

**Perceptions of Quality Training:  
Reflections of traditional volunteers as trainers pre- and  
post registered training organisation accreditation at St  
John Ambulance South Australia.**

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by

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## Abstract

This study explored the perceptions held by volunteer trainers at St John Ambulance South Australia regarding what constitutes quality training. Further, it explored similarities and differences in those perceptions before and after St John Ambulance SA became a Registered Training Organisation.

The findings of the study suggest that the volunteer trainers generally believe that the organisation is achieving a 'quality' outcome from its training, but only through what many consider unacceptable increased effort by the volunteers, particularly regarding the increased time required for accreditation, training and administration of training related tasks. Key contributors to 'quality' were seen to be better course design, increased professional development opportunities, and the establishment of relevant networks.

The study found, however, that the increased time and effort required for accreditation may be having an adverse effect on volunteer trainer retention, with many of the volunteers stating that they would leave the organisation if there was any further increase in work relating to the issuance of qualifications. One major contributing factor to this situation was seen to be the significant increase in the use of information technology. In this context, the volunteers expressed a strong desire to be directly involved in the design and development of training policies, processes and products for the organisation.

The study provided strong evidence that there are two cultures (volunteers and paid staff) and two structures (training services and first aid services) currently existing within St John Ambulance SA, and that this results in significant tensions that impact negatively upon volunteers.

It is argued that the study provides important insights to assist other Australian volunteer organisations as they move into nationally recognised qualifications and seek to meet the attendant standards for quality and compliance.

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## Certification

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



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