Mutual Obligation Policy

Guidelines for Volunteer Managers in Local Government

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Contents

Executive Summary

The "Mutual Obligation Policy: Implications for Local Government Volunteer Managers Guidelines" (the Guidelines) has been prepared as part of the broader South Australian State Volunteering Strategy. Members of the Local Government Volunteer Managers Network and Local Government Human Resources Network were invited to respond to a questionnaire focussing on current practice and experiences of managing "volunteers" undertaking volunteering as part of Work for the Dole and mutual obligation requirements.

The Guidelines attempt to clearly explain mutual obligation and work for the dole policies. These policies were developed in response to the expanding welfare system and the belief that recipients of welfare support should reciprocate in some way, such as volunteering and working for the dole. Mutual Obligation (MO) policy is a Commonwealth level initiative affecting local government because like many other volunteers, people undertaking volunteering as their mutual obligation contribution often approach their local council for volunteering placements. On the other hand, Work for the Dole (WFTD) participants can only be placed (by job search agencies) in not-for-profit or government organisations, including local government. The number of MO volunteers may increase with changing requirements for welfare support.

The contradiction of terms between volunteering (without expecting gain or financial reward) and mutual obligation (both sides fulfilling their side of a bargain) is somewhat awkward, especially for people obliged to undertake WFTD as their form of MO. WFTD is now specifically excluded from the new national definition of volunteering (www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy-and-best-practise/definition-of-volunteering/; also see p. 4. www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Definition-of-Volunteering-27-July-20151.pdf). Whether or not volunteering as a MO activity should be included in the definition is less clear because although such volunteering is mandated, the participant has a choice of whether or not to volunteer (they can choose to undertake one of the other available activities instead) and they have a choice about where they volunteer and what type of volunteering they undertake.

The survey found that most volunteer managers had been in their roles for fewer than five years and one third had not undertaken any training or professional development in volunteer management. This was often due to cost or lack of access. Nearly two thirds of respondents reported that they have no WFTD participants amongst their volunteers. About half of respondents indicated that at the time of the survey, MO participants formed less than 40% of their volunteers, with most forming less than 20% of volunteers. The Councils that had 41-60% of their volunteers as MO participants were located in rural areas.

Many respondents had difficulty answering some of the questions in the survey because they did not know which of their volunteers were MO participants, as these individuals are not required to disclose this information. Most respondents felt that MO volunteers were no different from other volunteers, but that WFTD participants had different characteristics. One key difference unrelated to the individuals themselves was the required timeframe of involvement. Placements were often for less than six months, which is at odds with volunteer managers' needs for long term, stable volunteers. The rate of turnover imposes additional training costs on the relevant local council.

Based on their experiences, respondents had a range of ideas to help WFTD participants in local Councils. These include:

- Helping them change their work attitudes and values so that they could seize the opportunity offered by doing WFTD in local Councils;

- Stronger external supervision;

- Longer time frames to ensure stability of workforce;

- Supportive case workers;

- Honesty about conditions;

- That all parties understanding rights, responsibilities and desired outcomes

- Better Federal/State government support;

- Reduced threat of breaching;

- Greater access to real skills training;

- Better transport options;

- Participants not having to physically report to their providers during the projects (provider should be following up with Project Manager);

- Recognising that the tasks available in Councils may not necessarily match the needs of WFTD participants;

- Accounting for the more demanding role and required resources of WFTD participants compared with other staff, MO volunteers and volunteers in general;

- Better connections with the broader workforce rather than being isolated or in a team of other WFTD people; and

Management of MO participants involved in volunteering programs was generally positive, but improvements include:

- Increasing capacity to provide the weekly hours required;

- Respect, acceptance of and understanding by paid staff;

- Flexibility around the number of hours they are required to do;

- Better government support to reduce the threat of breaching;

- Being ready to "hit the ground running" with references and police clearances;

- Greater respect from the job service agencies;

- Identifying/keeping records of MO volunteers to enable monitoring and comparisons of their volunteering experiences and outcomes; and

- Surveying other volunteers to gauge their experiences of working with MO volunteers.

A central authority (not job service agencies) should disseminate clear information on current MO and WFTD requirements and promptly circulate details of policy changes. Volunteer managers have reported that dissemination to date from representatives of the Department of Social Services has been vague and inconsistent.

1. Background to the Development of the Project

The "Mutual Obligation Policy: Implications for Local Government Volunteer Managers Guidelines" (the Guidelines) has been prepared as part of the broader South Australian State Volunteering Strategy. The Strategy consists of four project or working groups with a range of tasks (see www.savolunteeringstrategy.org.au/WorkingGroups). As part of Working Group 4's responsibility to identify proactive ways for volunteering management and policy to adapt through continuous improvement, funding for research and development was applied for, and granted from the Local Government Association (LGA) of SA in 2015. The LGA of SA also contributes to the State Volunteering Strategy by recognising volunteering as a priority area (see www.lga.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=2970&c=16513 and www.lga.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Volunteering%20Strategy%20Background.pdf).

After a survey of the literature and current state of play in regard to both WFTD and MO, the project was introduced to Local Government Volunteer Managers in February – March 2016. Members of the Local Government Volunteer Managers Network were invited to respond to a questionnaire focussing on current practice and experiences of managing "volunteers" undertaking volunteering as part of WFTD and MO requirements. They were also asked to nominate case study examples.

A summary report of the responses, "MO and WFTD Participants in Local Government Volunteering" was circulated to members of the LGVMN and other respondents in April 2016.

These Guidelines are the product of the survey, a review of the local, national and international literature on MO as well as examples and case studies of how MO (including WFTD) participants have performed in volunteering programs.

Research and feedback from Local Council staff in earlier stages of the project suggested the Guidelines needs to clearly explain MO and WFTD policies, and address the mismatch of these policies with the newly adopted definition of volunteering (www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy-and-best-practise/definition-of-volunteering).

The Guidelines will be a valuable tool for all those who have an interest in and responsibility for designing and implementing volunteering initiatives involving MO participants, especially Volunteer Managers. However, local council Elected Members and staff from a range of areas within local governments who engage volunteers should also find the document useful. These may include Planning and Development, Social Planning, Community Development, Library Services, Human Resources and Infrastructure and Traffic Management.

As Councils progressively recognise key strategies in managing these volunteers at the local level, a longer-term outcome from the project will be enhanced consistency in approaches to volunteer management throughout Local Government in South Australia.

2. Introduction
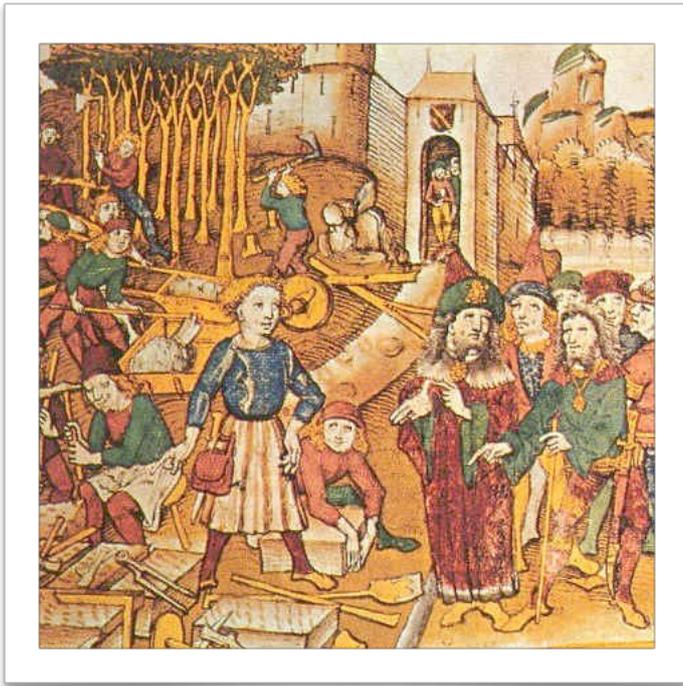
Figure 1. European feudal societies in the Middle Ages were based on mutual obligation between different social classes. The term "landlord" as we use it today comes from this system.

The concept of MO was first associated with the European feudal system. Members of upper classes (lords or barons) granted the use (but not ownership) of land and military protection to members of lower classes (peasants), in return for military allegiance, labour or a share (tax) or tithe of agricultural and other production. It was a social system requiring political and economic reciprocity between people (providing the parties were able to work) (Brown, nd).

Although the modern Australian welfare system was based on fair recompense for working men (the Harvester decision in 1907 was based on wages sufficient to support a man, his wife and three children), it was also concerned with citizens' rights, rather than their obligations (Yeatman, 2000).

Similarly, when the aged pension was introduced in 1908, entitlement to it was viewed as a right based on need (shorter life expectancy at the time meant that it was not a large nor long term expense) (Herscovitch and Stanton 2008). When the welfare system expanded over ensuing decades to include other groups such as the unemployed, widows, war veterans, people with disabilities, sole parents and carers, the idea that recipients of welfare support should reciprocate in some way was championed by both major parties who agreed that people who can work should do so (Macintyre, 1999). The spiralling costs of welfare support, alongside fears of long-term welfare dependency may also have had something to do with this shift in thinking (see Moss 2001).

In the 1990s, rights were replaced with obligation (Green 2002). Greater social and economic participation for welfare recipients who were able to work was encouraged under the banner of "Mutual Obligation" (Green, 2002). Who could argue with that?

What is an "Obligation"?
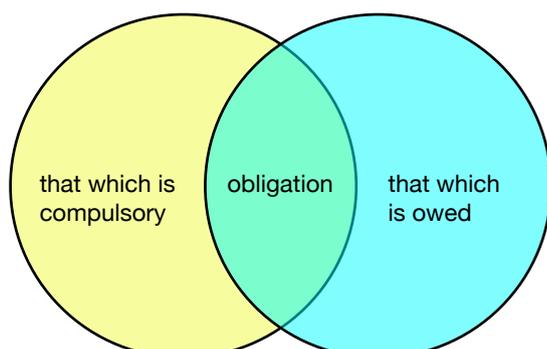
(Some policy analysts point to weaknesses and moral issues in MO policy and we discuss these further in Appendix 1.)

Of course, while not all welfare recipients could be expected to work, they could make other socially useful contributions. One of these is volunteering. The contradiction of terms between volunteering (without expecting gain or financial reward) and MO (both sides fulfilling their side of a bargain) is somewhat awkward, especially for people obliged to undertake WFTD as their form of MO. WFTD is now

specifically excluded from the new national definition of volunteering (www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy-and-best-practise/definition-of-volunteering/).

While MO policy is a Commonwealth level initiative, it affects local government because like many other volunteers, people undertaking volunteering as their MO contribution often approach their local council for volunteering placements. This is largely because they want to contribute to and in their own community and they find it easier and more practical to volunteer locally. Some may have few options, and are directed to local government by third party agencies (namely job active providers, Volunteer Resource Centres, State government volunteering offices or volunteering peak bodies).

Existing research on the characteristics of Australian volunteers shows an age profile with the 45-64 age group the largest, motivated by altruism, involved for considerable periods of time (sometimes decades), more likely to be retired and more likely to be born in Australia. In some areas, such as sports and education, volunteers are more likely to have school-aged children (Volunteering Australia 2012 http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/State-of-Volunteering-in-Australia-2012.pdf).

2.1 Research problem

The demographic characteristics and motivations of MO participants who volunteer may differ from "ordinary" volunteers. Systematic differences have implications for how they are managed. Warburton and Smith (2003) reported that compulsory volunteer programs failed to develop positive community attitudes and active social behaviours. Conversely, Levy (2014) found that many persons undertaking WFTD or other MO activities enjoyed their work and continued to contribute to their communities via volunteering even after finding paid work.

The number of MO volunteers may increase with changing requirements for welfare support. So how should volunteer managers in local government respond to a new "type" of volunteer and a likely increasing demand for volunteer places from this source? In this study, we explore current patterns and draw on real world examples to provide a set of Guidelines for best practice in volunteer management in local government.

2.2 Definitions of key concepts

As of August 2016, considerable confusion surrounds MO and WFTD. "Mutual Obligation" is an umbrella term that includes WFTD amongst a range of other activities, one of which is volunteering. Other activities or schemes include Green Corps, accredited study, part-time work, Army Reserves and language, literacy, and numeracy activities, under the Skills for Education and Employment

(SEE) Program (https://www.education.gov.au/skills-education-and-employment). We are focussing on volunteering and WFTD as MO contributions and refer to persons undertaking such volunteering as "MO participants"; those participating in WFTD are termed "Work for the Dole participants".

Under Social Security Law (http://guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law), people receiving income support payments must show that they are actively looking for work and participating in a range of MO activities that will help them into employment (unless they have been granted an exemption).

People receiving the Aged Pension do not have MO requirements. Nor do Disability Support pension recipients unless they have been assessed as being capable of part time work (see www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/medical-evidence-and-assessment).

If benefit recipients do not meet their MO requirements, their benefits may be reduced or stopped.

3. Mutual Obligation

3.1 Mutual Obligation

MO requirements (including WFTD) are generally determined by age, assessed work capacity and whether a person has primary responsibility for the care of a child.

Participants have either full-time or part-time MO requirements. Only Principal Carer Parents (PCP) once the youngest child in their care turns six years of age and participants with a Partial Capacity to Work (PCW) of 15 to 29 hours per week can have part time MO requirements.

Job seekers aged 18– 49 years with full time MO requirements undertake WFTD as their main activity. People aged 55 years or over can meet their MO requirements by doing at least 30 hours per fortnight of suitable paid work, self-employment, approved voluntary work, or a combination of these. They do not have to undertake WFTD. The requirements for persons aged 50-54 are unclear; this group was described by an NGO volunteer manager as "falling between the cracks".

Approved voluntary work has a significant vocational focus. Examples include library assistant or charity shop sales assistant. Inappropriate voluntary work would be, for example, collecting money on the street for a charity organisation, or walking dogs for an animal shelter (guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law/3/2/9/130).

3.2. Work for the Dole

WFTD participants are placed by WFTD Coordinators in activities where they can give back to the community and gain skills and experience that can help them find a job. Some WFTD participants may be involved in volunteer projects instead of formal WFTD positions. The number of hours required for WFTD is based on age. Persons aged under 30 years need to complete 25 hours per week for six months of each year. Persons aged 30-49 are required to complete 15 hours per week for six months of each year. People aged 50–55 can volunteer to do WFTD as their approved

activity for 15 hours per week for six months each year (http://www.employment.gov.au/work-dole-information-job-seekers, May 6, 2016).

Job seekers who have a partial capacity to work or who are principal carer parents need to participate for about half the number of hours in WFTD as full capacity job seekers.

Principal carers who meet certain conditions do not need to look for work or undertake WFTD. These conditions include being self employed and having ongoing paid work for at least 30 hours per fortnight with an income from employment more than the Federal Minimum Wage, or relevant Award Wage; or no available appropriate child care (see https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/mutual-obligation-requirements-and-exemptions-principal-carers for further details).

3.3. Volunteering

Volunteering Australia's new (2016) definition of volunteering is

"… time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."

This definition of volunteering specifically excludes mandated government programs, such as WFTD (see p. 4. www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/Definition-of-Volunteering-27-July-20151.pdf). Whether or not volunteering as a MO activity should be included is less clear because although it is mandated, the participant has a choice of whether or not to volunteer (they can choose to undertake one of the other available activities instead) and they have a choice about where they volunteer and what type of volunteering they undertake.

The decision to include WFTD participants in the survey was made on the basis that some individuals used WFTD as a pathway to volunteering (Levy, 2014); some participants are managed by volunteer managers; and in some Councils, some WFTD participants undertake the same or similar activities as volunteers.

4. Survey Findings

Local Government Volunteer Managers were emailed an invitation, an information sheet and the link to an online survey in February 2016 (see Appendix 2).

The total number of respondents was 54. The target sampling frame was membership of the Local Government Volunteer Managers Network (membership =55). Some members of the Local Government Human Resources Managers Network were also sent the survey (membership=130), while other staff in Council departments involving volunteers (such as Community Development or Library Services) may have been forwarded the survey from colleagues.

The total number of Councils in SA is 74. Note that some respondents may be from the same Council, while other Councils may not be represented at all if:

- they do not have a volunteer program and thus no volunteer manager (most likely to occur in rural areas); or

- the volunteer manager (or similar) in a Council did not respond to the survey.

4.1. Respondent Characteristics

4.1.1. Age and Sex
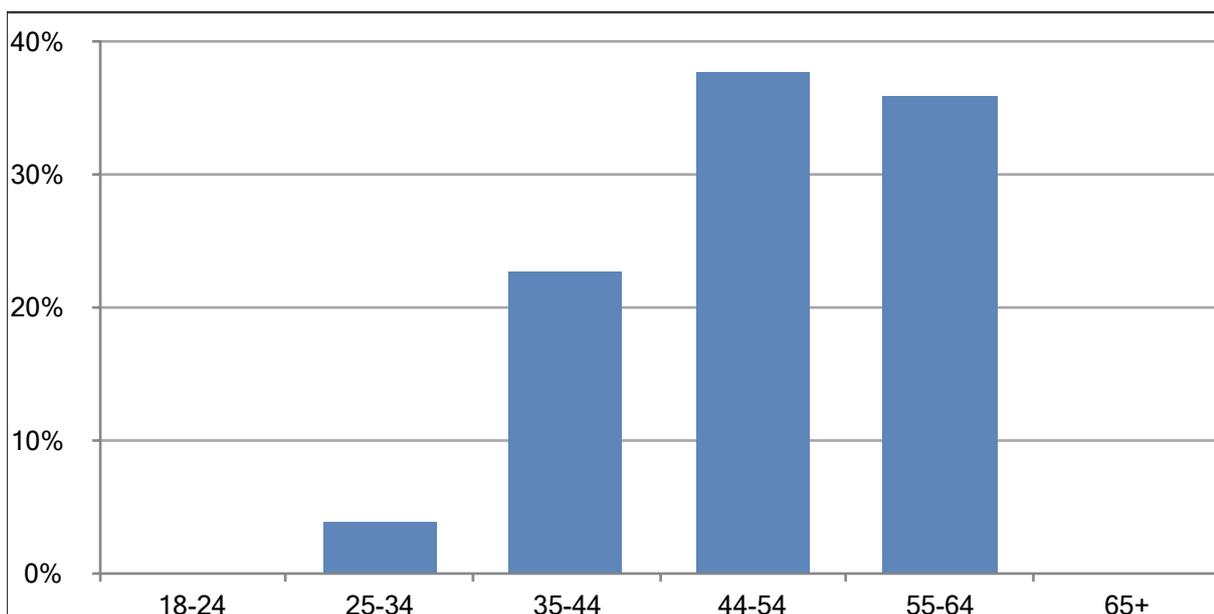
Figure 4.1. Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

Approximately 70% of respondents were aged 44 or more, with over a third aged over 55.

Most respondents are female (74%), although 4% (2 people) preferred not to identify their gender.

4.1.2. Location

Approximately half (52%) of respondents were located in the metropolitan area. The greater representation of metropolitan councils in relation to the 28% of all SA councils which are metropolitan reflects the distribution of councils with volunteering programs in South Australia. In turn this is a function of the distribution of the SA population.4.1.3. Socioeconomic Status of LGA
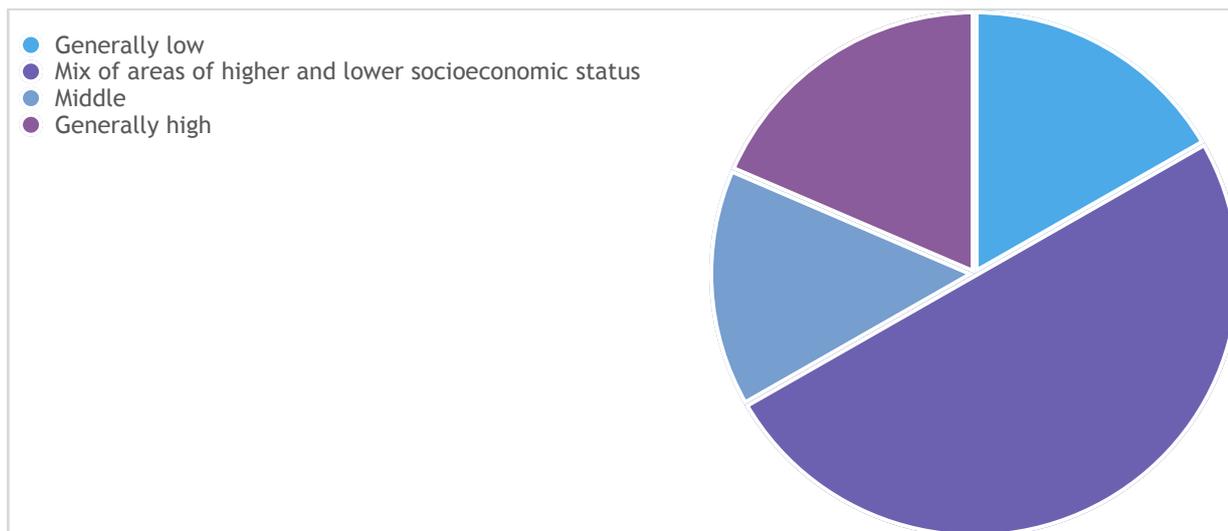
Figure 4.2 Socioeconomic Status of Respondents' Councils

The distribution of respondents' Councils' socioeconomic status in the sample reflects the distribution of socioeconomic status for all SA Councils according to SEIFA data (http://stat.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_SEIFA_LGA).

4.1.4. Position/Role

Approximately 60% of respondents were Volunteer Managers or similar (Table 4.3). Just over one quarter of respondents were categorised as "other", which includes positions such as community development or service, governance and library officers, a CEO, Deputy CEO, and unspecified team leaders and managers.

Table 4.3 Respondents' Position/Role

Position/role	N	%
Volunteer Manager, Coordinator or similar	32	59.3
Human Resources	5	9.3
Responsible for both volunteering and HR	2	3.7
Other	15	27.8
Total	54	100

4.1.5. Time in Current Position
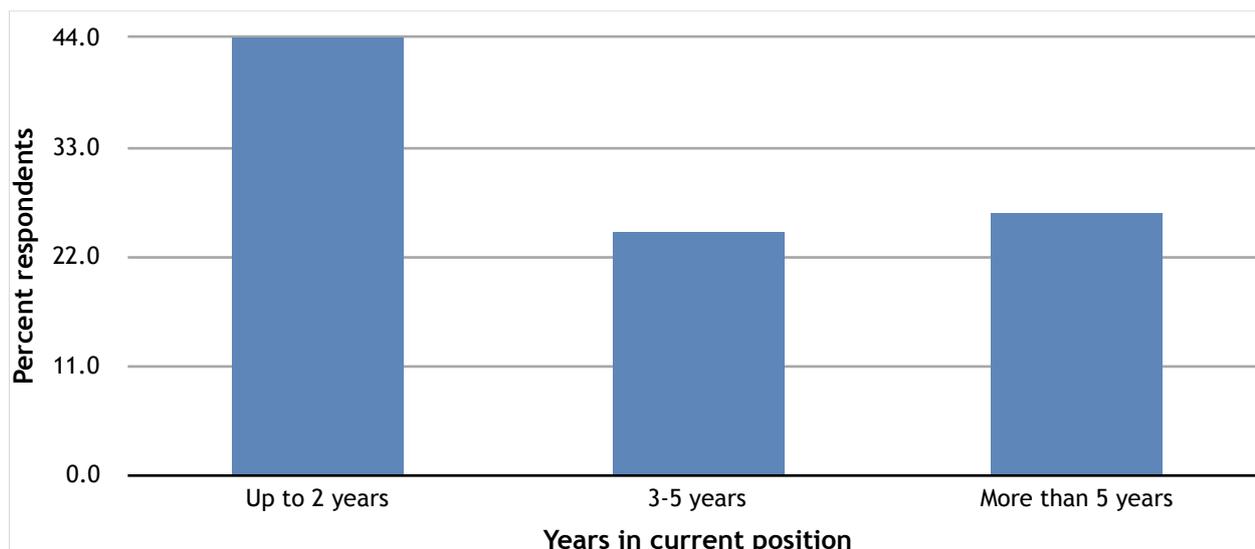
Figure 4.4 Time in Current Position

Nearly three quarters of respondents had been in their positions for fewer than five years (Figure 4.4).

4.1.6. Professional Development or Training in Volunteer Management

Two thirds (65%) of respondents had completed training or professional development in volunteer management and 4% (n=2) had not done any but intended to do so in the future. This left a sizeable 31% who had not undertaken any training or professional development. Additional comments explaining why not included:

> *"This Council doesn't have a volunteer program per se."* (respondent in a rural area)

> *"Have only done internal training"* (respondent in a rural area).

> *"Hard to access quality training"* (respondent located in a rural area)

> *"I'd do more but LGA charges too much!!!"* (Volunteer Development Officer in a metropolitan LG)

Clearly there is a need for affordable training, particularly for rural managers. Volunteering SA&NT offers such training - adapting their training for online delivery may be a solution for those unable to travel to Adelaide.

4.2. Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation Participants

4.2.1. Proportion of Volunteers Who Are WFTD or MO Participants

Given that WFTD participants may be managed by staff other than Volunteer Managers (because of specific supervision requirements and funding arrangements), nearly two thirds of respondents

reported that they have no WFTD participants amongst their volunteers (Figure 4.5). About half of respondents indicated that at the time of the survey, MO participants formed less than 40% of their volunteers, with most forming less than 20%. The Councils that had 41-60% of their volunteers as MO participants were located in rural areas, which as the previous section suggested, has less access to training
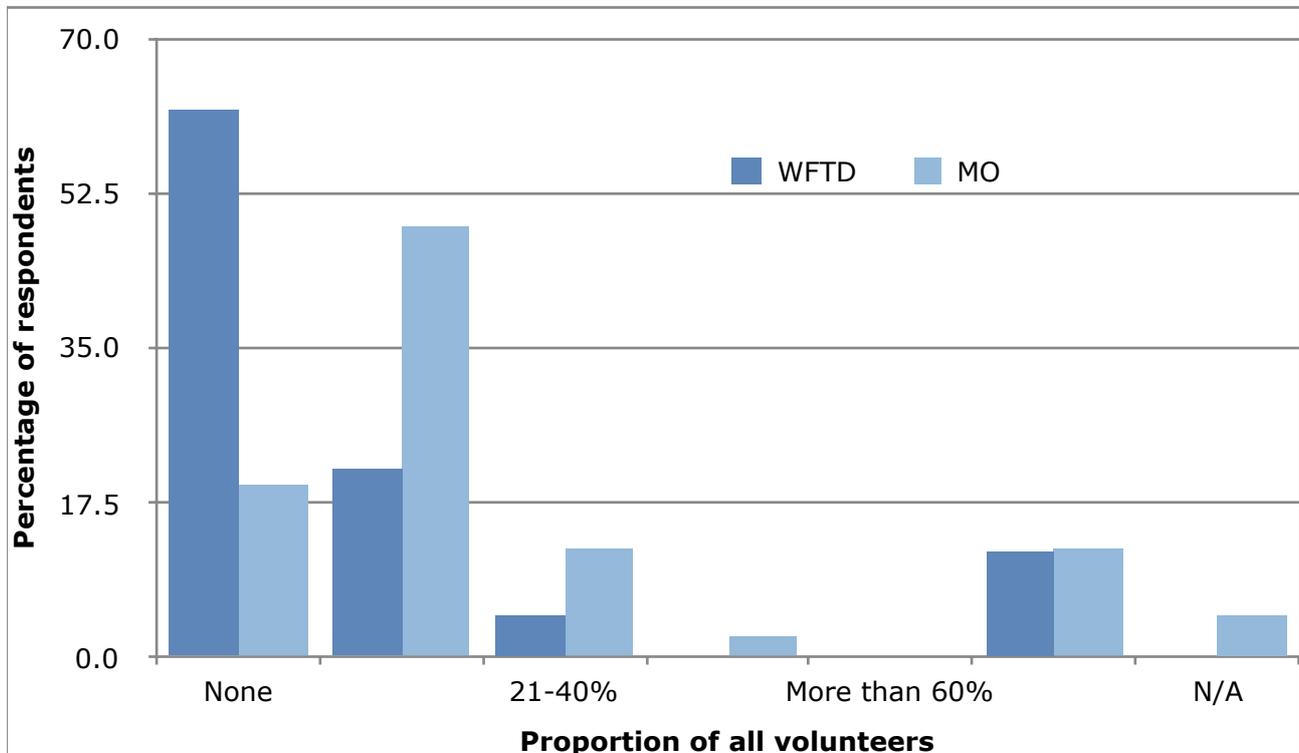
Figure 4.5 Proportion of All Volunteers Who Are MO or WFTD Participants

Many respondents could not make an estimate because they did not know which of their volunteers were MO participants, as volunteers are not required to disclose this information. Respondents commented that MO participants are

> "*not directly identified unless requested to complete voluntary work form for Centrelink",*

while others said

> "*I have been in this role for two years and only ever signed 2 Mutual Obligation forms. Neither of them were new recruits".*

> "*Reports on hours contributed by mutual obligation participants has never been requested by JSA/Centrelink".*

MO participants may be reluctant to advise of their status. According to one respondent

> "*….they often do not disclose this info to us for reasons of pride, sometimes embarrassment."*

4.2.2. When Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation Volunteers First Joined Council

As can be seen from Table 4.6 half of respondents did not know when MO participants first joined their council's volunteer projects. Again, based on respondents' more detailed answers and comments, this result is explained by the fact that many, if not most such volunteers, do not self-identify themselves as fulfilling MO requirements (nor are they required to do so). Alternatively, volunteer managers were appointed some time after the individuals joined the volunteering program and therefore had no knowledge of this.

WFTD participants' status is formally recorded, yet one third of respondents did not know when these individuals began with their Council. It might be argued that this outcome may be because respondents who are Volunteer Managers and not involved with WFTD programs nevertheless attempted to answer the question.

Closer examination of the 14 respondents in the WFTD column shows that they are all involved in human resources or have dual roles (that is both volunteering and human resources, or volunteering and other roles) and are thus likely to have direct experience with WFTD participants. Respondent who did know when their WFTD participants began mostly nominated the years 2011-2015 as the time most WFTD participants began, although this period may simply reflect the length of time most respondents have been in their roles, as shown in Figure 4.6.

Table 4.6 When WFTD and MO Participants Joined Council

Time	WFTD	MO
Late 1990s-2000	7.1	3.6
2001-2005	0.0	17.9
2006-2010	0.0	14.3
2011-2015	42.9	14.3
2016	14.3	0.0
Don't know	35.7	50.0
Total	**100**	**100**
N	14	28

4.2.3. Are WFTD and MO Participants Different from 'Ordinary' Volunteers?

There is a clear difference in respondents' opinions of WFTD and MO participants, although given that only about 14 respondents work directly with WFTD participants, (versus the 25 who answered the question in the survey), the results for WFTD may be less reliable.

Assuming the respondents had an otherwise reasonable basis for their opinions for this group, the picture is almost a mirror image one – most respondents think WFTD participants are different from

other volunteers, while MO participants are not different (Table 4.7). The large "don't know" category for WFTD reflects the general separation of WFTD and volunteering programs in most Councils; as WFTD participants are managed by staff not involved with volunteering, it is difficult for them to know how WFTD participants compare with volunteers.

Table 4.7. Are WFTD and MO Participants Different from Other Volunteers?

	WFTD	MO
Yes	64.0	11.1
No	0.0	63.0
Don't know	24.0	11.1
N/A	12.0	14.8
Total	**100**	**100**
N	25	27

Many respondents elaborated on their answer, with the main point of difference identified as the relatively short time frame of participants' involvement, which is at odds with the needs of volunteering programs. Comments included:

> *"[unlike other volunteers] MO people leave for paid work. I have a number of examples where we have invested time and money training, police checks and resources only for them to leave 3 months later"*.

 Another said:

> *"the conditions and time frames put around WFD participants make it harder for the client to volunteer and harder for the organisations to be able to place them. Most people need long term volunteers, not volunteers that will be pulled out [of] the service after their '6 month' contract with the agency referring them ends"*.

Similar comments were:

> *"Some, not all, move on to paid roles so don't become long term, regular volunteers. We would prefer to have a stable group of volunteers. If they are involved in Community Wellbeing Programs, the residents like to build a relationship with volunteers, knowing they will be supporting them long term"*;

> *"Work for the dole people do not tend to stay very long before they move on or get jobs, mutual obligation people tend to stay longer."*

Another commented on the different management requirements:

> *"If you are asking if there is administrative and/or supervisory differences/workload etc...yes."*

On the other hand, while some respondents noticed differences, they were either not important, or were positive ones. For example, some respondents said:

> "They can be [different from other volunteers] but normally volunteer because they are happy to and to be able to comply with Centrelink requirements."

> "The only difference is that the mutual obligation volunteers may be more keen to work more hours than the usual volunteers."

> "They are generally more educated and ready to learn…"

Those who saw no major differences focussed on MO participants, stating:

> "The Mutual Obligation Volunteers make a choice to do paid work or volunteer… they are placed in roles that they have a passion for. Of the volunteers that I have met that are mutual obligation volunteers, most of them are long serving and have just as much commitment as any other volunteer."

> "It depends on the individual, we treat them as volunteers and screen all of the applicants as we would with our volunteers prior to engaging them to ensure that they are suitable and motivated. If they are not motivated and feeling like they are getting anything out of the placement then it does impact negatively on the rest of the volunteer team."

> "I consider Mutual Obligation volunteers as being the same as our regular volunteers because they are recruited in the same way and take on our established and recognized roles. Their primary commitment to us is the same as other volunteers. It is an added bonus to them that they can count the hours to satisfy the mutual obligation."

> "[They are] just like other volunteers."

4.2.4. Attributes of WFTD and MO participants

Table 4.8 paints a rather negative picture of WFTD participants' generic work skills. MO participants are rated much more highly although there is scope for improvement in literacy, teamwork and interest in learning a particular skill. WFTD participants fare worst on literacy and work ethic.

Table 4.8 Work-related Personal Attributes of WFTD and MO Participants (multiple response)

	WFTD	MO
Have good literacy	14.3	50.0
Have a range of valuable skills	57.1	67.9
Be able to follow instructions	35.7	71.4
Have a good work ethic	21.4	64.3
Work well in a team	28.6	57.1
Are interested in learning a particular skill	35.7	53.6
Want particular types of roles	50.0	67.9
N	14	28

Respondents' comments included:

> "We will not take on WFD participants due to supervision issues and also we cannot guarantee hours."

> "WFTD- often don't turn up & don't notify".

Many respondents found it impossible to generalise and pointed out:

> "it's really individuals".

> "I cannot generalize about these individuals based on the options you give me as they are all different.   This question feels like it is asking me to pigeon hole people in to good bad, able or not able, I would not do this with ANY volunteer applicant whether they be WFD, MO, or volunteering via their own initiative."

> "Hard to differentiate or generalize we treat all as individuals."

> "Again it comes down to the individual and what they are looking to get out of it. Literacy is a challenge across our community."

MO participants who volunteer are a selective group relative to all MO participants, as illustrated by the following comments:

> "They meet these skills because they are recruited to match the requirements of the volunteer role."

> "…we recruit participants the same as we would volunteers assessing them on their motivation, ability to meet the needs of the role, work ethic etc. We have had some excellent participants and some not so good. Literacy appears to be an issue, more so with the younger participants".

5. How WFTD and MO Participants Compare to Other Volunteers

Other aspects of management are presented in Table 5. WFTD participants fare poorly on most attributes according to the survey respondents, particularly on health, and education and training, but there are one or two surprises. One is that some respondents found WFTD participants easier to manage than volunteers (although half found them more difficult). WFTD participants tend to be less flexible than MO or other volunteers partly because they must adhere to Centrelink requirements and partly because they tend to have limited means for transport or childcare options and so on. These limitations apply to a more limited extent to MO participants. On the whole, MO volunteers were no different from other volunteers.

Table 5 Rating of Selected Attributes Against General Volunteers

	WFTD			MO		
	Less than other volunteers	About the same as other volunteer	More than other volunteers	Less than other volunteers	About the same as other volunteer	More than other volunteers
Flexibility	81.8	18.2		16.0	80.0	4.0
Easy to manage	50.0	20.0	30.0	8.0	92.0	
Health status	60.0	30.0	10.0	4.0	92.0	4.0
Level of education/training	63.6	36.4		12.0	88.0	
Social skills	40.0	60.0		4.0	96.0	
N	14			28		

Some respondents found this question difficult to answer, even impertinent. Comments included

> *"What a horrible question!"*

> *"These are tough questions to answer, for example, health status - we don't do medicals on our volunteers so hard to compare."*

> *"We do not compare our volunteers in this way, once they are with us they are volunteers and their issues are no more prevalent or comparable to others."*

> *"This depends on the individual and most of the WFD participants we have taken on have been young people and don't have the same work experience/social skills in comparison to the rest of the volunteer workforce which is predominately older."*

5.1. Average Period of Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation Participation

More than 80% of WFTD participants worked with Councils for up to six months only (as WFTD placements are mandated to span six months), whereas MO participants were much more likely to stay for more than a year (Table 5.1). There was also much more variation amongst MO participants in the length of time they stayed with Council volunteering programs.

Table 5.1. Time Spent with Council

	WFTD	MO
Less than 3 months	30.8	0
3-6 months	53.8	3.3
6-12 months	7.7	0.0
More than a year	0.0	33.3
Varies between individuals	0.0	56.7
Don't know	7.7	6.7
N	13	30

Difficulties with time frames were usually associated with WFTD, as shown by the following comments:

> *"WFD have a six month time frame from when they are on the books with the agency, we have signed for the 6 months period only to have volunteers pulled out after three because it took the agency three months to place them and the six months was up at 3 months for us."*

> *"Most of our Mutual Obligation volunteers are long termers - more than one year."*

Another pointed to the variation between individuals in both WFTD and MO:

> *"Hard to say - some love their placement/volunteer work and choose to stay, other complete their requirements and leave."*

5.2. Management of WFTD and MO Participants Over Time

Management of WFTD participants was done "reasonably well" right from the start in most Councils (Figure 5.2). There is very little improvement in their management over time but note the large "don't know" category that reflects the fact that most respondents have not been in their role over the long term, and/or may not have any basis on which to make a comparison. Also, the number of respondents is very small (n=13) so this pattern should be interpreted with caution.
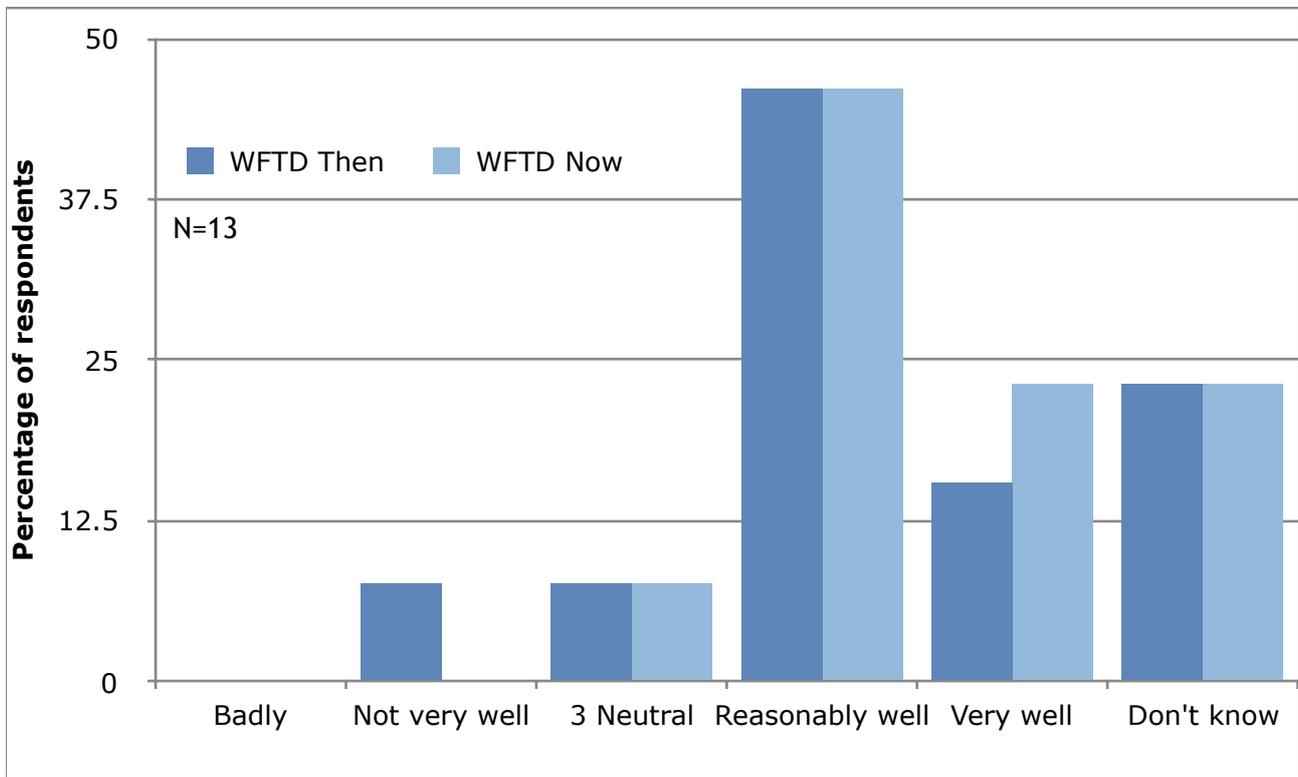
Figure 5.2 How Well WFTFD Participants Were Managed Over Time

One respondent said that compared to the past, they now understand their requirements better because more information is provided "up front" about individuals' situations. However, such information is not necessarily provided by all Job Active agencies:

> *"The management of the scheme, from the provider's side, seemed a bit ad hoc.*
> *We had the sense that the administration of the program was under-resourced."*

One respondent said they still needed to be better able to clearly communicate and ask questions of the agencies involved. Other issues that still needed to be addressed were reliability of attendees, the need for increased staff resources including funded training, more flexibility in scope of duties, the difficulty in providing programs that require many hours per day, and policy stability:

> *"we have been working with a third party provider to set up some group activities*
> *and the government keeps changing the goal posts."*

There is improvement in the management of MO participants, although they were also reasonably well managed from inception (Figure 5.3)
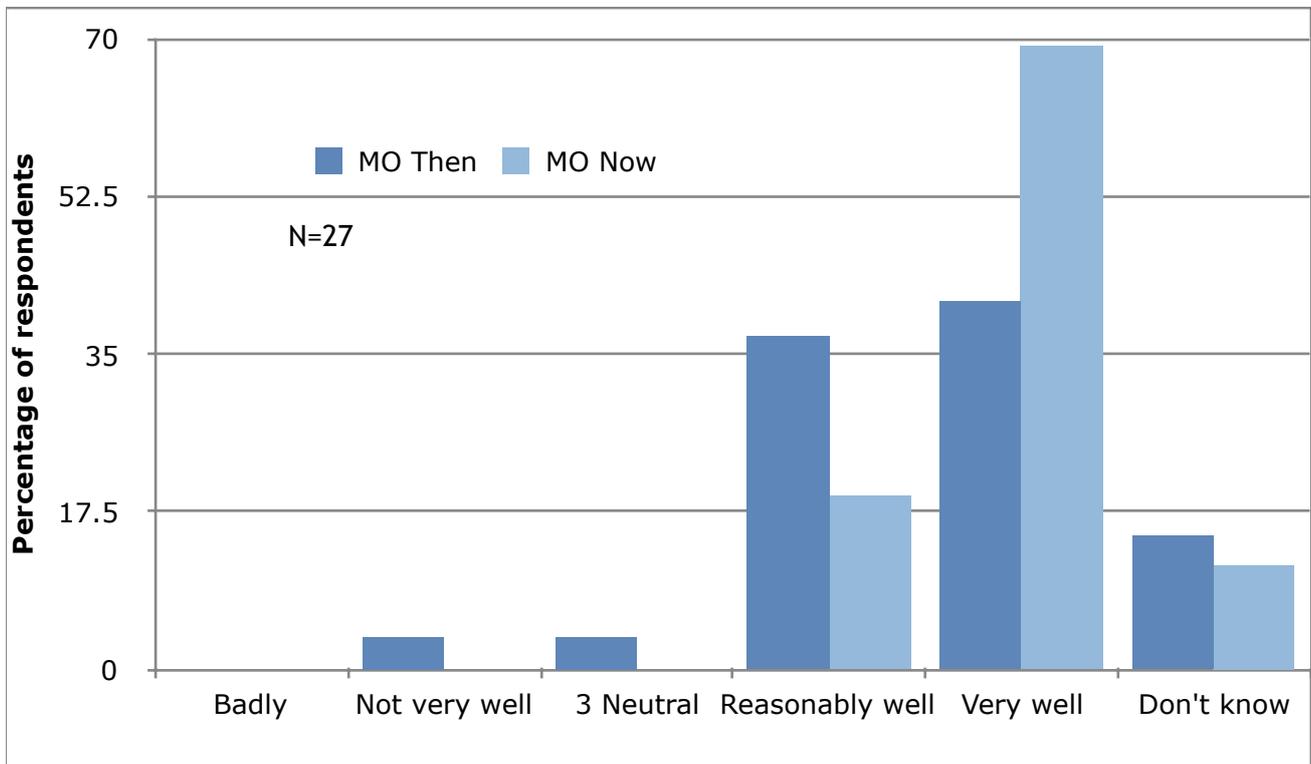
Figure 5.3. How Well MO Participants Were Managed Over Time

Many respondents noted that they have never had any management problems with MO participants:

> *"We place all applicants for volunteer roles carefully, ensuring we have a good recruitment process for placing people has helped this a lot. We don't have any issues with Mutual Obligation."*

> *"Our program works well as MO participants tend to be in the older age bracket and go through the same process as the rest of the volunteer workforce."*

> *"They are managed very well already, same as all of our volunteers."*

Some had suggestions for ways to improve management of MO volunteers. This included r educing the number of hours MO participants are required to do, create programs allowing for shorter term volunteers, create more volunteer programs, increase staff resources including funding to assist with the training and ongoing management and support of participants, and clearer Centrelink forms.

5.3. Responsibility for Preparing WFTD and MO Participants for Role in Council

MO participants tend to be seen as more capable of self-preparation than WFTD participants (Table 5.4). Third party organisations such as Job Service Providers or Community Development Programmes are seen as having the most responsibility for WFTD. Council is also expected to help MO participants, as for volunteers in general.

Table 5.4. Who is Responsible for Preparing WFTD and MO Participants for the Roles with Council?

	WFTD	MO
The individuals themselves	50.0%	70.0%
Council	26.9%	56.7%
Job Services Agency	88.5%	53.3%
Commonwealth Government	38.5%	36.7%
Other volunteers	0.0%	13.3%
Don't know	7.7%	3.3%
N respondents	19	45

5.4. Ongoing Volunteer Roles Offered

Whether WFTD and MO participants become "real" volunteers after they find a job or are no longer required to contribute their time is a key issue for volunteer recruitment and policy. Table 5.5 shows that ongoing roles are offered most of the time to WFTD participants and virtually always to MO participants. Although 21% and 29% for WFTD and MO respectively do not take up volunteer role, it appears that others do. The main points of difference are in the larger "No" and "Don't know" categories for the WFTD group, probably relate to those respondents in HR managing WFTD participants rather than volunteers and therefore do not know if the WFTD participants take up volunteering roles or not.

Table 5.5. Whether Ongoing Volunteer Roles Are Offered to WFTD and MO Participants

	WFTD	MO
Yes, but depends on need	26.3	33.3
Yes, but depends on the individual	26.3	35.6
Yes but not all individuals take the role	21.1	28.9
Yes (total)	**73.7**	**97.8**
No	15.8	0
Don't know	10.5	2.2
Total	100	100

Comments from respondents were overwhelmingly positive and very similar.

> *"We have a few WFD participants who have continued on as volunteers with Council."*

"This round of WFD is only new so we haven't had any participants who have completed; however I am confident that a couple will stay. A large percentage of our MO participants continue on as volunteers with the Council."

"Our mutual obligation people go on for years so we have a good retention of these volunteers."

"Mutual Obligation volunteers have all stayed on for a number of years"

"In my experience the Mutual Obligation volunteers continue with us after their obligations have been met."

"Approximately 50% continue to volunteer when their mutual obligation ends."

"All so far."

As noted earlier, managers often do not know which of their volunteers have MO requirements so it was difficult for some respondents to answer this question. One commented:

"Often, if a volunteer is on an MO, we may not know, so if that MO finishes, again, we may not know it has finished, so in all ways they are just a normal volunteer, so offering them a continuing role is irrelevant. They can continue volunteering with us as long as they want."

5.5. Paid role offered

There are no marked differences between WFTD and MO participants in whether they are offered paid roles (Table 5.6). Respondents stressed that WFTD and MO participants were as eligible to apply for vacancies as anyone else but were not given preferential treatment.

Table 5.6. Whether Paid Role Offered Upon Completion of Placement

Paid role offered upon completion of placement	WFTD	MO
Yes, but depends on the individual	14.3	10.3
Yes, but depends on budget or vacancies	14.3	17.2
Yes if individual is best suited compared to other applicants	14.3	17.2
Yes but not all individuals accept the role	0.0	0.0
Yes (total)	**42.9**	**44.8**
No	0.0	0.0
Don't know	7.1	6.9
Total	100	100
N	14	29

Comments emphasising that volunteering with the Council does not give an applicant any advantage include:

> *"They would have equal opportunity to get a paid position with us in the same way as other volunteers, internal staff or outside applicants."*

> *"We have a strict recruitment policy - no one is "offered" a job - they must go through the recruitment process like all other applicants."*

> *"Paid roles are very few & far between."*

> *"As volunteers of council after 3 months they can apply for internal positions which is part of our Enterprise Agreement. They are then selected based on merit."*

> *"As mutual obligation participants are considered as volunteers then they are able to apply for internal positions after their probation period ends."*

> *"All Council vacancies are advertised through a competitive process."*

Several respondents observed that some volunteers have unrealistic expectations about job prospects:

> *"It must be made extremely clear that volunteer work does not always lead to employment. This needs to be very clear as we find people get miffed when they don't get a job and they think they are trained and as good as a staff member. A volunteer role is not a paid staff role and they are not trained up to the level of a staff member. It is extremely awkward and uncomfortable when a volunteer has the expectation that they should be interviewed and obtain a job if one is advertised."*

> *"…they often expect a job from it. We are not an employment agency so it becomes difficult when that expectation is shattered..."*

> *"…although jobs may come up there is a high possibility they will not get the job as they need to be experienced and qualifications etc."*

5.6. Other Relevant Observations

The feasibility of using local governments (and possibly other not-for-profit organisations) in the long-term is questionable, given the costs and strains borne by the host organisations. Relevant comments included:

> *"The conditions and time frames for individuals and groups on WFTD agreements do not benefit the 'volunteer' or the organisation. The costs to us and the clients far outweigh the benefits for us."*

> *"I don't think we have enough scope in our work to take on Work for the Dole as they come with more requirements."*

> *"Our HR department [needs] to take more responsibility in managing WFTD, rather than leaving it up to the community programs to incorporate into programs that are already over stretched."*

There is also a mismatch between volunteering programs that involve vulnerable groups, and WFTD participants being unable to work with these groups. This means it may be difficult in many Councils to provide suitable activities for WFTD participants. The participants themselves would also be unfamiliar with working with these groups and presumably less likely to take up volunteering opportunities involving them.

Respondents found that job active agencies could sometimes place undue pressure on both the participants and the council staff managing them:

> *"The issue I have is with the agencies who try and place their clients. We have seen volunteers under this program be harassed, disrespected and emotionally affected by the tough bullying tactics of their case managers. These people have been wonderful, reliable, smart, punctual volunteers who have not deserved the treatment they have received. Managing the stress put on these volunteers by these agencies would be one of the only comparable differences [between MO participants and other volunteers]".*

Positive outcomes noted by respondents included the effect of volunteering on WFTD and MO participants' job aspirations.

> *"Whilst many come to us not knowing what they want to do, after volunteering, many leave knowing what they want to do".*

6. Case Studies

6.1 Work for the Dole – Cowell Museum, Franklin Harbour LGA

This WFTD program began in October 2015 with five participants. The number has since increased to 22 and is likely to further increase. Participants are long-term unemployed persons, with a roughly equal gender balance (slightly more males), aged from early 20s to late 50s, including a set of parents and their adult son. Some have never been in the paid workforce, some have trade qualifications or skills but have been unemployed due to personal problems or injury. Some left school at a very young age. Many have no motivation and most do not want to be there, although some enjoy the social aspects of the program. There is a common theme of feeling "ripped off", in that the hourly rate based on their dole payment is well below minimum wage. Their WFTD supervisor describes some individuals in the program as unemployable and felt that with only one or two exceptions, he cannot in good conscience recommend them for jobs. In general, it appears that WFTD participants in this area (rural with relatively high levels of unemployment) are the least skilled and most difficult to manage and work with, with all persons receiving government benefits. The Cowell supervisor felt that there were reasons other than lack of job opportunities to explain their unemployed status. Personal characteristics affecting their ability to undertake paid work include extreme shyness, depression, low intelligence, immaturity, pettiness, arrogance, lack of care in what they do and aggression. The supervisor had to deal with daily squabbles between participants. Some participants had to be removed from the program by the jobactive agency (Complete Personnel) due to their aggression – the Cowell supervisor did not have the authority or means to discipline or sack them. He does not know what happened to them.

The supervisor reported that it is difficult to find activities for 20 people, as most tasks (restoring old buildings and implements, disassembling and reassembling sheds, minor plumbing, landscaping and the like) need only three or four persons. It is impossible, though, to split the larger group into smaller teams as each team would require a supervisor. It is also logistically difficult to transport a group of 20 persons to different job sites. Recognizing this problem, the Franklin Harbour Council and District Lions Club provided a new mini bus. The bus was brand new and subjected to work related wear and tear within the first two days (such as paint marks from dirty hands). It was not, therefore, really suitable for transporting potentially dirty workers who had little regard for its condition. The bus is now only used in circumstances where there is no other means of transport. Many of the Cowell WFTD participants do not have a driver licences (usually they have been revoked) and those who do have a licence often do not own a car. This transport problem is magnified in a rural area. Note that funding for materials is provided by Complete Personnel, who have spent approximately $20,000.

The job active agencies are paid by the Commonwealth Government based on the number of people attending the WFTD programs and are also responsible for providing supervisors. However, the Cowell WFTD supervisor's view was that the Commonwealth is providing insufficient funding for the scheme to operate. This means that the number of persons per supervisor is likely to increase,

along with inherent problems in having a large number of people in one place working on a small number of limited tasks.

Positive aspects of the Cowell WFTD program are those originally envisaged by the MO policy – that it enables people to give back and be a part of their community and that it provides a structure simulating typical working life – that is getting up early on a daily basis, organising oneself to be at a designated place on time, learning new skills and so on. The Cowell supervisor felt that these things were important for the participants (although the individuals themselves may have a different view). Other important benefits for the participants are that:

- they are able to use their supervisor as a referee for job applications (as they usually have no one else to draw on);

- the community sees positive and tangible outcomes (buildings repainted and so on).

On the other hand, participating in WFTD immediately identifies the participants as being on the dole and can perpetuate the stigma of "dole bludgers".

6.2 Mutual Obligation Case Studies

It has been very difficult to find examples of volunteer programs involving MO participants. This is because:

1. Managers and coordinators simply do not know who is volunteering because of MO requirements and who is volunteering for the usual reasons – and it is of course possible for MO volunteers to have the same motivations in addition to their MO requirement.

2. Given the generally positive experiences of the survey respondents with volunteers they do know to be fulfilling MO obligations (with the participants' capabilities being indistinguishable or at least similar to those of other volunteers), there is little additional useful insights to be shared from SA Council volunteer programs.

We also searched for documentation of any experiences of interstate counterparts and other not-for-profit organisations, but as in South Australia, this search turned up little useful information. One exception was a report compiled by Clarence Valley Council (NSW) in 2009 (https://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/metro/res.asp?id=6704) which suggesting that MO is a "….double edged sword that increases the pool of 'volunteers', assists the MO volunteer to

achieve their activity test and to gain experience/training, but can bring both benefit and cost to the organisations involved" (p.8), also, rather audaciously, that it "…may provide a source of "volunteers" to assist in the delivery of services that are less attractive to the volunteers with no external incentive to participate." (Clarence Valley Council 2009:42).

The report recommended that because there is a need to understand the impact of MO on volunteer services and develop strategies to assist, then appropriate MO and community service "volunteering" programs should be identified and research undertaken in the Clarence Valley to measure the amount of MO occurring, the impact of MO on the volunteers and the organisations, and systems to keep organisations informed about changes to MO and community services. It appears this was not completed (CVC 2009:47) as we were unable to locate any subsequent study.

The Clarence Valley Council conducted a survey of volunteers in their region, (deliberately excluding MO volunteers as not meeting the definition of volunteering), which asked how people became involved in volunteering. In addition to the usual reasons ("someone asked me", "part of family culture", "saw a need", "wanted to contribute" and so on), many of these now "ordinary" volunteers reported that they began via Centrelink's MO requirement. In other words, as reported by some SA respondents, many people continued volunteering after they have finished MO, and gave more volunteering hours than required. Clarence Valley Council concluded that MO provides a source of "volunteers" and introduces people to the concept of volunteering. Their survey also found that some volunteers believe MO can have a negative impact on organisations, as it changes the reason people are there and creates a different atmosphere.

The introduction of MO caused problems for some services used as case studies in Clarence Valley Council's report. These were Lower Clarence Meals on Wheels and Clarence Community Social Support Services, which found that participants were not always willingly involved or suitable for the available roles. Most were described as "wonderful" but some as "time wasters". This experience appears to have been minimised in South Australia through the use of careful and rigorous screening and matching of volunteers.

We also discovered during the course of this project that a major difficulty experienced by Volunteering Clarence Valley, Job Services Australia organisations, MO volunteers and volunteer groups is the frequency of change in the criteria defining MO/activity tests and the associated notifications. For these Guidelines to function well and be sustained into the future, they need to account for these frequent and ongoing changes at the Commonwealth government level.

Appendix 1: Literature Review

The Australian Commonwealth Government's Mutual Obligation (MO) and Work for the Dole (WFTD) initiatives are one of the most explicit and fully elaborated 'workfare' policies in the world. As in the UK and US, there is extensive comment and critique on its ideological underpinnings. The literature acknowledges that there are good MO initiatives – those that genuinely try to help people out of their predicament and poor MO policies, which result in precarious or underemployment and people rendered ineligible for benefits. Australia's MO policies are generally regarded poorly and most of the literature is highly critical.

In terms of local government, it is difficult to conclude much about the best methods of implementing volunteer work for MO and WFTD participants because of a lack of published material. This literature review, therefore, outlines two of the main themes from the literature. It focuses on whether MO is indeed mutual and secondly whether either MO or WFTD actually work.

Whether MO is really mutual or is in fact conditional is a common theme. For example, Goodin (2002), argues that the Australian government's obligation to pay benefits to those in need are conditional (rather than unconditional) on claimants having devoted labour time to the activities specified in the policy (rather than contributing to society in any other ways) and that the contribution is made in the same time frame, rather than long before (as with the pension) or after receiving benefits (as with Higher Education Contribution Scheme or HECS). In other words, MO policy does not necessarily present reciprocity and mutuality because repayment is demanded at a time when recipients are at their weakest. Moss (2006: 95-98) points out that many MO and WFTD participants have already 'given something back' in purely financial terms when they were taxpayers and workers (or they may do so in the future).

Similarly, Kinnear (2000: V-VI) concluded that MO policies fail ethically and morally, especially because the socially advantaged impose obligation as a form of repayment, on the financially disadvantaged. Nevile (2012) observes that this form of conditionality aims to change behaviour, to make welfare recipients responsible for their own wellbeing. In this form of 'responsible citizenship', assistance from the state is no longer a right, but rather something that has to be earned. Keevers et al (2008) suggests that the MO approach is paternalistic, replacing the rights-based principle of welfare entitlement with recipients of welfare services who must comply with activity requirements, such as volunteering or studying, and are subject to a reward and punishment regime with supervision of their lifestyle.

Gunders (2012) used discourse analysis of political speeches to conclude that welfare recipients were repeatedly represented as immoral and 'un-Australian' by the Howard government (1996-2007). The Howard government promoted a particular version of the Protestant work ethic as an element of a moral Australian identity, representing that welfare recipients lack that work ethic, which threatens the economic and moral wellbeing of the community. Former Treasurer, Joe Hockey, echoed these sentiments in his "lifters and leaners" Budget speech in 2015. On the other hand, Bessant (2000) queries the official justifications for the WFTD scheme, arguing that they show the government does not understand or at least acknowledge the causes of unemployment. She also argues that WFTD contravenes the Australian constitutions as it prohibits civil conscription.

A second theme in the literature is a consideration of whether MO or WFTD programs actually work. Empirical research on the extent to which MO or WFTD participants obtain employment or continue in volunteer roles, in any setting, suggests that programs were largely ineffective. Based on study of a pilot WFTD scheme in Nov 1997 – June 1998, Borland et al (2004) found that participation in the WFTD program was associated with a significant adverse effect on the likelihood of exiting unemployment payments. They identified a 'lock-in' effect, whereby program participants reduced job search activity. The resentment or frustrations engendered from being unable to spend sufficient time searching for a job due to time spent volunteering was counter productive for everyone involved.

Carson et al (2003) reported similar results, also based on a WFTD pilot. They found that the program failed the most disadvantaged jobseekers because it did not respond adequately to the varying personal circumstances of participants. Although there were some positive aspects of participation, particularly for voluntary participants, the program did not build employment skills or increase employment commitment and self-esteem. Volunteers' attitudes towards the scheme were significantly more favourable than those of the coerced participants. Carson et al reported that many of the participants in their study were frustrated because the work they did was not relevant for building the skills that they needed for the type of work they hoped to obtain. Young people

resented being compelled to undertake activities with little relationship to their lives or aspirations, just to avoid being breached. These findings highlight the fact that the implementation these types of employment programs fail to take account of social circumstances such as lack of parental support, illiteracy, homelessness or intellectual disability.

Volunteering as part of a labour program such as WFTD was not considered in Martin and Grubbs's (2001) review of OECD countries' experiences with active labour market policies. This was probably because volunteering was yet to be widely recognised as a potential pathway to employment at that time. However their findings are useful. They point out that the most common method of evaluating whether a labour program such as WFTD works still consists of simply monitoring the labour market status and earnings of participants for a brief period following their spell on a programme. This method is still the case today in Australia (see the ABS Labour Force surveys, Cat. No. 6202). While this sort of monitoring is useful, it cannot determine whether a program actually "worked" or not for participants. Further, the mix of programs is constantly being revised (or "innovated"), and there is variation in participation and across different geographic locations that make evaluation even more difficult. There is little evidence on the long-term effects of these active programs. Outcomes are invariably expressed in terms of program impacts on future earnings and/or re-employment prospects of participants, not on potential social benefits such as reduced crime, less drug abuse or better health.

Other empirical findings include a survey of Brisbane welfare recipients who were breached for failing to undertake their MO. It found that getting breached once does not work as an incentive to ensure compliance with compulsory administrative and activity (Schooneveldt 2004). Grahame and Marston (2012) report that single mothers complying with welfare to work requirements experienced a lack of recognition of their identities as mothers, paid workers, and competent decision makers. These experiences have negative consequences for self-worth, relational autonomy, and ultimately the wellbeing of single parent families.

Veldboer et al (2015) provides a different picture. Noting the oxymoron of mandatory volunteering, Veldboer et al (2015) asked older female participants in Rotterdam how they felt about volunteering in return for benefits. Surprisingly, the respondents claimed that the approach better recognised their contribution to society. They also viewed the policy as important for other benefit claimants who are perceived to lack any motivation to give something back to society. The authors offer several explanations for this finding - one is that there is internalisation of the dominant policy discourse in a country with a culture of consensus. Another is that participants see soft benefits for themselves (see also Kampen et al., 2013). They tend to recast their mandatory activities as allowing them to be full and respected partners in social interaction and (becoming) useful members of society. In other words, you can be a full citizen even if you are on long-term benefits, as long as you do enough for society. This notion is consistent with Levy's (2014) findings that mandatory volunteers felt the same levels of satisfaction and self esteem as other volunteers. It is also possible that Velboer et al's study was selectively biased toward respondents with positive views.

A third theme concerns context. Rees et al (2014) examined the behaviours of the UK equivalent to our Job Services Australia provider. They found that in outsourced, welfare-to-work schemes, providers responded to financial pressures and incentives by 'creaming' off easier to serve claimants whilst 'parking' harder to service clients and also cite (somewhat dated) evidence of the same process occurring in other countries, including Australia (p. 225). If this continues, it may be that the volunteers emanating from MO and WFTD present with characteristics that will prove challenging from both a management and teamwork perspective. A consequence could be that Volunteer Managers risk going beyond the terms of the contracts/arrangements, as has occurred with Job Network service providers (Rogers 2007).

If participants resent the tension between MO and volunteering, or have motivational or other issues, it is possible they may not fulfil the requirements of their volunteer roles adequately. While LGVMs have the discretion of asking them to leave, this imposes time and costs in recruiting and training replacements. Another concern is the risk involved for care receivers – such as the elderly – in terms of the integrity of some unwilling 'volunteer workers' (Sawer, 2006, in Veldboer et al 2015:4) given the range of community and social activities involving local government volunteers.

 LG volunteer program coordinators can face interrelated policy, procedural and operational issues which constrain effective management and/or development of their programs, due to a diversity of programs (Cuthill and Warburton). Other tensions may exist between the values and aims of Job Network service providers, MO participants, government employment policies and LGVMs. For example, job service providers may disagree with aspects of the policy, yet they are the front line in terms of its implementation and achieving policy outcomes

As outlined earlier, there is a lack of published literature and research studies more generally on MO and WFTD within local governments in Australia. Most of the literature addressing volunteering and local government considers separate volunteer organisations with local government and discusses how they should work together (for example, Osborne and McLaughlin 2004; Wallis and Dollery 2002). However Gazley and Brudney (2005) report that in the US, there is political and labor resistance to local government volunteers and that local government managers are concerned that they lack the funding or staff to utilize volunteers. These findings suggest that governmental capacity may be the main obstacle to greater volunteer involvement in local governments in general, let alone the influx of a new type of volunteer.

Cuthill and Warburton (2005) and McKeown and Lindorff (2011) both address the management of volunteers in local government, although not the impact of MO or WFTD specifically. The former present a conceptual framework which provides a model for understanding volunteer management across local government, developed through exploratory research conducted at the Gold Coast City Council in 2003–2004. They advocate a whole-of-Council approach to volunteer management. This approach requires clear articulation of Council policy and the development of consistent and coordinated procedures. Interestingly, although volunteer contributions may be recorded by volunteer managers, at the time of the research, GCCC had no standardised processes for recording volunteer management efforts. It is not clear from the literature how widespread this failure to recognise managers' efforts may be, but an increasing proportion of MO volunteers may place extra demands on managers – it could be argued that extra demands should be documented. Cuthill and Warburton's conceptual framework (Figure 2) (or some variant of it) and their call for a volunteer management policy seem to be used in South Australian local governments (LGCMG 2008).
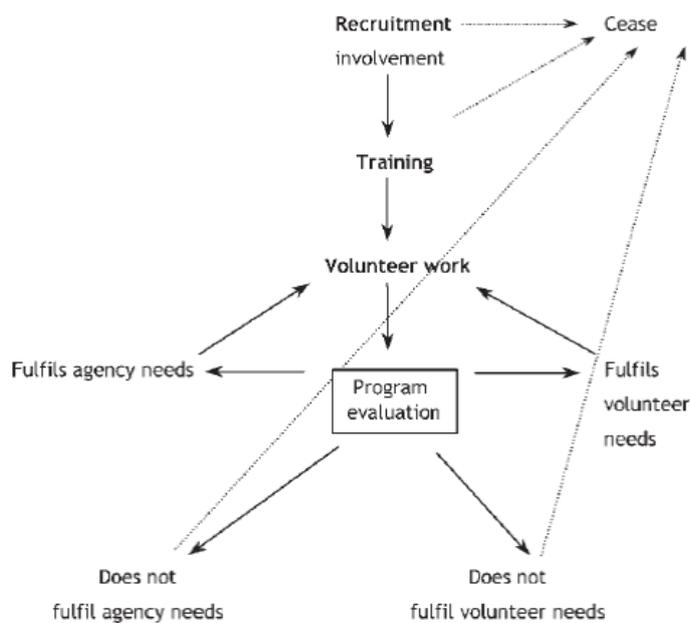
Figure 2. Conceptual framework for *Volunteer Management in* Local Government

McKeown and Lindorff ask if strategic human resource management practices (such as performance measurement) underpin local governments' "external workforce" which includes volunteers, in addition to temporary staff, external contractors and trainees. They find little evidence that strategies and policies relating to these staff, or their management, have been strategically aligned with council strategies and business plans. Their argument that such strategies should apply to the external workforce suggests that external worker and volunteer requirements may become more stringent and defined. This could affect volunteers with specific profiles, such as MO and WFTD participants. Conversely, it may also offer a more targeted form of skills development, as expressed by the individuals in Carson et al's study. McKeown and Lindorff (2011) report that the Victorian councils all recognised the importance of a consistent approach in managing volunteers. Interestingly, volunteers in Victorian local government appear to managed by the human resource managers. Responses to how volunteers are managed reflected a mix of opportunism and ad hoc management of what were generally seen as 'goodwill' positions. The delicate balance between people providing vital community services but receiving for no payment provided a practical challenge for the implementation of strategic HRM practices, such as recruitment and selection and

occupational health and safety, which most chose to ignore. The authors conclude that employees within the core internal workforce are ultimately accountable for their own performance and the performance and coordination of the external workforce. Moving from the core to the peripheral external workforces shows decreasing strategic HRM integration into the organisation.

McKeown and Lindorff recognise that as Australian local governments are diverse, a one-size fits-all-councils solution to external workers and volunteers is not feasible and policies and processes need to be somewhat flexible and responsive to specific scenarios. They argue that without a strategic and informed intent, local governments may find that their actions are not responsive in the long run. In the context of MO requirements, local governments may need to explicitly consider how it may affect them and their volunteers rather than basing practices and decisions on past practice. This may involve the ability to access, use and retain knowledge held by those outside the core of permanent employees. 'What gets measured gets managed' means that managers need to know the true nature and number of their workforce so they can achieve organisational goals.

Conclusion

The literature review shows that many questions are unanswered and raises many more. What about the issue of accountability of MO participants in local government (Brudney 1999)? Should local government volunteer managers and volunteer managers need to explain or justify their actions and to whom - Centrelink? Placement providers? If so, what is the risk of loss of independence? How should they do this? What effect would this have on administrative efficacy, especially LGMs' and job search facilitators' performance, and would there be distortions in organisational behaviour? Does the performance of MO participants need to be judged or at least recorded? Can/do MO participants in LG volunteer programs contribute to community capacity building like other volunteers? Given that volunteer management in local government takes place in the context of a broader social agenda – what social issues do we consider in this State and how does this differ across Councils in South Australia? Clearly more research should be completed to answer some of these important questions.

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Appendix 2: Ethics Application With Questionnaire

Flinders University
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Office Use Only	
Code:	**Project Number:**

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF SOCIAL OR BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

*<u>**IMPORTANT –**</u> refer to the 'Application Submission Process' and 'Application Submission Guide' documents available from SBREC Submission Forms, Guidelines and Templates web page <u>before</u> completion of the form. Submit completed form and all relevant attachments in PDF format to <u>human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au</u>*

New Ethics Application	**x**	
Response to Deferral Notice		Project Number
		3000007889

Research Involving Children or Vulnerable Adults

If you are intending to conduct research involving children or vulnerable adults you are required to have undergone a Criminal History Check. A set of procedures has been agreed between the University and the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Screening and Licensing Branch. For specific information about these procedures please refer to the Research Involving Children or Vulnerable Adults webpage and the Criminal History Check Procedures webpage.

Accordingly, Section H (Certification and Signatures) asks whether the research will involve children and vulnerable adults and if yes, asks for confirmation that a current Criminal History Check is in place.

A. PROJECT TITLE and TIMEFRAME

A1. Project Title

Managing mutual obligation 'volunteers' within local government: challenges and opportunities for South Australia

A2. Plain language, or lay, title

Managing mutual obligation volunteers in local government

A3. Period for which approval is sought

Projects <u>may not commence</u> until formal written notification of final ethics approval has been provided.

Date data collection is due to commence:	14/12/2015	
Important Note – data collection cannot commence until final ethics approval has been granted by the SBREC.	Or following approval:	
Date data collection is expected to be completed:	29/1/2016	
Date project is expected to be completed:	6/5/2016	

B. RESEARCHER/SUPERVISOR INFORMATION

*Correspondence regarding ethics approval will be emailed to the Principal Researcher with copies to all other researchers listed on the application unless otherwise indicated. Please note that is a requirement that **all supervisors** receive a copy of all correspondence relating to the project.*

Principal Researcher *(student or staff member)*

Title:	First Name:			Family Name:	
Prof	Melanie			Oppenheimer	
Status:	Staff:	**x**	Flinders Uni Student:		Associate:

Flinders Uni Student No. (Principal researcher only)		**Degree enrolled in:** (please do not use acronyms)	
Supervisor(s) (also list as researcher below)			
Flinders Uni School/ Department:	History and International Relations		
Postal Address:			
Phone: 8201 2322	**Fax:**	**Email:**	melanie.oppenheimer@flinders.edu.au

Researcher 2/Supervisor

Title:	First Name:			Family Name:	
Dr	Lisel			O'Dwyer	
Status:	Staff:	**x**	Flinders Uni Student:		Associate:
Copies of correspondence required			Yes	**x** No	
School/Department/ Organisation:	Social and Policy Studies				
Postal Address:					
Phone: 8201 2985	**Fax:**		**Email:**	lisel.odwyer@flinders.edu.au	

ALL QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ANSWERED IN THE SPACES PROVIDED.
ATTACHMENTS IN LIEU OF RESPONSE (WITH NOTATIONS TO 'SEE ATTACHED') ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

C.   PROJECT DETAILS

C1.   Brief outline of:

A   the project:

This project focuses on the impact of the new Commonwealth government's Work for the Dole scheme on Local Councils across South Australia, and will produce a Handbook to assist LGAs to encourage volunteering by mutual obligation participants.

From 1 July 2015, all job seekers between the ages of 18 and 60 will be required to undertake new 'mutual obligation' requirements under the Commonwealth government's Work for the Dole scheme. Many local governments in South Australia, both urban and rural, are becoming involved in formal 'placements' by hosting work experience job seekers and assisting them to gain the skills necessary to move from welfare to work. These pathway activities will be for a six-month period.

Feedback from Volunteer Managers in Local Government indicates that there is substantial concern about how this tier of government in SA will cope with the possible inundation of mutual obligation clients in volunteer programs. For example, 20% of the City of Onkaparinga's volunteers are already coming from Mutual Obligation Programs. The Chair of the Local Government Volunteer Managers Network suggests that 'many Councils are being approached to take on mutual obligation volunteers' (see supporting documents attached to this proposal). There are further concerns as to whether this type of activity constitutes volunteering at all and how this might impact on volunteering programs more broadly.

This project is an initiative of the Volunteering Strategy of South Australia, specifically Focus Area Four: Progressively Adapt Through Continuous Improvement. This focus area is charged with generating and testing potential solutions, developing innovative avenues to volunteering and to support alternative volunteering opportunities within council programs. (www.savolunteeringstrategy.org.au).

B   significance:

The idea of mutual obligation is part of the shifting conceptualisation of 'work'. However, the new Volunteering Australia definition of volunteering specifically excludes mutual obligation activities as volunteering. This only adds to the current confusion surrounding mutual obligation. There is ongoing debate in the sector around the concept of volunteering includes whether mutual obligation placements should be considered volunteering opportunities at all. These 'volunteering-like' activities challenge generally accepted definitions of volunteering and do not come under the new definitions of volunteering enacted by Volunteering Australia in July 2015. Yet Local Government Volunteer Managers in SA are being encouraged to involve mutual obligation participants as a genuine pathway to employment. As many of these individuals have been involved with such programs for many years, Volunteer Managers are receiving 'mixed messages' as to whether mutual obligation-based volunteering is a genuine opportunity or something to be avoided, making their involvement even more challenging.

Researchers such as Marc Levy (2014), and Snyder & Omoto (2008) suggest that mutual obligation can be considered volunteering if volunteering is perceived as a continuum reflecting personal goals, not whether one receives financial remuneration for the task completed. Further, income support recipients have been volunteering as part of government requirements since the 1990s, when the Howard Coalition government introduced specific policies linking unemployed income support to 'mutual obligation' as a form of contribution. These policies followed the Keating Labor government's Working Nation policy, when the long term unemployed were given customised community service opportunities. Some Local Government Councils have worked very successfully with these 'volunteers' alongside the 'traditional' volunteers for many years.

C   research objective(s):

This project aims to produce a handbook (both online and hardcopy) for Local Government Volunteer Managers, Local Councils and the not-for-profit sector detailing how best to engage with the new Australian Government requirements to provide meaningful outcomes for both Councils and individual clients. It builds on the Volunteers in Local Government Toolkit developed in 2011 (https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Volunteers_in_Local_Government_Toolkit.pdf).

No.	Research objective
	Identify how Local Councils in SA have engaged with these programs in the past
	Evaluate current and past projects
	Develop a handbook for dissemination to Local Governments around South Australia

<u>Note</u>: tab across to add new rows for additional research objectives.

C2.   Medical or Health Research involving the *Privacy Act 1988*

Is the research related to medical or health matters?

Yes		*Place letter 'X' in*
No	**X**	*the relevant box*

If YES, to question (A) below; if NO, go to item C4.

A   Will personal information be sought from the records of a <u>Commonwealth Agency</u>?

Yes	
No	**X**

If YES, complete Part A of the Appendix 'Privacy Legislation Matters' that relates to compliance with the Guidelines under Section 95 of the Privacy Act 1988.

If NO, go to question (b) below.

B   Will health information be sought from a Private Sector Organisation or a health service provider funded by the <u>State Department of Health</u>?

Yes	
No	**X**

If YES, complete Part B of the Appendix 'Privacy Legislation Matters' that relates to compliance with the Guidelines under Section 95 of the Privacy Act 1988.

If you answered 'NO' to both (a) and (b) above go to item C4.

C3.   Health Research Involving or Impacting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples
Does your project comprise <u>health</u> research involving Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Yes	
No	**X**

IMPORTANT
Proposals to conduct *health-related research* involving Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples or communities in South Australia *must also be* submitted to the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (AHCSA). However, please note that ethics approval from AHCSA will remove the requirement to gain approval from Flinders SBREC, as described in section G1, below.

C4. Project and Data Type

Publication

PROJECT TYPE	Publication	X

Intend to publish results? (eg article, book, thesis)	Yes	X
	No	

Handbook and peer reviewed journal paper(s)

Data Type

Is DATA to be obtained **primarily**	Quantitative	X	Qualitative	
Is information to be sought by	Questionnaire	X	Interview	
	Experiment		Computer / Online	
	Focus Group		Secondary analysis of data	
	Other	X	Other	X
			If OTHER, please state: Case studies of existing projects involving Mutual Obligation volunteers	

Recording / Observation

If YES, outline what will be recorded or observed below

Will participants be video or audio recorded or photographed?	Yes	
	No	X
If YES, please place a letter 'x' in the relevant response box or boxes	Video	
	Audio	
	Photographed	

C5. Research Method
 Outline of the research method, including what participants will be asked to do

WHO will be recruited? (e.g., students, staff, CEOs, children, members of public)

Local government volunteer managers

SOURCE of participants (e.g., organisation, members of public, University, school)
List of all local governments (via Local Government Volunteer Managers Network mailing list)

RESEARCH METHOD – participants will be asked to:
Complete online questionnaire

RECORDING - Audio / video recording / photographs
n/a

WHERE will each component of the research be conducted? (e.g., University, organisation, private office, public)

University, online, telephone.

C6. Research Objectives
Briefly describe how the information which will be requested from participants addresses the research objectives outlined in item C1(c)

Objective 1 *identify how Local Councils in SA have engaged with these programs in the past*

The questionnaire addresses methods of engagement.

Objective 2 *evaluate current and past projects*

The questionnaire addresses strengths and weaknesses of current and past engagement and other issues arising in the management of Mutual Obligation volunteers compared to other volunteers. We also use case studies to illustrate how these issues affected the outcomes of the projects.

Objective 3 *develop a handbook for dissemination to Local Governments around South Australia*

Analysis of the survey data forms the basis for the content and recommendations in the handbook.

D.   PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

D1. Brief outline of:

A   Identity and Basis for Recruitment
Who will the participants be? What is the basis for their recruitment to the study? What component of the research will each participant group be involved in?

Overtype response here (use table below if useful)

Participant Type	Basis for Recruitment	Component of Research Involved In (e.g, survey, interview, focus group, observations)
LG Volunteer Managers	Role in Local Govt	Survey, advice on current and past projects to identify case studies (via phone or email)

B   Participant Numbers Approached and Population Pool
Please specify the number of people that will be approached (or an approximation if the exact number is unknown) AND the size of the population pool from which participants will be drawn.

Overtype response here (use table below if useful)

Participant Type/Group	Population Pool	Numbers to be approached	Expected / Required No.
LG Volunteer Managers	All Local Govts in SA	68	60

C   Source of Participants
From what source will participants be recruited (e.g., public, department, organisation)?

Overtype response here (use table below if useful)

Participant Type	Source of Participants
	Local Government Volunteer Managers Network and LG Association

D	**Conflict of Interest** **For all researchers, please indicate whether or not there is a conflict of interest.** Please specify whether any of the researchers involved in the project have any role, or relation to, the source from which participants will be recruited (e.g., organisation). Please indicate whether a possible conflict of interest may exist (financial or other interest or affiliation. For example; doctor/patient; employer/employee; lecturer/student; collegial relationship; recruitment of friends and/or family; other. If a possible conflict of interest may exist, please explain how this will be managed using an approach that will minimise any possible perceptions of obligation and/or pressure to participate.

Researcher(s) Name (ALL Researchers)	Possible conflict of interest? Please provide a considered response of whether there is or isn't a possible conflict of interest. **If YES, please consider and explain how this will be managed.**
Melanie Oppenheimer	n/a
Lisel O'Dwyer	n/a

E	**Participant Age** Will any participants be less than 18 years of age? IF YES, please indicate the age range or potential participants and confirm whether information has been presented in a manner and format appropriate to the age group of participants.

Yes	
No	X

Please note: that 17 year old Flinders University students may participate in research without parental consent providing the project is deemed to be low risk by the SBREC. Participants recruited outside of the University under the age of 18-years will require parental consent unless a compelling argument can be made to the Committee.

Age range of each participant type / group	Information presented in a manner / format appropriate to age group and participants? Yes/No
Early 20s – late 60s (typical working age in management level role)	Yes

F	**Informed Consent** Do participants have the ability to give informed consent? Yes If YES, please explain how participants will indicate willingness to be involved (e.g., completion of questionnaire, return of consent form etc). Completion of questionnaire, response to email/phone calls. If NO, please explain why not. If participants will be aged under 18 indicate whether they will be given the opportunity to *assent* to research participation (e.g., sign parental consent form).

D2. Cultural and/or Religious Background
Indicate whether the participant group will be comprised of people from a specific cultural or religious background (for example, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, Greek people, etc) OR if any such categories are likely to form a significant proportion of the population to be sampled.

n/a

D3. Language
Will there be any issues with language? If YES, please explain what the issues are and whether information will need to presented in a language other than English.

Please also indicate whether anyone other than the researcher will be involved in translation of participant responses. If YES, explain how anonymity and confidentiality matters will be managed.

Yes	
No	X

If YES, explain what the issues are and whether information will need to be presented in a language other than English

n/a

WHO will translate information and how will anonymity and confidentiality matters be managed if translation will be conducted by someone other than a researcher?

n/a

D4. Participant Contact and Recruitment

A **Contact and Recruitment**
Please provide a detailed explanation of how potential participants will be contacted and recruited. For example, if making direct contact (e.g., face-to-face, in class, telephone) HOW will contact details be obtained and how will participants indicate their willingness to be involved in the project?

Initial contact will be made via letter with telephone or email follow up – contact details are available on each Council's website. All Council websites are listed at https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=210.

Willingness to be involved will be evident from completion of the questionnaire (as in Part F, Section D1)

<table>
<tr><td>B</td><td>**Verbal Script**
If potential participants will be approached directly (e.g., face-to-face, in class, on telephone) please provide a verbal script of what will be said by researchers or a third party who will recruit on the researcher's behalf.

The Committee recognises that a verbal script cannot predict all the possible responses or questions from potential participants and does not expect that the researcher will read directly from it during interaction with participants as this would impede open and natural communication. The verbal script should be an explanation of the key points that will be communicated to participants during contact and recruitment so that the Committee can be confident that participants will receive a complete picture of what the research entails to ensure that informed consent can be given</td></tr>
</table>

n/a

<table>
<tr><td>C</td><td>**Email Text**
If potential participants will be approached via email, provide the text that will be emailed.
If participants will be contacted via email please provide the text that will be used in the email sent to potential participants to ensure that informed consent can be given.

Important – email text for student projects should be written by the supervisor to act as a Letter of Introduction for the student.</td></tr>
</table>

Letter of Introduction (on Flinders letterhead and/or emailed)

Dear x

Flinders University has been funded by the Local Government Association (SA) to examine the management issues associated with volunteers in local government who are involved in volunteering through mutual obligation requirements. All Volunteer Managers in SA Councils are invited to assist in this work by completing a short questionnaire on your views and experiences with managing this particular group of volunteers, with the aim of developing a handbook on mutual obligation policy in Local Government in South Australia. This work also forms part of the South Australian Volunteering Strategy.

The research is being undertaken by Professor Melanie Oppenheimer from the Flinders University School of History and International Relations and Dr Lisel O'Dwyer from the School of Social and Policy Studies, both of whom are members of the State Volunteering Strategy Working Group on proactively adapting volunteer management through continuous improvement (see http://www.savolunteeringstrategy.org.au/Working-Group04). An information sheet has also been provided (attached).

Please go to www.surveymonkey.xxxxxx at your convenience to complete a short questionnaire on the challenges and opportunities in managing mutual obligation volunteers in your Council. The survey will be "live" until January 11, 2016. If you would prefer a hard copy of the survey to posted, or an electronic copy to be emailed, please contact Dr Lisel O'Dwyer on 0412 199 385 or by email lisel.odwyer@flinders.edu.au. Similarly, if you have any queries or would like to discuss this project further, please contact Dr O'Dwyer.

Your responses are confidential and no identifying information will be disclosed in any resulting publications.

This study has been approved the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee.

We appreciate your time in helping with this research!

Kind regards

Prof Melanie Oppenheimer

Dr Lisel O'Dwyer

D5. Information given to participants

What information will be given to participants? For example, the letter of introduction, information sheet, consent form, survey, debriefing or feedback information. Please clearly outline when this information will be provided to potential participants.

Please note

- that letters of introduction, information sheets and consent forms must be provided before a decision is made on whether or not to participate.

- a full Information Sheet is required for all questionnaire studies. Half-page condensed versions will not be accepted.

What information will be given to participants and/or recruiting organisations?	**When** will information be given to participants?	Info given prior to a decision being made about participation?
Letter/email of introduction	Early December	Yes
Information sheet	Early December (attached to letter/email)	Yes

D6. Direct Recruitment Approaches

Does recruitment involve a direct personal approach to potential participants (e.g., face-to-face, classroom, telephone) by the researchers or by other parties/organisations to be involved in contact and recruitment?

Yes	
No	X

If YES, how will the researchers address any real, or perceived, coercion felt by potential participants?

n/a

D7. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Indicate any confidentiality and anonymity assurances to be given to potential participants and explain the procedures for obtaining free and informed consent of participants for each component of the research (e.g., survey, interview, focus group etc).

Please note that where the sample size is very small, it may be impossible to guarantee participant anonymity and confidentiality. Participants involves in such projects should be clearly advised of this limitation in the Information Sheet.

Answer YES or NO to the questions in the box below
If you answer 'Yes' or 'No' to any questions, please ensure that potential participants are advised accordingly in the Information Sheet to ensure informed consent can be obtained.

	Research Component? (e.g., survey, interview etc)	Info given prior to a decision being made about participation?	Participation Confidential?	If relevant, will lecturer / topic coordinator know who has participated?
Component 1	Yes		Yes	n/a
Component 2	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a
Component 3				
Component 4				

Note: To add more 'component' rows press 'tab' at the end of the last row.

D8. **Permissions**
Indicate any permissions that may need to be sought to conduct the research, recruit specific people, access existing data sets or post advertising material and attach correspondence requesting permission AND granting permission. If this correspondence is not yet available please respond that a copy will be submitted to SBREC on receipt. For example, permission may need to be sought from parents or guardians, teachers, school principals, DECD, Head of School, organisational Head to recruit employees, Head of a University department or school, data custodians, community organisations etc).

Please note that permissions should be sought, in the first instance, from the Chief Officer or Head of the peak organisation or governing body unless adequate justification can be provided that contextual circumstances require a different approach.

Please note for class projects where permission letters are required to conduct the research, permission letters will need to be provided for every student.

	Permission will be sought from:	Permission **request** attached?	Correspondence **granting** permission attached?

D9. **Incidental People**
Indicate whether anyone may be incidentally involved in the research (e.g., members of the public, colleagues, family members, children etc). In certain professional studies consideration may need to be given how such people will be informed about the research and how consent may be obtained for their incidental involvement. An oral statement given to a person / group incidentally involved prior to the commencement of the research may be sufficient.

n/a

D10. **Time Commitment**
Indicate the expected time commitment(s) by participants AND the proposed location(s) for every component of the research (e.g., survey, interview, focus group, observation). This information should be clearly conveyed to potential participants in the Letter of Introduction and/or Information Sheet.

Component of Research (e.g., questionnaire, interview)	Expected Time Commitment	Proposed Location
Questionnaire	15 - 20 minutes	Workplace

E. RESEARCH CONDUCTED OVERSEAS

E1. **Recruitment of Overseas Participants**
Will any participants be recruited from overseas or will the research be conducted outside of Australia? Please note that regardless of the physical location of the researcher, if participants recruited will be *located* overseas the NHMRC considers it to be 'overseas' research.

Yes	
No	X

F.	SPECIFIC ETHICAL MATTERS

F1. Project Value and Benefits
Outline the value and benefits of the project to the participants, the discipline, the community etc.

The results and analysis and recommendations for successful management strategies will be provided to the Councils to help their future management of Mutual Obligation volunteers. The field of volunteering research and social policy will benefit by greater understanding of the motivations and characteristics of a relatively new group of volunteers The community benefits by gaining volunteers doing community work who are better supported to do that work.

F2. Burdens and/or Risks
Notwithstanding the value and benefits of the project (listed above), outline any possible burdens and/or risks of the project for research participants, researchers and incidental people (e.g, possible identification, disclosure of illegal activity, transport of participants, conducting research in participants homes, participant distress etc).

If illegal activities may be disclosed by participants during the course of the research please explain how this will be managed and clarify whether the researcher is a mandated reporter. Please note that even if a researcher is not a mandated reporter that researchers could be held criminally liable if they fail to disclose information to authorities relating to serious indictable offences (e.g., murder, rape child abuse) under S241 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act of South Australia.

None

F3. Management of Burdens and/or Risks
IF any issues were raised in item F2 (above), explain **how the researcher will respond** to each identified burden and/or risk.

IMPORTANT

- Psychological Considerations
  If there is any possibility that research participation may cause some participants to experience emotional discomfort (e.g., anxiety, distress, embarrassment) the Committee recommends that contact details of free support services (e.g., counselling, Life Line) are included in the Information Sheet to be provided to respondents prior to a decision being made about whether or not to participate.

- Safety Protocols
  If any research will be conducted in (a) the home of a participant or (b) in a politically unstable area an explanation of the safety protocols to be used to protect the safety of the researcher will need to be provided. For example, if conducting research in a participant's home applicants could (a) take another researcher or assistant with them if possible; (b) take a mobile phone that is easily accessible and/or (c) arrange to have telephone contact with a colleague / supervisor before and after visiting a participant's home.

- Illegal Activities
  If the researcher(s) are mandated reporters or it is possible that illegal activities could be uncovered or disclosed, participants should be advised in the Information Sheet that although information will be treated with the strictest confidence by the researcher, that disclosure of information either must be reported to relevant authorities or cannot be safe from legal search and seizure.

n/a

F4. Concealment
Will the true purpose of the research **be concealed** from participants?

Yes	
No	X

If **YES**, outline the rationale for, and provide details of, the concealment.

Overtype response here.

F5.	Feedback and/or Debriefing
	Describe any feedback or debriefing (regarding any 'concealment' listed in item F4) to be provided to participants that may be relevant to the research, including <u>how</u> participants will be informed of any deliberate deception or concealment. Please provide copies of any information to be provided to participants.

n/a

F6.	Questionnaires
	If participants will be required to complete a questionnaire indicate what the arrangements will be for the secure and confidential return of questionnaires to the researcher (e.g., sealable self-addressed envelope, collection by researcher or someone other than researcher, secure collection box etc).
	Please also indicate <u>how</u> participants will be informed of the arrangement (e.g., verbal instruction, information sheet, information listed at end of questionnaire etc).

WHO will distribute the questionnaire / survey to participants?

Participants will be emailed the link to the online survey.

HOW will participants return completed questionnaires / surveys?

The completed survey will be stored and returned electronically.

WHO will collect completed questionnaires / surveys?

Dr Lisel O'Dwyer

HOW will participants be informed of the arrangements?

Arrangements are described in the Information Sheet.

F7.	Participant Reimbursement
	Is it the intention of the researcher to reimburse participants? Refer to the Application Submission Guide available from the SBREC Guidelines, Forms and Templates web page for guidelines on participant reimbursement.

Yes	
No	X

If **YES**, how much <u>or</u> what will participants be given as a reimbursement? Please also provide a justification for the amount or item provided as reimbursement.

F8.	Data Transcription
	Indicate whether data may need to be **transcribed.** If **YES**, please indicate **who** will transcribe the data (e.g, researcher(s), secretarial assistance, professional transcription company). If anyone other than the researcher(s) will transcribe data, confirm whether they will be asked to sign a **confidentiality agreement**, a template for which is available from the SBREC Submission Forms, Guidelines and Templates webpage.

n/a

F9.   Participant Control of Data

Indicate what control participants <u>will have</u> in the immediate reporting and future use of data collected for the purposes of the research. <u>Will</u> participants have the ability to view individual transcripts (if relevant) and/or the final report for comment and/or amendment prior to publication? If **YES**, explain how participants will be given this access and/or opportunity in the Information Sheet.

n/a

F10.   DATA STORAGE AND RETENTION

Note that the data should be retained in accordance with the <u>Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research</u> and <u>Flinders University policy</u>.

F10(a) **Data Transmission Protocols**
During the research project:

What protocols will be used for the secure transmission of data (if required) to e.g., transcribers, interpreters or other members of research team?	The data does not identify individuals nor contain sensitive information so can be transmitted via USB sticks or emails.
If transcription or interpreter services will be used will the data received be deleted by transcribers / interpreters on completion of services?	

F10(b) **Data Type**
On completion of the project, data will be stored:

In writing		On Flinders University computer server	**X**
On audio tape/CD		On video tape/DVD	
Other (please indicate):			

The Committee advises that, unless written transcriptions have been reviewed and agreed to by participants, audio tapes should be retained as they may be required for the verification of results and/or secondary data analysis.

F10(c) **Data De-identification**
Will data be stored in a de-identified form?

Yes	X
No	

If **YES**, please confirm whether this means:	
that the data <u>cannot</u> in any way be linked to an individual or organisation (non-identifiable data); **OR**	x
that the data has had all identifying information removed but the means still exists to <u>re-identify</u> an individual and/or organisation (re-identifiable data).	x

F10(d)	**Data Storage Location**
	Clarify where the data will be stored securely. Wherever possible, research data should be held in the researcher's department or other appropriate institutional repository, however researchers are permitted to hold copies of research data for their own use, and for data to be stored in locations other than Flinders University.
	If data <u>will not</u> be stored at Flinders University, explain why and indicate where and how long it will be stored for in accordance with the retention periods listed below (*see Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research, paragraph 2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3*).

Data will be stored with password protection on Dr O'Dwyer's PC at Flinders University.

F10(e)	**Data Retention Period**
	Data will be stored securely at location listed above for:

	At least <u>12-months</u> after the completion of the project if the research project is for assessment purposes only, such as class research projects completed by <u>all</u> students. *Note: Applies to research projects which include a whole topic list of students on one application, not for projects that include one or a few student researchers.*
X	At least <u>five years</u> from the date of publication
	At least <u>seven years</u> if the research involves a South Australian Government Department from the date of publication
	<u>Permanently</u> if data relates to work that has a community or heritage value, preferably within a national collection

G.   OTHER MATTERS

G1.   Other Ethics Committees
Indicate any other centres involved in this research AND/OR any other Ethics Committee(s) being approached for approval of this project including the approval status of each. If copies of approvals cannot be provided at the time of application submission <u>please confirm</u> that copies of all approvals will be submitted to the Committee on receipt.

IMPORTANT
Please note that Flinders University now accepts ethics approvals for social and behavioural research projects from external / non-Flinders Human Research Ethics Committees that are registered with the NHMRC, without further scrutiny. Therefore, in such cases, approval from the Flinders SBREC is not required. However, a copy of the application (with attachments) and final approval notice must be provided to the SBREC Executive Officer via email to human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Full information is provided on the Applying for Human Ethics Approval SBREC web page.

n/a

G2.   Funding

G2(a)	Has funding been received / applied for? If **YES** answer <u>all</u> the questions below.

Yes	X
No	

G2(b)	Is the funding that has been received / applied for from an <u>internal</u> (i.e., Flinders University) or <u>external</u> (non-Flinders) funding source (e.g., ARC, NHMRC, etc)?

Internal	
External	**X**

G2(c)	List how much funding has been received / applied for <u>and</u> the name of the relevant funding body (e.g., ARC, NHMRC, etc).

	$ Funding received / applied for	Funding Body
	$20,000	Local Government Association

G2(d)	List the *grant* application or award number (if known) <u>and</u> the *grant* project title (as provided in the funding application).

	GRANT Project Number (e.g. for ARC / NHMRC, etc)	GRANT Project Title
	n/a	Managing mutual obligation 'volunteers' within local government: challenges and opportunities for South Australia

G2(e)	If funding has been applied for (or received), please declare any affiliation or financial interest that any researchers listed in the application may have.

n/a

> **G3. Attachment Checklist**
> Copies of the following supporting materials applicable to this research project <u>must</u> be attached to this application. See the SBREC Submission Forms, Guidelines and Templates web page for template participant documents.

		Attached	Not applicable
Recruitment advertisement (e.g., flier, online text, newspaper ad text etc)	n/a		**X**
Letter of Introduction (from the principal researcher)	Attached (see Section D4 Part C)		
Information Sheets for participants	Attached	**X**	
Research Tools Survey / Questionaire	Attached	**X**	

G4.   Research Involving or Impacting on Indigenous Australians
Does this research involve or impact on Indigenous Australians?

If so, a copy of your application will be forwarded by the SBREC Executive Officer to the Yunggorendi First Nations Centre for Higher Education and Research. for comments and recommendations, which will be incorporated into the Committee's response.

Yes	
No	X

H.   CERTIFICATION and SIGNATURES

The Researcher and/or Supervisor whose signature appears below certifies that they accept responsibility for the conduct of this research with regard to all conditions specified by the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee, and that they will not commence the relevant research until final ethics approval is granted.

By submitting this application, the applicant(s) agree to comply with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and are expected to be familiar with their responsibilities under each document.

Research Involving Children or Vulnerable Adults

Please note that if your research involves contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, you must have a current Criminal History / Screening Check in place prior to commencing the relevant research, which must be valid for the duration of the proposed study.

Please submit a copy of your Criminal History / Screening clearance to human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au, when available.

Does your proposed research involve you, or any member of your research team, in undertaking any activities involving children or vulnerable adults?		*Place the letter 'X' in the relevant box* Yes
	X	No

Translations

Does your proposed research require documentation to be translated into another language?		*Place the letter 'X' in the relevant box* Yes
	X	No
		n/a

If YES, I/we, whose signature(s) appear(s) below, certify that copies of all participant documents provided represent an accurate translation of the English versions provided to the Committee.

As a condition of subsequent approval of this protocol, I/we, whose signature(s) appear(s) below, undertake to:

(i)   inform the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee, giving reasons, if the research project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

(ii)   report anything which might warrant review of ethical approval of the protocol including:
  ◆ serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants;
  ◆ proposed changes in the protocol (method, changes in recruitment processes etc);
  ◆ any changes in the research team; and
  ◆ unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

(iii)   provide progress reports annually, and/or a final report on completion of the study, outlining:
  ◆ progress to date, or outcome in the case of completed research;
  ◆ maintenance and security of data;
  ◆ compliance with the approved protocol;
  ◆ compliance with any conditions of approval; and
  ◆ will request an extension of time if required <u>prior</u> to the ethics approval expiry date.

A pro forma is available from the Managing Your Ethics Approval section of the SBREC web site.

Principal Researcher's Signature: **Date:11/11/15**

Principal Researcher's Signature: **Date:11/11/15**

SUBMISSION Instructions
Please email one signed PDF electronic copy of your ethics application (including all relevant attachments) to the Executive Officer at human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au. PLEASE NOTE that applications received after the closing dates listed in the Meeting Schedule on the SBREC Applying for Human Ethics Approval web page will be held over to the following meeting. (However, applications submitted and reviewed as low/negligible risk are not subject to these closing dates.)

INFORMATION SHEET

(for Volunteer Managers, Supervisors and Officers

Managing mutual obligation 'volunteers' within local government: challenges and opportunities for South Australia

Researchers:

Professor Melanie Oppenheimer

School of History and International Relations

Flinders University

Ph: 8201 2322

Dr Lisel O'Dwyer

School of Social and Policy Studies

Flinders University

Ph: 8201 2985

Description of the study:

This study is part of the project entitled 'Managing mutual obligation 'volunteers' within local government: challenges and opportunities for South Australia'. This project will investigate how volunteer managers in local government handle this type of volunteer when they are directed to volunteer programs rather than Work for the Dole projects. The project is funded by the Local Government Association's Research and Development Scheme and supported by the Local Government Volunteer Managers Network and Flinders University.

Purpose of the study:

This project aims to produce a handbook (both online and hardcopy) for Local Government Volunteer Managers, Local Councils and the not-for-profit sector detailing how best to engage with the new Australian Government requirements and how to provide meaningful outcomes for both Councils (and other organisations) and individual clients. The handbook will:

- Prepare volunteer managers for managing persons from these distinct groups who may have particular backgrounds, skill levels and motivations, as distinct from other volunteers;

- Identify ways to capitalise on the expected influx of volunteers from these groups

What will I be asked to do?

You are invited to complete an online survey which asks about your management experiences and views about how current and past Work for the Dole and other Mutual Obligation participants have coped with volunteer work. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes. Once all surveys are complete, the information will be statistically and thematically analysed and used to inform the development of the handbook, along with selected case studies of current and past projects. Your participation is voluntary.

What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?

The sharing of your experiences will improve the planning and delivery of future volunteer programs involving both ordinary volunteers and Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation

volunteers. We are very keen to deliver a resource which is as useful as possible to Volunteer Managers.

Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?

We do not need your name and you will be anonymous. Any identifying information will be removed and the final data file will be stored on a password protected computer that only the researchers (Professor Oppenheimer and Dr O'Dwyer) will have access to. Your comments will not be linked directly to you.

Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?

Other group members may be able to identify your contributions even though they will not be directly attributed to you.

The investigators anticipate no risks from your involvement in this study. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the investigator.

How do I agree to participate?

Participation is voluntary. You may answer 'no comment' or refuse to answer any questions and you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time without effect or consequences. Your decision to complete the survey will indicate your consent.

How will I receive feedback?

Outcomes from the survey will be summarised and given to you by the investigators if you would like to see them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.

Online Questionnaire

Thank you for helping us better understand the management and impact of Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation volunteers in your Council.

Work for the Dole participants are persons who are seeking jobs and are placed by WFTD Coordinators in activities where they can give back to the community and gain skills and experience that can help them find a job. Job seekers aged 18– 49 years with full time mutual obligation requirements undertake Work for the Dole as their main activity. Some Work for the Dole participants may be involved in volunteer projects instead of formal Work for the Dole positions.

Please consider only those Work for the Dole participants managed by Volunteer managers and associated staff.

Mutual Obligation participants are persons receiving government support such as Parenting Allowance who are required to give back to the community via other means such as volunteering, and are not participating in Work for the Dole OR are required to participate in volunteering in addition to Work for the Dole.

The first section is about your background as a volunteer manager.

1. What is your age?…….years

2. What is your gender?

    a. Male.....

    b. Female....

    c. GLBTI.........

    d. Prefer not to say……

3. Please indicate your position/title in this

    Council: ....

4. How long have you held this position?

    Years..........

    If less than one year indicate number of months:

    Months………

5. Please indicate if you have any of the following qualifications (can tick more than one)

    a. Completion of Year 12 or equivalent

    b. Certificate ....   Field..........

    c. Diploma .... Field...........

    d. Degree.......   Field...........

    e. Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate........Field..................

    f. Master's degree ....Field..............

    g. PhD........   Field................

    h. Other (please specify)……………

6. Have you completed any training or professional development in volunteer management?

    a.   Yes.......

    b.   No ……..

    c.   No, why not ....

    d.   No, but will in future.... If 6c or 6d ne missing, ask why haven't done training previously

    e.   In progress

    f.   Other (please specify)……..

7. How many Work for the Dole participants do you currently manage in Council related projects?

    a.   ……..persons

8. How many Mutual Obligation volunteers do you currently manage in Council related projects?

    a.   ……..persons

9. How many total volunteers do you currently manage in Council related projects?

    a.   ……..persons

10. Do you record volunteer contributions? (please tick all that apply)

    a.   Yes, record for all volunteers (go to Q11)

    b.   Yes, record for Work for the Dole volunteers (go to Q11)

    c.   Yes, record for Mutual Obligation volunteers (go to Q11

    d.   No (go to Q13)

    e.   Other ………………………………

11. What type of information do you record? (please tick all that apply)

    a.   Number of hours contributed per volunteer.............How many in the last financial year?................

    b.   Number of days per project............ How many in the last financial year?................

    c.   Number of volunteers.................. How many in the last financial year?................

    d.   Number of projects completed................. How many in the last financial year?................

    e.   Number of items (eg trees planted, graffiti tags removed) ....

    f.   Number of people assisted

    g.   Type of tasks completed per person

    h.   Other..

12. How do you use the collected information? (please tick all that apply)

   a. To justify need for ongoing volunteer projects within the Council................

   b. As evidence of impact when seeking outside sources of funding for future volunteering projects................

   c. For use in annual report...............

   d. To show the volunteers or others how much effort went into a project.............

   e. Planning of future projects.............

   f. Other...............................

13. Which of the following reasons explain why you don't record volunteers' contributions ?

   a. Too difficult to keep track...........Why?.................

   b. No point...............

   c. Impossible to record or measure the most important outcomes (eg satisfaction, camaraderie, pleasure in accomplishment)...................

   d. No time to organise or maintain recording.................

   e. No budget to organise or maintain recording...................

14. Where is your Council located:

   a. Metro.......

   b. Rural.........

15. What level of socioeconomic status is your Council's area?

   a. Generally low ....

   b. Mix of areas of higher and lower socioeconomic status...........

   c. Middle.............

   d. Generally high.............

   e. Don't know...............

   f. Other (please explain)
       …………………………………………………………………………..

The next section is about your experience with and views of people who are involved in a volunteering project in your Council through a Work for the Dole or Mutual Obligation arrangement. Include only those Work for the Dole participants who are involved in a project managed or supervised by volunteer managers, coordinators or officers.

16. What proportion of your Council's volunteers are Work for the Dole participants?

   a. N/A...................

   b. Less than 20%........Approximate number.......

   c. 21-40%........... Approximate number.......

   d. 41 – 60%......... Approximate number.......

   e. More than 60%........... Approximate number.......

   f. Don't know……….

17. What proportion of your Council's volunteers are Mutual Obligation participants?

     a.   Less than 20%........ Approximate number.......

     b.   21-40%........... Approximate number.......

     c.   41 – 60%........ Approximate number.......

     d.   More than 60%........... Approximate number......

     e.   Don't know..........

18. Do you think Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation volunteers are generally different from other volunteers ?

Work for the Dole	Mutual Obligation
N/A................	N/A.............
Yes.....(if Yes, go to 17).	Yes.....(if Yes, go to 17).
No......	No......
Don't know......	Don't know......
Other (please specify) ………………………………………… …………………………………………	Other (please specify) ………………………………………… …………………………………………

19. My experience is that people who volunteer through Work for the Dole or Mutual Obligation tend to: (can tick more than one)

Work for the Dole Participants	Mutual Obligation Participants
N/A.......................	N/A...............................
Have good literacy........	Have good literacy........
Have a range of valuable skills.........	Have a range of valuable skills.........
Be able to follow instructions.........	Be able to follow instructions.........
Be as motivated and interested as any other volunteer.............	Be as motivated and interested as any other volunteer.............
Have a good work ethic............	Have a good work ethic............
Work well in a team.............	Work well in a team.............
Are interested in learning a particular skill	Are interested in learning a particular skill
Want particular types of roles.............	Want particular types of roles.............
None of the above..................	None of the above..................
Other (please specify) ………………………………………… …………………………………………	Other (please specify) ………………………………………… …………………………………………

20. Which of the following terms would you say describe the Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation participants you manage?

Work for the Dole	Mutual Obligation
Less educated than other volunteers in your Council............	Less educated than other volunteers in your Council............
More educated than other volunteers in your Council...........	More educated than other volunteers in your Council...........
About the same education levels as other volunteers in your Council............	About the same education levels as other volunteers in your Council............
Not as healthy as other volunteers...................	Not as healthy as other volunteers....................
Healthier than other volunteers.................	Healthier than other volunteers.......................
About as healthy as other volunteers...............	About as healthy as other volunteers...................
Less flexible than other volunteers...................	Less flexible than other volunteers...................
More flexible than other volunteers................	More flexible than other volunteers.......................
About as flexible as other volunteers................	About as flexible as other volunteers...................
Easier to manage than other volunteers in your Council........... Please briefly explain why........................	Easier to manage than other volunteers in your Council........... Please briefly explain why.........................
More difficult to manage than other volunteers in your Council............. Please briefly explain why............................	More difficult to manage than other volunteers in your Council............. Please briefly explain why............................
About the same to manage as other volunteers in you Council	About the same to manage as other volunteers in you Council
Other (please specify)	Other (please specify)
……………………………………………… ……………………………………………… ……………………………………………… ………………………………………………	…………………………………………… …………………………………………… …………………………………………… ……………………………………………

21. On average, how long do the Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation volunteers participate in your Council?

Work for the Dole	Mutual Obligation
N/A	N/A
Less than 3 months.............	Less than 3 months.............
3-6 months.............	3-6 months.............
6-12 months...............	6-12 months...............
More than a year...............	More than a year...............
Varies a lot between different people...............	Varies a lot between different people...............
Don't know..................	Don't know..................

22. Please describe the 3 most positive aspects of managing Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation volunteers.

Work for the Dole	Mutual Obligation
N/A	N/A
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
Don't know	Don't know
None	None
Other (please specify)	Other (please specify) ....

23. Please describe the 3 most challenging aspects of managing Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation volunteers.

Work for the Dole	Mutual Obligation
N/A	N/A
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
Don't know	Don't know
None	None
Other (please specify)	Other (please specify) ....

24. When did the Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation volunteers first join the volunteer projects in your Council? (name the year or approximate year)

Work for the Dole	Mutual Obligation
....	....
Don't know......................	Don't know......................
Other (please specify)	Other (please specify)

25. On a scale of 1-5, how well did your Council manage the specific needs of Work for the Dole participants when the first ones became involved in volunteer based projects?

    Not well 1   2   3   4   5   Very well

    N/A..........Don't know...... ...Other/additional comments......................

26. On a scale of 1-5, how well does your Council manage the specific needs of Work for the Dole participants now?

    Not well 1   2   3   4   5   Very well

    N/A..............Don't know...... Other/additional comments…………………..

27. On a scale of 1-5, how well did your Council manage the specific needs of Mutual Obligation participants when the first ones became involved in volunteer based projects?

    Not well 1   2   3   4   5   Very well

    N/A..........Don't know...... ...Other/additional comments......................

28. On a scale of 1-5, how well does your Council manage the specific needs of Mutual Obligation participants now?

    Not well 1   2   3   4   5   Very well

    N/A..............Don't know...... Other/additional comments…………………..

29. What would improve your ability to manage Work for the Dole participants?

    ....
    ....
    ....

30. What would improve your ability to manage Mutual Obligation participants?

    ....
    ....
    ....

31. Whose responsibility should it be to help Work for the Dole participants prepare for their role? (tick any that you think apply)

Work for the Dole	Mutual Obligation
The individuals themselves.........	The individuals themselves.........
Council.............	Council.............

Commonwealth Government	Commonwealth Government ....
Council and Commonwealth Government............	Council and Commonwealth Government............
Other volunteers.........	Other volunteers.........
Don't know................	Don't know................
Other (please specify)	Other (please specify)
…………………………………………… …………………………………………… ……………………………………………	…………………………………………… …………………………………………… ……………………………………………

32.   What would improve the ability of Work for the Dole participants to cope with or thrive in their roles in your Council?

....
....
....

N/A.........

Don't know……….

33.   What would improve the ability of Mutual Obligation volunteers to cope with or thrive in their roles in your Council?

....
....
....

N/A..................

Don't know.........

34.   When a Work for the Dole placement ends will you offer /have you offered a continuing volunteer role within your council?'

Yes, have done so in the past.........How many people have taken this up?..........

Yes, will do so in future...........

Yes, but depends on the individual.................

No.......Why not?..............................

35.   When a Work for the Dole placement ends will you offer /have you offered a continuing paid position within your council?'

N/A...............

Yes, have done so in the past.........How many people have taken this up?..........

Yes, will do so in future..........

Yes but depends on the individual.............

No.......Why not?…………………………

36. When a Mutual Obligation placement ends will you offer /have you offered a continuing volunteer role within your council?'

N/A...................

Yes, have done so in the past.........How many people have taken this up?..........

Yes, will do so in future..............

Yes but depends on the individual.............

No.......Why not?...............................

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire. We look forward to providing you with guidelines on best practice in managing Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation participants.