*Cutting Edge Research in Tourism – New Directions, Challenges and Applications*
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# How volunteers are organized: a review of three museums

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## ABSTRACT

Volunteers in museums play an important role in supporting paid museum staff and augmenting museum resources. If they are organized well they can help to realise organizational goals and contribute to the overall success of the institutions in which they participate. However the academic literature is broad in its recommendations for how volunteers should be organized. This paper contributes to the discussion by reporting on a study that examined the way in which three large museums in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory in Australia organized their volunteers. . Methods used for data collection included semi-structured interviews with volunteer coordinators from each institution and a self-administered questionnaire which was mailed to the total population of volunteers at the three institutions (641 at the time of data collection). The study found that each program employed a bureaucratic approach, was successful and well structured. However, the respective volunteer coordinators do not feel that volunteers are fully integrated into the institutions and paid coordinators are insecure over their management methods. These issues are discussed and recommendations are made for ways in which volunteers can be better organized.

**Keywords:** Volunteers, organization, management, recruitment, training

## INTRODUCTION

For the end of June 2004 there were 1,329 museums in Australia which utilised the services of 20,443 volunteers to assist with their operations (AusStats, 2004). Consequently there has been much debate by museum practitioners about the problems involved in organizing large numbers of volunteers. It has been argued that volunteer programs that are not well organized and structured result in unrealised organizational goals and dissatisfied volunteers (Brudney, 1999; Metzer, Dollard, & Rogers, 1997). Effective management is essential if the full potential of voluntary is to be realised. In a study of festival volunteers Getz and Frisby, (1988) found that voluntary organizations which adopted a more professional and business like structure acquire a greater share of resources and achieve more goals than for less sophisticated organizations. A trend by organizations has been toward bureaucratization, using practices of standardisation, centralisation and formalised

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systems (Nichols, 2004; Tyzack, 1996). Holmes (1999), in a long term study of heritage museums, established that the heritage sector was becoming increasingly more specialised in its management of volunteers in response to both increasing volunteer numbers and the number of museums and heritage organizations. The academic literature has identified a range of models to describe how volunteers are organised.

Rochester (1999) in a study of a variety of small voluntary organizations identified four models of volunteer involvement. The first of these is the 'service delivery' model. In this model, volunteers are under an explicit agreement similar to a contract of employment. They carry out a lion's share of the operational activities of the organization in the form of predetermined and specific tasks. There are clear organizational arrangements, and a clear distinction between the roles of volunteers and paid staff. Organizations that use this model invest heavily in initial training, while paid staff organize volunteer workloads, provide support and supervision on a one to one basis, and provide opportunities to exchange skills with other volunteers. They are also responsible for recruiting, training, deploying and supporting volunteers.

The second model is the 'support role' model where the role of the volunteer is to support and supplement the work of the paid staff who are executing more important areas of work. This model enables paid staff to maximise their time on operational activities. Training tends to be impromptu, while support, supervision, and appraisal can vary from informal to tightly structured.

The third model is the 'member/activist' model. Organization and management is about inviting people to find out what contribution they can make, offering opportunities for personal and social learning and providing mutual support. Volunteers may undertake all organizational roles, which can be negotiated and developed over time in light of the volunteer experience, personal growth and reflection. Volunteer participation is more flexible and can range from passive to very active.

The fourth model is the 'co-worker' model where the differences in the role and distinctions of status between paid staff and volunteers are unclear. The work of staff needs to be supplemented by volunteer effort. Division of labour is ambiguous and roles and status are blurred. Allocation of tasks and responsibilities is done through discussion and negotiation considering the knowledge and skills of both paid and volunteer staff. Supervisors may be paid or unpaid, and leadership is based on nurturing and enabling, by example.

According to Meijs and Karr (2004) in a study of the different settings in which volunteering takes place, volunteer management systems focus on two types. One is the European model where tasks fit the expectations of volunteers (membership management) or two, the American model where specific operational tasks are identified and volunteers are found to do them (program management). They propose that because there is more need to control the (mis)use of private norms and values in public organizations volunteer management in public organizations must be more in control than in private organizations. That controlling is easier they believe using the program approach. This model is similar to Rochester's service delivery model.

More recently, in order to assist volunteers to work in cohesion with paid staff Lockstone, Deery, and King (2004) suggested that volunteer resources should be

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integrated into organizational culture. The model, under which they propose this to occur, was flexibility theory. The flexible organization manages time such that organizational needs are mutually aligned with employee needs and work patterns in order to achieve economic imperatives; and jobs such that employee's skills are used in a broader range of areas (Lockstone, et al., 2004). In a pilot test of two visitor information centres and four attractions they found that volunteer managers and coordinators perceived the application of flexible work practices as impractical, but acknowledged the use of these practices 'as a means of maintaining volunteer interest and improving role-related knowledge' (Lockstone, et al., 2004: 450).

The research outlined here demonstrates the diversity in managing volunteers and indicates the complexity in understanding volunteer management, not least because findings will always be contextually derived. This paper contributes to the discussion by reporting on the management of three volunteer programs at three large museums and art museums in Sydney and Canberra, Australia.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at the Australian War Memorial (AWM), located in Canberra, the capital city of Australia, in the Australian Capital Territory. The Australian Museum (AM), located next to Hyde Park in the centre of Sydney, New South Wales. The Art Gallery of New South Wales (AG or Gallery), located in The Domain, in the centre of Sydney, New South Wales.

Methods used for data collection included a self-administered questionnaire mailed to the total population of volunteers across the three institutions (641 at the time of data collection). The results of the questionnaire have been reported in Edwards (2005). A total of eight, semi-structured, interviews were held with serving volunteer coordinators and managers from each of the institutions between November 2002 and February 2004; three from the AGNSW, two from the AWM and three from the AM. The interviews were conducted in an informal manner and in a place chosen by the participant. In each case, this was in a quiet room of the organization.

As the intention was to combine the themes emerging from the interview data, the researcher felt that it was important to ensure that each interview followed a similar structure. Accordingly, a semi-structured interview prompt list was designed to assist the researcher to cover the same topics and sub areas with each participant. Three days prior to the interview, the prompt list was emailed to participants for reflection. As participant confidentiality was assured, their comments have been anonymised when presenting the data (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004).

The interview opened with questions about the participant's background and experience in the organization, and how they came to be in their current roles. More specific questions, were asked as the interview progressed. These questions related to their attitudes to volunteers, program structure, recruitment, management, their challenges in organizing volunteers, types of rewards offered and field interaction. As it is important to allow the voices of participants to emerge (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), participants were allowed to tell their own story in a way that was most comfortable for them. All interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

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Annual reports, induction manuals, volunteer information packs and business plans were used to provide background information on each institution. Specifically they assisted in gaining information on organizational structure and procedures, roles and tasks of volunteers, employment practices, volunteer program rules and regulations, and where necessary, to cross reference perspectives put forward by participants. The availability of documents varied at each institution.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted with the aid of QSR NUD*IST Vivo software program; a program designed to specifically facilitate analytic induction. Analytic induction is 'the thesis that there are regularities to be found in the physical and social worlds' (Huberman & Miles, 1994). As the data was collected, the researcher constantly theorised and tried to make sense of the data. As notes and transcripts were read, emerging themes were tracked and developed, and concepts and propositions of the data were interpreted. The final activity was to review findings by understanding the data in the context in which they were collected (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

## FINDINGS

### *About the attractions*

#### Australian War Memorial

The AWM houses the largest collection of war artefacts in Australia. The purpose of the AWM is to commemorate the sacrifice of those Australians who died in war. The vision of the AWM 'is to be an outstanding Memorial that is acclaimed for its commemorative ethos, activities and exhibitions; engages with the greatest possible number of people; undertakes continuing revitalisation; and is recognised as a pre-eminent national institution' (Australian War Memorial, 2002). The AWM is open daily except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. Admission and tours are free. Forty-two general tours - six a day - are offered on a weekly basis. For the financial year ended 2003 the museum was host to 794,000 visitors.

The volunteer program is situated under Education and Visitor Services (E&VS) in the Public Programs branch. At the time of data collection, there were 224 active volunteers. Although, the majority of volunteers participate in four main areas, the voluntary guides, the discovery room, conservation volunteers, and the online Gallery, they can be found in many areas within the AWM. The various activities undertaken in these areas include conducting interpretive guided tours, VIP tours for the general public and special interest groups, assisting the public with research enquiries, assisting with functions and formal ceremonies, assisting conservators in preparing relics for storage, and working in laboratories treating textiles and paper based artefacts.

#### Australian Museum

The AM is a museum that houses a national science collection. The purpose of the AM is to propagate knowledge about the natural environment of Australia and to increase that knowledge specifically in the areas of biology, anthropology and geology (Australian Museum, 2003). The vision of the Museum is 'Sustainable environments and cultures for future generations achieved through documenting and understanding the past and present' (Australian Museum, 2003: 2). To achieve the vision, the AM's mission is to 'Research, interpret, communicate and apply

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understanding of the environments and cultures of the Australian region to increase their long-term sustainability' (Australian Museum, 2003: 2). For the financial year ended 2003, the museum was host to approximately 397,000 visitors. The AM is open daily except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. Tours are free.

For the period 2002-2003, there were 186 people actively volunteering within the Australian Museum. The volunteer program is situated within Visitor Services under the Division of Public Programs. It comprises two areas: Public Programs and Behind the Scenes. Public Programs' volunteers meet and greet Museum visitors, help visitors feel welcome and oriented to the Museum, take guided tours, interpret Museum content and assist in special events. Behind the Scenes volunteers, assist in a wide variety of roles, supporting scientists and other Museum staff in clerical and other duties such as cataloguing, researching and classification.

### Art Gallery of New South Wales

The Gallery is an art museum that houses an extensive collection of national and international artworks. The purpose of the Gallery is to 'develop and maintain a collection of works of art, and to propagate and increase knowledge and appreciation of art' (Art Gallery New South Wales, 2003). The Gallery's mission is to 'maintain a reputation as an energetic, outgoing and accessible art institution in Australia, and at the same time strive to be a major international gallery of the world, continuing to inspire, interest and provide enjoyment to increasingly diverse audiences' (Art Gallery of New South Wales 2003: 1). Tours are free. The Gallery is open daily except for Good Friday and Christmas Day. Admission and tours are free but entry to special exhibits attracts a fee.

Volunteers in the art museum come under Public Programs within the division of Curatorial Services. There are two distinct volunteer programs, the Volunteer Guides and the Task Force. At the time of data collection there were 278 volunteers across the two programs. The Gallery's Annual Report states that the value of volunteer services to the Gallery is 1.357 million dollars (Art Gallery of New South Wales 2003). The Volunteer Guides provide guided tours of the Gallery's collections and major exhibitions for the public, school children and special groups.

The Volunteer Task Force is a group of Society members who provide voluntary support to both the Gallery and the Society. It provides an opportunity for Society members to become more actively involved with the Gallery. It is a multi-function support group that undertakes a variety of activities such as ticket and catalogue sales, assisting in the members' room, mail outs, opening mail, counting votes, clerical and library assistance, and serving at a variety of day and evening functions hosted by the Gallery.

*How volunteers are organized*

### Australian War Memorial

E&VS volunteers, are managed by the Volunteer Coordinator E&VS and an assistant volunteer coordinator. They are both paid staff. The volunteer coordinator was self-employed for 30 years before joining the War Memorial. At the AWM the coordinator has had a number of positions including security officer and acting manager of the Treloar Technology Centre (TTC) when it was a visitor site. During the period of this

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study it was found that due to staffing constraints in the E&VS Volunteer Services Unit, the volunteer manager was often unsupported in th eir role.

The TTC and Treloar A Conservation Laboratory are currently used for the restoration of large technology. Volunteers at the sites report to the Volunteer Coordinator, TTC. The Volunteer Coordinator, TTC was an E&VS volunteer from 1998-2000. He is supported by team leaders, who are fulltime conservation staff assigned to specific restoration projects. National Collection volunteers are managed on a one-to-one basis by section heads.

### Australian Museum

The management of volunteers at the AM has been consistently disjointed and continued to be so during the study.  The program from 2000-2004 has had numerous coordinators.  Sometimes this has been one person and at other times up to three people.  The major duties fell to the front of house manager who also has other duties to fulfil within the museum.  This person enjoys managing the volunteers but is despondent that they don't have the time that they would like to commit to the role.

### Art Gallery of New South Wales

Management of the guides and Task Force is not dissimilar to self-managed teams. The Gallery guides are self-managed by an unpaid coordinator and an assistant coordinator. The position of volunteer guide coordinator is the most senior within the Gallery guides. The coordinators are in the position for one year. The guide coordinator works in conjunction with a volunteer committee. The committee is comprised of the guide co-ordinator, the immediate past co-ordinator, the assistant co-ordinator, the children's co-ordinator and assistant, the lecture programme co-ordinator and assistant, and the treasurer, secretary and assistant. Four committee members undertake additional roles as liaison guides.  Liaison guides act as mediators between the curators and the Gallery guides and they are the only guides allowed to speak to the curators. Liaison guides also gather materials that support specific exhibitions that can be used by Gallery guides.

The Task Force is managed by the 'Volunteer Coordinator Task Force', and a committee of eight members. The Volunteer Coordinator Task Force is elected from the current sitting committee and is in the position for two years. The duties of a Task Force volunteer are carried out on a roster basis. There are also five project officers who are responsible for a number of social activities and a Task Force news letter. To be a Task Force member, a person is required to pay an annual subscription of ten dollars.

*Volunteer recruitment and training*

### Australian War Memorial

There are two recruitment processes; one for E&VS and one for the TTC. The relevant volunteer manager for each venue undertakes each process. The recruitment process for E&VS is conducted on an 'as needs' basis. Predominantly, the manager will advertise through the major newspapers. Applicants must be willing to commit to working for one year following recruitment and training. Successful applicants are given a Voluntary Guides manual that outlines the policies, rules and procedures regulating volunteer involvement and a teamwork agreement document

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that sets out the working guidelines to which volunteers must adhere. All volunteers must undergo a security check and are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

New guides are trained by two experienced guides for a period of six to eight months. During this time, the volunteer is required to present a paper to the training team on how they intend to conduct tours through the AWM and to conduct 12 tours on which they undertake a self-assessment. On completion of the 12 tours they are evaluated by the training team and become a full guide. Guides are evaluated three times a year to ensure that they are maintaining a professional standard.

The recruitment process for TTC volunteers is less formal than for E&VS volunteers. The initial point of contact is over the phone. If the applicant's skills are required, the applicant is invited to an interview-come-orientation. The interview-come-orientation session acts as a culling tool as some applicants withdraw their interest when they understand that the environment in which they will be working is not always a comfortable one. The volunteer is placed on a probation period of 50 hours.

### Australian Museum

Public Programs volunteers are recruited approximately once a year. There are two different recruitment processes for the guides and the Behind the Scenes volunteers. Those people interested in guiding are invited to an information day at which they are informed of the Museum's expectations, commitment required, activities they can be involved in and training requirements. Participants are then invited to fill in an application form. These application forms are reviewed and prospective volunteers are invited in for an interview conducted by the volunteer coordinators. The applicant is asked to bring with them an object from nature, on which they are to give a three minute talk. Interviews are and are similar to a job interview but not as formal.

Public Programs volunteers are required to work a minimum of 22 days a year as well as attend regular meetings and training days. New volunteers attend a four-day induction course that covers customer service, basics of museum interpretation and education, museum content and conducting guided tours. Volunteers are expected to commit for a period of 12 months and appraised once a year.

Training for front of house includes undertaking tours with trained volunteers and paid front of house staff. When the volunteer feels comfortable with their knowledge they are assessed by the volunteer coordinator. If the coordinator does not think the volunteer is read they will make suggestions to the them for improvement in their guiding skills. The volunteer is also required to evaluate themselves after 50 hours of volunteering.

For Behind the Scenes volunteers the recruitment process is less formal. A scientist from Behind the Scenes will make a request to the volunteer coordinator for a person to fill a particular task. Commitment for Behind the Scenes volunteers varies with the type of task performed. Ongoing projects will require regular attendance, while short-term projects will require volunteers for a specified period. Training for Behind the Scenes volunteers is provided by the respective supervisor.

### Art Gallery

There are two separate recruitment processes. Gallery guides are recruited through advertisements in a major Australian newspaper and the Look Magazine once every

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four years. Applicants are sent an information package that explains the guiding commitment including: a minimum of 42 hours guiding per year, children and adult guide training for one year, three years of children's guiding, followed by the option to take adult tours. These explicit expectations act as a culling tool as people tend to withdraw their interest if they feel they are unable to fulfil these commitments. Interviews are conducted by a panel that includes a representative of Public Programmes, the guide co-ordinator, and two members from the volunteer committee. Volunteer guides are required to pay $25 a year to be a guide.

People who have previous guiding experience in other museums or overseas and have a second language will be interviewed outside the normal recruitment period. Guides are expected to attend 75% of lectures that are aimed at educating the guides about art. Guides are also invited to participate in presentation workshops which can cover a range of foci such as health and safety issues, care of children or presentations.

The Task Force recruits volunteers on an 'as need basis' and at the time of data collection it had a waiting list of two years. Task Force volunteers must commit to working a minimum of 48 hours a year or 4 hours a month. New members are given a folder with explicit instructions for all Task Force activities and rules of membership. For the first six months they are rostered to work with a senior Task Force member, who shows them what to do and to 'keep an eye on them'. New recruits are on a six month probation period and must demonstrate satisfactory performance to the committee to be accepted as Task Force Members.

### *Volunteer facilities and benefits*

#### Australian War Memorial

Volunteer benefits include full access to the research centre and facilities; discount at the bookshop and kiosk; concessional entry to other Museums, Galleries and Institutions in Canberra; invitations to ceremonies and presentations by curators, services and other activities organized by the memorial; insurance cover for injury or illness arising out of work at the Memorial; invitations to listen to presentations; and payment for guides to be members of the Association of Australian Gallery Guides Organization (AAGGO). The institution also pays the full cost for the Memorials' AAGGO representative to attend the AAGGO bi-annual conference.

Certificates of appreciation are presented to online, gallery, and discovery room volunteers following 2000 hours of service. TTC volunteers receive certificates of appreciation on the completion of a project, and badges indicating 200, 500, 1,000 or 2,000 hours of service. The Gallery guides have a separate Christmas function. The patron of the guides, the wife of the Governor General, once a year has afternoon tea with the guides and attends selected volunteer functions.

#### Australian Museum

Volunteers have their own room which contains a small library and resource centre, coffee and tea facilities and a pigeon hole for messages etc. On recruitment, volunteers are given a T Shirt (uniform) which must be return if they leave within six months. Volunteers have free access to the Museum and special exhibitions and receive a free subscription to Nature Australian Magazine, the Museum's own publication which is sold in the Museum shop, discounted attendance for any public

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and staff lectures, discounts at the Museum shop and honorary membership of The Australian Museum Society.

**Art Gallery**

Task Force volunteers and Gallery guides each have their own facilities with tea, coffee, milk and biscuits. The benefits of being a guide include attending lectures by curators, special exhibitions and seminars at reduced cost; a small reduction in parking fees; Christmas luncheon; free access to exhibitions; and a badge. Task Force volunteers are given a lunch at the Annual General Meeting and Christmas.

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**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

| | AWM | AM | ART GALLERY |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Organization of volunteers** | - 2 paid coordinators for the E&VS volunteers<br>- Guide committee inputs into guide activities and processes<br>- 1 paid coordinator at the TTC | - Varies 1 and 3 paid coordinators | Gallery guides<br>- 2 unpaid coordinators<br>- Guide committee oversees volunteer guide program<br>Task Force volunteers<br>- 1 unpaid coordinator<br>- Task Force committee oversees tasks |
| **Volunteer recruitment and training** | E&VS volunteers:<br>- Recruitment once a year<br>- Orientation<br>- Formal interview<br>- 6 - 8 months guide training<br>- Self assessment on 12 tours<br>- Team evaluation after 12 tours<br>- Must commit to guiding for 1 year<br>TTC volunteers:<br>- Skills matched to the tasks<br>- Orientation session<br>- 50 hours probation | Public Programs volunteers<br>- Recruitment once a year<br>- Information day<br>- Panel interview<br>- 4 day induction<br>- Hold regular meeting and training days<br>- 6 months training or when volunteer feels ready<br>- Evaluation by volunteer coordinator<br>- Self evaluation after 50 hours guiding<br>- Must commit to guiding for 1 year<br>Behind the Scenes volunteers<br>- Recruitment on 'as needs' basis<br>- Skills matched to the task<br>Commitment depends on type of project | Gallery guides<br>- Recruit once every 4 years<br>- Information pack sent out<br>- Panel interview<br>- Cost of $25 a year to be a guide<br>- Commit to 42 hours per year<br>- 1 year training in children and adult guiding<br>- Expected to attend lectures<br>- Involvement in presentation workshops<br>Task Force volunteers<br>- Recruit on 'as needs' basis<br>- Commit to 48 hours per year<br>- Training by buddy system for first 6 months<br>- 6 month probation period and demonstrate satisfactory performance |

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## TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

| | AWM | AM | ART GALLERY |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Volunteer Facilities and Benefits** | E&VS volunteers:<br>- Tea/coffee facilities<br>- Guide committee has own room<br>- Access to the research centre and facilities<br>- Kiosk and bookshop discount;<br>- Concessional entry to other attractions<br>- Invitations to presentations, ceremonies etc<br>- Membership of AAGGO<br>- Certificates of appreciation<br>- Christmas function<br>- Afternoon tea with Governor Generals wife<br>TTC volunteers:<br>- Tea and coffee facilities<br>- Certificates of appreciation on project completion<br>- Badges for 200, 500, 1,000, 2,000 hours | Public Programs volunteers<br>- Own room - small library, resource centre, tea/coffee facilities<br>- T shirt<br>- Free access to museum and special exhibitions<br>- Free subscription to museum magazine<br>- Discounts to public and staff lectures<br>- Museum and coffee shop discounts<br>- Honorary membership of Australian Museum Society.<br>Behind the Scenes volunteers<br>- Coffee and tea facilities<br>- Free access to museum and special exhibitions<br>- Free subscription to museum magazine<br>- Discounts to public and staff lectures<br>- Museum and coffee shop discounts<br>Honorary membership of Australian Museum Society. | Gallery guides<br>- Own facilities with tea and coffee<br>- Gift for 20 years service<br>- Own facilities with tea and coffee<br>- Free attendance at lectures by curators<br>- Discounts to special exhibitions, lectures, seminars<br>- Regular luncheons<br>- Small reduction in parking fees<br>- Christmas lunch<br>- Free access to exhibitions<br>Task Force volunteers<br>- Own facilities with tea and coffee<br>- Christmas and AGM lunch |

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## DISCUSSION

The Governance structures of each organization are similar. Each organization is responsible to its relevant minister and financially accountable under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act. They exist in a framework of corporate governance and are administered through a Council or Board of Trustees. Operationally, the institutions are managed by a director, and in one case an assistant director. Each organization adopts a functional structure, where employees who perform similar functions or work are brought together and rules and regulations are communicated from the top down. This does not mean that the Director has absolute power; on the contrary, the curators in each organization have a major role in setting the activities of the organization.

The integration of the volunteer programs into the institutions is different at each organization. In one institution the program is given equal member status to other programs in the institution. In another institution the manager's role is less valued, evidenced by the difference in resources the volunteer program receives as compared to other areas within the organization. Whilst in another, the self-managed volunteer program tends to function outside the normal operations of the institution; involvement is on an 'as need' basis. The practices in the latter two organizations have served to isolate volunteer managers and coordinators leaving them to feel undervalued. All volunteer programs are expected to be self-supporting with the expectation they will not cause a strain on the organization's resources. This may be because the volunteer programs are not seen to be critical to the continuity of the organizations.

Volunteers at each institution participate in highly structured environments and have specific job functions. They operate under an explicit agreement similar to a contract of employment. The role of the volunteer is to support and/or supplement the work of paid staff, by undertaking activities for the organization, in the form of predetermined and specific tasks. The programs pay a lot of attention to training. A volunteer manager or coordinator (can be either a paid or an unpaid position), organize volunteer workloads and supervise the activities of volunteers. They are also responsible for recruiting, training, deploying, and supporting volunteers.

Horizontal linkages occur through interdepartmental meetings with direct, formal, reporting relationships. A top down approach to management is employed, where decisions are made further up the line to ensure control of members at the bottom of the organization. It could be said that volunteers are at the very bottom of the organization. This functional structure is even in place where the volunteers are self-managed. According to the volunteer coordinators, decision-making is inclusive of volunteers. However, respondent comments raise doubts as to whether this is really the case, for example:

> *'We used to (work) 'with' now it is (work) 'for'.'*

> *'The rules change according to the committee member's views, and these can vary considerably and every two years!'*

> *'I am a volunteer in the ... and do as I am told. I make suggestions but generally, we do not use our own initiative.'*

In two programs, changes, issues, and ideas are discussed at committee level before presenting them to the volunteers for consideration; in effect controlling the direction

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of the outcome. None of the volunteer coordinators is at a level where they can go to a departmental, or management meeting. All coordinators rely on representation through their immediate supervisors; therefore, volunteer managers can only indirectly influence decisions that impact on their volunteer programs. One paid coordinator used organizational change to try to improve the alignment between the volunteer program and the organization:

> *'When there was a museum restructure it helped me, to give me impetus*
> *to hopefully make an opportunity for the volunteer program to fit into the*
> *structure a bit more because it was floating.'*

For these programs it could not be concluded that because they were managed in a more professional and business like structure they acquired a greater share of resources. On the contrary access to resources was limited for each program. However the organizational structures do achieve the goals expected of the volunteer programs. From the organization's perspective, paid coordinators were less satisfied with the operation of their programs than the unpaid coordinators of the self-managed program were. One paid coordinator did not feel that volunteers were valued the same as paid staff. From the volunteer's perspective there is nothing to suggest that the organization-managed program is better than the self-managed program (Edwards, 2005).

All volunteer coordinators believe they have a personal understanding of their volunteers, but did not feel this was shared by many staff outside the programs. Volunteer managers and coordinators are responsible for ensuring that their programs run smoothly. However, paid coordinators are challenged by their own insecurities; in contrast, unpaid managers (who are also volunteers) were confident in their abilities but feel somewhat alienated from other programs. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, although the programs have been around for a number of years, the formal management of these programs have not been a priority for the organizations; they have predominantly been left to look after themselves. As a result, these programs have evolved through a process of trial and error. Secondly, volunteer coordinators and managers have gained their positions, not because they have the specific skills and training necessary for volunteer management, but because of the position they have been in at the time. Consequently, the skills they bring with them come from experiences gained in previous organizations. However, they don't feel that these skills adequately meet the requirements of the position. Hence, they are somewhat insecure and each paid coordinator believes that 'things could be done better' and looks to the external environment for how this could be done.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

Each volunteer program contains elements of management practices used for paid staff including: principles of recruitment, induction, equal opportunity, occupational health and safety, training and rewards. There is no doubt that in large institutions, these practices are a necessity. The organization of these volunteers is similar to Meijs and Bridges (2004) 'American' model and Rochester's (1999) 'service delivery' model. As these museums are characterised by a high level of professionalism and are required to deliver high quality services and products a more rigid organizational approach is used. Nevertheless the lack of integration between paid and unpaid staff results in a poor understanding on both sides and contributes to volunteer coordinators and volunteers feeling marginalised and/or undervalued by the

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institution. What is missing, in each of the programs, is the personal factor. Edwards (2005) noted that the volunteer is different; they are not just like paid staff and they don't want to be managed like paid staff. They have chosen to be there for reasons other than income. Therefore, the relationship they expect to have with the organization is different.

This issue calls for the development of a more personal, integrated, model of volunteer management which is practiced by all staff in the institution. Such a model may look similar to Rochester's (1999) 'member/activist' model or flexibility practices proposed by Lockstone, et al., (2004). Yet due to the nature of these large institutions it would need to contain elements of the American and service delivery models. But as always, there is still more that needs to be understood about these organizations. Developing a new mindset in a paid workforce that already views volunteers as complementing and expanding the roles of paid staff will not be a difficult task. However, if volunteers are viewed more sceptically, and are seen as problematic by paid staff, changing the management model will be more difficult and raises questions about the impact of organizational culture on volunteer/staff relationships. The culture of the organization may be a powerful influence on staff and their perceptions of volunteers. Therefore, an understanding of organizational culture is required in order to identify strategies that will assist in creating positive mindsets and belief systems of staff.

The study suggests that volunteer coordinators who have had no previous experience in managing volunteers could benefit from training prior to taking on the volunteer coordinators position. This would assist those coordinators to effectively manage volunteers and to feel more confident in their management approach. Greater participation in the organizational decision making process would also enable coordinators to feel their programs are more valued. This training may be from a State volunteer association, by the outgoing volunteer coordinator or preferably a combination of both.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, each of the institutions in this study has explicit transactional contracts that guide volunteer participation in the organization. As these volunteers join their respective institutions, they know what to expect and what is expected of them. Volunteers have an explicit understanding of where they fit into the organization and are well informed of the organization's expectations of them in terms of their role, obligations and commitment. Each of the programs would benefit from greater integration into the respective institution.

The author is cognizant of the fact that the interpretations and conclusions apply to a specific field of the visitor attraction sector; museums and art museums. Nonetheless, it is through studies of one field that we build theory for testing in another. This study of museum volunteers can contribute to an increased understanding and management of volunteerism by key stakeholders in the tourism industry.

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