by developing policies and procedures for the management of volunteers which include grievance procedures. Some groups specifically focus on particular forms of complaint such as harassment, discrimination, bullying and abuse (Starclub 2016). Large, hierarchical organisations often have HR departments, and an array of resources and processes available to volunteers. In very small organisations, this may not be the case as members, users and office bearers may all be the same people.

Resolving problems in-house helps maintain relationships and possibly leads the way towards the development of clearer processes that thwart a repetition of the particular conflict. During interviews it was suggested that public awareness of rights in the workplace was heightened and volunteers seek help due to their awareness of their rights particularly around bullying, discrimination and harassment. If the issue persists, volunteers and organisations can make use of the services and resources of their particular industry. Peak, umbrella and government agencies can provide a range of services. These include training, resource sheets, and mediation. The SA Ambulance Service provides Volunteer Equity Support and employs Volunteer Contact Officers who in 2014-2015 responded to 70 requests for assistance in cases requiring equity issue support (SA Ambulance Service 2015). Other industry bodies train individuals to help clubs with their complaints procedures. Play by the Rules, originating in South Australia (2001),

aimed to provide information and education on discrimination, harassment and child protection in sport. It has expanded and partnered with government departments in other states and now provides resources, training and mediation to clubs all over Australia. To assist sporting clubs in resolving issues it recommends the maintenance of Member Protection Polices (MPP) and training of Member Protection Information Officers (MPIO) to help clubs so that conflict is resolved at the club level (Play by the Rules 2020).

Preventing problems before they arise and resolving issues internally is mentioned and recommended by multiple bodies (Play by the Rules; The Centre for Volunteering). The benefit of this recommendation is an attempt to enable the relationship between the volunteer and organisation to continue and possibly improve.

Changed the day I volunteer, to avoid the responsible individuals.

In South Australia volunteers may be referred to mediation services if they are unable to resolve conflict at the organisation level.

The numbers of enquiries and complaints made to volunteer support services, mediation services and statutory authorities is not gathered for comparative purposes. This means those bodies that do capture information measure disputes using different formula over different time periods. Concentrating on conflict and disputes (not workplace accidents) South Australian volunteer support services, two mediation services, SafeWork SA, Ombudsman SA, and the Equal Opportunity Commission resulted in 187 enquiries and complaints since 2015⁴. For comparative purposes, even though the client groups are not the same, the Office of the Small Business Commissioner SA (OSBC), which aims to 'ensure a fair and competitive operating environment for SA small businesses' (2020, p. 8) dealt with 3,878 enquiries - an increase of 14% in the 2019/20 financial year. This included 338 formal cases of which 180 were successfully resolved. At first glance it would therefore appear that only 187 enquiries and complaints by volunteers and their organisations is indicative of very few problems, especially as there are more than 900,000 volunteers in South Australia. However, it is just as likely to indicate that there is a gap in our collective knowledge with volunteers and their organisations not knowing how to prevent problems and conflict occurring, how to handle a situation, where to enquire for help, or how to make a complaint. In the case of volunteers, it would also be important to find out how many leave due to a conflict and whether they ever intend to volunteer again.

From the volunteer perspective, it did not appear in the South Australian *Creating a safe and positive volunteering experience* survey that they were likely to have only one issue that caused the feelings of unhappiness. At times volunteers mentioned a number of issues and instances where problems were not resolved causing an escalation:

Issues are not solved. They accumulate.

Not resolved, simply had to move on for the greater good. Lack of respect. Influenced my own change.

Seriously thinking about leaving next year if no improvement in management

⁴ Note: Not all organisations were able to provide information from 2015.

The Australian experience

Internal mechanisms for handling complaints and grievances

Nationally, the existence of grievance procedures for managing conflict and disputes was highlighted in surveys of volunteer issues (VA, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011). Organisations and volunteers were invited to take part in the surveys and, it must be noted that the majority of organisations responding did have paid staff and were situated within the community services sector. In these surveys, South Australian volunteers and organisations took part and made up to 17% of respondents.

Regarding conflict management, Table 1 indicates whether volunteers knew that grievance procedures were available. Between the six surveys awareness of grievance procedures remained fairly similar. Those who were aware that their organisation did or did not have a complaints procedure and those who did not know were similar. It is noticeable that the results, in percentage terms, changed very little over time.

| Volunteer management – use of volunteer management processes by organisations: volunteer responses <i>Grievance procedures in place</i> | | | | |
|---|---|------|------|------------|
| Year | Number of responses by volunteers | Yes | No | Don't know |
| | | % | % | % |
| 2006 | 404 | 61 | 12 | 27 |
| 2007 | 2184 | 65 | 17 | 18 |
| 2008 | 1591 | 69 | 11 | 20 |
| 2009 | 1986 | 68.2 | 10.3 | 21.6 |
| 2010 | 991 | 69 | 14.2 | 16.8 |
| 2011 | 1070 | 70.1 | 29.9 | |

Table 1: Volunteer responses on the existence and use of grievance procedures, Volunteering Australia 2006-2011

In 2016 Volunteering Australia published a report, *State of Volunteering in Australia* (VA 2016). This asked organisations whether they included grievance procedures in their volunteer management practices. Of the 500 organisational responses to this question, 78% were affirmative while 22% replied in the negative.

The data from the national surveys is now 10 years old, but, considered with the more recent 2016 national analysis it could be argued that there is a consistency in the results. That is, complaint processes are fairly common among responding volunteer involving organisations. However, there is a consistent number of groups where grievance procedures do not exist, or the organisation's volunteers are unclear about their existence. promotion of training and resources. The percentage may be small, but it indicates that there is a vulnerable group of volunteers totally unaware of whether they can seek help from their organisation if conflict arises. As a last resort volunteers can leave. They can find another organisation, change the type of volunteering to do, or stop volunteering altogether. Regardless of future engagement, a volunteer can be left feeling vulnerable, hurt and confused (Locke 2013).

In comparison, the South Australian *Creating a safe and positive volunteering experience* surveys found evidence of organisations with grievance procedures as part of their complaint processes. Of the 60 respondents to the organisation survey, 44 answered

questions on the grievance or complaints processes they had in place. Of this latter group 39 (89%) confirmed the use of grievance procedures as part of their internal dispute processes. Examples include:

*Member Protection Policy "nipped in the bud" in the first instance before it festers
Reporting is regular. Supervision is a requirement. An oversight council responds to complaints/ incidents.*

Referencing volunteer agreement, and code of conduct, volunteer is spoken with by Volunteer Coordinator and representative from outreach partner depending on severity of the behaviour, volunteer is encouraged to reflect on behaviour, and if further support is needed in understanding their obligations under the agreement or code of conduct, then support/further training is arranged. In rare instances, volunteers have been dismissed. In all of this process volunteers are encouraged to utilise workplace EAP that they have access to, and option of volunteer representative being present for any discussions. In rare instances where volunteer has been dismissed, they have been encouraged to access EAP and also referred to Volunteering SA/NT to look for more suitable volunteer placements that match their interest and values.

While organisations may never have to resort to such procedures their existence is an indication that conflict in volunteer involving organisations and associations does occur and organisations are familiar with need to implement conflict resolution strategies. To support organisations, clubs and groups, a range of help is available. This consists of fact sheets, training, websites, and mediation, as well as regulation and legislation. It is important to provide support and resources to volunteers so they can do their work. As seen by volunteer comments made in the Survey, to knowingly allow a situation to continue where volunteers are vulnerable to poor or unjust treatment in organisations, associations groups and clubs, runs the risk of:

- cutting off an important avenue of community expression
- causing mistrust of volunteer involving organisations, associations and groups
- the loss of skill, experience, and creativity.

Questions were asked in the Survey to gauge how organisations resolved issues. Of the 27 useable responses, two internal processes, 'Internal dispute resolution process' and 'Internal procedure – volunteer performance' were the most commonly employed. These internal processes were supplemented by a range of external agencies and practices which formed part of the organisation's overall dispute resolution practice. Regardless of these efforts 13 organisations stated that a total of 42 volunteers left the organisation, group or club. This indicates that leaving the organisation is a fairly common method used by volunteers to resolve disputes.

External supports

Across Australia no state or territory offers the services of a volunteer advocate. Rather volunteers can approach SafeWork in their respective states or territories, the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman. In South Australia, the Ombudsman SA investigates complaints about South Australian government and local

government agencies and is open to volunteers to make complaints. These services are excellent but were not set up to specifically support the needs and problems of volunteers.

Support services for volunteers are available and include networks set up to support the management, promotion and advocacy of volunteering. The second set of external organisational supports is comprised of a framework that can be consulted to prevent or manage issues leading to conflict.

Networks

In South Australia there is a vibrant web of networks that enable a positive contribution to volunteering. Networks provide a structure and place for the sharing of ideas, highlighting areas that need improvement and provide insight to successful outcomes. Specific networks aligned to the Volunteering Strategy are the:

- Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network,
- Local Government Volunteer Managers Network,
- Metro and Regional Volunteer Managers Networks
- Business SA Networks.

Such networks attract different groups and support the work of volunteers and people engaged in their management. They provide an informal avenue for learning and training. Networks provide an opportunity to share and learn across sectoral boundaries. Besides opportunities provided at conferences, networks can provide the only opportunity clubs, groups and organisations have to learn about volunteering in other environments.

Framework for managing volunteers

Australia has a national definition of volunteering that has evolved over time and in recognition to the environment in which it occurs. Volunteering Australia, the national peak body for volunteering, has long promoted volunteering as an activity of 'enduring social, cultural and economic value' (Volunteering Australia, 2009).

Volunteer support services affiliated with Volunteering Australia continue to promote the inclusion of grievance policies and procedures in the management of volunteers. For example, The Volunteer Centre of NSW, 1996, recommended that conflict and grievance procedures be comparable to policies developed for paid workers (The Volunteer Centre for NSW 1996). The National Volunteer Standards for Involving Volunteers, third edition, was designed to support volunteer programs by recommending which standards to develop and implement (Volunteering Australia 2015). Standard 6 on workplace safety and wellbeing calls for the development of grievance procedures so that such problems are 'managed consistently, transparently, equitably and in line with the principles of natural justice' (p.15). Volunteering support services at a state/territory level have been authorised by Volunteering Australia to deliver training and resources for the implementation of services. Users can purchase a guide and workbook as well as subscribe to a more costly online self-assessment tool (Volunteering Australia n.d.). For small organisations, groups of clubs with few resources such costs may exclude their ability to use these resources. The Volunteering Resource Hub, an initiative of Volunteering Australia and funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services is an online service providing freely available resources that provide evidence on best practice

in volunteer management. For instance, guides on handling incidents or complaints cover work health and safety, dealing with conflict, a template on managing a grievance procedure, how to conduct difficult conversations, and managing under performance (Volunteering Australia 2021).

At the State and Territory level, a toolkit to resolve conflict was launched in 2016 by the NSW Minister for Volunteers (NSW Volunteering, 2016). This web-based resource discusses how to prevent, manage and resolve conflict. Prior to this, and concerned that the cost of the guide, workbook and self-assessment tool for the National Standards for Involving Volunteers was prohibitive for very small groups and clubs involving volunteers, the NSW Government released a Statement of Principles for Recognition of Volunteers in 2013 (Randle 2015). Principle 7 states:

This organisation provides all our people with the opportunity to resolve disputes with respect and dignity. (2015, p1)

A review in 2015 found that the Statement of Principles in 2015 had been well received with many organisations agreeing to abide by the principles. A major problem with uptake throughout NSW appeared to be lack of awareness of their existence.

In the UK, the Volunteer Rights Inquiry considered the introduction of a Volunteer Advocate and legislation, however this was not included as part of the final recommendations. The recommendations instead concentrated on encouraging organisations to strengthen volunteer management. The inquiry also identified the need to review progress of the recommendations at the end of two years but momentum has been lost as has the Call to Action progress group who were tasked with keeping this issue live. However, it is important to gather evidence and focus on volunteering in the different sectors involving volunteers before considering the introduction of legislative change. Particularly as in the experience of the UK Inquiry one of the complaints in the Survey from both volunteers and organisations concerned the increase of regulations and red tape:

Don't expect more regulations. Keep compliance requirements simple and efficient. Eg clearances to work with children, vulnerable groups, disabled etc to come back within a week, not months later. You lose good potential volunteers by the delays in the process and the excessive duplications across applications.

There was nothing I could do to reduce the bureaucratic red tape.

External supports for the prevention and early resolution of disputes

There are a number of resources available for good volunteer management practice. Many of these resources offer free downloads, newsletters, and training. A sample of the resources available include:

- Volunteering SA&NT
Managing volunteers www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au/volunteer-involving-organisations/managing-volunteers
- Volunteering Australia

Handling Incidents or Complaints, Resource Hub,
<https://volunteeringhub.org.au/category/handling-incident-or-complaints/>

- Justice Connect – Not-for-profit law
Disputes and conflict <https://www.nfplaw.org.au/disputes>
- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
Dealing with internal disputes www.acnc.gov.au/raise-concern/concerns-about-charities/dealing-internal-disputes
What the ACNC can investigate <https://www.acnc.gov.au/raise-concern/concerns-about-charities/what-acnc-can-investigate>
- SA.GOV.AU
Managing volunteers www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/community-organisations/managing-a-community-organisation/managing-volunteers
- Play by the Rules www.playbytherules.net.au
- Conflict Resolution toolkit (NSW www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/resources/conflict-resolution-toolkit)
- Fair Enough – Everyone in sport deserves respect
www.sasi.sa.gov.au/news?a=3849

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

In the form of mediation, conciliation and arbitration, ADR allows for resolution of disputes without resort to the courts and legal action. When conflict does occur and resists internal resolution, external mediation services are available and funded by the South Australian government. A sample of government and statutory services available are:

- Ombudsman SA. The Ombudsman SA investigates complaints about South Australian government and local government agencies. It conducts freedom of information reviews. Volunteers can lodge a complaint to this service. The Ombudsman can also receive information about state and local government activities confidentially under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.
- Fairwork Ombudsman. The Fairwork Ombudsman aims to resolve workplace matters early and offers free tools and resources to achieve this. This includes online learning courses, fact sheets, best practice guides and templates. It is not an advocacy body but established to receive and investigate workplace disputes and complaints.
- Office of the Small Business Commissioner (OSBC) ensures a fair and competitive operating environment for South Australian small businesses. The OSBC offers a three-pronged approach to settling disputes – initial assistance (try to resolve issues early at this enquiry stage), pre-mediation (formal case engaging with all parties again trying to resolve the issues) and external mediation (formal mediation service). During 2018-2019 OSBC received 3,383 enquiries and handled 262

formal cases. The OSBC dispute resolution service is an alternative to legal proceedings. Unlike a court or tribunal, OSBC does not have the powers to compel anyone to negotiate or cooperate and so cannot provide assistance if any party refuses to participate.

- Equal Opportunity Commission (South Australia) (EOC). Equal opportunity law applies to both paid workers, volunteers, apprentices and trainees as well as work experience participants. The EOC will attempt to resolve complaints that allege a person has acted in contravention of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984. A free service, complaints are dealt with through conciliation. Alternatively, the Commissioner may refer a complaint to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT).
- Consumer and Business Services (South Australia) (CBS). The CBS oversees the Associated Incorporations Act 1985. If a complaint is made the CBS may make initial inquiries for more information, conduct a formal investigation under the Act, or take no further action. The South Australian Associations Incorporation Act 1985 does not include procedures to settle disputes in the Rules for Incorporated Associations. In comparison in Victoria, if an association's rules do not include a grievance procedure, it will automatically revert to the grievance procedure set out in the 'model rules' for incorporation.

Other mediation agencies in South Australia were also consulted in the process of this review:

- InDispute Employment Advocacy Services (South Australia) (IDEAS). Set up to provide an effective, low-cost service for employees and volunteers in dispute with their employers, IDEAS aim to reach a resolution as quickly as possible before it escalates. Common concerns relate to workplace health and safety, unfair treatment or favouritism, sexual harassment, and bullying.
- Uniting Communities Mediation Services believe that mediation can reduce conflict and promote positive relationships. The aim of mediation is to find solutions acceptable to all parties. The most common disputes are neighbourhood disputes, family and intergenerational feuds and multi-party disputes. At times these involve whole communities or small not-for-profit organisations or special interest groups.

Engaging a mediation service early when internal mechanisms are failing can help all parties reach an agreement acceptable to all. In South Australia mediation is not included in model constitution rules. This inclusion would, at a minimum, provide direction to individuals and groups with little knowledge of external alternative dispute options.

Unfortunately, if an agreement is not honoured the only alternative is to begin legal proceedings. If this occurs, costs will be made against the person or party who did not enforce the agreement agreed to by both parties. All parties engaged in any dispute resolution process need to be aware of this probability if solutions are not reached at earlier stages.

Nip it in the bud!
Mediate

All mediation services interviewed consistently recommended the need to address problems quickly, before they escalate and turn into a dispute which can cause stress and expense if legal action is commenced, proceedings are drawn out and end up in court. It was argued

that the ombudsman model is based on the identification, investigation and resolution of complaints – not necessarily on advocacy.

Interviewees strongly recommended that binding decision processes should not be introduced. Their experience argued that preventing conflict before it starts and grows is best served by the development of effective internal processes and access to mediation. Instituting binding decisions and processes for volunteers can be detrimental in terms of:

- the time it takes,
- the costs involved,
- the legal fees and court costs, and,
- the negative stress experienced by all participants.

While alternative dispute resolution services exist in South Australia, Mex (2019) found they were not well known or promoted. This lack of awareness was reinforced by comments in the current Survey:

[need] Access to information that is easily understood.

[need] Better information provided to non-profit registered incorporated community groups on the rights and responsibilities of them.

In response to similar issues related to conflict that affect volunteers, the NSW Department of Communities and Justice provides general information on managing problems. For problems requiring more assistance, people are referred to Voluntas (<https://www.volunteering.com.au/voluntas/>). This project, developed in partnership with The Centre for Volunteering NSW, is an advocacy project specific to the needs of volunteers and organisations involving volunteers. The aim is to have constructive conversations with the help of accredited mediators to maintain dignity, respect and fairness. Made up of a coalition of like-minded people including mediation professionals and members of volunteer and not-for-profit organisations, Voluntas provides quality dispute management services to volunteers and their organisation that is free of cost.

Greater knowledge and use of mediation services and the introduction of a model such as Voluntas could be of value in South Australia as the South Australian *Creating a safe and positive volunteering experience* survey indicated that even though volunteers were aware of external mediation and services, they were more likely to leave the organisation if the internal dispute resolution was unsatisfactory. For instance, in one group, the mediation was unsuccessful because all parties would not accept the need or process of mediation:

members of the group chose to be selective on who should be a part of the group. I chose to take the mediation approach. Then I was targeted. Stressful and very disappointing.

Volunteer respondents to the Survey were asked about their experiences in resolving disputes and conflict amongst volunteers.

I felt really upset and unsupported. I rang Volunteers SA and they gave some advice, but I wish there was someone I could go to, to talk to the organisation and help stop the person who was being horrible to me.

From the volunteer perspective, it was less likely to find comments about alternative dispute resolution or legal action to resolve the conflict. Three volunteers mentioned that legal action had either been taken or was being considered:

Continued lobbying, but not everything resolved, will more than likely go to court.

Binding decisions

The second part of the problem statement seeks to identify and suggest mechanisms that would result in a binding decision when other options were not available or had been exhausted.

Currently, when volunteer disputes occur there are mechanisms available which aim to prevent or encourage early intervention. These mechanisms include standards and guides regarding behaviour and management (e.g. Volunteering Australia 2001; Not-for-profit Law 2020). There are also mediation services. The surveys and interviews undertaken for this report did not identify any pattern or numbers of disputes that might lead to the need for a binding decision to be made at present. In the survey, only one respondent stated that the dispute would be going to court while interviewees relayed experiences that were managed internally or through mediation. Indeed, one interviewee feared that an authority with the power to make binding decisions might inadvertently become punitive. Other interviewees considered mediation and alternative resolution processes as options to resolve disputes that do not cause high financial or emotional/mental costs and are able to maintain relationships.

Additional considerations in relation to the role of a Volunteer Advocate (or similar body) in having the power to make binding decisions where all parties must accept the determination might include:

1. Independent bodies similar to an ombudsman office are often connected to particular industries and regulators. This would not be the case for volunteers as volunteers are not regulated as an industry or special interest area. There is not an industry of volunteering.
2. Another issue concerns parameters of such a service, for example, definitions about formal and informal volunteers. For instance, without the connection to an incorporated body, would informal volunteers also benefit from a volunteer advocate or would it be relevant only to formal volunteers working for incorporated organisations, charities and government agencies?
3. Existing offices such as an ombudsman service do not necessarily work with people having interpersonal problems and bullying which were identified in the *Creating a safe and positive volunteering experience* survey and interviews as common problems presenting for mediation. Further, issues of bullying are addressed currently by both the Human Rights Commission and Fairwork Australia. This gives rise to questions about duplication and potential confusion.

4. In Australia, statutory and ombudsman bodies may not necessarily have the authority to make binding decisions on all parties in a dispute. For example, the Tolling Customer Ombudsman (TCO) and the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) decisions are only binding on operators and firms, not the consumers (TOC n.d.; AFCA 2018; Neave 2007). In such instances, people making complaints can choose to take the dispute to court.
5. Ombudsman offices do not play an advocacy role. They deal with receiving and dealing with complaints.

Suggestions by volunteers and organisations to improve volunteering in South Australia

In the *Creating a safe and positive volunteering experience* surveys carried out for this research, both volunteers and organisations, groups and clubs made suggestions to improve the volunteering experience. Such insights are worth considering in moving forward:

Final comments and suggestions from volunteers:

In the organisation I volunteer in a better range of opportunities could benefit from identifying and using the individual skills of volunteers would enhance both the org, and the volunteer

All good Volunteer organisations should be moving to digitise their work schedules... So we can access our Roster from home and be prepared 1 -2 weeks in advance, and 'book' our work tasks per day and time

Perhaps older established organisations could be asked to collaborate more with new & emerging charities

Volunteer management needs to be performed by people experienced and interested in HR management. It's not a job to (for example) train inexperienced people.

Make volunteering more appealing for younger members of the community.

Have a volunteer advocate

Final comments and suggestions from organisations, groups and clubs:

Volunteers don't need more legal paperwork to sort through - very small communities and volunteer burn out big issue, very few volunteers in next generation

Appointing a Volunteer Coordinator. Essential role to help the club identify resources within membership &/or community. Continue to break-down jobs into smaller roles so that it alleviates volunteer fatigue

Keep compliance requirements simple and efficient. Eg clearances to work with children, vulnerable groups, disabled etc to come back within a week, not months later. You lose good potential volunteers by the delays in the process and the excessive duplications across applications.

... our community clubs are struggling with their understanding with volunteer management. I see so many people scared off from volunteering due to the red

tape clubs are imposing (due to misinformation and misdirection ie working with children checks etc.....)

doing the survey made me realise we can do better with our volunteers' policies around OH&S, induction. I have done this in our football club. Volunteer insurance is something I would like to know more about

greater support in gathering volunteers regularly for training, review and networking

Final comments and suggestions from committee and board members:

[Need] guidance by older members of committee (other committees) on decision making.

I would like there to be someone independent I can go to help, who will take the time to talk to me and then make the bad behaviour with the other person stop, once and for all. The organisation isn't doing anything much and, like paid workers, there should be someone I can go to with the power to intervene and stop bad behaviour by other volunteers.

Please include a clear position statement on the role of volunteers who have a mandatory requirement to meet their Jobseeker obligations. This impacts in particular on older Australians who cannot find employment, but still have a lot to offer through volunteering, bringing skills and knowledge that can contribute to many organisations. Work needs to be done on how to avoid humiliation, and having a clear mandated statement on volunteering and Jobseeker would help us feel more valued, less vulnerable, and more willing to share our skills and abilities through volunteering.

Conclusions

This review was undertaken to guide the Working Group in its desire:

To help South Australian volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations prevent and mediate disputes. Where disputes fail to be resolved or other options are not available, a new mechanism that could have the power to make a binding decision will be explored.

It is a statement which accepts the existence of conflict in the volunteering experience. It was found that information, support and services did exist to assist the resolution of conflict but the range of mechanisms were broadly unknown or they needed greater development and expansion. This is in spite of the efforts to promote and communicate the mechanisms available.

Further, while anecdotal stories of conflict abounded and some bodies attempted to capture the range and depth of problems it was striking that little data about disputes and how it was resolved appears to be captured over a period of time. This meant that the data available could not be compared or contrasted across organisations or sectors.

Among the experts interviewed there was a strong recommendation to shift the focus of attention preventing problems beginning. And once they occur to resolve issues before they escalate. Greater communication about the resources available and research on identifying gaps were seen as action that would help prevent and manage problems in a timely fashion and with respect to all parties.

Evidence on the need for a new power that could make binding decisions was not found. Rather, it appeared that the process to institute a binding decision was not related to advocacy but to investigating a problem and then making a decision which may only benefit one of the parties involved. The process of advocacy was seen to more likely involve open communication respectfully encouraged, a working together to solve problems and a realisation of a solution acceptable to all.

In light of the experience in the UK, the lack of awareness of the current resources or where to go to if trouble occurs points to the need to strengthen existing supports and mechanisms. Volunteering peak bodies are well situated to provide a nexus for information on resources and services to resolve conflict.

Recommendations for action

Based on the findings and conclusions of the literature review, interviews, submissions and the *Creating a safe and positive volunteering experience* surveys for individuals and organisations the following recommendations are suggested as a baseline for a clear understanding of volunteer disputes and processes necessary for prevention, management and resolution.

There exist internal and external mechanisms and services available to help resolve disputes involving volunteers. These include mediation services, Ombudsman SA and the Office of Consumer and Business Services whose roles in assisting volunteers and volunteer involving organisation could be amplified.

1. Data Collection

Without evidence we operate in a vacuum. Currently in South Australia there is no specific collection of disputes and conflict that involves volunteers across sectors. Several bodies do collect information, but it is not comparable due to different measurement tools.

To understand conflict and how it affects volunteers and volunteering, there needs to be a consistent, comparable mechanism that follows a dispute from the beginning through to resolution. Such information is vital to a baseline for the development of resources, knowledge of existing gaps and the overall impact of disputes on volunteering and volunteers. This would provide an understanding of what is actually happening and help identify recurrent themes. It is only with greater knowledge will it be clear if a legislative response is required.

- 1.1 Explore the merits of developing a centralised database to capture the number of disputes and conflicts involving volunteers, establishing a baseline against which to measure activity over time.

2. Tools and resources

At present a number of resources exist. These are often available at little or no cost to the organisation or volunteer. It would be helpful to audit these resources to identify:

- how many there are
- how relevant they remain
- how accessible they are
- gaps and areas needing further development.

Similarly, training is also available, from specific training designed by industry bodies for their clubs, organisations and associations to general training on the rudiments of volunteering. Comments made in the Surveys and Mex (2019) research, for example, point to a lack of knowledge about what exists, it's relevance and where it can be found.

It can be difficult to know what resources are available across the volunteer involving sector. Cost is also an issue for volunteers and groups and organisations with few resources or available funds.

2.1 Maintain a catalogue of existing resources related to preventing and resolving volunteer disputes.

3. Awareness raising and promotion

As Mex (2019) found, many groups and associations are unaware what help was available or where they could seek support when conflict emerged. However, resources and services do exist but need ongoing promotion. For instance, the turnover of committee members in associations and clubs, loss of paid managers of volunteers and long serving volunteers results in a loss of knowledge and skill. The knowledge of available supports may also be lost. Further, not every person is familiar or has access to online services and social media channels. There is a need to use a variety of communication channels to raise awareness of the problems caused by conflict and available avenues of support. Promotion needs to be simple, clear, repetitive and accessible.

3.1 Develop a communications strategy to promote existing resources and services for preventing and resolving volunteer disputes.

4. Build strong networks

Currently there are a number of bodies, governments and institutions supporting volunteers, board and committee members, and organisations, for example:

- Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network,
- Local Government Volunteer Managers Network, and
- Metro and Regional Volunteer Managers Network.

However, there is little public awareness or evidence of ongoing dialogue between the various volunteer support services, industry peaks, mediation services, and statutory authorities across sectors. Thus, volunteering can be segmented along industry or sector lines. This segmentation may hinder the development of an overall picture of the 'what,

where, why and who' of conflict regarding volunteers. It may also delay the identification of emerging trends.

4.1 Continuation of quarterly network meetings across sectors to encourage good practice in volunteer management.

Current networks are:

- Public Sector Volunteer Policy Network.
- Local Government Volunteer Managers Network.
- Metro and Regional Volunteer Managers Networks.
- Business SA Networks.

Other networks may also be identified and engaged as appropriate over time.

5. External support

Survey respondents commonly used internal policies and procedures for managing and resolving conflict. However, if unresolved, volunteers will leave if the dispute process is ineffective. There are mediation services available to South Australians but the main focus of these services is not volunteers and the organisations involving volunteers. There is now the opportunity to develop such a service and build expertise on supporting volunteers and their organisations using mediation.

In addition, the Ombudsman SA has existing powers to investigate complaints about South Australian government and local government agencies and is open to volunteers to make complaints.

5.1 Explore provision of early intervention options for volunteers and organisations to resolve disputes i.e. referring to existing external supports, such as Alternative Dispute Resolution services.

5.2 Explore expanding the current powers of Ombudsman SA to include community volunteers, in addition to their current dispute resolution responsibilities for local and State government volunteers

5.3 Advocate for the addition of a dispute resolution process to be included in the model rules for incorporated associations in South Australia. The process should specify that mediation be chosen as the first external option to resolving disputes. To raise awareness of the new process, training and education should be provided.

6. Leadership

The experience in the UK should be considered when moving forward with Volunteering Advocacy in South Australia. The final recommendations of their Volunteer Rights Inquiry responded to concerns about additional red tape and this being a barrier to involving new volunteers. There was an assumption that the relevant existing bodies, working together, were enough to drive the recommendations. After 10 years the momentum was lost (Jackson 2020). Learning from this shows the importance of having one body take the lead role. This does not mean that one organisation be the repository of all information,

research and expertise on resolving volunteer disputes. Rather it means that such leadership would be a conduit for all stakeholders and thus build expertise and authority across all sectors on preventing, managing and resolving disputes that involve volunteers and their organisations.

It is important that such leadership be provided by the peak body on volunteering in South Australia. Volunteering SA&NT has built expertise and knowledge on volunteering over decades. They have an established and recognised understanding of their role in the development of volunteering. Further, as the state peak body, volunteering is their business and they are widely accepted for their expertise.

6.1 Encourage peak, umbrella bodies and government agencies to highlight the options available to volunteers and organisations when internal processes and mediation are unsuccessful.

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