

January 2020

## **Spontaneous Emergency Volunteering Frequently asked questions (FAQs)**

For more information please contact Volunteering SA&NT  
T (08) 8221 7177 E [reception@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au](mailto:reception@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au) W [www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au](http://www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au)

Volunteering SA&NT manages the authorised registration of people wanting to volunteer in the community in the recovery phase of an emergency.

Volunteering is a very good way to help in times of need, but it is important to be mindful that the needs and readiness of impacted people and communities always comes first. Turning-up in disaster impacted areas is not in anyone's interest, can be unsafe, and be a drain on critical resources and infrastructure.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Spontaneous Emergency Volunteer.

### **What is a Spontaneous Emergency Volunteer?**

In an emergency, Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers (volunteers) are people wanting to assist in the recovery phase of an emergency. They may be a first time volunteer and not affiliated with any not-for-profit organisation or charity.

Communities rely on skilled volunteers to assist in emergencies (such as bushfires, floods, cyclones and vehicle accidents). These volunteers generously and spontaneously offer to lend a hand to help the community in recovery operations following an emergency.

Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers may come from either inside or outside the affected areas and everyone is welcome to register. Spontaneous emergency volunteers may:

- be motivated by a sudden desire to help others in times of emergencies;
- have no formal training in emergency response;
- have a variety of skills, experience and availability.

### **Why would I register?**

There are four main reasons why we encourage you to register.

1. In times of emergencies, people often tend to feel helpless and want to help where they can.
2. Volunteering gives people a sense of purpose and can help with their overall health and wellbeing.
3. It enables us to find volunteers more efficiently and effectively with the right skills, at the right time, to priority areas of need, when it is safe to do so.
4. Everyone's personal safety is important and you could even unintentionally hinder some aspects of the overall recovery effort by turning up to help unannounced.

## How do I register?

Please register your interest to become a Spontaneous Emergency Volunteer either through the [FREE WeDo App](#) or via the [Volunteering SA&NT website](#).  
[www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au](http://www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au) (search WeDo or Spontaneous emergency volunteering)

Following the emergency, Volunteering SA&NT will advertise for Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers for the recovery phase through a range of mediums, including [Department of Human Services State Recovery Office](#), social media (search Volunteering SA&NT), radio and newspapers etc.

If you need to update or change your registrations details, please contact Volunteering SA&NT on (08) 8221 7177 or [Email](mailto:reception@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au) reception@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au

## What happens next?

Volunteering SA&NT will provide regular updates by email or mobile. We work in collaboration with the State Recovery Office, volunteer-involving organisations, recovery agencies and other organisations. It takes everyone time to work out how to most effectively use volunteers. The recovery phase can take a number of weeks, months or even years so matching volunteers with recovery activities also takes time.

We cannot guarantee that all registered Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers will be contacted as this depends on the number of people who may register to volunteer, the skills best suited to support the recovery activities, and the requests we receive from disaster recovery management authorities and other organisations.

In the meantime please support family, friends, neighbours and other members of your local community. There are other ways to [support communities and groups](#) who have been impacted by the bushfires in South Australia. ([www.cityofadelaide.com.au](http://www.cityofadelaide.com.au) search bushfire recovery)

## What is expected of a Spontaneous Emergency Volunteer?

When you sign up as a volunteer, along with your rights, you also have responsibilities to your organisation. [Volunteer rights and responsibilities](#) [www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au](http://www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au) (search Volunteer rights and responsibilities)

As a Spontaneous Emergency Volunteer helping in the recovery phase it is expected that you will:

- follow the instructions issued by all authorities
- be flexible and reasonable in working with your team
- treat everyone with respect and courtesy
- take responsibility for your own health and safety and not put at risk the health and safety of others
- participate in training, briefings or coaching necessary to your voluntary duties
- take responsibility for staying informed
- use information gained in the course of your volunteer work with sensitivity and discretion and observe confidentiality and privacy requirements.

## Can I claim out-of-pocket expenses?

Organisations are not legally required to reimburse volunteers for out of pocket expenses such as travel. While some organisations have a policy that provides this type of reimbursement, others are not in a financial position to do so. Please check with individual organisations.