

volunteers  
&  
paid workers

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Joy Noble

# **VOLUNTEERS & PAID WORKERS**

A Collaborative Approach

by Joy Noble



Volunteering S.A. Inc.

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A collaborative approach**

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# CONTENTS

Page Number

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
- AIM	
- DEFINITIONS	
- SYNOPSIS.	
<b>2. WORK - THE BIG PICTURE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
- THE CONCEPT OF WORK	
- CHANGING WORK AND SOCIAL PATTERNS	
- ORGANISATIONS WHICH INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS	
- VARYING PERSPECTIVES ON VOLUNTARY WORK	
- PROFILES OF VOLUNTEERS AND PAID WORKERS	
<b>3. QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
- SERVICE RECIPIENT	
- PAID WORKER	
- VOLUNTEER	
- MANAGER OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS	
- EXECUTIVE/ADMINISTRATOR	
- POLITICIAN	
- FUNDER	
- TRADE UNION OFFICIAL	
<b>4. THE WAY AHEAD .....</b>	<b>25</b>
- VALUE ALL WORK AND WORKERS	
- ANALYSE THE ORGANISATION	
- ESTABLISH GUIDELINES COVERING PAID AND VOLUNTARY STAFF	
- FORMULATE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES	
- ADOPT A PROACTIVE AND CREATIVE APPROACH	
<b>5. PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE: .....</b>	<b>43</b>
- CASE STUDIES	
<b>6. ACHIEVING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	

# Acknowledgments

The writing of this book was a cooperative effort. A long list of people who contributed their ideas and comments come to mind.

Initially the plan was to address the subject through a short issues sheet. Amanda Carter assisted in those early days, beginning with a literature search. It quickly became apparent that little material of direct relevance was available, particularly in the Australian context. The issue sheet grew in length as every statement seemed to be followed by 'on the other hand...' It became apparent that the subject demanded a longer treatise, reflecting the multitude of issues and the diversity of situations where both voluntary and paid workers are involved.

Ideas were sought from a wide range of managers and practitioners working in the many areas where volunteers and paid staff are jointly involved, as well as board and staff members (voluntary and paid) of Volunteering S.A. Executive Directors of state volunteer centres also contributed very valuable comments. The material was critiqued by a number of policy makers, practitioners and academics. Particularly helpful comments were made by Liz Wilson of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, S.A., Mary Bradford of the Policy and Development Division of the S.A. Department of Family and Community Services, Jude Elton of the United Trades and Labor Council, Andy Fryar, Coordinator of Volunteer Services, Julia Farr Services, and Margaret Chylinski of Loxcare Inc. Loxton.

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My very special thanks go to David Bennett, Training Officer with Volunteering SA, and Elaine Butler of the Centre for Labour Studies, University of Adelaide, who continued to encourage me throughout and contribute their ideas as they critiqued draft after draft. Thank you David and Elaine!

The bibliography contains details of books, papers and journals which have been particularly useful in writing this book. All those listed are considered to be worthy of attention by readers. Many are quoted directly in the text.

I am not sure whether to thank Volunteering S.A. for requesting my involvement! What I naively thought would be a short project turned out to be a prolonged haul. It is with some relief that I hand over to readers the task of taking the subject further, of discussing the issues in their own area of activity, and of making their own decisions.

*Joy Noble*

# Foreword

Addressing the topic of volunteers and paid workers is in itself still a dangerous undertaking in Australia.

Deeply entrenched in one of our pockets of conservatism we find that perhaps the majority of us view the topic like apples and oranges, let's keep them apart.

A strong community view expresses the act of volunteering in either perjorative or pious terms, made all the easier by such categorization to dismiss the issue as a non-issue anyway.

However, we live in a country with 500,000 not-for-profit organisations, only 38,000 of which employ paid workers. So we must be looking either at a gigantic myth with around 460,000 organisations doing nothing we should worry about! Or perhaps volunteers make up such a huge workforce in Australia that we simply could not function as a nation without them.

The big question. Should we look the other way and pretend it's not really happening in the hope it will go away, or could we consider facing the fear of the volunteer, even seeing in the volunteer presence an opportunity for creative alliances.

Joy Noble in 'Volunteers and Paid Workers' says we can take the latter option, and begins the examination of issues relating to paid and voluntary work. In an interesting unfolding of the modern concept of work in our changing economic and social environment she makes a clear case for volunteer work being recognised as real work and examines the possibility of recognising specific categories of volunteer work and paid work. She examines relationships between paid and volunteer workers and between each of these and the client base they serve.

She looks at management of volunteer programs, the role of administrators and executives in voluntary agencies or associations and touches on the political and funding dynamic.

The way ahead is seen as working towards a collaborative approach which she states can do nothing other than benefit the whole community.

The book is thoughtful and provocative and will be well suited to students in volunteer management and also to those engaged in determining policies and practices for volunteers.

***Margaret Bell AM***

President, Australian Council for Volunteering  
Executive Director Volunteering NSW  
Immediate Past President of International Association  
for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## AIM

The aim of this book is to examine issues in relation to paid and voluntary work, and point to ways through which paid and voluntary workers can together extend and enhance services and increase community vitality and cohesion.

**Topics** which are addressed include:

- the nature and impact of work in our changing society
- the characteristics, motivations and expectations of paid and voluntary work and workers
- the appropriateness of voluntary or paid work, or both, in particular situations
- the relationships between all those involved, including persons receiving services
- structures and strategies which maximise the skills and commitment of all workers.

**Stakeholders** who should find the book of interest include:

- senior executives and supervisory staff of organisations where volunteers are involved
- managers of volunteer programs
- paid workers and their representative bodies
- volunteers
- policy makers and funders
- academics
- students undertaking courses in volunteer management and those studying in areas where volunteering occurs.

While in no way under-estimating the importance of other forms of unpaid work, such as parenting, or of voluntary work performed informally outside the framework of an organisation, the subject of this book relates primarily to non-profit organisations which involve or are considering involving, both paid and voluntary workers. Areas where volunteers commonly work include community services, health, sport and recreation, environment, heritage, arts, education, religion, human rights and emergency services. Organisations operating in these areas may be non-government organisations (N.G.O's) or government bodies.

Some mention is made of for-profit organisations which have taken over services previously undertaken by government, such as hospitals and prisons.

Readers will not find one definitive answer which is valid in *every situation* at any *particular time*. A myriad of situations, each with its own set of circumstances and opportunities, will be found across the many areas where volunteers with diverse roles and responsibilities are involved. The needs, values and perspectives of the wider community as well as organisations and individuals, all require consideration. Different conditions and characteristics in particular situations at particular times may call for different responses. **A simplistic prescription which is valid across all settings at all times, is therefore not only impossible, but unhelpful.**

It is hoped that readers will be encouraged to think through the issues, identify general principles, and devise structures and strategies within their own organisations, which will lead to the development of harmonious and productive partnerships between paid and voluntary workers.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used in the context of this publication:

***Paid work*** is work performed for a wage or salary, or for a profit margin. Conditions of work and associated entitlements are set either through awards, enterprise bargaining arrangements or by mutual consent. Legislation bestows certain rights and responsibilities on paid workers and their employers.

***Volunteering*** is work which:

- provides a service to the community
- is done of one's own free will
- is done without monetary reward (not to be confused with the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses).

Services provided within one's own immediate family circle, although provided of one's own free will and without monetary reward, are not regarded as volunteering but rather as work related to mutual commitment.

Conditions of voluntary work vary considerably from organisation to organisation. As is the case with paid workers, legislation, for example Equal Opportunity and Occupational Health and Safety, also places certain responsibilities on and award certain rights to volunteers and the organisation with which they are involved.

The three elements contained in the definition of volunteering exclude work performed under different conditions. For instance, payment of an honorarium which involves monetary reward (although small) takes the activity outside the parameters of the definition; community service orders

made by a legal authority cannot be said to be done entirely of one's own free will.

## **SYNOPSIS**

You may have picked up this book to look for new ideas or different ways of operating, or simply hoping to receive affirmation and encouragement for current endeavours. Whatever the situation, it is hoped that this book will help you take your courage in both hands, acknowledge that you can make a difference, and determine to act in ways which ensure that your impact is both powerful and positive.

### **Chapter 1**

This chapter outlines the aim and anticipated readership and provides definitions of paid work and volunteering.

### **Chapter 2**

Perceptions of the word 'work' are considered, and changing work and social patterns explored. The varying ratios of volunteers to paid workers within different organisations are considered. This is followed by an examination of how various members of organisations and the community, view volunteering. Finally the profiles of those responsible for doing the work - volunteers and paid workers - are explored.

### **Chapter 3**

All parties involved - service recipients, paid workers, volunteers, managers of volunteer programs, executives, politicians, funders, and trade union representatives, are encouraged to consider their own roles and responsibilities through a series of questions. Such questions involve examining attitudes to paid and voluntary work and relationships between all parties, opening the door to future possibilities.

### **Chapter 4**

'The Way Ahead' begins by viewing the reality of our changing world and the proposition that we should value all work and workers. In the quest to establish realistic and productive partnerships, readers are invited to take a further five steps:

- closely analyse their own organisation, including its mission, roles, structures, traditions, resources and costs
- establish combined paid/voluntary staff policy and practice guidelines, based on identified principles which will lead to effective structures, strategies and procedures
- institute a decision-making process for use in individual situations which takes account of
  - a. what is both desirable and feasible

- b. outcomes which will be effective and efficient, in both the long and short term
- be proactive and creative.

**Chapter 5**

'Putting Theory into Practice' presents case studies which illustrate the observations contained in earlier sections, highlighting both the complexities and opportunities to be found within individual situations. The case studies demonstrate the necessity of:

- having policies, structures and strategies in place
- facing up to the reality of situations by considering factors such as funding constraints and the many commitments and interests which workers will have, outside the demands of the particular work area.

**Chapter 6**

The reader, irrespective of their role, is challenged to support a collaborative and creative approach, which has the potential to benefit the whole community.

Throughout the book many questions are posed, calling for thought, discussion and action. Some relate to matters of interest within individual organisations, others to the wider scene. By taking a 'big picture' approach, readers will be in a better position to clarify issues, and find answers in relation to their own situation or organisation.

## 2. WORK - THE BIG PICTURE

In analysing issues and pointing to ways through which paid and voluntary work and workers, can together enhance services and increase community cohesion, it is necessary to consider:

- the concept of work
- changing work and social patterns
- the mix of voluntary and paid workers within organisations
- varying perspectives relating to volunteer work, particularly as they impinge on paid work
- profiles of paid workers and volunteers.

### THE CONCEPT OF WORK

The Oxford Australian Reference Dictionary begins its lengthy definition of 'work' with the words 'the application of mental or physical effort in order to do or make something, especially as contrasted with play or recreation, use of energy'.

Websters Dictionary begins its definition with 'exertion of strength or faculties to accomplish something'. (Synonyms are listed as 'labour', 'travail', 'toil', 'drudgery', and 'grind!').

**Work occupies a large part of our daily lives, as students, members of the paid workforce, parents, home occupants, carers and volunteers.**

While work performed in each of these roles has its own boundary, people find that over time their lives are a mixture of most or all of these categories. Engaging in activities to accomplish something can be physically, mentally or emotionally demanding, challenging, enjoyable, stressful or boring or a mixture of each.

When discussed in an economic or political context, the word 'work' is likely to refer to paid work and linked to individual and family incomes. Despite the enormous contribution of volunteering and other forms of unpaid work to the economy, Australia's Gross National Product currently includes only paid work. In the social context, the word 'work' is also seen as very much related to paid work. When asked, 'What do you do?', the response by those not in the paid workforce is likely to be 'Oh, I don't work - I stay at home', 'I'm unemployed' or 'I don't work, I'm just a volunteer'!

A great deal of time is spent in unpaid work within the home environment in activities such as

- family duties, including parenting
- carers tending a disabled, sick or frail family member who is unable to manage alone
- household tasks, including home maintenance.

Other forms of unpaid work include:

- work experience arranged within educational courses or employment schemes
- rehabilitation placements and re-training
- community service placements ordered by a court or juvenile panel.

Considerations and issues relating to unpaid work as listed above, are different from those associated with volunteering and as such, require different responses which are outside the scope of this book.

The findings of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey 'Voluntary Work Australia', conducted in 1995 and reported in 1996, reveal what a significant activity volunteering work is within Australian society. During the twelve months ending June 1995, '2,639,500 persons representing 19% of the civilian population aged 15 years and over, provided some form of voluntary work through an organisation or group. These volunteers contributed approximately 433.9 million hours of voluntary work'.

Clearly volunteering within an organisation constitutes work, with its associated outcomes. Its relationship to paid work therefore needs to be very clearly defined and differentiated within each organisation.

## CHANGING WORK AND SOCIAL PATTERNS

**Our world and our thinking continue to change. Social, technological, economic and political aspects are all in a state of flux, each influencing the other. The field of work is part of this change process.**

Work has gone through many stages since the days when people foraged for a subsistence living. In pre-industrial times most work was done in and for, the household. As R.E. Pahl (1995) points out:

There was no *a priori* assumption that wage labour was a superior form of work or that men were the natural wage earners. Very often women were the main money earners, either by selling produce at markets or by producing textile goods in their homes.

### Paid Work

The Industrial Revolution brought huge changes in the nature of work, with wages being paid in exchange for one's labour. The 'living' or 'family' wage introduced in Australia in 1907 (and known as the 'basic wage' in 1911) was an attempt to guarantee a male bread-winner and three dependent children, a minimum income. It was assumed women would be in a dependent relationship with either a father or husband to provide for all their needs.

In the last half century paid work patterns have changed dramatically. These changes include an increase in the number of women, including married women, who have entered the paid workforce, although for many this is on a part time basis. Susan Jackson (1996) writing for the *The Brotherhood of St. Lawrence*, reports that women who carry the major burden of caring for family members who are disabled, aged or frail, continue to work much longer total hours than men, when paid and unpaid work are combined.

Some management consultants, such as Charles Handy (1994), are now expressing concern about the long hours worked by many paid workers and the large gap between the incomes of those paid workers and people who are unemployed. Handy points to another concern - the danger of the workplace becoming a ghetto for those working such long hours. Fabian Dattner (1996) refers to stress levels when she writes,

I don't know of too many people who are entirely happy with the rate of change nowadays. Most agree that you have to be on the ride to survive, but the speed is a killer, and controlling it takes just about all the energy we have got.

Recently the nature of negotiating or awarding payment for labour, has undergone major changes. Examples are enterprise bargaining rather than award wages, the contracting out of services previously undertaken by government departments (often following a tendering process), and workplace agreements.

The type of paid work available continues to change, with less people employed in manufacturing and more working in the service industries. Downsizing, redundancy packages and retrenchment results in many middle aged people leaving the paid work force.

Young people in particular, are bearing the burden of unemployment. Some, including school students, are combining study with part-time paid work.

As work demands change, workers are much more likely to change careers as well as the organisations within which they work. Technology, the shifting of work to off-site locations and the setting up of home-based enterprises, are challenging how we think about paid work and its future.

### **Voluntary work**

The nature and scope of voluntary work and workers, is also changing. The picture of the typical volunteer as the well-off woman dispensing charity and baking cakes, is a far cry from the situation today. Many

volunteers are at the forefront in calling for preventive measures to tackle problems at their source, whether this relates to a sustainable income level, or a sustainable environment.

People of all ages and backgrounds and both sexes, can be seen volunteering in diverse areas. These encompass a great number of activities, such as fighting for social justice, promoting enjoyable lifestyles, advocating for change, assisting children and adolescents, working with people experiencing mental health problems, participating in tree planting schemes, responding to emergency situations, arranging festivals and organising sporting events.

As with paid workers, volunteers are also more likely to move from one organisation to another, and engage in a range of activities.

Far from accepting the status quo, many volunteers are now questioning how the money they raise is being spent, and whether their skills and knowledge are being used to best effect. **Volunteers expect their time and commitment to be well managed by people who understand the issues relating to volunteering and who apply best practice strategies.**

In recognition of the advantages of involvement in voluntary work 'as an effective way to help unemployed people into paid work', the federal government has relaxed regulations for recipients of unemployment benefits who are over fifty years of age. New regulations enable them to undertake voluntary work within approved not-for-profit organisations and still satisfy the activity test (Jocelyn Newman 1996). This initiative, while seen by some as an indication of the lack of paid work available, will introduce volunteering to people who have previously given little or no thought to the option, and potentially increase their range of contacts and confidence level. It is interesting to note that 'approved' organisations do not currently include government organisations, some of which involve volunteers.

The changing face of volunteers and the contribution they make, is reflected in many recent developments. Bodies devoted to the concept of and best practice in volunteering are operating at regional, state, national and international levels. Apart from centres operating in country districts, every state and territory has its own separately incorporated volunteer centre. State and commonwealth governments are contributing funds to many of these bodies. Volunteering Australia is the national body, supported by all states and territories, and the International Association for Voluntary Effort (IAVE) attracts membership from one hundred and ten countries across the world.

Organisations are now appointing people with the specific responsibility of managing volunteer programs and volunteers. Becoming a manager of volunteer programs is a new career option. Nationally accredited training courses in volunteer management from certificate to diploma level are being offered by state volunteer centres, offering both distance and on-site learning. An increasing number of university courses in areas where volunteers are involved are including the subject of volunteering in their curriculum.

Recent ABS surveys have gathered statistical information on volunteering throughout Australia. Research relating to both the concept and practice of volunteering, which has previously been minimal, is now being encouraged by universities and by state volunteer centres.

**As work and social patterns continue to change, issues and developments in relation to paid and voluntary work, as well as relationships between paid and voluntary workers, call for constant review.**

## **ORGANISATIONS WHICH INVOLVE VOLUNTEERS**

In considering the relationship between paid workers and volunteers, we need to be aware of the fact that there are wide variations in the *mix* of workers between one organisation and another. One organisation may have a ratio of one volunteer to every ten paid workers. In another, the reverse will be true.

**Roles** are often related to the mix of workers, for instance volunteers will take on additional roles where there are no paid workers.

The number and variety of **areas** where volunteers work has expanded over the years. Many volunteers are now attracted to new areas such as the environment and heritage.

Traditionally, volunteers have worked in non-government organisations and groups, and the majority continue to do so. However an increasing number of volunteers now work within local and state government bodies. In recent years a number of government services have been contracted out to private enterprise and some volunteers have continued their involvement, although under different circumstances.

## Not-for-profit Organisations

### *a. Where paid staff are in the majority*

Many organisations in the areas of community services, health, education, tourism and policing, be they government or non-government, fall into this category.

In these settings, it is *likely* that:

- volunteers will be seen as enhancing and extending the work of paid staff
- the board of management of non-government organisations will include a number of volunteers in its membership
- a paid worker or workers will be responsible for directing, supervising and supporting the work of volunteers
- volunteers are likely to be involved in discreet, although important, areas of work, such as fund-raising units, or assisting teachers to work with specified students who are experiencing learning difficulties
- volunteers will work for a full or part day each week, fortnight or month.

### *b. Where volunteers are in the majority*

Included in this category are many non-government organisations in the areas of arts, environment, sport and recreation, heritage and emergency services, religion, politics and community development, as well as self-help and other groups set up to address an unmet need, for instance in the area of community services and health.

In these settings it is *likely* that:

- paid workers will be seen as enhancing, extending and managing the work of volunteers
- volunteers will be involved in the administrative infra-structure
- the management committee will be composed fully or mainly of volunteers
- some volunteers will work long hours each week, including weekends and evenings, sometimes in the organisational setting, sometimes from home
- paid workers will be allocated administrative responsibilities as well as management of volunteers, but tasks will be shared between voluntary and paid staff.

### **c. Where staffed completely by volunteers**

Many arts, environment, heritage, sport and recreation, and advocacy and self-help groups, are *likely* to feature here.

In this setting volunteers will perform all the duties and carry out all the responsibilities of management, administration and service provision.

### **For-profit organisations**

Volunteers may continue to play a role in organisations which have taken over services previously undertaken by government departments in such areas as health and prisons. Such volunteers see themselves as providing 'a community service' in areas which are particularly suited to volunteers, for example providing personal laundry services to patients who are without access to relatives, or becoming a 'buddy' to a young person in a correctional institution. Safeguards are normally in place to ensure volunteer efforts are directed towards extra benefits for individuals, and not as a means of reducing the hours of paid workers, filling in for vacancies created as the result of redundancies, or for increasing profit margins. These volunteers do not see themselves as working *for* the organisations, but as performing tasks *within* them. They may do this through outside bodies such as Red Cross or a church group, or through a separately incorporated volunteer service such as a friends association which is not dictated to by the company, but establishes its own principles, develops its own direction, and provides and supervises its own services.

**While volunteer numbers operating in for-profit organisations would be low, this position may change as further services previously undertaken by government organisations are privatised.**

## **VARYING PERSPECTIVES ON VOLUNTARY WORK**

If relationships between voluntary and paid workers are to operate in ways which bring benefits to all parties, the various hopes, fears and beliefs of everyone concerned need to be taken into account. Those with an obvious stake in the outcomes include policy makers, administrators, paid workers, volunteers, people who manage volunteer programs and of course, recipients of services. The latter will consist of:

- individuals and groups who are in receipt of direct personal assistance, such as advocacy or a befriending service, or who benefit from a community service, such as a tour of a botanic garden or recreational activity

- the community at large which benefits for example, from increased public awareness of health and environmental issues and from cohesion brought about by joint efforts.

The perspectives of one stakeholder may clash with those of another. For instance, the perception of an administrator that a project can continue without a paid worker, may be at odds with the perceptions of service recipients, as well as those of volunteers, who are left to carry on alone. Some of the examples listed below illustrate this point:

#### **paid workers and their representatives, as well as volunteers**

- fearing that government funding cuts will mean retrenchment of paid workers, leaving volunteers to fill the void, or to close the project or organisation

#### **paid workers**

- hoping to increase community awareness and participation through the involvement of volunteers in their organisation, but fearing that management are not prepared to set up the infrastructure, or provide the resources necessary to ensure effective volunteer participation
- believing that volunteers will want to take over aspects of their work which they particularly enjoy
- fearing that they will be replaced by recipients of Job Search Allowance who volunteer, particularly if they work a significant number of hours in the one organisation
- fearing that they will be put under pressure to give many hours on a voluntary basis, whether they wish to or not
- hoping that management will provide them with the necessary training and extra time required to perform their duties in relation to adequately supervising volunteers.

#### **volunteers**

- hoping that their time and skills are put to best effect
- fearing that trade unions, in considering the needs of their members, may overlook the contribution they make in enhancing and extending services
- fearing that if they are involved in the provision of advocacy services that their project will be first on the list of any cuts in government funding
- hoping that an organisation will not put pressure on them to give more time than they wish, or to undertake work in which they have no interest
- fearing that paid staff will leave them with jobs no-one else wants.

#### **recipients of unemployment benefits who decide to volunteer**

- fearing that the recent move by the federal government permitting unemployed persons over fifty years of age to undertake an increased number of hours of voluntary work in lieu of having to satisfy the activity

test is an implicit acceptance of the fact that paid work is not available for older people

- hoping that they will not be prejudged as less skilled or less committed than people with other motivations for volunteering
- fearing that the government may institute 'work for the dole' schemes under the guise of 'volunteering'

#### **government officials**

- hoping that volunteering will assist young people who are unemployed to gain work skills, and for older people to retain skills
- believing that they can cut costs by contracting out the provision of vital services to community organisations, which, in order to become competitive, will maximise the involvement of volunteers, whether appropriate or not

#### **not-for-profit organisations**

- feeling under some pressure to accept recipients of unemployment benefits who are over fifty years of age as volunteers even though their skills and commitment to the task may not match organisational requirements, possibly resulting in tensions between staff

#### **for-profit organisations**

- which have taken over services previously undertaken by government departments, hoping that they can increase profit margins by extending the involvement of volunteers into areas previously carried out by paid workers

#### **citizens**

- believing on the one hand that volunteers are 'wonderful', and on the other, 'foolish' for working without monetary reward
- believing a ban on volunteer involvement will result in more paid jobs.

**Beliefs, hopes and fears need to be addressed, whether we believe they are based on fact or misconception.** For instance, if we believe that the roots of unemployment lie elsewhere than in the involvement of volunteers, we will need to present the facts. It can be pointed out that advocacy by volunteers has, in many fields of endeavour, resulted in the setting up of new services staffed wholly or partly by paid workers; also that fund-raising by volunteers continues to support the employment of many paid workers. However, we also need to point out that unemployment is likely to increase (and the quality of service fall) if governments cut funding to organisations and expect them to *replace* paid workers with volunteers.

While the option for unemployed people over fifty years to volunteer rather than actively seek paid work can bring many benefits, potential dangers

need to be addressed. Unemployed persons should not be put under pressure to 'volunteer' as a condition of continuing to receive their benefit, particularly if they feel that government initiatives should be aimed more directly at increasing the number of jobs available. Organisations should not feel they are obliged to accept such people regardless of their suitability for the tasks to be performed. Paid workers should not be put in a position where they fear their positions are placed in jeopardy.

## PROFILES OF VOLUNTEERS AND PAID WORKERS

In order to maximise the contribution of both paid and voluntary workers and match workers to job requirements, we need to consider motivations, expectations, roles and responsibilities, relationships with the public, available hours, qualifications and commitment. In doing so, we will observe both similarities and differences, between, and amongst, volunteers and paid workers.

It is important to remember that paid workers and volunteers are not a different form of being! As Steven McCurley (1981) reminds us 'No-one really believes receiving a wage payment automatically makes one a professional, no-one should believe that serving without pay automatically lifts one to a state of grace'. Many people will be working in both a paid and voluntary capacity over the same period of time. The 1995 ABS national statistics reveal that almost two-thirds (65%) of volunteers were also in either full-time or part-time paid employment. The vast majority of volunteers will spend time in the paid workforce at some stage in their lives.

### Motivations and Satisfactions

What motivates a person to engage in paid and/or voluntary work in the first place? Obviously a very important motivation for paid workers is the income they derive. However interest in the area and appropriate skills are also significant. Why workers *remain* in the job may or may not match the original motivation. A paid worker may remain in a job simply because of the wage packet; on the other hand they may remain because of the satisfaction derived from their efforts despite the fact that a higher salary may be available elsewhere.

The national ABS statistics (1996) on volunteering provide an interesting insight into differences between the original motivation to volunteer, and the satisfactions experienced by volunteers after they begin work. The five most important factors in the original reasons to volunteer as revealed in the survey are listed below, and these are compared with satisfactions in practice:

	Reasons for becoming Involved	Personal benefits derived
	%	%
Help others/community	41.5	29.6
Personal/family involvement	3.5	17.2
Personal satisfaction	26.6	59.4
To do something worthwhile	23.3	24.4
Social contact	15.7	38.3

*Source: ABS 1996 Voluntary Work, Australia June 1995 Survey, Catalogue 4441.0*

These figures relate to volunteers in general. What happens in individual situations may differ in certain respects. In the same way, profiles of paid workers relating to original motivation in joining an organisation as against the benefits derived, and presumably reasons for remaining, are likely to contain common elements while differing in degree in various situations.

Volunteering offers people a wide choice of interest areas, ranging from children's services to the environment within which they can contribute and put their skills to good use.

Many women engage in volunteer work in order to regain skills after an absence from the paid workforce while performing parenting duties. People who have suffered a trauma or accident are often motivated to volunteer as a way of returning to mainstream life in the community. Unemployed persons volunteer to maintain and develop new skills, make new contacts, and regain confidence and self-esteem, in the hope of increasing their chances of obtaining paid work. Graduates seek to volunteer in a specific workplace to learn how to bridge the gap between theory and practice. While altruism rates high in terms of motivation, volunteers do not normally work for 'love' alone!

### **Expectations**

Workers expect to both give and receive. Paid workers expect not only a wage but the status which is given to paid work by our society and also hopefully, personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Workplace agreements demonstrate the importance paid workers place on flexibility in working hours, on safe and healthy working conditions and on having adequate equipment and administrative backup. Volunteers also expect a return - furtherance of a cause or interest, the satisfaction of a job well done, making new friends, using and maintaining current skills, and developing skills which may lead to employment. **Both paid and voluntary staff expect that their efforts will be appreciated and supported by management, fellow workers and the wider community.**

### **Skill Requirements**

Wide differences in the degree of skill needed to perform a task and associated responsibilities, apply to both paid and voluntary work. As members of a management board, volunteers may be involved in decisions on policy direction and recruitment of paid staff. On the other hand, they may be engaged in tasks such as filling envelopes and selling raffle tickets. Such wide differences in roles and responsibilities also apply to paid workers.

### **Relationships with the Public**

Different types of relationships with the public reflect different settings, roles and responsibilities.

A paid bus driver within the main transport system will appreciate passengers saying 'thank you' on disembarking, but his or her relationship with passengers is likely to be more formal than would be the case with the volunteer driver of a community bus for people who are frail or aged. The work performed may appear to be similar, but the community bus driver will want to build up personal relationships with his or her passengers, being conscious of the fact that at least some of the passengers will require extra attention. A volunteer befriending a youth who has appeared before a juvenile court is likely to have a different relationship with the youth than would be the case with the paid probation officer.

On the other hand, service recipients may not always know whether a service is being performed by a paid worker or a volunteer. The visitor to the museum may not distinguish between a paid or voluntary guide, a person seeking advice from the legal aid agency may not know whether advice is being offered by a paid employee or a lawyer who has offered his or her services voluntarily during evening hours, and a phone enquiry could just as well have been answered by a volunteer or a paid receptionist.

### **Hours Worked**

Despite the fact that some volunteers will work long hours, often across a number of agencies, hours worked by volunteers within any one organisation are likely to be considerably less than those of paid workers, including part-time workers. This places extra demands on management. For instance, keeping volunteers fully informed is difficult when they are working only a few hours one day every fortnight. The national ABS statistics from their 1995 survey reveal wide differences between the number of hours volunteers work. This is not surprising when one considers a volunteer may work for several hours once a month as a guide

in a heritage building, while the chairperson of the board of a community organisation may spend several days each week attending meetings, on administrative duties and in public speaking engagements. The mean average hours worked by each volunteer in Australia is 164 hours per year, or fourteen hours per month, arrived at by dividing the number of volunteers (2,639,500) into the total hours worked (433.9 million over a year).

### Gender

The ABS Survey conducted in 1995 recorded a *participation rate* of 21.3% of women in the population volunteering as against 16.7% of men. This difference may decrease as women continue to become more involved in the paid work force and men retire at an earlier age. In relation to paid workers (full and part time), the participation rate in volunteering as at August 1996 was 74% for men and 54.1% for women, as recorded by the ABS.

Differences exist in *the areas* of work in which men and women are involved. This applies to both paid and voluntary work. Women are currently predominant in community services, while men are in the majority in areas such as sport and emergency services. This position is changing to some extent, for example as women join forces with men in country fire units.

In relation to *role differentiation*, an Australian Council of Social Service survey (1996) on volunteer work, as reported in Paper No.74 'Volunteering in Australia', found:

Gender differentiation seems to mirror the imbalances in the paid work force: men are more likely to hold and seek out positions of authority. Nevertheless, women are able to exercise more power than they do in other spheres of their life.

### Qualifications

While paid staff are likely to possess qualifications related to their job, a volunteer may choose an activity which is a welcome contrast to his or her occupation, or previous career, as for example, an engineer who coaches the school football team over the weekend. On the other hand, volunteers are often recruited because of their particular qualifications, perhaps to a board because of their experience in management or finance, to a maritime museum because of their expertise in ship-building, or to an organisation because of their previous experience as a bookkeeper when in the paid workforce. **It is therefore impossible to make a general classification of paid workers as qualified and volunteers as unqualified.**

## Commitment

'Unreliable' is a word one sometimes hears when volunteers are mentioned. While all workers are expected to carry out their duties in a capable manner, volunteers will feel more freedom in allowing family and personal commitments and interests to sometimes take precedence, and in refusing to carry out certain duties in which they have no interest. On the other hand, volunteers can be just as committed in fulfilling tasks as paid workers. Simply being on the job does not necessarily guarantee reliability - a lack of commitment can be displayed by either, or both.

Paid workers will often remain in a job even though they receive little personal satisfaction or enjoyment. Volunteers are less likely to do so. This fact may have an impact on productivity levels in both spheres.

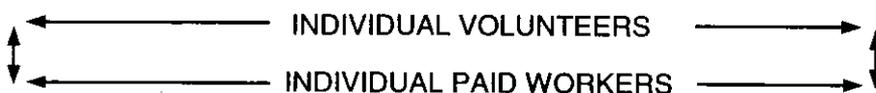
## Areas of Work

While volunteers often see themselves as enhancing or extending the work of paid workers, they will sometimes work in situations where there are no paid workers, or where the paid worker's main task is to manage the work of the volunteers. This is likely to be the case in self-help groups or when community members become pro-active in setting up new services where a gap exists, or where they advocate to pursue a community cause or the rights of certain individuals.

At present, the great majority of volunteers work in not-for-profit organisations, while the opposite is true for paid workers.

## Similarities and Differences

As the above examples show, no clear-cut similarities and differences between paid and voluntary workers will hold true in every setting, at any particular time. There may be greater differences between the profiles of two volunteers or two paid workers in relation to their varying attitudes, motivations, roles, responsibilities, relationships, hours worked, qualifications and commitment levels, than is the case between volunteers or paid workers as two separate groups, as the diagram below shows:



*Differences along continuums may be greater than between the two groups.*

However, paid workers as a group and volunteers as a group also exhibit *similarities*. We need to recognise differences and similarities in the two groups, as well as differences and similarities between individual volunteers and individual paid workers within our own particular setting. As situations and individual workers change, regular reviews are necessary, keeping in mind the needs of both the organisation and the workers.

In this chapter we have looked at both facts and feelings. What is happening in the world of work affects us all, and the situation is far from static. **Wants and needs in terms of work requirements, and the situations and aspirations of workers themselves, are all in a state of flux, as is the amount and type of paid and voluntary work available. Complexities abound, but so do opportunities for everyone involved.**

In the next chapter we will look in some detail at the questions faced by all stakeholders, in relation to the aspirations of community members, organisations and workers.

### 3. QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

Many questions arise for different stakeholders in relation to voluntary and paid work. These require them to:

- understand the current situation
- appreciate the influence their attitudes and actions have on others
- open their minds to future possibilities.

While each stakeholder has different roles and responsibilities involving different questions, readers are urged to consider all questions, remembering that we often hold multiple roles and that the actions of one can affect all. **Consideration of all questions will help us to understand and respond to a variety of concerns and points of view.**

#### **AS A SERVICE RECIPIENT**

What services do I or family members receive, either directly or indirectly, from paid and voluntary workers in the areas of health, community services, education, sport and recreation, arts and culture, environment and emergency services?

What are my attitudes to both voluntary and paid work? Does the particular area of work or the role make a difference to my views? For instance am I happy for volunteers to be involved in sport but not in health services, or to be involved in counselling but not in financial management?

Is it important for me to know whether services are being provided by paid or by voluntary workers ... in some situations ... in all situations? Why or why not?

If a volunteer along with a paid worker, is providing me with a personal service, do I expect to be consulted before the arrangement is finalised? Do I understand their different roles? Do I feel free to discuss my feelings about the arrangement? Is there a person identified to whom I can express these feelings?

#### **AS A PAID WORKER**

What differences and similarities do I see between volunteer and paid workers' motivations and expectations in my organisation? What are the implications of these similarities/differences? Does management understand the situation and respond accordingly?

What are my views on volunteering as a concept and in practice? How do I feel about people volunteering in my own organisation?

Do volunteers change the nature of my organisation? What are the pros and cons? Do I prefer their involvement to concentrate on a particular area, say management within the board, fund raising activities which contribute

to paying the salary bill, administrative duties, or on enhancing the work of paid workers in service provision, or a combination of all four?

What do I do when I believe I am, or volunteers in my organisation are, being exploited? Do the structures encourage the resolution of any difficulties, as well as the input of ideas?

Do I see myself in my *volunteer* role (say, as secretary of the local drama group) in different terms from the volunteers in the organisation where I am employed?

### **AS A VOLUNTEER**

Do I have a clear idea of the overall aim of this organisation? Have I been encouraged to do so? Do I feel involved in the organisation as a whole, or only in regard to a particular section? Does it matter? Am I obliged to understand the scope and complexity of the organisation, or can I concentrate simply on my specific role?

Why did I volunteer? Have my expectations been fulfilled? Have they changed? Do I feel satisfied with my achievements, that my skills are respected and my efforts appreciated? What form of appreciation do I value most - demonstrated respect for my skills and achievements, a badge, an annual dinner, or simply the feeling that my efforts are worthwhile?

Do I feel that I am a nuisance when asking for information, even though I know it is necessary to do the job properly? Am I included in planning sessions? Are my views taken seriously?

Have I had adequate training and orientation?

Am I aware of boundaries in relation to what I can or should not do?

How successful am I in fulfilling what is required of me within this organisation, as well as maintaining my other commitments and interests? Will I be provided with an honest appraisal of how performance expectations are being met?

How do I feel about volunteer entitlements in terms of payment of out-of-pocket expenses and about the provision of resources to enable me to do the job adequately? What do I know about insurance cover?

### **AS A MANAGER OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

Does my operational style preserve the definition of volunteering in relation to being of service to the community, of one's own free will and without monetary reward - not forgetting that for some people payment of expenses is essential in balancing their budget?

How do I view my job of Manager of Volunteer Programs in terms of long-term career prospects? Should I be taking advantage of the

opportunity to undertake an accredited course in volunteer management, and would this be supported or subsidised by the organisation?

Am I constantly pushing volunteering, regardless of whether it is appropriate or not?

Do I have sufficient knowledge of the abilities and expectations of both paid workers and volunteers as they relate to the fulfilment of organisational goals?

Why is it, that despite the contribution volunteers make to this organisation, some executives adopt a patronising attitude and view volunteers as unskilled, and my status suffers accordingly? How can I make them take volunteering seriously and appreciate the issues surrounding it? Would placing a dollar value on the work of volunteers assist, or would this encourage them to ignore intangible benefits such as increased community participation?

Am I expecting too much of volunteers? On the other hand, do I underestimate, or have little knowledge of their skills, ideas and enthusiasm? Do I hold them back from doing more or working longer hours if they so desire? Where must I draw the line?

Am I ignoring legitimate concerns of paid workers who may feel under threat or are expected to supervise volunteers without allowance being made for the extra work and skills involved?

What efforts do I make in encouraging and preserving productive and satisfying relationships between management, paid workers and volunteers?

Do I feel I have the support of management, paid workers and volunteers in my role?

### **AS AN EXECUTIVE/ ADMINISTRATOR**

Do I see volunteers mainly in terms of providing a particular service or raising money, overlooking their value in terms of increased community awareness and participation?

Do I feel more comfortable if volunteers work in discreet units rather than being involved in the organisation's infrastructure? If so, why? Is my opinion based on a personal attitude or on practical considerations? Have I given serious thought to possible ways in which volunteers can enhance and/or extend the services of the organisation?

Am I expecting volunteers to do extra work (perhaps even to the extent of replacing paid workers) in order to keep this tender I'm preparing as competitive as possible? How responsible is this in terms of customer service?

Do I accept that high standard services require workers, both paid or voluntary, to be well-informed, consulted, trained and supported? Has a skilled worker been given the job and resources to manage the volunteer programs and volunteers?

Do I facilitate involvement of all staff, paid and voluntary, in decision-making processes? What structures are needed to ensure that this happens? What safeguards are required to guarantee that volunteers are not used as a cheap option when the service requires paid workers? What criteria do I use in making these judgments?

Do I make it a practice to consult with both paid workers and their representatives as well as volunteers, before decisions are made in relation to which jobs are allocated to paid workers and which to volunteers?

Do I appreciate the crucial role I play in encouraging, discouraging or tolerating, volunteer involvement? Is my stance based on tradition, absence of thought, reluctance to share power with community members, or on deliberate consideration in relation to the appropriateness of paid or voluntary work?

When was our staff policy last reviewed? Is it preferable to make this a paid and volunteer document which emphasises a joint contribution, while making clear the similarities and differences between voluntary and paid workers, or to have two separate documents?

### **AS A POLITICIAN**

Have I, or my staff, fully appreciated the fact that ABS statistics reveal that almost twenty per-cent of the population over fifteen years of age volunteer within organisations and many others provide informal volunteer services? Do I know the different areas where these people work, who they are, and why they volunteer?

Am I inclined to believe that volunteers can always be recruited, even to the extent of them taking over the jobs of paid workers? Am I aware of the extra burdens women in particular face, when institutions for people who are sick, disabled or frail are closed without sufficient funding being provided to enable paid staff to work in community support services?

Do I accept that involvement of volunteers is not cost free, and that if the volunteer contribution is to be maximised, funds will be needed to ensure adequate management and support structures are in place? What are the implications of my response to this question?

Why do government executives in some areas, for example family services, appear to be more conscious of the need to provide financial support to organisations which maximise the legitimate involvement of volunteers, than executives of other departments covering services where

the volunteer proportion of the workforce may be even higher - for instance, arts and environment? Do I make the same mistake? If so, what should I do about it?

In introducing any scheme which provides work experience for people who are unemployed, am I aware of the need to include the element of choice if the word 'voluntary' is used, keeping in mind that an important part of the definition of volunteering is that the activity is 'done of one's own free will'? While encouraging people who are unemployed to volunteer, am I conscious of the need to continue to expand efforts directed towards them finding paid work - the preferred option of the great majority?

### **AS A FUNDER**

Have I considered the value of retaining the volunteer contribution (in monetary terms and increased public involvement and support), by continuing to provide funding for this community organisation? Should I regard it as an investment, particularly when I think of the long term savings, for instance in health costs, through the provision of preventive and support services?

Are the same accountability requirements placed on government departments with their large budgets as are placed on small organisations with very small budgets and modest government funding? Can requirements for the latter be simplified while retaining their effectiveness?

### **AS A TRADE UNION OFFICIAL**

What is my view about volunteer involvement? Can I clearly expound my views? Am I proactive in thinking through the issues rather than giving the matter thought only when forced to do so?

Who am I likely to blame if volunteers take over the role of paid staff - funding bodies, organisational management, or volunteers themselves? Why? Is my concern that volunteers may replace paid workers a rejection of volunteering as a whole, or related to specific issues and situations?

Has my union a policy on volunteer involvement? If so, how long since it was reviewed? Would it help to do so in consultation with a volunteer centre and industry or organisation with which my members are involved?

Many questions have been posed in this chapter, and no doubt readers will have other questions to ask appropriate to their role and situation.

**Knowing the right questions to ask is important. Of equal importance is being prepared to respond to the implications of the answers.**

By questioning the status quo, the way is open to widen our horizons and pursue opportunities within our own areas of influence. The next chapter invites readers to do just that.

## 4. THE WAY AHEAD

In order to make wise decisions on whether paid workers or volunteers, or both, should be involved in general, as well as in specific situations within organisations, and on their respective responsibilities, we need to:

- value all work and workers
- analyse our own organisation
- establish guidelines covering paid and voluntary staff
- formulate effective decision-making processes
- adopt a pro-active approach.

Many people with different roles will be affected by such decisions. All need to be involved in order to ensure the best outcomes for everyone.

### VALUE ALL WORK AND WORKERS

It is impossible to imagine the demise of work, either paid or unpaid. Paid work will continue to be the preferred means of achieving an income for the vast majority of people. The most sophisticated form of technology will not free us from the need to work, in order to produce goods and provide services, for ourselves and others. Nor would most of us wish to spend our lives entirely engaged in leisure or recreational pursuits. While enjoying times of personal relaxation, work provides us with a balance, helping us to find reward and satisfaction in our achievements, to use our skills and experience in areas of interest, and to increase our range of contacts.

The tendency to equate work only to paid employment is unfortunate. As pointed out by the Australian Council of Social Service in 'The Future of Work'(1996):

The reality that employment is a socially privileged form of work (it confers access to a public identity, a direct market income and hence a degree of personal autonomy) should not blind us to the existence and importance of non-paid work. All forms of work have their place and value.

### Value of Paid Work

**Apart from the monetary rewards provided by paid work, the purposefulness it engenders and the discipline and shape it gives to living is what makes it so desirable to many people.** Moreover, when a person has to report for paid work each day this makes leisure hours seem so much more rewarding, providing contrast and balance to living. The importance of paid work being available to those who seek it as a source of income and in terms of self respect and identity, is widely

accepted. Its unavailability, not only to many young people, but to older people who have been retrenched, has created a great deal of uncertainty, inequality and trauma over recent times. The availability of paid work is therefore vital, at least until other alternatives which confer the status and income levels currently associated with paid work, are found. Payment of a social wage has been put forward as one solution. Decreasing the amount of paid overtime and a more equal sharing of hours in paid and unpaid work by men and women, is another.

### **Value of Voluntary Work**

We need to remember that not everyone is seeking paid employment at a particular time. A person may want time out to devote more time to parenting, to engage in leisure activities or undertake further study. Many older people relish the freedom of not having to earn an income after retiring from paid work. This does not mean they are all happy to spend the rest of their lives watching T.V. or playing golf.

**While the availability of paid work for those who seek it is highly valued and necessary, many countries which favour a democratic style of government also pride themselves on making opportunities available to citizens to participate in a voluntary capacity in areas of interest, to have a voice and to bring about desirable change.**

Bernard Shaw (1931) put it this way in 'Man and Superman':

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

Matching the needs of organisations and of potential volunteers can bring benefits to both parties. Some people will not wait to be asked to volunteer but will make their own moves. Others will need encouragement, particularly if they have not previously volunteered their time.

While volunteering should not be seen as a satisfactory long-term alternative to paid work when that is what a person wants, it can offer an unemployed person the opportunity to retain existing skills, develop new skills and expand their contacts, thus increasing their opportunities to find paid work.

Women and men who wish to rejoin the paid workforce after a period engaged in full-time parenting can extend their interests and contacts and contribute their skills, including organising abilities gained through the complex job of managing a household.

Young people can broaden their experience, knowledge base, work skills and confidence.

People who have retired from the paid work-force can through volunteering, enter new areas and enjoy interests undreamed of while tied to paid employment.

People who have accepted separation packages and do not wish to engage in full-time paid work can through volunteering be offered opportunities to experience the world of work outside the realm of their previous occupation, learn new skills, develop new perspectives and establish new professional networks. Many of these people hold formal qualifications and are highly skilled. They can offer a great deal to volunteer programs.

If one places a modest \$12 an hour value on hours worked, voluntary work within organisations as revealed in the 1995 ABS survey, represents a monetary value of \$5.2 billion per annum. These hours do not include the work of those who volunteer on a regular basis outside the framework of an organisation. An ABS survey in South Australia in 1988 showed that informal volunteering accounted for a further 26.3%. By extrapolating this across Australia, an additional \$1.37 billion could be added to the above figure.

The value of this informal voluntary work is often overlooked. The efforts of community health workers can be negated without the constant support given by neighbours in assisting people who are disabled or frail with their shopping and home and garden maintenance, or in providing friendship. Recycling of household rubbish is impossible without the voluntary cooperation of householders. Adam Jamrozik (1996) argues strongly against the exclusion of informal volunteering in the national survey in relation to immigrant communities from non-English speaking countries. He writes:

Anyone who has had even a transient contact with immigrant groups would be astonished at the amount of 'voluntary work' being done in those communities. The ABS should wake up to the reality of 'informal' volunteer work among immigrant communities.

Placing a dollar value on voluntary work is, of course, but one measure, and an inadequate one. It is impossible to put a dollar value on the intrinsic benefits to the individual worker and the community at large. As the report of the national ABS survey states, 'voluntary work is an important contribution to national life. It meets needs within the community at the same time as it develops and reinforces social networks and cohesion.'

### **The Link between Social and Economic Well-being**

If we are to forge a future where everyone feels valued and enjoys satisfying levels of income and lifestyle, we will need to take account of the reality of our own situations as individuals, family members and citizens. **Family patterns and working arrangements need to be considered in relation to economic security, physical and emotional health and social integration.**

The relationship between social and economic well-being is clear. A viable economic climate is obviously important. But money alone will not sustain a society. An economy will not operate effectively unless people are fit and physically, emotionally and intellectually functional. A sick workforce will not help the economy, nor will workers who are under stress due to personal problems. A society will not function well with large numbers of people living in or near poverty.

Sociologist Eva Cox in the 1995 Boyer Lectures points to the need for countries to value not only their financial capital, but physical, human and social capital. By social capital she refers to 'the process between people who establish networks, norms and social trust and facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.' Charles Handy (1994) echoes these sentiments when he compares satisfying lifestyles to an inside-out doughnut, with a small inner core devoted to obtaining economic necessities, and a large outside circle where people have more freedom to engage in a range of activities (both paid and unpaid), develop networks and mingle with a wide group of people.

### **Need for a Balanced Lifestyle**

There is a need for a balanced approach between those who feel overwhelmed by the volume of work expected of them and those who feel under-utilised. This becomes obvious when one considers the widening gap between income levels, between those who work very long hours in paid employment, (while others are retrenched or are unemployed), and between the hours women and men spend in unpaid work. We all know of people who are over-stressed by too much work, of those who have retired from paid work and are bored, and of people who are depressed because they cannot find paid work.

Work can and should be, both enjoyable and useful. **The quality of our individual lifestyles depends a great deal on our ability to feel that we are part of a community as we contribute to the world of work, value**

**its many forms, and find a satisfactory balance between leisure, paid and unpaid work.**

If organisations are to recognise the needs of, and bring benefits to all parties, including the workers, they will need to take a number of practical steps. The first step is to formally acknowledge the value of both paid and voluntary work and workers. This can be reinforced by including wording in the organisation's strategic plan to the effect that community involvement is welcomed whenever this is appropriate and possible, and that organisational goals will be achieved through the joint efforts of paid and voluntary staff.

Having taken this very important first step of valuing all work and workers, we can move to the second, by analysing our own organisation.

### **ANALYSE THE ORGANISATION**

Organisations vary considerably in their:

- mission and objectives
- responsibilities and duties
- attitudes and beliefs
- structure and culture
- traditions
- relationships (internal and external)
- resources
- costs.

All factors are important and require investigation before one can decide on the appropriateness of voluntary or paid roles - or both. Examples of questions which need to be asked are posed under the various headings. Readers will, no doubt, want to add questions of their own.

#### **Mission and objectives:**

*Is the involvement of only paid workers, only volunteers, or a combination of both, most likely to achieve outcomes related to the organisation's mission and objectives?*

*Is the promotion of community involvement and increased community awareness an important element in the organisation's charter?*

The health of an organisation and all those associated with it, will depend on its mandate being clearly understood and accepted by everyone

involved. **Cohesion within the organisation will be greatly facilitated as both paid and voluntary staff accept that they are working for a common goal.**

### **Responsibilities and duties:**

*What are the responsibilities to individuals receiving services and to the wider community?*

*What experience, skills, attributes and training are necessary to perform the duties to the required standard?*

*Are organisational accountability requirements in any particular task more than should be expected of a volunteer, or of paid staff who are expected to supervise the work of volunteers?*

*Are the duties already covered by Award provisions for paid workers?*

*What legal responsibilities does the organisation have towards service recipients, paid workers and volunteers?*

*Can the work be adequately performed by a volunteer working only a few hours a week?*

*Does a particular job require the full or half time commitment of one worker rather than a series of volunteers working on separate days?*

*Has the impact on paid work opportunities been considered in any changes foreshadowed?*

*Does the organisation recognise the danger of paid workers being expected to work extra hours due to the fact that volunteers are working 'without monetary reward'?*

Some responsibilities and duties ideally require full time commitment to the job, or no more than two people sharing the same job. The executive director of a large organisation would be an example. The responsibilities of some jobs require that the worker be bound to the organisation within a formal contractual arrangement, for instance, assessors in a taxation department or social workers with statutory responsibilities. In these situations, volunteers may be found who have the necessary skills, but the responsibilities including the legal responsibilities of the job, require a paid worker. Other roles are also the province of paid workers. Giving drugs to patients, making decisions on a student's examination results, preparing

reports for presentation to a court of law or enforcement of legal regulations and laws, are examples.

Some roles are particularly suited to volunteers. Volunteers who act as advocates or buddies to people who are disabled, who befriend a lonely person in a nursing home, who represent community interests on a management board, and who fight bushfires in country regions, are examples. In some situations volunteers may be the only voice likely to be heard in bringing to public notice an injustice or gaps in service when paid workers are bound to confidentiality within workplace agreements, or are reluctant to speak out for fear of losing their job.

Paid staff will often work over and above their set hours - whether they work in an organisation which involves volunteers or not. **It is important for workers to see themselves as either paid workers or volunteers in a particular organisation. Working extra hours within a paid job should not be confused with volunteering.**

#### **Attitudes and beliefs:**

*What are the attitudes of paid and voluntary staff, including management, towards voluntarism as a concept?*

*How are these attitudes reflected in practice?*

*Do some paid staff members welcome volunteers, while others reject the idea of their involvement, either tentatively or out-of-hand?*

*Does the organisation expect volunteers to be more altruistic in their motivation than is expected of paid workers?*

Beliefs and attitudes may vary considerably between and amongst management, paid workers and volunteers. While some members of the organisation may believe in the value of volunteer involvement, others may believe that any form of work for which no monetary payment is made is exploitative, whether performed as a volunteer or as a paid employee who works over and above the legally required hours.

Some people will judge a volunteer according to his or her motivation. They believe a 'good' volunteer must be motivated primarily for altruistic reasons; a person who volunteers for other reasons is under suspicion. A genuine interest in organisational goals can be an important incentive for

all workers to give of their best. However of itself it will not guarantee good results. A paid worker may regard income as the main reason for involvement. A volunteer's motivation may relate to a desire for increased social contacts. Both workers can give valuable service provided they have the necessary skills and experience.

### **Structure and Culture:**

*Are the structures in keeping with the intention of the organisation to encourage either a dictatorial approach or genuine consultation and involvement by everyone in decisions which affect them?*

*Are effective support and supervisory structures in place in relation to both paid and voluntary staff?*

*What opportunities are available to both paid and voluntary staff for information dissemination and exchange, the input of ideas and representation on the governing body?*

*Are procedures in place to resolve contentious issues or grievances in relation to both volunteers and paid workers?*

What happens in practice depends greatly on both the structure, which defines responsibilities and roles, and on organisational culture which reflects staff attitudes and commitment.

It is well accepted that sound management structures and practices are necessary if the experience and skills of paid staff are to be maximised. Management of a volunteer/paid work-force, which will include volunteers with a great range of motivations and expectations, working shorter hours, is equally important, and even more complex. A person or persons with management expertise and a commitment to the organisation's decision to involve volunteers will need to be employed if an organisation involves a significant number of volunteers or if volunteers occupy roles which call for close supervision.

### **Traditions:**

*Have volunteers formed a minor or major part of the workforce in the past?*

*Are volunteers part of the infra-structure or confined to separate enclaves?*

*Have their roles and responsibilities changed over time?*

*Would organisational goals be achieved more quickly or fully by a change in the make-up of voluntary and paid roles?*

*When were the traditions reviewed? Are they in need of change?*

The role volunteers have traditionally played in organisations may vary considerably. In some organisations, particularly small organisations, they may be an integral part of the structure. In others, particularly larger organisations, they may form separate enclaves, for example, as fund raisers. Perceptions surrounding traditions, and the implications of changing a tradition will need careful consideration. However, an organisation which retains out-moded traditions despite changing situations will soon find itself seriously disadvantaged.

### **Relationships (internal and external):**

*What part have the organisation's policy makers and administrators played in relation to clarifying the why, who, what and how of volunteer and paid staff involvement?*

*Is mutual trust and understanding engendered between all parties involved within the organisation?*

*Has full consideration been given to the needs of recipients of service - and relationships with the various players?*

*What is the organisation's relationship with funding bodies and the wider community?*

*Does it welcome outside advice and involvement?*

*Are service recipients aware of whether a service is being provided by a paid worker or a volunteer? Do home owners realise that the people hauling the tarpaulin over their roof during a violent storm are volunteers? Does it matter - as a general rule, or in a particular situation?*

Attention is often focussed on relationships between volunteers and paid workers, but not on the organisation's policy makers and administrators. Unless the latter understand the concept of volunteering and its practical implications, structures and strategies which foster a cooperative approach are unlikely to be put in place.

**The perspectives of service recipients deserve constant consideration.** In some circumstances volunteers may not be welcome, while in others the opposite will hold true.

The expectations of funding bodies also require attention. Obtaining funding will not only relate to *what* services are to be provided, but *how* they are provided.

**Resources:**

*Does the organisation enjoy a competent workforce which is well set up to fulfil the demands of the organisation's mandate?*

*Are the skills and current expectations of individual workers regularly assessed and taken into account in planning and implementation of programs?*

*Is future funding considered to be secure, based on recurrent government funding and a history of successful fund-raising from within the community - or does the organisation live from hand to mouth with paid workers on contracts of a year or less?*

*Is sufficient account being taken of the possible effects of competitive tendering of government services? Does it impose an opportunity or a threat?*

*Is the organisation an attractive place for volunteers to offer their services in terms of its working environment and facilities?*

*Are financial resources sufficient to employ paid workers, to reimburse volunteer out-of-pocket expenses, pay insurance cover and other costs?*

*What about work-space and materials to do the job?*

*Is there a danger of exploitation of workers, voluntary or paid, due to inadequate finances to pay wages, expenses, and provide the necessary organisational infrastructure?*

Limited financial resources may well affect the nature of an organisation's workforce. While an organisation may wish to increase its paid workforce, limited finances may make this impossible. While some large organisations may be able to dip into their capital reserves to employ extra paid staff, many organisations which involve volunteers have limited if any, capital reserves, and depend on receiving ongoing financial support from government, corporations and/or on the general public for their survival. For these organisations, painful decisions and compromises which can disadvantage service recipients, paid workers and volunteers, are commonplace.

Money is obviously necessary to cover costs. However money without a skilled and committed workforce is useless. **Despite limited financial resources, many small organisations achieve great outcomes, due to their ability to think creatively and develop a skilled, committed and coordinated staff team.**

### **Costs:**

*What are the monetary costs of involving either or both forms of labour?*

*Are there any intangible costs, for example dissatisfaction amongst paid and voluntary staff due to troubled working relationships?*

*In terms of a cost-benefit analysis, do the costs, both tangible and intangible, outweigh the benefits or vice versa, in the short and/or long term?*

**While salaries and associated costs often absorb a large percentage of the budget, involvement of volunteers is not free.** Both forms of labour incur costs in recruitment, orientation, dissemination of information, health and safety requirements, supervision, training in professional development, and support. In certain circumstances, some of these costs could be proportionally greater for volunteer than for paid staff, for instance if extensive training of a large number of volunteers working short hours, is involved.

Having considered the value of all forms of work and analysed elements within our own organisation, we will be well placed to take the next step and formulate staff guidelines which will assist in making decisions in individual situations.

### **ESTABLISH GUIDELINES COVERING PAID AND VOLUNTARY STAFF**

Making decisions in a particular situation is much easier if there are written guidelines in place, not only relating to the concept of volunteering, but covering staff - both paid and voluntary, who work within the organisation. Staff guidelines should reflect basic principles held by the organisation, which influence *why* something is done - or not done - as well as the *operational style*. With the focus clearly set on desired outcomes for all parties, the guidelines will assist in defining boundaries between paid and voluntary workers, clarifying workplace responsibilities and entitlements and promoting satisfying relationships.

**Preparation of staff guidelines should involve all stakeholders and take account of all perspectives.** Some clauses will stand over time, others will need to be reviewed as circumstances change.

Obviously the type of organisation and its beliefs and attitudes, will influence the guidelines. Some organisations have separate guidelines for paid workers and volunteers. However there are advantages in developing joint guidelines covering both paid and voluntary staff, thus emphasising that all come under the one umbrella of human resources.

The following are some examples of clauses of a general nature which may be included in joint paid/voluntary staff policy and practice guidelines.

- Both paid and voluntary staff will be involved in meeting organisational goals, keeping in mind the need to involve those best suited to respond within a particular situation, at a particular time.
- The different but complementary roles, expectations and responsibilities of paid and voluntary staff will be clearly defined.
- All staff, paid and voluntary, will be provided with:
  - orientation to the organisation - its mission, objectives, structure and procedures
  - a clear understanding of what their job involves and conditions under which they will work
  - information, training, facilities, supervision and support necessary to satisfactorily carry out their duties
  - opportunities to be involved in decisions of relevance to their role and responsibilities.
- All relevant legislation covering paid and voluntary workers, e.g. occupational health and safety, will be made known and closely observed.
- Entitlements in the way of salaries, out-of-pocket expenses and insurance cover will be known and agreed to before staff begin work.
- Clear communication systems between management, paid workers and volunteers will be established, with opportunities for all to contribute their ideas and present any grievances for consideration.
- A climate of mutual trust, recognition and support will be fostered between management, volunteers and paid staff.
- Members of the community should not be coerced into performing voluntary work, or allocated unwelcome responsibilities or tasks.
- The involvement of volunteers must not constitute a threat to the job security or work satisfaction of paid staff.
- The person or persons responsible for managing the voluntary program or programs will be given the resources necessary to ensure that program goals are achievable.

- Any dissatisfaction with performance levels will be dealt with by management as it occurs. A change in role, or withdrawal of the offer of voluntary work, or dismissal of a paid worker, will be considered only after those involved have been provided with opportunities to improve their performance to the required level.
- In the event of an industrial dispute, volunteers will not be expected to undertake work normally undertaken by paid staff except by agreement between all parties involved - management, paid staff involved in the dispute and their representatives, and volunteers.
- These guidelines will be reviewed annually.

Staff policy guidelines are unlikely to cover every situation. However, by operating within the principles and spirit of the guidelines, and by thinking through each situation and avoiding simplistic solutions, they provide a useful base-line for decisions which promote high quality services, while keeping in mind the needs of everyone involved.

With policy and practice guidelines in place, we can now refine decision-making processes.

## FORMULATE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Decision-making will be easier if taken step by step:

- assess the situation and establish desired outcomes
- check that these outcomes are congruent with the organisation's mandate and policy and practice guidelines
- establish *what* needs to be done
- decide *how* to proceed
- make and implement the decisions
- review progress and amend as necessary.

Everyone affected by the decisions should be encouraged to participate in the process.

While keeping outcome requirements clearly in mind, decisions will need to take account of:

- what is both desirable and feasible
- effectiveness and efficiency, in the short and long term.

### Desirable and feasible

Both factors need to be considered separately and together. For example, management may believe it is **desirable** to involve volunteers to increase

community participation and enhance service provision, but conclude that this is not **feasible**, as paid staff are strongly opposed to the introduction of further volunteers. On the other hand, it may be **feasible** to involve more volunteers as paid staff/volunteer relationships are healthy and accommodation is adequate, but it is not **desirable** because the nature of the work requires full time commitment by paid staff members.

It is neither feasible nor desirable to expect people to volunteer if:

- recognition and respect for their efforts is lacking
- they believe they will be exploited by being given jobs no-one else wants
- they are expected to produce results without the infrastructure which ensures proper orientation, on-going information and any necessary training and support
- they are called on to volunteer when their current responsibilities leave them with little or no time for leisure pursuits and a balanced lifestyle.

### **Effective and efficient in the short and long term**

Effectiveness needs to be judged against outcomes. The word 'efficient' should be seen in terms of long term budgetary and management practices, not simply short term cash savings. Both effectiveness and efficiency will suffer if an organisation has made no effort to establish structures which aid information exchange, training/support measures and productive working relationships.

A funding body may believe that monetary costs can be cut if several small organisations amalgamate, thus reducing salary and overhead costs. In these circumstances, costs and benefits, both tangible and intangible, need to be closely monitored. While expenditure may be reduced, this may be off-set by a reduction in income derived from regionally-based government funding or local fund raising, and the resignation of volunteers who prefer to be involved in smaller organisations. Intangible benefits may also be lost, such as community cohesion and pride in locally based efforts.

Short term benefits need to be assessed against long term gains. Government funding cuts which result in the closing down or curtailment of organisations which promote preventative and remedial health care, can be extremely expensive in the long term when one considers the costs of hospital care. Many small organisations in the health area, including self-help groups, are staffed predominantly by volunteers, e.g. cancer care associations. Losing the involvement of volunteers who are passionate in their efforts to assist others due to cuts in the already modest funding of such organisations, is short sighted and costly, in both human and monetary terms.

Organisations which cut volunteer out-of-pocket expenses from their budget can also be seen in terms of foregoing long term goals for short-term benefits as they lose volunteers who cannot afford to pay expenses from their own often limited income.

**Shortages in terms of cash, facilities, human resources, and creative ideas, can all place limits on what we would ideally like to achieve. While compromises may be necessary, these should not be made at the expense of principles laid down by an organisation.**

Wise decisions can be made by decision-makers who:

- understand their own organisation in detail, and its place within the wider community
- appreciate the effect decisions have on people and communities - directly and indirectly
- listen to all points of view and consider all suggestions
- capitalise on all the skills staff can offer
- establish general principles which will guide practice
- encourage the involvement of everyone affected in the decision-making process
- subject decisions to constant review.

From the baseline of valuing all work and workers, we have analysed our own organisations, and considered the establishment of staff guidelines and the formulation of decision-making processes. However another step is necessary, if we are to face up to the challenge of our constantly changing environment.

### **ADOPT A PRO-ACTIVE AND CREATIVE APPROACH**

We must not only be capable of responding in a reactive fashion to situations which arise, but be proactive in facilitating change. A 'big picture' perspective, creativity and courage, are called for.

Opportunities abound for workers, paid and voluntary, to be innovative in assisting people in need, in enhancing lifestyles, in widening the knowledge base of community members, and in working for social change. **By trusting people through the sharing the information, the action and the power, organisations can create partnerships of understanding, knowledge and achievement.**

Being pro-active requires the will to speak out, and to act quickly and decisively.

**Be prepared for situations which may arise.**

In maximising the contribution of both paid and voluntary workers, we will have structures and strategies in place which ensure that the organisation is exemplary in its own management and operational style, enabling everyone involved to be empowered through knowledge and ownership. Such structures and strategies will reinforce guidelines already prepared, in relation to joint efforts by paid workers and volunteers.

Examples of initiatives which will ensure organisational readiness for whatever may eventuate could include:

- staff discussions on the future of work and the place of paid and voluntary workers
- an informed manager of the volunteer program who has up-to-date information and opinions on contemporary thinking and volunteering issues, gained perhaps through involvement in an accredited course on volunteer management
- equal opportunity recruitment procedures which provide a two-way match between organisational needs and the interests and abilities of the persons recruited
- a staff handbook which is available and includes organisational goals, structure, services, staff listings and information channels as a back-up to staff orientation
- regular planning days scheduled for board/executive members and staff which encourage the exchange of information and ideas
- consultation with everyone affected by decisions as an in-built requirement
- facilities and events which provide opportunities for socializing, for instance, friendly lunch rooms and the organisation of fun functions.

If such a climate is created, we will be much better prepared to incorporate change, take advantage of opportunities, and tackle differences and difficulties which are inherent in any activity.

**Be innovative**

We need to be pro-active in encouraging and instigating future developments.

'It is individuals who change societies, who give birth to ideas', author Doris Lessing reminds us. Many innovations have emanated not from politicians or administrators but from people frustrated by limitations, or passionate in the desire to promote a cause or new services.

**Being innovative calls for a willingness to trust people, and to recognise that many people (both paid workers and volunteers) are capable and willing, indeed often anxious, to be part of the action.**

In looking for new ways to achieve organisational goals which result in enhanced activities, we will need to:

- initiate research in areas where facts, not just opinions, are needed
- showcase achievements to date and acknowledge all those responsible for such achievements
- encourage everyone involved to offer their suggestions for more effective ways to achieve organisational goals, and follow through with action plans
- ensure that the potential to effectively utilise human resources is maximised by researching what works best and by instituting methods of best practice
- delegate as much responsibility as possible, to enable people to feel free to make decisions and be creative
- increase available human resources through new channels, for instance the involvement of people who have resigned from the paid workforce and young people who are anxious to increase their knowledge through practical involvement
- increase financial resources by showing governments and corporations that the joint efforts of paid and voluntary workers can promote a more creative and cohesive society, and that by providing funding, they are investing in the future
- keep abreast of new funding possibilities, such as tendering for services
- capitalise on the benefits of technology
- encourage volunteers and managers of volunteer programs to discuss their experiences
- initiate discussion and debate between politicians, community figures, trade unions and paid and voluntary workers
- encourage debate of issues through the media, by attending and speaking at conferences, and contributing articles to journals
- publish material which addresses issues and opportunities relating to creative alliances between paid and voluntary workers.

By becoming involved in new thinking, new ideas and new strategies we are challenged to:

- research the facts
- be clear on messages we wish to convey and action we wish to pursue
- focus on issues, not personalities
- keep on keeping on.

In this chapter 'The Way Ahead', we have analysed both facts and attitudes in discussing the value we place on work and workers, and in considering the many factors which determine the type of organisations within which we work. Other ideas to take us forward have been suggested - the development of guidelines covering paid and voluntary staff, a process to assist in decision-making, and a determination to adopt a pro-active and creative approach in whatever we do.

Putting ideas into practice tests our understanding and commitment. The case studies in the next chapter illustrate the diversity and complexity of the many situations in which both paid and voluntary workers may be involved.

## 5. PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE: CASE STUDIES

The case studies listed below show the necessity for organisations, while working towards fulfilling their responsibilities to the community, to also keep in mind their responsibilities to workers, both paid and voluntary. A variety of situations are included, relating to:

- expansion and enhancement of services
- staff relationships and roles
- funding cuts and financial constraints
- industrial matters
- citizen advocacy and participation.

With one exception (case study 14) all organisations quoted are not-for-profit.

### Case Study 1

*An art gallery and a museum each planned to introduce a new service to the public through the recruitment of additional paid and voluntary staff.*

*One organisation recruited the additional volunteers before they had appointed a paid worker to manage the program. No volunteer job descriptions had been prepared, no training was provided, and no communication channels had been put in place. What followed was confusion and conflict between paid workers and volunteers, a series of complaints by visitors, and the loss of public support for what had begun as an exciting project.*

*The other organisation, in consultation with current paid and voluntary staff, had already developed policy and practice guidelines. These were closely followed as the objectives of the project were defined, job descriptions prepared, required volunteer numbers and skills established, and a paid worker appointed who would be responsible for the project. The result was a high quality operation enjoyed by members of the public, delivered by a united and happy workforce.*

Any changes or extensions which affect staff make-up and/or numbers need to be considered in the light of the organisation's mission and objectives, tradition, beliefs, responsibilities, tasks and resources, and with the full involvement of everyone concerned - management, paid workers, volunteers, recipients of services, and where appropriate, trade union representatives.

### **Case study 2**

*A volunteer working in a family organisation had been helping a mother cope in a difficult situation. It was noticed that the child had been badly bruised. Having a mandatory duty under state law to report suspected abuse, the volunteer contacted the supervising social worker who immediately took over full responsibility, with the volunteer withdrawing until the situation had been clarified.*

In this case roles and responsibilities for the social worker and the volunteer had been clearly established, with the parents knowledge and agreement. If this had not been done, further confusion and distress would have worsened the already fraught situation.

### **Case study 3**

*Two nursing homes involved volunteers in helping to feed residents.*

*Nursing Home A management did so simply to cut costs. The paid staff were apprehensive, but, being over-worked, said nothing, except for several nurses who alerted their union to the situation.*

*Nursing Home B wanted to enhance services for several lonely residents who were neglecting their food. Specially selected volunteers, who already had a good relationship with the residents concerned, worked with the responsible paid staff member to encourage better eating habits. The decision to involve volunteers was made jointly between management, paid workers and volunteers, with the proviso that the situation be reviewed after three months.*

While the two nursing homes may, on the surface, appear to have acted in similar ways, their motives and strategies were very different. The actions of Nursing Home A constituted a threat to the job security of paid staff whose duties included the feeding of patients, and who were not consulted before the plan was put into operation. A reduction of paid nursing staff hours could well have been the result. The actions of Nursing Home B emanated from a desire to enhance quality care. The volunteers complemented, but did not replace, the work of paid staff.

### **Case Study 4**

*An organisation offered paid work for two days a week to a volunteer, provided he 'volunteered' on his usual day. The paid job involved a different role and responsibilities from that of the voluntary job. The volunteer refused to accept the offer, as he felt he was being put under undue pressure to continue volunteering.*

In this case the person may have been willing to continue his day-a-week voluntary work, but to make this a condition of paid work was exploitative.

Offering paid work to a volunteer can be a happy experience for a person who is actively seeking paid work, and for the organisation which has had an opportunity to assess the person's attributes. However, it is important not to raise false hopes when a volunteer begins work that paid employment could follow, or to use a period of voluntary work as a trial period, and then choose which of a number of volunteers will be offered paid work. A person should be appointed as either a volunteer or a paid worker, with a clearly defined job description which includes both role and responsibilities. Any change in status from a voluntary to a paid worker should be done openly, and be equal and fair to everyone concerned. Otherwise tensions and feelings of confusion or being let down can occur. The situation may also cause other volunteers to question the organisation's purpose and indeed its honesty, in relation to the involvement of volunteers.

### **Case Study 5**

*A volunteer was asked to fill in for a paid worker while on annual leave. The volunteer, who believed she had the necessary time and skills, agreed.*

Practices such as this are undesirable. Deciding to employ a paid worker involves making budgetary provision for all associated entitlements at the time of appointment. This includes filling in for annual leave absences by other paid workers.

### **Case Study 6**

*The manager of a community organisation was keen to assist people recovering from injury or trauma increase their skills and raise their confidence levels, by providing them with the opportunity to join the ranks of existing volunteers. He urged staff to support the plan, but failed to consult them on the practicalities. The result was a mixed blessing for the organisation, current staff and the new volunteers. While some of the volunteers managed to receive satisfaction from their efforts, the skills and attributes of others were poorly matched. The lack of supervisory structures further compounded the problem for everyone involved. Very few of those who were recruited, continued to volunteer.*

All parties in such an arrangement may benefit, but only after processes of careful consultation, planning, matching of the person to a particular job, ongoing support, supervision, and where necessary, training, have been thoroughly established.

### **Case Study 7**

*Julie, who was intellectually impaired and in receipt of a pension, led a very unhappy home life. As a means of escape, she spent most days working for a number of hours in the kitchen of an organisation for homeless persons. Management, on the suggestion of paid and voluntary staff,*

*made an exception in allowing Julie to work well over the hours worked by other volunteers.*

Julie's need for a haven in which she felt happy and valued was considered to be more important than rigid conformity to general practice.

### **Case study 8**

*Volunteers and paid workers in two community organisations called for a change in the constitution to allow staff representation on the board, in addition to the executive director who was already a member. Joint discussions followed to decide whether such representation should be restricted to one person (either paid or voluntary), or whether two places would be sought (one to represent paid workers, one to represent volunteers). Both organisations enjoyed cordial relationships between paid and voluntary staff.*

*Staff in organisation A decided to ask for two places - one to represent paid workers and the other to represent volunteers.*

*Staff in organisation B decided that one position would suffice provided structures and strategies were put in place to ensure that all points of view were canvassed and presented.*

Each decision took account of the fact that while both paid and voluntary workers were regarded as 'staff', and many of their interests were similar, differences in the situation and expectations of each also needed to be acknowledged.

### **Case study 9**

*Budgets were cut by ten percent across a number of schools. In an effort to maintain as many services as possible, parents were urged by some school principals to volunteer both as fund raisers and to provide administrative services previously undertaken by paid staff. The response varied between schools and between parents. It was found that the interests and skills of parents who volunteered did not always match service requirements, and that success in fund raising differed greatly between different socio-economic areas. Some parents who did 'volunteer' did so under duress, others who did not, were left feeling guilty.*

Equal budgetary cuts across services do not necessarily result in equal consequences. Situations such as this put pressure on management, paid staff and volunteers. Guidelines and strategies need to be carefully worked out so that undue pressures are not imposed on any of the players involved. In this situation it was unfair to expect parents (usually mothers), who were already overburdened with family responsibilities, to volunteer. Measures need to be taken to bring the reality of situations such as this to the attention of policy makers so that volunteering is not seen as an easy cost-saving option.

**Case Study 10**

*A group of parents of children with disabilities had set up a program to fill a service need. They eventually succeeded in attracting government funding to employ paid staff, but the funding was subsequently cut, despite the fact that a much needed and quality service was being provided in an effective and economical fashion. The management committee, which was made up of parents and interested community members, had to decide whether to (a) close the service, or (b) again staff it with volunteers until funding was available to employ paid staff. Their conviction that to close the service would create serious hardship for the children, led them to decide in favour of (b).*

This situation again highlights what can occur when government funding for vital services is cut. Not only were paid staff made redundant, but parents in deciding to become involved again, did so at considerable inconvenience to themselves by adding 'volunteering' to their already heavy home commitments.

**Case study 11**

*A small agency, associated with conservation, had finally secured sufficient funding to employ two paid workers. A manager and a typist/bookkeeper was one suggestion. However it was decided to employ a manager and a project officer, but no typist/bookkeeper. The latter work was done by a group of volunteers each working one day a week under the supervision of the manager.*

Shortage of funds, particularly for small organisations, places limits on the number of paid staff who can be employed. Difficult choices are often necessary. If the above agency grew to the stage where effective coordination and control of the typing/bookkeeping services became too difficult, with different staff each day, it would seriously have to consider how additional revenue could be raised in order to employ an additional paid worker to accept responsibility. The proposal could well include volunteers assisting the paid worker.

**Case study 12**

*When the regional manager visited a branch office of a government department, she found a volunteer doing the work normally undertaken by one of the typists. The paid typist (who liked working with children) was filling in for a paid child care worker whose hours had been cut. The branch manager was told by his supervisor that to replace the typist with a volunteer, even on a day a week basis, was unacceptable. The volunteer typist heard what was being said, and strongly objected, saying she really enjoyed the work, and why shouldn't she be allowed to volunteer.*

While the paid typist was in no immediate danger of losing her job, (the volunteer was typing on only one day a week), and the feelings of the volunteer typist could be appreciated, 'topping up' the hours of the paid child care worker by the paid typist set an undesirable precedent. The branch manager also ran the risk of industrial action being initiated by dissatisfied paid staff who may disagree with the typist working outside her job description.

### Case study 13

*Management within a hospital called on volunteers to fill in for paid workers who were on strike, despite the fact that there had been no negotiated agreement between the striking workers and the volunteers. The volunteers refused, knowing that the good relationships they had enjoyed with paid workers and their representatives in the past would be jeopardised and future services would suffer as a result. They called on management to organise a meeting between all parties to resolve the matter of immediate concern, and to undertake the preparation of guidelines which would clarify future policy and practice.*

Before any action is taken by management in the event of an industrial dispute, the perspectives, motivations and interests of all parties need to be explored, joint consultation arranged, and policies, which should already be in place, put into practice.

### Case study 14

*Three for-profit organisations took over three correctional institutions, all of which had well-regarded volunteer services.*

*Institution A decided to cut costs by expanding volunteer services into areas previously undertaken by paid staff. They appointed a new Volunteer Manager whose duties included this role.*

*Institution B decided it would continue to cooperate with a prisoners aid organisation.*

*Institution C decided it would invite the volunteers to set up their own separately incorporated body and allocated funding for the infrastructure. As a result Volunteer Services Inc. was established.*

*A crisis situation occurred in each organisation, when their pay offices reported that they were behind in their work. Each organisation called on volunteers to assist.*

*Responses varied.*

*In Institution A the Volunteer Manager felt bound to help or risk losing her job. The result was outraged union officials and a further reduction in the number of people willing to remain as volunteers.*

*The Prisoners Aid Organisation (involved in Institution B) and Volunteer Services Inc. (involved in Institution C), while sympathising with the overstretched paid workers, refused to assist. They knew that the relationships*

*they had built up with paid workers and their representatives over the years would collapse, and the volunteers would feel exploited. In addition, providing administrative services for the company was outside their charter.*

Volunteer involvement within a for-profit organisation needs to be closely questioned and monitored. Volunteers need to be sure that they are there to provide additional benefits to individuals over and above what could be expected of paid workers, i.e. providing a community service, rather than as a means of replacing paid workers or increasing company profits.

A blanket refusal to be involved in a for-profit organisation in any way can disadvantage persons in need of the special help that volunteers can provide, such as befriending a lonely person in a nursing home.

Safeguards do however, need to be in place to ensure that the volunteer service maintains its independence in regard to the principles espoused, the direction it takes, and the services it provides and supervises.

### **Case study 15**

*An extensive oil slick was discovered along the coastline, putting thousands of penguins at risk. If the penguins were to be saved, hundreds of people needed to be mobilised immediately. A call was made for local citizens to assist. Central coordination was provided by paid staff, trained in veterinary science and in disaster management.*

Satisfactory outcomes depend on having people with the right skills and attributes, in the right place at the right time. Involvement of volunteers in this situation had the added advantage of raising community awareness of environmental hazards and of the need for long term solutions to be developed.

### **Case study 16**

*Citizens were upset at local government moves to close a sports field. A residents' group was set up to fight the decision. The group knew that they would have to work in a voluntary capacity and also cover any incidental costs and risks. Indeed they believed any financial backing by an outside body might put their independence in jeopardy.*

These residents demonstrated their democratic right to be involved in matters of concern, hoping that their actions would lead to a reversal of the decision and the continuation of a well-used community service.

**Case study 17**

*At the request of paid staff and with the backing of management, a volunteer manager was asked to develop a volunteer program, located in a rehabilitation unit, to assist individuals who were recovering from brain injury.*

*Following consultation with paid staff and union representatives in establishing guidelines for volunteer involvement in the program, the manager identified university students studying various 'therapy' disciplines as being a good pool of potential volunteers. These students would be able to contribute to the program's goals, and at the same time gain valuable, practical experience of working in a rehabilitation unit.*

The reciprocal nature of volunteering should not be overlooked when recruiting volunteers. In the above case we can clearly see the benefits to be derived by both the organisation and the students.

Consulting with paid staff at the outset of this process ensured that their views and concerns were taken into account in the formation of clear program guidelines.

The matters raised in the above examples have implications for and affect many people. Responsibilities rest with all those with the power to make decisions in their own area of influence. The goal will be to achieve maximum benefits for everyone involved.

A collaborative approach between both paid and voluntary workers will greatly facilitate that goal.

## **6. ACHIEVING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH**

Communities and organisations which value the contribution of both paid and voluntary workers and achieve a collaborative and creative approach, are likely not only to survive, but thrive!

Creative collaboration involves;

- working towards a common aim
- trusting people
- valuing all forms of work
- appreciating both similarities and differences in the motivations, expectations, skills, attributes and time availability, of both paid and voluntary workers
- matching organisational needs and personal abilities and attributes, and ensuring that training is provided when necessary
- understanding and safeguarding the needs and interests of all parties
- establishing policy and practice guidelines and decision-making processes
- being flexible, pro-active and creative.

The opportunity for people to engage in paid work in order to earn an income and give of their skills, and for volunteers to pursue an interest, champion a cause and find satisfaction in joint efforts, are intrinsic aspects of a democracy and are highly prized in this country. The quality of our lives depends to a large degree on our ability to find a balance between leisure, paid and unpaid work, and to accommodate all forms of endeavour into a productive and enjoyable lifestyle. Beneficiaries will be service recipients, organisations and their workers, and the community at large.

In some situations, collaboration will involve paid workers being in the majority, with volunteers enhancing and extending their efforts; in others the reverse will hold true.

Apart from the tangible benefits of such collaboration, intangible benefits, which while difficult to quantify, are important in terms of satisfying relationships between workers, as well as in increasing community vitality and cohesion.

While the benefits of a collaborative approach may be accepted in theory, achievement in practice is not easy. Wants, needs, situations and the aspirations of workers themselves (both paid and voluntary), keep changing. Genuine and productive partnerships call for all of us, with our varying roles and responsibilities, to think through the issues in the context of each individual situation at any particular time, and to make wise decisions which respect the interests of everyone involved. Policy makers, administrative staff and front-line operators, all have particular responsibilities. Abdication by any, will slow or defeat the purpose.

Readers have been encouraged throughout this book to think through the issues, examine their own attitudes and work towards the best possible result for everyone involved.

An organisation, in working towards a collaborative approach which values and maximises the time, skills and commitment of both paid and voluntary workers, can set goals, establish structures and develop strategies. However, it is the way in which paid workers and volunteers - individually and together - relate to those goals, exercise their imagination and take the initiative on a day-to-day basis, which will make the difference between mediocre results and significant achievements.

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Have you ever tried to define the similarities and differences between paid and voluntary work; between paid workers and volunteers?

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Here at last is a book that, by refusing to skirt around relationships between paid and volunteer staff, clears the way for further discussion and debate on this important subject.

In working towards a collaborative approach, the book:

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- asks pertinent questions of all players to help crystallise their thinking;
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- offers case studies as practical examples of the theory developed in the book.

This lively and trailblazing analysis will be invaluable for policy makers, managers, funders, paid and volunteer staff, trainers and students.



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**JOY NOBLE** is a well known South Australian author of publications mainly relating to volunteering. She is a former social administrator, has lectured on human service management, and has been a volunteer in a number of community organisations.