

QUEENSLAND TOURISM WORKFORCE CRISIS RESILIENCE & RECOVERY PROJECT

VOLUNTEER RESILIENCE REPORT



QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL

The Voice of Tourism



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OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

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in partnership with The University of Queensland**

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live across Queensland, and recognises their continuing connection to the land, waters and culture. We also pay our respects to all First Nations people, past, present and emerging.

About the Queensland Tourism Industry Council

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is Queensland's peak tourism industry body and the leading advocate for Queensland's tourism and hospitality sector. QTIC represents the interests of the state's more than 60,000 tourism businesses and more than 800 members across Queensland working in all sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry.

QTIC acknowledges the generous contributions to this document made by many QTIC members.

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About The University of Queensland

For more than a century, The University of Queensland has educated and worked with outstanding people to create positive change for society. UQ research has global impact and is delivered by an interdisciplinary community of more than 1,500 researchers at 6 faculties, 8 research institutes and 100+ research centres.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to compare the resilience of tourism volunteers to 'paid' tourism employees, or non-volunteers, based on responses to an Australia wide survey and a follow-up workshop with a firm that manages, accredits, and consults to tourism visitor information centres (VICs). The survey was administered amid-COVID-19, in late 2021, as part of a [Queensland Tourism Workforce Strategy V2: A crisis resilience and recovery plan](#), a project lead by The University of Queensland in partnership with Queensland Tourism Industry Council. The workshop was conducted with six staff of the tourism volunteer firm, in mid-2022, after the survey data were analysed.

The results of the survey show that demographically volunteers differ from non-volunteer (paid employee) respondents. Volunteers are older, predominantly women, and have attained higher levels of education. **Volunteers worked significantly fewer hours** than non-volunteers. Regarding resilience, volunteers are slightly less resilient than non-volunteers. **Volunteers also perceive their organisations as significantly less resilient** than their paid counterparts. In terms of the specific dimensions related to organisational resilience, volunteers identify their organisation's strategic response can be improved when facing change. In terms of **empowerment, volunteers score lower** than the non-volunteer group, specifically self-rating lower on self-efficacy, autonomy, and sense of impact. Given their maturity and higher education levels this is surprising and suggests **organisations under-utilise the potential of their volunteers**. The workshop confirmed these findings.

Volunteers reported better psychological well-being than non-volunteers, with lower scores for depression, anxiety, and stress. This may be attributable to their maturity, their shorter working hours, or to the lack of autonomy (and so responsibility) they are given on-the-job. For volunteers, an aspect of emotional intelligence, **emotional regulation, played a greater role in their psychological well-being** than for the non-volunteer group. For volunteers, a **sense of impact is the most significant predictor of resilience**, suggesting organisations employing volunteers should provide them with more opportunities to make a difference. In comparison, non-volunteers who have higher levels of self-efficacy tend to be more resilient. Furthermore, **volunteers perceiving a strong learning culture in their organisation, are more resilient**. Finally, the temporary relaxation of working hours for student visa holders was the strongest external predictor of volunteer resilience, suggesting the absence of migrant workers negatively impacted volunteer resilience. Results from the workshop identified explicators, and suggestions, for practice - to improve volunteer resilience at the micro (individual) and meso (organisational) levels but could not conclusively explain macro-level impacts.

The findings of this report show that **volunteers are under-utilised** given their potential to contribute to the tourism workforce. Their maturity, education levels and psychological well-being mark **volunteers significant assets at times of crisis**, and they appear **more perceptive of organisational resilience** characteristics than paid employees. However, they report lower levels of empowerment and contributions to organisations. Additional and more consistent training and engagement could improve their self-efficacy, allowing them to work independently more effectively, and potentially enhance their contributions to their host organisations, and destinations. **Improved recruitment, selection, and training of both volunteers and of those that manager them** are key areas for improving volunteer resilience.





INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 and its impacts has been significantly disruptive on Queensland's tourism industry. Aside from the demand-side impacts, COVID-19 has also presented acute workforce challenges. Funded by the Queensland Government's Advance Queensland scheme, this project seeks to find strategies for recovery and resilience through a program of research including extensive consultation with industry groups (employees, operators/senior managers, and stakeholders), sectors (retail, accommodation, and food service) and regions. The ultimate goal is to support a staged recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic impacts and to develop workforce resilience and recovery strategies to weather future external shocks via a [Queensland Tourism Workforce Strategy V2: A crisis resilience and recovery plan](#). The project is led by Dr Richard Robinson, of The University of Queensland, in partnership with Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC). The project is supported by Ms Hongmin (Jess) Yan, a Post-doctoral Research Fellow, and Dr Yawei Jiang, the former post-doc fellow in this project. Prior reports can be accessed [here](#).

In the first year of the project, on which this report is based, there were two key deliverables. Firstly, a total of 15 consultation workshops were conducted, three in each of five RTO regions: Gold Coast, Whitsundays, Tropical North Queensland, Southern Queensland Country and Outback Queensland. This was followed by an **Australia wide survey**, sampling across all tourism groups, including volunteers, aimed to understand the characteristics of the workforce, self-reportage on various **resilience and resilience-related factors**, and finally to consider these resilience and resilience-related factors as a function of the workforce characteristics, three key sectors (accommodation, food service and retail) and explore regional differences. This report focuses on the findings from this survey, by comparing the responses of **volunteers with non-volunteer (or paid) participants**.

QTIC Chief Executive Officer's Foreword

When the global pandemic first hit Australian shores, thousands of skilled employees were forced to leave the tourism industry. With the reopening of borders and the return of travellers, managing a developing labour and skill shortage has become a priority for the tourism sector. Tourism's revitalisation now depends on the attraction and retention of an experienced workforce.

To meet growing consumer demand, it is imperative that QTIC engages in collaborative research opportunities to explore innovative and effective solutions to evolving workforce challenges. Meaningful development can only be achieved through meaningful engagement between industry, government, and research institutions. QTIC's partnership with training and research institutions such as the University of Queensland (UQ) is critical in producing informed and evidence-based solutions to complex industry concerns.

This report is the third in a series, and the first of three that summarises the research UQ and QTIC have partnered on in 2022. The report's focus is on an important, but often overlooked, tourism labour market – volunteers. Volunteers are critical to the staffing of Queensland's visitor information centres, to the delivery of events, and often form a vital staffing component of visitor experiences and destinations.

By investigating the differences between tourism's paid and volunteer workforces concerning resilience and recovery, we hope this report will be a useful resource for those connected to the tourism sector. Understanding the factors that impact the retention and sustainability of a viable workforce is essential



to the success of the tourism sector. The research will also help to inform nuanced and evidence-based decision-making by both government and industry.

My sincere personal thanks go to Associate Professor Richard Robinson for his enormous contributions in researching and authoring this report, and to the many QTIC members who shared their lived experiences and critical insights to support accurate research.

Brett Fraser
Chief Executive Officer
Queensland Tourism Industry Council

METHODS

This report is based on the findings of a survey and a follow up workshop. The survey was administered online via various industry networks, including QTIC and The Tourism Group. The survey at the broadest level had two main aims. The first aim was to collect descriptive information about the tourism workforce’s characteristics, including volunteers, and responses to COVID-19 and various policy interventions and incentives, and market adaptability. The second aim was to test a conceptual model (see Figure 1), to discover what factors contributed to employee and organisational resilience building. In analysis, we extended aim two to examine some of the descriptive factors in combination with the resilience results.

The second study conducted for this report was a workshop with a firm that was contracted to manage, consult to, and accredit visitor information centres (VICs) across Australia. The workshop was facilitated by the project lead, two research assistants provided technical and data gathering support. The participants comprised six staff from the firm. The workshop was facilitated around the presentation of highlights from survey, just described.



Figure 1. Volunteer and Employee Resilience Conceptual Model

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Field data totalling 235 responses were used for analysis. 100% of the volunteer responses were from Queensland (n=103), while the non-volunteer group in the sample also contained respondents from other States (n=132). The below tables compare the basic characteristics of the volunteers in the sample with the non-volunteers in the same sample.

A. Age

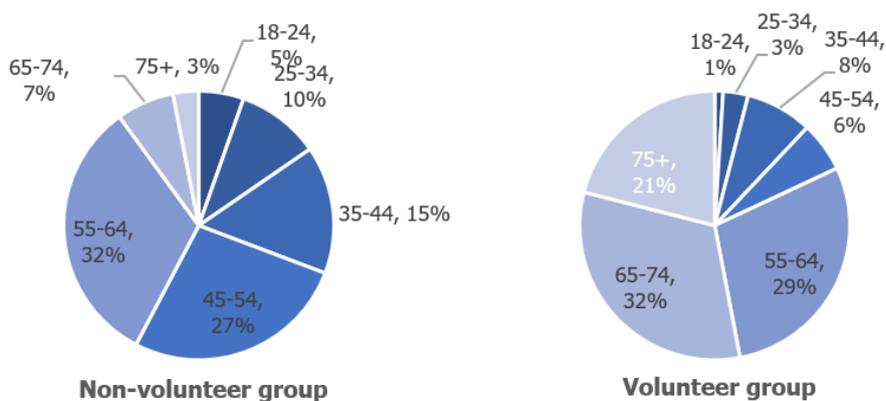


Figure 2: Age distribution

The median age of the volunteer group is 65 years old, while the median of the non-volunteer group is 52 years old. As our sample of non-volunteers attracted many operators, their average age is higher than the general tourism employee population. However, the average age of the volunteers in the sample is generally representative of that sector of the tourism workforce.

B. Gender



Figure 3: Gender distribution

Women are over-represented in the volunteer and non-volunteer groups in the sample, and this is generally representative of the gender split in these tourism workforces.

C. Education

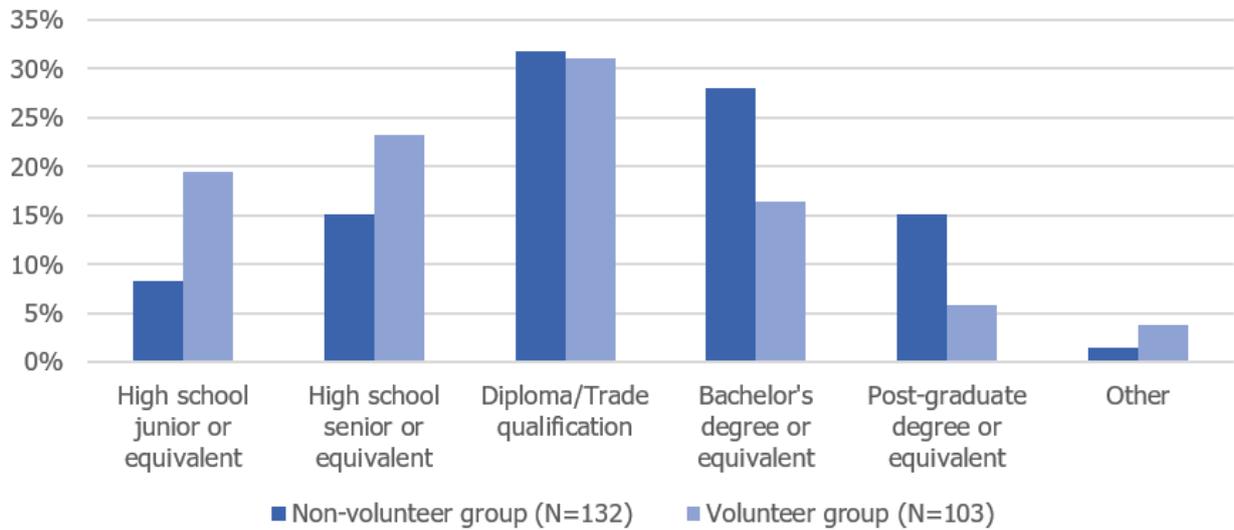


Figure 4: Education levels

The volunteers in the sample have stronger levels of higher educational qualifications than the non-volunteer group and this is consistent with the typical profile of volunteers who tend to be older and better educated than non-volunteers.

D. Working Hours

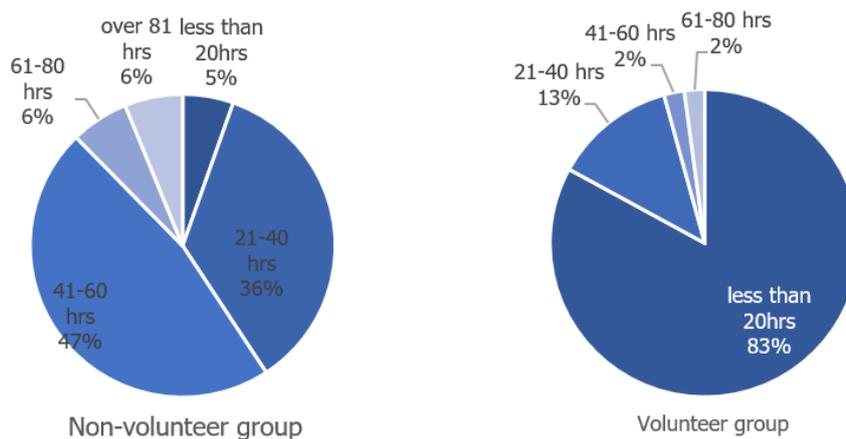


Figure 5: Working hours

There is a significant difference in the weekly working hours between the volunteer group and non-volunteer group. For the volunteers 83% of them worked for less than 20 hours/week. By comparison 35% of non-volunteers worked between 21-40 hours/week, and 47% for 41-60 hours/week.

FINDINGS

A. Perceived Organisational Resilience

Resilience is defined as the 'developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure, or even positive events, progress, and increased responsibility' (Luthans 2002). Compared to the non-volunteer groups (n =132), the volunteer group (n =103) tends to perceive their **organisation as slightly less resilient**. In particular, volunteers consider their **organisation's strategic** responses can be further improved in the face of external changes, including identifying changes, redesigning business strategy to adapt to changing environments, and developing relationships with external stakeholders. These perceptions may be attributable to the types of organisations volunteers work in (e.g., visitor centres) or the volunteer education levels.



Figure 6: Group comparison re resilience

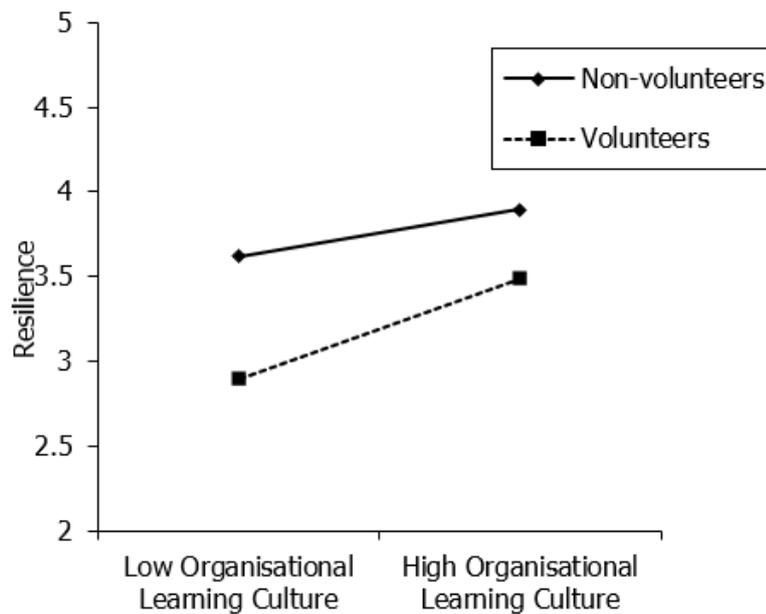


Figure 7: Interaction plot of organisational learning culture and employment type

The simple slope analysis (Figure 7) shows that organisational learning culture has a **stronger positive** effect on resilience for volunteers than for non-volunteers. In other words, working in an organisation, which encourages exploring new ways of working and people can openly discuss mistakes or provide feedback to learn from each other, is generally helpful for promoting employees’ resilience. This beneficial effect is particularly more salient among volunteers. A potential explanation here is that for volunteers, their relationship with the organisation is more social exchange-based than economic exchange based. Thus, a stronger learning culture signals the organisation concerns for their people’s development and learning; this will reinforce volunteers’ trust in the organisation; which in turn motivates them to explore new or improved ways of work to overcome the adversity during a crisis (i.e., being more resilient).

B. Experiences of Empowerment at Work

[Employee] “empowerment is multi-dimensional. It involves the sense of meaning, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact in a workplace context” (Spreitzer, 1995). The study results show that overall, the volunteer group tends to feel less **empowered**. In terms of the specific dimensions of empowerment, compared to non-volunteer groups, volunteers report a **lower level of self-efficacy** (i.e., confidence in one’s ability to get the job done), **autonomy** (i.e., freedom to decide how to get jobs done), **and impact** (i.e., the extent to which the job can influence organisational outcomes).

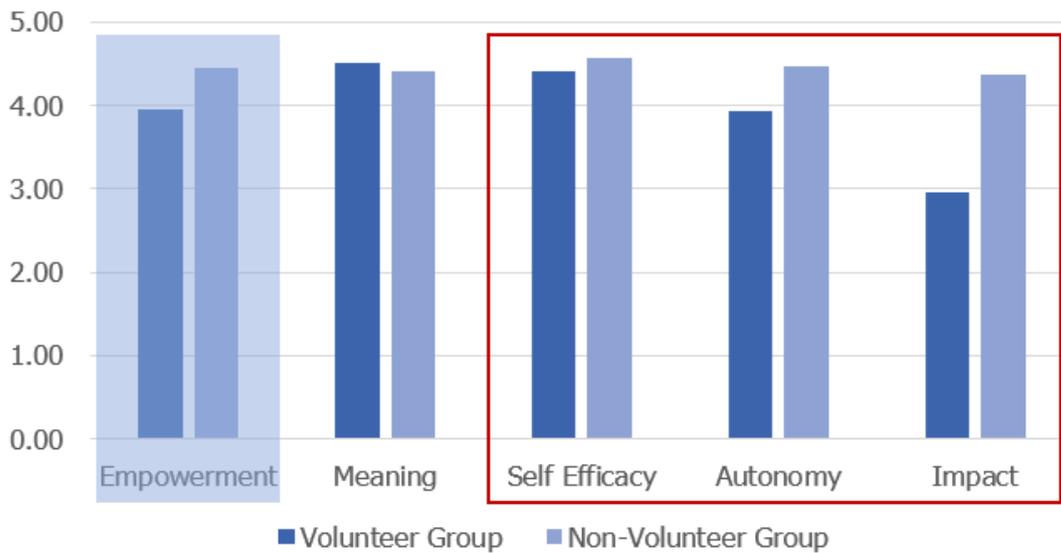


Figure 8: Group comparison re empowerment

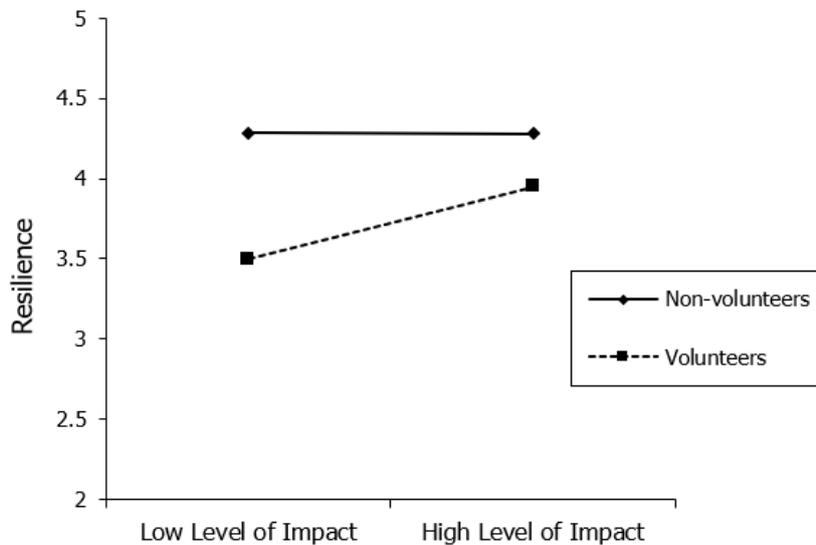


Figure 9: Interaction plot of impact and employment type

The simple slope analysis (Figure 9) shows that, for volunteers, a sense of impact is an important indicator of their resilience. In other words, when volunteers feel they can influence the strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work (i.e., a stronger sense of impact), they are more resilient. This differs from individuals who are employed for paid jobs; their feeling of impact has little impact on their resilience. A potential explanation for such differences is that compared to paid employees who can be extrinsically motivated (e.g., monetary rewards and performance goals), volunteers tend to be more intrinsically motivated (e.g., intrinsic interests and values). So volunteers are more concerned with doing work that can exert positive changes on others. Thus, when volunteers believe what they are doing has minimal influence on the organisation’s functioning, such a perception of uncontrollability can lead to passiveness, rather than seeking to take proactive actions to deal with work-related challenges when confronted with a crisis.

C. Psychological Well-being during COVID-19

For this study we adopted a mental health approach to psychological well-being. Accordingly, we measured respondents' psychological well-being with the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21), which medical practitioners often use to measure the emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress. Regarding participant's psychological well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic, the volunteers report **lower anxiety, depression, and stress** than the non-volunteer group. Further regression analysis shows that this might be attributed to **age** and likely education. Notably, the average age of the volunteer group (63) is significantly higher than the non-volunteer group (49) ($t = -7.46, p < .000$). Thus, the volunteer group, which shows a higher average age, tend to experience less anxiety, depression, and stress.

Furthermore, in addition to the impact of age on psychological well-being, for volunteers, across four dimensions of emotional intelligence (i.e., self-emotion appraisal, others' **emotion** appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion), regulation of emotion plays a more significant role in alleviating stress, anxiety, and depression during COVID-19 pandemic.

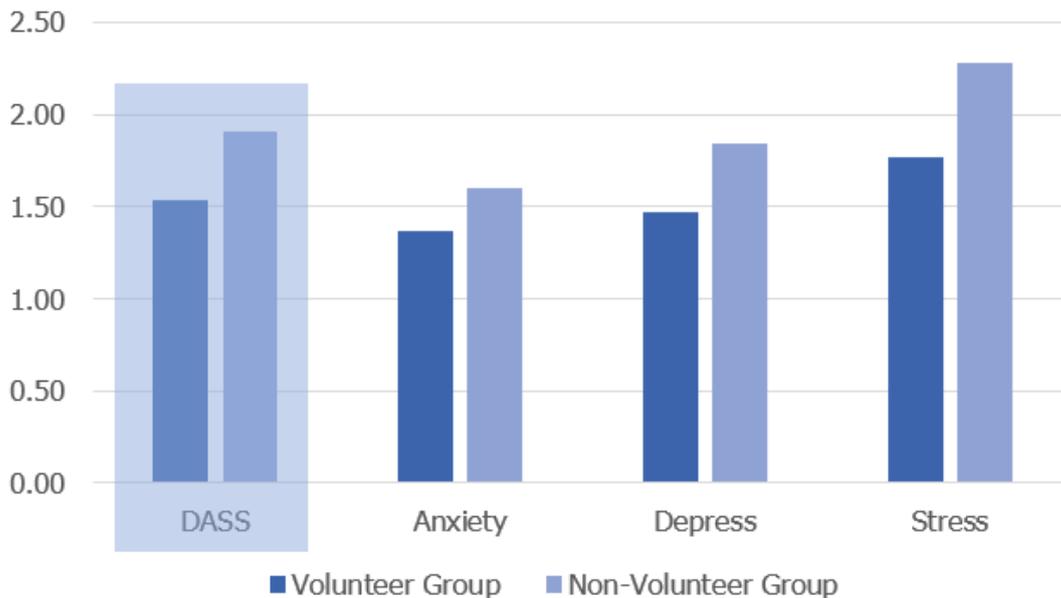


Figure 10: Psychological well-being

D. Antecedents (predictors) of Employee Resilience

In terms of micro-level antecedents, regression analysis shows that across four dimensions of empowerment (i.e., meaning, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact), **a sense of impact** is the most significant dimension predicting resilience. In comparison, non-volunteers, who have a higher level of self-efficacy regarding their jobs, tend to be more resilient.

In term of the meso-level (organisational) antecedents, when volunteers perceive a strong **learning culture** in their organisation, they tend to be more resilient. This differs from the non-volunteer group, where the relationship between learning culture and employee resilience is not significant.



In terms of external support or interventions (e.g., employment support, business support, and market incentives), for volunteer groups, regression results show that the **temporary relaxation of working hours for student visa holders** help to boost employee resilience. In comparison, for non-volunteer groups, the most significant external factor predicting resilience is **boosting cash flow (tax-free) for businesses**.

Antecedents of employee resilience: volunteer vs non-volunteer			
	Micro-level factors	Meso-level factors	Macro-level factors (e.g., external support or intervention)
Volunteer	A sense of impact	Organisational learning culture	Temporary relaxation of working hours for student visa holders
Non-volunteer	Self-efficacy		Boosting cash flow (tax-free) for businesses

Table 1: Antecedents (predictors) of Well-being

E. Industry Consultation

In the final stage of this volunteer-focussed study, we conducted a workshop with a firm that was contracted to manage, consult to, and accredit visitor information centres (VICs) across Australia. VICs are largely staffed by volunteers. The workshop was facilitated by the project lead, two research assistants provided technical and data gathering support, and six staff from the firm comprised the participants. The workshop was facilitated around the presentation of highlights from the survey (as reported earlier in this report), however, to prime discussions preliminary findings from the (15) in-region consultation workshops (conducted in 2021 across Queensland) were provided to the participants to provide their insights on the results. Fuller findings from the consultation are included in the appendix.

E.1. Recruitment and selection process for VICs volunteers

The firm has little direct control over the VICs regarding recruitment and selection – rather holding workshops hoping that the VICs will reach out for advice, but most communications see “more passive”. A complication is that VICs are owned by a single body (e.g., council, or self-owned) and they all have different views. The firm play a mainly accreditation role – and advocates – so has similarities to a peak association. The changes in the selection due to the outbreak of COVID-19 is shown below.



Prior to COVID-19

Channels: newspaper advertisements, airport posters, radio, and other media.

Selection criteria: sought applicants to be qualified in the broadest sense - communication and/or service skills.

Selection criteria: sought applicants to be qualified in the broadest sense - communication and/or service skills.

Reponses: greater in regional areas, with candidates "more accepting" of volunteering in community than in cities.

During COVID-19

Initially, not much change in selection.

Deeper into COVID period, there was less demand for, and on, volunteers - either business closures or temporarily no need to keep volunteers, but also because volunteers stood themselves down due to health and family concerns.

E.2 How does job training & business needs align?

Training for volunteers depends largely on the understanding of managers of VICs. Overall, volunteers are seen as an "easy and cheap" resource. Managers generally lack a consideration of the real needs and value of volunteers. Best practice VICs have induction programs, a buddy system, and a monthly basis rotation, which the firm tries to push. These practices largely depend on the nature and location of the VIC and their roles and responsibilities (e.g., a VIC located in a major transport hub versus a regional small town).

Suggestions regarding business alignment were that volunteers should be treated like staff, not volunteers e.g., noting the particular needs of a VIC and getting the "right people at the right spot". VICs would benefit from proper on-boarding and development programs being in place, e.g., briefings, supervisor training, allowing for volunteer group interactions etc. The objective is to "influence" volunteers not to "make" volunteers, recognising the diversity of skills and experiences they bring to their roles. Volunteers could be empowered and trained (from their direct organisations) to take on more transactional duties, to alleviate the pressure on commercial transactions during the peak seasons.

Nonetheless, VIC models vary a lot and volunteer efficacy depends on creating the right environment and them having advanced skills and coordination. Managers are advised to enquire about more fully, and value volunteers' skills – and support this with the ongoing and regular training.

E.3 Why is volunteer resilience important and what does it look like?

Resilience fostered by:

Feeling valued, belonging, being recognised, and having direction.

These attributes, provide a conducive environment translating resilience into long-term loyalty.

For older volunteers, resilience yielded social benefit and allayed loneliness.

COVID consequences:

Volunteer resilience tested during COVID, leading to attrition.

Reasons included health, & family commitments, or seeking paid work.

Supports include social benefits include morning teas, activities organised by volunteers themselves (e.g., for charity & community fund raisers).



E.4 What are some of the main challenges for volunteer workforces and strategies to address these?

Challenges:

Insurance as policies related to volunteers capped at 85 years.

Most volunteers in the older demographic.

Unreasonable as most volunteer roles lack risk.

Digital literacy challenging for many.

Slow adaption to COVID protocols.

Strategies:

For social distancing take operations outside, change physical layout.

Communicate via online channels & shorter messaging.

Necessitated volunteer training & upskilling/reskilling.

G. Questions and discussion prompted by the survey findings

G.1 What macro-level factors explain resilience?

The research team was perplexed by some of the macro level factors that seemed to predict volunteer resilience. The firm could not provide further concrete insights, however, did suggest student working hours impact on volunteer resilience as they help 'lighten the load', by providing "additional resources". Similarly, internships could take up some capacity. Otherwise, boosting cash flows is immaterial for volunteers as VICs are largely paid by local councils. Although this did not influence the analysis it should be noted that many VICs, and other tourism organisations have a mix of paid and unpaid workers.

The firm suggested that an **exchange program** (possibly sponsored by Tourism Events Queensland or Tourism Australia) could facilitate **mobility of volunteers** who loved to travel as well as work in community

G.2 How might the “sense of impact” and “organisational learning culture” (as a predictor of resilience) finding be explained in the VIC context?

Sense of Impact:

Allow volunteers to “make a difference”, “giving them voice” and to “see their own value/s” – (e.g., in daily protocols & marketing schemes).

Review paid staff remuneration to enhance positive work environment.

Organisational Learning Culture:

Continuous improvement.

Regular quality volunteer training.

Train the trainer, so staff coaches are open-minded and willing to change.

Resources to provide best customer experience.

The firm articulated a direct relationship between ...



Finally, the firm participants at the workshop were asked in an open-ended manner how they, the VICs and volunteers were able to adapt to become resilient, particularly with reference to the COVID-19 impacts. The firm originally pointed out that destinations in which VICs were located often encountered crisis, and that adaptation depended on the type of disaster. As a result, many VICs and the firm, were “not locked into their business models”, allowing for adaptation and change. However, a key strategic enabler of adaptation was that the fundamental product of VICs was **information**. Thus, they were often the first local entity to receive advice, protocols etc. and charged with understanding this information so they could be more responsive and effectively communicate.

Specifically, VICs can play various roles; as a touchpoint for information, communication, and to provide hope to businesses and communities under strain. During the COVID-19 crisis VICs were exposed to new roles and processes e.g., ticketing, check-in procedures etc. As such the crisis potentially opened new doors for collaborations. The role of the firm is to publicly promote and endorse the critical roles VICs play at times of crisis, to aid their sense of belonging in communities and how by their very mandate makes them an early adopter of change and adaptive capacity.

The firm believes that given these characteristics and circumstances, and that VICs have multiple stakeholders and are key players, in times of crisis VICs are not fully utilised nor recognised. VICs are powerful entities in their own right and even though many are individually owned and operated they are equally powerful as a networked community (N=400 across Australia).





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APPENDIX

Topics

Questions and discussion prompted by in-region consultation findings (2021)

Please describe the recruitment and selection process for volunteers in VICs?

Prior to COVID-19 job recruitment channels were newspaper advertisements, airport posters, radio, and other media. The guidelines and selection criteria broadly sought applicants to be qualified in the broadest sense – communication and/or service skills. It seemed responses were greater in regional areas, with candidates “more accepting” of volunteering in community than in cities. As the contractor, the firm sought to encourage advertising VICs and applicants to fulfil as many of the selection criteria as possible, noting that although these were not remunerated positions, there is ideally a formality to follow which ideally led to better “fit and commitment” from the volunteers.

During COVID there was initially not much change in the selection process. Deeper into the COVID period and immediately following there was less demand for, and on, volunteers - either business closures or temporarily no need to keep volunteers, but also because volunteers stood themselves down due to health and family concerns. Currently, there is a shortage of volunteers contributed to by the number of “non-actives” who make rosters look deceptively adequate.

Finally, the firm has little direct control over the VICs regarding recruitment and selection – rather holdings workshops hoping that the VICs will reach out for advice, but most communications see “more passive”. A complication is that VICs are owned by a single body (e.g., council, or self-owned) and they all have different views. The firm play a mainly accreditation role – and advocates – so has similarities to a peak association.

How does job training & business needs align?

Training for volunteers depends largely on the understanding of managers of VICs. Overall, volunteers are seen as an “easy and cheap” resource. Managers generally lack a consideration of the real needs and value of volunteers. Best practice VICs have induction programs, a buddy system, and a monthly basis rotation, which the firm tries to push. These practices largely depend on the nature and location of the VIC and their roles and responsibilities (e.g., a VIC located in a major transport hub versus a regional small town).

Suggestions regarding business alignment were that volunteers should be treated like staff, not volunteers e.g., noting the particular needs of a VIC and getting the “right people at the right spot”. VICs would benefit from proper on-boarding and development programs being in place, e.g., briefings, supervisor training, allowing for volunteer group interactions etc. The objective is to “influence” volunteers not to “make” volunteers, recognising the diversity of skills and experiences they bring to their roles. Volunteers could be empowered and trained (from their direct organisations) to take on more transactional duties, to alleviate the pressure on commercial transactions during the peak seasons.

Nonetheless, VIC models vary a lot and volunteer efficacy depends on creating the right environment and them having advanced skills and coordination. Managers are advised to enquire about more fully, and



value, volunteers' skills – and support this with the ongoing and regular training required to know and value volunteers.

Why is volunteer resilience important and what does it look like?

The firm reported that volunteers feeling valued, belonging, being recognised, and having direction fostered resilience. VICs that make volunteers feel these attributes and provide a conducive environment will help translate resilience into long-term loyalty. The participants also suggested resilience yielded social benefit and allayed loneliness – key issues for elderly in regional areas.

Positive supports to enhance these social benefits included morning teas, activities organised by volunteers themselves, for example fund raisers for charity and community causes. Resilience of volunteers tested during COVID, leading to dropouts. Reasons included health, and family commitments, find other volunteer opportunities (filling more pressing community needs) or seeking paid work (due to economic concerns).

What are some of the main challenges for volunteer workforces and strategies to address these?

Insurance is a growing problem, but specifically policies related to volunteers are capped at 85 years of age. Given most volunteer roles lack risk (if any at all) and the aged make up a significant percentage of that workforce this is a major constraint. Embracing change and digital literacy are also a major issue, with many volunteers slow to adapt to COVID protocols (e.g., social distancing, check-in QR codes).

Some strategies undertaken to work around these challenges included taking VIC operations outside, which necessitated different volunteer skillsets. Some VICs changed their layout to work around social distancing, and others amplified their online presence (with volunteers involved), e.g., online chats. The firm increasingly changed the way it communicated with VICs e.g., zoom meetings and shorter messaging. This however required upskilling/reskilling of volunteers – and the legacy is that some roles have changed slightly post-COVID.

Questions and discussion prompted by the survey findings (2021)

What Macro-level factors explain resilience?

The research team was perplexed by some of the macro level factors that seemed to predict volunteer resilience. The firm could not provide further concrete insights, however, did suggest student working hours impact on volunteer resilience as they help 'lighten the load', by providing "additional resources". Similarly, internships could take up some capacity. Otherwise, boosting cash flows is immaterial for volunteers as VICs are largely paid by local councils. Although this did not influence the analysis it should be noted that many VICs, and other tourism organisations have a mix of paid and unpaid workers.

How might the "sense of impact" (as a predictor of resilience) finding be explained in the VIC context?

The firm suggested that empowerment of volunteers equated to impact, but that this was likely restricted in VICs despite an "I can make a difference" need with volunteers. Suggestions to promote a sense of impact were "giving them voice" and allowing volunteers to "see their own value/s" – captured in marketing schemes like Daymakers. Looking at appropriate remuneration for paid staff would promote a



positive environment and positive outlooks conducive to preconditions for sense of impact and articulating a good purpose in helping people.

Further suggestions to improve sense of impact including targeted training to promote areas of potential meaningful influence for volunteers. It was suggested that COVID-19 may have directly adversely impacted volunteers, e.g., housing crisis or volunteers lost their houses in regional areas, thus distracting their focus.

How might the “organisational learning culture” (as a predictor of resilience) finding be explained in the VIC context?

The firm reported that as a proxy for learning cultures VICs do have goals and processes in place, and these processes and activities make sense as part of the bigger picture (organisationally and within an environmental context). Nonetheless, a culture of continuous improvement should be more actively fostered, not specifically relating to what volunteers are trained/taught, but better ways to learn. Also, a good organisational learning culture gives volunteers the resources to provide best experience for customers, which can in return make them more confident at workplace. Managers being the direct learning coach for volunteers need to be the right person for them to consult, with the attributes of open-minded and willing to change. Other suggestions for improvement included treating volunteers like staff, giving volunteers a voice, embrace them (fostering a sense of belongingness), and invest in them by providing additional resources, for instance.

The firm articulated a direct relationship between an organisational learning culture > sense of impact > resilience.

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