

2016 Volunteer Survey

Moving ahead – our next steps

Thank you to all of the QFES volunteers who took the time to participate in this year's survey. Your important feedback will help shape a number of initiatives across the department that will better-support our workforce, both volunteer and paid, moving forward.

Developing the QFES Volunteerism Strategy

From recruitment and retention initiatives, to training and volunteering opportunities, the framework for our QFES Volunteerism Strategy will help shape our department and allow it to better-meet the challenges of the future and in turn, the needs of the community.

The strategy will be built upon our department's principles including that we:

- ◆ are community-based and community-focused
- ◆ recognise, value and respect all of our people equally
- ◆ actively engage and involve volunteers in decision-making
- ◆ celebrate our diversity but are focused on our common mission
- ◆ make risk-based decisions
- ◆ are team-based (from state to frontline).

The strategy is currently under development and the Volunteerism Strategy Steering Committee has been formed comprising key stakeholders from the public and private sector who all support volunteers.

Other initiatives this feedback will inform include our Valuing Volunteers Initiatives, the QFES Transforms Through Leadership (leadership and development program within the department) and training reviews.

To review the full survey report

For those wishing to access the full 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey report, please visit our website at

www.qfes.qld.gov.au

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has around 42,000 dedicated volunteers across the state comprised of 6200 State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers, 36,000 Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers, as well as Research and Scientific Branch network and Technical Rescue Unit volunteers.

Our department's shared mission is '*... to create safe and resilient communities by minimising the impact and consequences of emergencies on the people, property, environment and economy of Queensland.*'¹

Our volunteers are a key component in our ability to deliver on this mission and to work with our many partners and the community to help keep the people of Queensland safe.

It is essential our volunteers have the chance to provide feedback and that their voices are heard. By understanding their satisfaction, we can better-understand how the department can support them in their roles and what can be done to improve their overall volunteer experience with QFES.

About the 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey

In July and August 2016, QFES commissioned TNS to undertake the QFES Volunteer Survey for a second time.

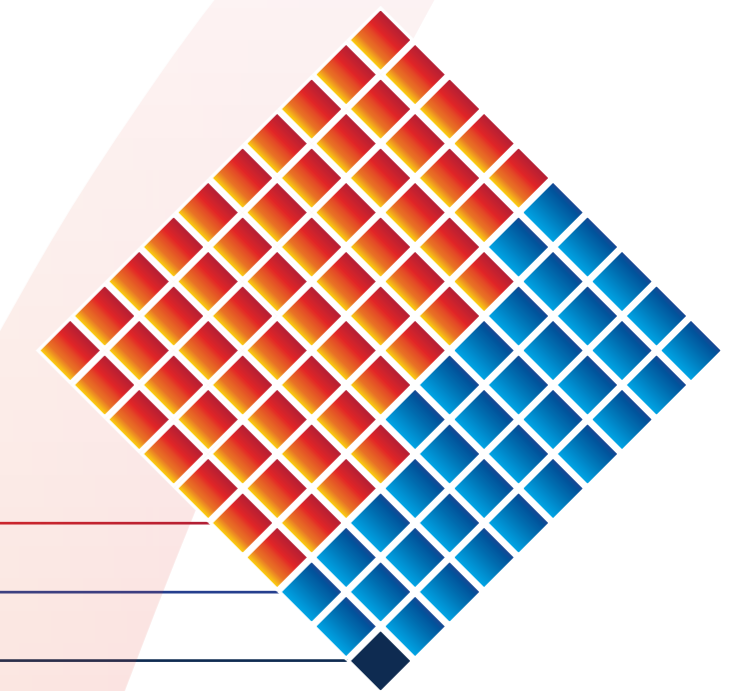
The research was conducted to follow-up and build on results from the 2014 survey and to determine current volunteer satisfaction with the services QFES provided.

A total of 5205 volunteers participated from across QFES in the 2016 survey and the following results and highlights are based on their responses.



The topics covered in the survey included questions on general satisfaction, volunteer perceptions of QFES, recruitment, leadership, workplace conduct policies and procedures, inclusion, information and communication, recognition, training and development, intention to continue volunteering and general demographic areas.

The results from the 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey provided a measure of volunteer satisfaction, direction and understanding as to what issues exist and how volunteers can be better-supported in their roles in the future.



Survey responses (proportional)

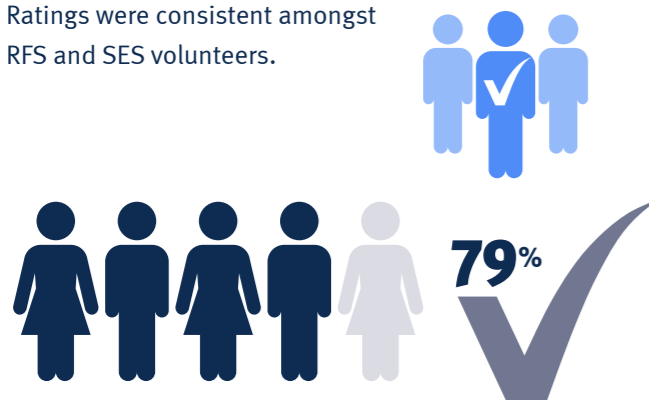
¹ Our Future Direction (2016), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, p.3.

Key highlights

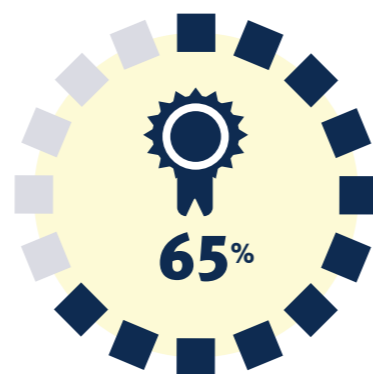
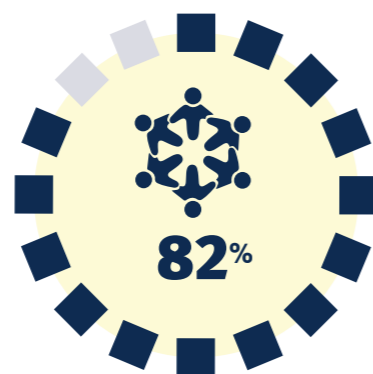
Here are some areas where QFES is doing well and where survey feedback was positive:

- Overall satisfaction with the volunteer experience is very positive, with almost four in five (79%) volunteers satisfied and one in three very satisfied.

Ratings were consistent amongst RFS and SES volunteers.



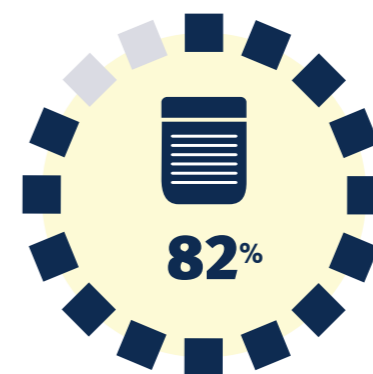
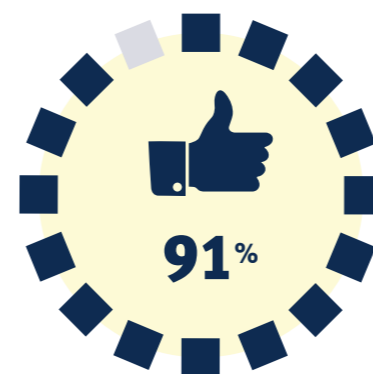
- Volunteers believe their respective services to have a good reputation in the community (82%) and are professional (65%).



Snapshots

Other areas where we are doing well:

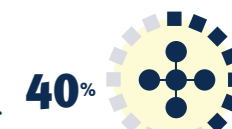
- Have a **good understanding** of the organisation's expectations of their behaviour and Code of Conduct (91% and 82% respectively).



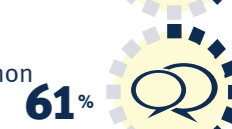
Other useful information:

- Perceptions of QFES – modern, inclusive, proactive, professional organisation that is ready for change and has a good reputation in the community.

- Being valued as a team member is preferred method of recognition. **40%**



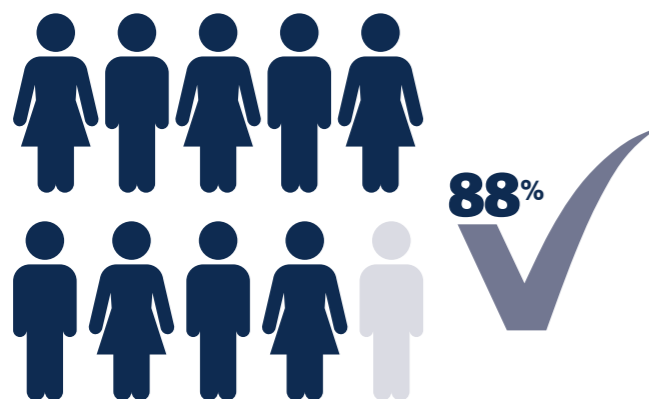
- Word of mouth was the most common way to learn about opportunities. **61%**



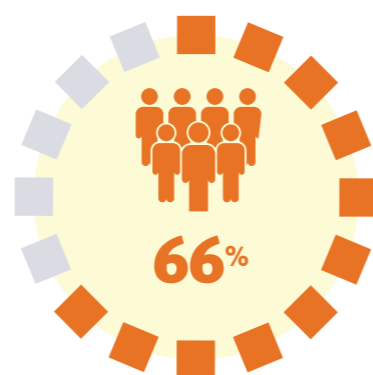
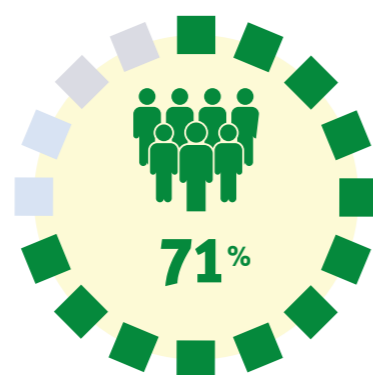
- Contributing to community was key motivation for volunteering. **70%**



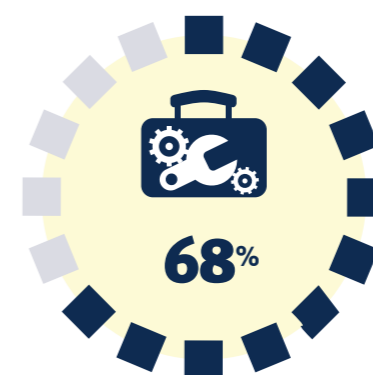
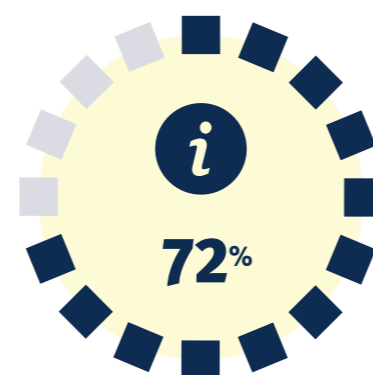
- This strong, positive sentiment is supported by the fact that almost all (88%) volunteers said they intend to continue volunteering.



- Most volunteers perceive a **strong culture of teamwork** in their brigade/group and local area (71% RFS and 66% SES).



- Satisfaction with general information provided – 72% (4% increase from 2014) and satisfaction with training – 68%.



Local leadership and colleagues are most valued

- Most are satisfied with direct supervisor in relation to leadership skills (e.g. support provided, modelling effective leadership, resolving conflict and valuing input).

- Volunteers perceive that those they work most closely with (i.e. First Officer (RFS) and Group (SES)) are most adept at providing support, resolving conflict, modelling effective leadership skills and valuing their input, with perceptions of such leadership skills decreasing up the chain (i.e. lowest ratings being for Area Director (RFS) and State Office (SES)).

Key areas for improvement

While the 2016 QFES Volunteer Survey had some great results, it was also undertaken to provide feedback and highlight some areas where we can improve.

- Providing relevant and timely communication.
- Increase the effectiveness of trainers.

- Improve leadership skills across all levels – conflict resolution, challenge unacceptable behaviour, change management.

- Increase training in workplace behaviour and Code of Conduct.

- Provide support in relation to bullying – 21% of those surveyed witnessed and 12% experienced it.

- While volunteers largely feel the service is sufficiently focused on its people during times of crisis (65% agree), relatively fewer feel that the service is focused in this area on a more day-to-day basis (45% agree).

QFES will explore ways to engage with our volunteers outside of times of crisis.

