



Australian Government  
Attorney-General's Department  
Australian Emergency  
Management Institute

# 2011 National Emergency Management Volunteers Summit

'The future is in our hands'

The third National Emergency Management Volunteers Summit was held in Canberra on 30 and 31 May 2011. The event was hosted by the Attorney-General's Department, in partnership with the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum, and with the support of the Australian Taxation Office. Approximately four hundred emergency management volunteers, managers and leaders from across Australia attended to collaborate, share experiences, develop strategies and, importantly, to recognise the contribution of emergency management volunteers to Australian communities.

The theme was 'The Future is in our Hands' and concepts explored were Partnerships, Experiences and Solutions. This Summit coincided with the tenth anniversary of the United Nations' International Year of Volunteers and offered an exceptional networking opportunity for delegates, particularly those from remote areas of Australia.

In recognition that many volunteers may have been unable to attend, social networking tools were used throughout the Summit to facilitate online participation. Dedicated pages on Facebook and Twitter provided users with an opportunity to follow the program online, to communicate and share information with others, and to build networks both locally and nationally. This was a first in the history of the Summit, and achieved over

15,000 post views on Facebook and reached over 17,000 people with 658 tweets.

The Summit was officially opened by Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. The Australian Attorney-General, the Hon Robert McClelland MP, followed and formally commenced proceedings. Keynote speakers explored the past and current state of the sector, identified challenges and suggested strategies for the future.

A volunteer panel discussion saw six representatives from different organisations share their personal volunteering experiences. A similar opportunity was extended to all participants during nine interactive breakout discussions, held concurrently on both days of the Summit. Drawing on personal experiences and



ideas, groups discussed key issues within the sector and debated how to build a stronger emergency management volunteer movement into the future.

As a result of the breakout discussions, key recommendations around the issues of time, cost, recognition, training, people, research, and the role of the Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum (AEMVF) were developed. The recommendations will assist individuals, volunteer organisations and agencies, and governments, in building a stronger emergency

management volunteer sector and, ultimately, a more resilient Australia.

The Attorney-General's Department would like to particularly thank the AEMVF, the South Australia Fire and Emergency Services Commission and the Department of Community Safety Queensland, for their contributions towards this important event.

A copy of the summary and transcript reports, including recommendations, can be viewed at [www.ema.gov.au/volunteers](http://www.ema.gov.au/volunteers)

