An exploration of the characteristics, structures and functions of Australian voluntary coastal conservation groups

by

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RHD Thesis Declaration

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Abstract

The place where the land meets the sea, has an iconic status in the Australian culture and way of life with more than 85% of the population living a maximum of one hour away from the sea. Coastal and marine biodiversity underpins human existence, health and prosperity. However it is under increasing environmental challenge. This challenge is met formally through government investment in biodiversity conservation, however, the levels of funding are declining. Alongside funded action, civic participation in voluntary work has presented one solution to addressing ecological challenges. The Australian federal, state and local governments have called on citizens to voluntarily participate in natural resource management programs associated with conserving biodiversity. On the other hand, there is a downward trend in participation across all voluntary sectors. It is important that the recruitment, ongoing participation and actions of environmental volunteer groups are better understood so that their contribution can be sustained and enhanced. The purpose of this research was to improve our understanding of the efficacy and sustainability of voluntary coastal conservation groups (CCGs) and to contribute to the academic knowledge using approaches that are able to support this understanding. A qualitative research approach was used.

A review of the literature showed a dearth of academic knowledge about the volunteer experience and the operations and functions of present-day CCGs. One common approach outlined in the literature is the function's approach to understanding the motivations, benefits and experience of volunteers in conservation work. This research investigated the functions of CCGs in the contemporary Australian volunteering context. It suggested modifications to these functions based on the findings in the data in the unique coastal context of this nation. However, understanding the functions of volunteers as individuals does not fully explain the ways in which CCGs operate to engage their volunteers. To support an approach through

which to understand the way the organisation itself operated, this research used a community of practice framework. This model was shown in the data to support the understanding of the ways in which volunteers joined together in the context of coastal conservation to work as a community in this domain. This focus on the operations of the CCG supported greater understanding of the way in which the social community of volunteers interacted and engaged in conservation work.

The research findings were used to develop a CCG Functions Framework, specific to the coastal conservation volunteering context. This framework can be used by practitioners to further understand volunteers' personal characteristics, their reasons for volunteering, satisfaction and the benefits they attained from volunteering. This knowledge can also be used to support the recruitment and retention of volunteers. The results of this research supported a CCG Communities of Practice Framework which was used to explain the operation of the CCGs and to make recommendations of community actions that are able to support and enhance the operations of CCGs and through this to improve conservation outcomes.

The unique contribution of this research is the combination of two models that result in simple tools that can be used to audit CCGs. The first is a tool that integrates the motivations, perceived benefits and sources of satisfaction as characteristics of volunteers in coastal conservation work. The second is a tool that can be used to audit the operations of CCGs as a community of practice to better undertand ways in which to enhance their function.

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When I began this quest, friends, who had completed higher research degrees, told me I would learn a lot on this oydssey. Apart from all that is involved in research I have learned a lot about myself. I am a much stronger person. My resilence has been tested and I am now more self confident in my ability to achieve.

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ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CCG	Coastal Conservation Group
CEO	Chief Executive Officers
CEP	Communities Environmental Program
EPA	Environmental Pollution Authority
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
LIS	Leader Interview Schedule
VIS	Volunteer Interview Schedule
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services
SES	State Emergency Services
SCUBA	Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VFI	Volunteer Functions Inventory

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Volunteering is reported to be part of everyday life for 19% of Australians aged 15 years and over producing an estimated annual economic and social contribution of $43 billion per year (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016). Volunteering is critical to the delivery by the Australian government of a broad array of services across a wide range of voluntary sectors including the environmental and conversation sector (Volunteering Australia, 2017). However, there is increasing concern over the sustainability of the Australian volunteering workforce as overall, there has been a decrease in participation in formal volunteering in recent years (ABS, 2015; Kragt & Holtrop, 2019). In addition, the recruitment and retention of volunteers is generally a persistent problem (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Kragt & Holtrop, 2019; Wilson, 2012). Environmental volunteers are the focus of this research specifically in the area of coastal conservation, and their contribution to the protection of the condition of the biodiversity in their local environment.

Biodiversity underpins human existence, health and prosperity (Constanza et al., 1997; Guerry et al., 2015). Notwithstanding this, the overall outlook for biodiversity in Australia is increasingly uncertain coupled with a declining level of investment in biodiversity conservation (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017). Civic participation in voluntary work has been identified as providing one potential solution to impending ecological challenges (McDougle, Greenspan & Handy, 2011). In the past three decades the Australian government has called on its citizens to voluntarily participate in natural resource management (NRM) programs associated with conserving biodiversity (Robins, 2018). Indeed, volunteer organisations have been shown to contribute successfully to the achievement of conservation goals despite financial constraints (Asah, Lenentine, & Blahna, 2014; Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Sloane & Probstl-Haider, 2019). Despite their potential contribution to a critically

important cause, volunteering for the environment and conservation is reported to be a less popular than voluntary sectors such as community service and the emergency services (ABS, 2016).

Coastcare, an arm of Landcare Australia, reported that in 2019 over 500 CCGs are currently operating for the protection of coastal and marine biodiversity in Australia. Research about the status and activity of these groups is limited. It has been documented that there is difficulty in sustaining volunteers' enthusiasm and commitment leading to some groups having ceased to exist or being in 'sleeper mode' (Curtis et al., 2014; Prager, 2010). It has also been reported that the governance of NRM is often seen to be fragmented, and sometimes dysfunctional (Robins 2018; Robins & Kanowski, 2011; Tennent, & Lockie, 2013; Vella, Sipe, Dale, & Taylor, 2015). Understanding this combination of two influences on our knowledge of the operation and status of CCGs, namely that of attracting and retaining volunteers, together with managing governance structures, is important if researchers are to better understand their contribution to the environment now, and into the future. Despite the strategic direction, funding and the sustained efforts of CCGs, achieving effective conservation outcomes continues to be challenging (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017).

Notwithstanding the challenges faced by conservation volunteering groups, a survey concerning 'community engagement with nature' in 2012 reported that 74% of respondents could be encouraged to become more involved in nature conservation activities (ABS, 2013). Furthermore, 30% of respondents to a Volunteering Australia survey in 2016 ranked the environment conservation sector as the third sector that they would most be interested in volunteering for in the future (Volunteering Australia, 2016). These statistics suggest that there is a large pool of potential conservation volunteers for CCGs to draw from.

There is a significant body of research documenting volunteering for environmental causes, including motivations, benefits to older volunteers, pro-environmental behaviours in younger volunteers; and global environmental citizenship in relation to lifestyle travel (Chen

et al., 2010; Pillemer, Wagenet, Goldman, Bushway, & Meador, 2010; Woosnam, Strzelecka, Nisbett, & Keith, 2019). There is a growing body of research about citizen-science as an approach to marine conservation, such as the use of Redmap (Nursey-Bray, Palmer, & Pecl, 2018), drivers and barriers to engagement in citizen-science in marine research (Martin et al., 2016), and the contribution of citizen-science to marine environmental monitoring (Roelfsema et al., 2016). However, research specifically related to CCGs and the volunteer experience is not as common.

The foregoing issues, combined with a lack of contemporary literature regarding CCGs and their volunteers, present an opportunity for academic research to improve CCG outcomes and to contribute to the academic knowledge. As such, this dissertation explores the present-day efficacy of the operations of CCGs and the experience of CCG leaders and volunteers. The literature review and research findings are used to develop a CCG Functions Framework which potentially, can be used by practitioners to further understand volunteers' personal characteristics, their reasons for volunteering, satisfaction, and the benefits they attain from volunteering. This knowledge can be used to support the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Furthermore, the findings of this research are used to align the data on CCGs with a framework derived from Wenger's (1998) communities of practice model. This purposely designed framework can be used to better understand the operational characteristics of CCGs and hence improve the volunteer experience and potentially improve conservation outcomes.

1.2 Identification and background of the topic

The place where the land meets the sea has an iconic status in the Australian culture and way of life with more than 85% of Australians living one hour away from the ocean (Harvey & Caton, 2010). "Australians make or break romances at the beach, they marry and

take honeymoons at the beach, they go on holidays with their children to the beach, and in vast numbers retire by the sea" (Huntsman, 2001, p. 2).

Sandy beaches and dunes, rocky shores, tidal flats, estuaries and bays are dotted along Australia's 30,000-kilometre coastline (Clark & Johnston, 2017). The biological interaction of biodiversity within and between these habitats provides an abundance of services which our economy, identity, sense of belonging, social lifestyle and well-being unwittingly rely on. Services like surfing, fishing, bird watching, beachcombing, camping and building sandcastles are easier to discern than essential ecosystem services such as nutrient recycling, erosion prevention, nursery habitats, roosting and nesting sites and carbon sequestration. Any diminishment in the condition of biodiversity weakens its capacity to provide these essential services (Clark & Johnston, 2017; Cresswell & Murphy, 2017; Morton & Hill, 2014). It is evident that coastal and marine ecosystem services underpin human existence, health and prosperity (Constanza et al., 1997; Constanza et al., 2014).

Cresswell and Murphy (2017) claim that the current overall status of biodiversity is poor and that it is not expected to improve in the short or medium term (p. 176). Clark and Johnston (2017) claim that "the state of most coastal biological components is in decline, particularly habitats and species that overlap with coastal land use" (p. 54). Historical legacies of the past and current pressures such as population growth, land development and litter in coastal areas are disrupting ecosystem services and processes that ecological communities deliver and depend on (Clark & Johnston, 2017). More recently, climate change has been identified as the biggest threat to biodiversity, as it is forecast to further exacerbate the effects of the increasing present-day environmental stressors (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017).

Over the last thirty years successive Australian governments have assigned different priorities for the protection of the environment (Curtis et al., 2014; Robins, 2018). Australia's current strategy for biodiversity conservation is under review. In the interim, Australia's

Strategy for Nature (Draft) 2018-2030 guides and coordinates the various levels of government approaches to biodiversity conservation. The goals of this strategy are to connect people with nature, to care for nature and to build and share knowledge (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017, p. 7). Historically the management of conserving biodiversity has been actioned by all levels of government, NRM regions, private enterprise, landholders and voluntary local community conversation groups (Curtis et al., 2014; Robins, 2018). Community-based conservation funding has also been provided by federal, state and territory governments to local voluntary groups such as CCGs, to pursue conservation outcomes (Clarke, 2006; Compton & Beeton, 2012; Curtis et al., 2014; Robins, 2018).

CCGs are typically involved in small-scale programs associated with advocacy, restoration, monitoring, education, and sustainability on public lands (Measham & Barnett, 2008). Robins (2018) stated that CCG activities include "conserving biodiversity, repairing coastal and marine ecosystems, devising integrated catchment plans, raising community awareness about sustainability, and much, much more" (p. 386). Considering the importance of these functions, greater insight into the leadership, structure, management of volunteers and of operational issues in CCGs is called for. Hence there is an opportunity to contribute to the gap in academic knowledge regarding present-day voluntary coastal marine conservation in Australia.

1.3 Rationale and significance of the research

Global research concerning the phenomenon of volunteering is extensive with researchers exploring volunteers' individual personality traits, motivations, behaviours, attitudes, participation, and demographic characteristics (Cnaan & Park, 2016). There has been attention paid to volunteering and how the disciplinary approach to it by youth and the ageing population is undertaken (Bushway, Dickinson, Stedman, & Wagenet, 2011; Dougle et al., 2011; Weinstein, 2011). However, there has been less attention given to integrated

approaches and theory building that would lead to greater holistic understanding of the operations of volunteer groups (Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010). For instance, understanding the how or why of the motivations of youth and older persons lead to engagement is important. More importantly is the way that organisations act to integrate these individuals and meet their needs through concerted action in the volunteering context. There is a rich body of research on volunteering in Australia, but it has been identified as being fragmented and non-integrative (Kragt & Holtrop, 2019). Environmental volunteering studies are more limited, in particular, research in an Australian context (Clarke, 2006; Measham & Barnett, 2008; Koss & Kingsley, 2010). A number of recent research studies have been published, but are often focussed on allied concepts such as citizen-science which, although similar to general volunteering, have functional and organisational differences which cannot always be transferred to a general self-organising and emergent CCG context (Follet & Strezov, 2015; Jones, Unsworth, McKenzie, Yoshida, & Cullen-Unsworth, 2018; Martin et al., 2016; Roelfsema et al., 2016). Like worldwide volunteering research, Australian studies have investigated the personal characteristics of discrete subsets of individuals and the triggers for their volunteering (Wilson, 2012). They have reported on volunteers' motives (Measham & Barnett, 2008), burn-out and engagement (Byron & Curtis, 2002), sense of place and identity (Gooch, 2003), generativity (Warburton & Gooch, 2007), activities (Measham & Barnett, 2008), marketing to potential environmental volunteers (Randle, Leisch, & Dolnicar, 2013), emotional well-being (Koss & Kingsley, 2010) and the physical, mental and social benefits of volunteering (O'Brien, Townsend, & Ebden, 2010). It is evident that these studies have no reference at all to conservation group operation, structure, leadership, operational issues, management of volunteers or community engagement. Critical to the operation of groups, such as CCGs, is the social element, and the function of communities thinking and acting together in response to their context (Pyrko, Dorfler, & Eden, 2016). This aspect has not been commonly discussed in the research literature, yet "it is

the organisation of the volunteer experience that determines the individual's engagement, recruitment, satisfaction, commitment and loyalty" (Wilson, 2012, p. 201). A common approach to the function of emergent community organisations that are linked to a purpose is the community of practice model (Wenger, 1998) which has been used as a lens through which to study conservation by a small number of researchers (Martin, 2009). This model is promising as a lens through which the socio-cultural interaction, knowledge building, and practices of the CCG can be better understood. The research presented here is warranted given the distinct lack of contemporary academic knowledge regarding CCGs and the experiences of present-day volunteers, and the different levels of governments' reliance on volunteers.

Lastly, there is a sense of urgency regarding this research as it is situated against a backdrop of a changing climate that is forecast to impact directly and indirectly on the well-being of all Australians.

1.4 Justification of methodology

Given the scarcity of knowledge about CCGs operation and of present-day conservation volunteering, I was interested in the structure and function of CCGs from a leadership perspective and the lived experience of the corps of volunteers in CCGs, their motivations, interests and experiences. Furthermore, I sought to understand the multiple dimensions of CCGs at the intersection of the roles of volunteers and leaders, where the structure and management interacted with perspectives of volunteers to determine the way that CCGs operated.

As a constructivist, I recognised the value of using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to explore the complex phenomenon of volunteering and CCGs. A qualitative research approach was used. This approach has a greater emphasis on the qualitative component and is well-positioned to understand the multiple subjective realties,

meanings and realities of CCG leaders and volunteers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Gabb, 2009; King & Horrocks, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010).

A survey questionnaire expressly designed with closed Likert-type, multiple selection, binary choice, and ranking items, and open-ended items was used to document patterns of motivations, activities, and beliefs about CCGs. The design of the survey instrument was informed by a framework, the CCG Functions Framework, that was developed in Chapter 2 in response to themes which emerged in that chapter. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the survey data and three level coding was used for the open-ended questions (Athens, 2010; Blumer, 1969; Saldana, 2013). Semi-structured interviews with a selection of leaders and volunteers from different CCGs were used to develop a broader and deeper understanding of the experience of volunteers (Franklin, 2013; Kelle, 2006; Perakyla & Ruusuvuori, 2011). Three level coding was used to analyse the interview data. In addition to the CCG Functions Framework, a second framework, the CCG Communities of Practice Framework, was developed in Chapter 2. This framework was based on Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice and was used as a secondary tool to analyse all the data to examine the alignment of the characteristics of the group and experiences of participants with the aspects of a community of practice. The analysis of all sets of this research's findings are presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, and are discussed in Chapter 8.

1.5 Research questions

As described, the purpose of this study was to improve the efficacy, sustainability and conservation outcomes of Australian CCGs to align their operations with communities of practice and to contribute to the academic knowledge concerning this topic.

The framing ideas and models presented in this thesis have been designed to respond to three research questions. The first research question sought to identify the organisational structure and functions of the CCG through the lens of both volunteers and leadership.

Research Question 1

How do CCGs operate and manage volunteers?

RQ 1.1: What is the organisational structure of a CCG?

RQ 1.2: What are the operational functions of a CCG?

RQ 1.3: What are the responsibilities and roles of CCG volunteers?

RQ 1.4: What operational issues does a CCG face?

Developing a comprehensive understanding of present-day CCG volunteering is at the heart of Research Question 2. The sub-questions delve more into the experience of volunteers by drilling down into why they volunteer, what their opinions are about coastal marine environments and to determine how volunteering has benefited them.

Research Question 2

What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation?

RQ 2.1: Why do volunteers participate in conservation?

RQ 2.2: What are the beliefs of volunteers about the coastal marine environment?

RQ 2.3: What benefits do volunteers derive from conservation volunteering?

Research Question 3 sought to determine whether the operations, functions, practices, and dynamics of the socio-cultural community of CCGs could be better understood by a community of practice model (Wenger, 1998) through alignment with its four dimensions; meaning, community, learning and identity.

Research Question 3

RQ 3.1: To what extent can a CCG be examined and explained as a community of practice?

1.6 Definitions and terminology

A range of terms and definitions associated with the research topic are used in this dissertation. To avoid uncertainty for the reader the key terms and definitions are defined below.

Biodiversity: The variety of all forms of life. There are three levels of biodiversity: genetic diversity (the variety of genetic information contained in individual plants, animals and microorganisms), species diversity (the variety of species) and ecosystem diversity (the variety of habitats, ecological communities and ecological processes) (Creswell & Murphy, 2017, p.181).

Climate change: Climate change is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and is additional to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods (Clark & Johnston, 2017, p. 131).

Coast: Areas covering terrestrial aquatic and marine environments within the heads of estuaries and bays, all areas of the intertidal zone, and all habitats up to 50 kilometres inland from the shore (Clark & Johnston, 2017, p. 1).

Coastal conservation group (CCG): A small group of individuals who are motivated to voluntarily participate in activities such as restoration, monitoring, education and advocacy on a regular basis in their local area.

Community of practice: "a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4).

Condition: The 'health' of a species or community, which includes factors such as the level of disturbance from a natural state, population size, genetic diversity, and interaction with invasive species and diseases (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017, p. 182).

Conservation: Protection and management of living species, communities, ecosystems or heritage places; protection of a site to allow ongoing ecosystem function or to

retain natural or cultural significance (or both) and to maximise resilience to threatening processes (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017, p. 182).

Decline: When the condition of an ecosystem, species or community has decreased to a point where its long-term viability is in question. It usually represents more than just a decrease in numbers of individuals and describes the result of several interacting factors (e.g. decreasing numbers, decreasing quality or extent of habitat, increasing pressures) (Clark & Johnston, 2017, p. 132).

Ecosystem: An interrelated biological system comprising living organisms in a particular area, together with physical components of the environment such as air, water and sunlight (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017, p. 183).

Environment: Includes ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; natural and physical resources; the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; and their social, economic and cultural aspects (Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, 2010, p. 86).

Habitat: The environment where a plant or animal normally lives and reproduces (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017, p. 184).

Marine environment: Sub-tidal marine habitats more generally, including those in gulfs and coastal marine waters outside the heads of estuaries and bays (Clark & Johnston, 2017, p. 1).

Natural resource management (NRM): The management of natural resources such as land, water, soil, plants and animals, with a focus on sustainable practices (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017, p. 186).

Species: A group of organisms capable of interbreeding and producing fertile offspring (Cresswell & Murphy, 2017).

Volunteering functions: an activity that is natural to or the purpose of a person or the action for which a person is specially fitted for (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

1.7 My story

The results of this research have caused me to reflect about my relationship with the coastal marine environment so here is a little about me.

I was raised in suburban Melbourne. There was just Mum and me. Mum did not volunteer as she had to work a lot to support us. We did not have holidays or outings to the bush. I suppose I was about five when Mum and I first ventured to a bayside beach in Port Philip Bay, Melbourne. My enduring memory of my first day at the beach was the joy of scorched skin resulting in a visit to the doctor.

I recall all sorts of things about the beach during my primary school years. Building complex sand castles complete with moats and underground tunnels, being buried in the sand, chest rashes from foam surfboards, riding and falling off 'skiffle boards' in the shallows, stinging march flies, my friends and I throwing horse shoe jellies at each other, yummy white bread sandwiches with lettuce and tasty cheese and icy cold lime malted milk shakes.

During these years I was engrossed by 'Sea Hunt', a weekly fictional TV series about a former Navy frogman who always saved the day. I was captivated by 'the Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau' documentary television series and enthralled by the underwater battle scenes between James Bond and Spectre in the movie 'Thunderball'. Whenever I went to the beach, I explored the rock pools hoping to find something really, really, big! As a kid of the 1960s I did not know much about life in the sea as it was invisible and mysterious. Sir David Attenborough's Blue Planet documentaries were 30 years away from being released.

As I grew taller and stronger, I became a reasonable swimmer. I was now ready to explore the close calm waters off Melbourne's bayside beaches with a mask, snorkel and fins. My lone adventures were never too far from the shore because as the depth of the water got

deeper it got darker and scarier! The beach had other uses too. It was a great place to have a rest, to get warm, to improve your suntan, to watch bikini clad girls and to fool around.

My genuine introduction to the marine environment began in my early twenties when I completed a basic a Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA) diving course at Portsea, Victoria. I quickly became a 'wannabe' Jacques Cousteau, longing to see more of this curious world. Over the next six years I observed a lot of sea life around Australia diving and snorkelling from boats and from shores. The unique assortment of textures, shapes, colours, sizes of plant and animal life was amazing. I have swum with whale sharks and manta rays, observed turtles laying eggs and turtle hatchings scurrying from their nests to the sea, enjoyed the beauty of glorious soft and hard coral gardens, cruised over lush sea grass meadows, been alarmed by different types of sharks and have witnessed coral spawning on the outer Great Barrier Reef. I became a SCUBA diving instructor and intended to complete a degree in Marine Biology with James Cook University. I discussed my plans with a zoologist from Sydney University. He urged me to reconsider my plans as I was 28 and would need to do a PhD to get anywhere in this field. At the time it seemed sensible to shelve my plans, as living on baked beans and crumb, for at least seven years, seemed an impossible feat.

Parenthood brought new responsibilities and rightly limited my diving activity. My two sons' initiation to the beach began at Bondi Beach, Sydney when they were toddlers. We would go on to build complex sandcastles, wrestle in the shallows and slurp on syrupy sweet icy cold 'snow cones' over many summers. I had the pleasure of introducing both my sons to the world beneath the waves by teaching them to SCUBA dive. I can still remember hearing Tom's shrill squeal underwater when he saw his first big blue groper. We move to Victoria and bought a beach house 90 minutes from Melbourne. I decided to join the local surf club, as a volunteer, to contribute to the safety of the beach going community. I am still an active member 20 years on.

At the age of 50 I enrolled in a Bachelor of Applied Science (Marine Environment) with the University of Tasmania to do something I had always wanted to do and to re skill myself for yet another career. I learned a lot about the importance of coastal marine ecosystems to human well-being at university. Nowadays, I get very teary watching Sir David Attenborough discuss the plight of coastal and marine habitats and the forecast extinctions of so many marine species, annoyed by those who strip the intertidal zone of all its life, cranky with fisherman who keep fish that should be returned and frustrated by those who do not pick up litter on the beach!

Reflecting on the results of this research I realise that I have much in common with coastal conservation volunteers. My connection to the marine world has continued to strengthen since my childhood. It is precious to me. Anywhere, where I can see, smell and hear the sea, it is my preferred place to be. As a father and a grandfather, I want my sons and their children to be able to enjoy what I have been able to experience. I now know that the place where the land meets the sea provides countless benefits for everyone to 'feel good'. It is a place where you can read a book, rest, get some sun, people watch, swim in the ocean, walk and play. It is the place where I first kissed my partner and told her that I loved her. It will be the place for me to 'pop the question'. Perhaps this why Australians make it a ritual to go the beach in summer and the reason it is so firmly entrenched in our Aussie culture. I just love being in and around the sea.

As a volunteer surf lifesaver, I have been a member of a community of practice for two decades. My domain has been surf lifesaving. As a member of this community I have lived the experience of the four aspects of meaning, community, learning and identity. I have developed relationships within this community and learned specific surf rescue skills as part of my practice. I am proud to identify as one that wears the 'red and yellow' every summer. As a member of this community I have always been welcomed by interstate clubs because I understand the practice, the community and am identified as being 'one of us'.

This research is my personal contribution to protecting and conserving marine coastal environments. I intend to have more input as there is still so much more to do.

1.8 Dissertation structure

This thesis consists of nine chapters which are now described.

1.8.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter highlights a troubling conundrum that ultimately threatens human welfare and possibly human survival. The chapter outlines several risk factors that contribute to this issue and explains the essential role that CCGs and their volunteers play in alleviating this risk. Chapter 1 also establishes that there is a gap in the research knowledge by identifying a paucity of contemporary research knowledge concerning the operation of Australian CCGs and the present-day lived experiences of volunteers. The chapter concludes with a description of the structure of this thesis.

1.8.2 Chapter 2: The research context

Chapter 2 provides a review of the international and Australian academic research regarding both the general and environment and conservation volunteering literature. The review defines volunteering in the context of this research and then gives an overview of the present-day volunteering trends in Australia. This is followed by a synthesis of the complex leadership responsibilities associated with managing a volunteer organisation, such as a CCG. The review then explains the CCG Functional Framework that was specifically designed to investigate CCG volunteers' personal characteristics, motivations, level of satisfaction and benefits which are interrelated and are essential to volunteer recruitment and retention. The chapter concludes with a justification for the use of the purposely designed CCG Communities of Practice Framework which was used to frame the operation of CGGs and to address the research questions.

1.8.3 Chapter 3: The research approach

This chapter explains that, as a researcher, I am a constructivist with a relativist view of the world. I recognise the importance of incorporating a subjective ontological perspective to fully understand the lived experiences of CCG volunteers. The chapter justifies the selection of the three methods used to collect data from both leaders and volunteers to develop a better understanding of the operation of CCGs and of the personal and socio-cultural experience of volunteering. The chapter further describes how descriptive statistics, three level coding and the CCG Community of Practice Framework were used to analyse the various data sets to generate concepts, dimension and themes, which in turn, are used to address the research questions.

1.8.4 Chapter 4: Instrument design, development and administration

Chapter 4 describes the design, development and administration of the instruments that were used in the three phases of this research's data collection: a survey, leader and volunteer interviews, and a secondary analysis of the data using the CCG Community of Practice Framework. The six dimensions that informed the design of the survey in Phase 1, which included quantitative components and open-ended question qualitative components, are presented. The emerging themes from the literature, which separately underpinned the design of the leader and volunteer interviews in Phase 2 are then described. The individual considerations and processes involved in both the development and administration for both the survey and interviews are explained. Lastly, the CCG Community of Practice Framework which was used in Phase 3, as a tool to provide a secondary analysis across all the data and to identify evidence of the characteristics of a community of practice being aligned with the CCGs, is presented.

1.8.5 Chapter 5: Survey findings and analysis

This chapter is the first of two results chapters. Chapter 5 addresses Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 and uses the survey data to report on volunteer demography, past, present and future participation in volunteering, volunteer motives (functions), level of satisfaction, benefits attained from volunteering, beliefs about coastal environments and CCG activities. Six new functions, Global Sustainability and Conservation, Global Social Networks, Personal Gain, External Organisations, Cross-Conservation Group Networking and Local Community are identified and tentatively proposed for inclusion in the CCG Functions Framework and for further consideration in the discussion. Overall, the data also validates the use of the framework to better understand the functions of volunteering in CCGs.

1.8.6 Chapter 6: Interview findings and analysis

Chapter 6 presents narrative vignettes of the experiences of four active leaders and three active volunteers to address Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 respectively, with acknowledged cross-overs between them. The vignettes are based on my transcripts of the interviews with the participants. Additional assumptions and observations about data in Chapter 5 are also used to situate their individual experiences. The vignettes provide a deeper insight into the operation of CCGs, the operational issues, and many other aspects of being a volunteer.

1.8.7 Chapter 7: Alignment of coastal conservation groups with communities of practice

This chapter used the ideas and key themes presented in the data to align the characteristics of volunteers and the experience of volunteers in CCGs with the aspects of a community of practice; meaning, community, learning, and identity. The purpose of this alignment was to assess whether a CCG can be aligned with the characteristics of a community of practice, and then to use the community of practice model to develop

understanding of the dynamics and socio-cultural complexity of the operations and functions of the CCG. The chapter establishes that the dimensions of a community of practice are well aligned with CCGs and uses this framework to identify some elements that have the potential to benefit, or to compromise, CCG sustainability.

1.8.8 Chapter 8: Discussion of findings

Chapter 8 begins with a discussion of the findings presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. It reveals the functional dimensions of volunteer motivations, satisfaction and benefits in relation to the demography of volunteers. The chapter then suggests and further justifies the six new functions proposed in Chapter 5; however, integrating them to three additional functions. Chapter 8 then proposes that for research relating to CCGs to be truly meaningful, consideration should be given to using both the frameworks developed and used in this research in future volunteering academic studies. Using the CCG Functions Framework alone raises awareness of the motivations, satisfaction and perceived benefits of volunteers, but loses insight into the complex interactions that individuals with diverse sets of functional requirements bring to the group. Using the CCG Community of Practice Framework alone raises awareness of these complex interactions as the group conducts its conservation work as a community but loses the value that insights bring to an understanding of the functional aspects of volunteering and to research. Thus, this section concludes that each framework acts on the other and should be regarded as inseparable.

1.8.9 Chapter 9: Conclusion and implications

Chapter 9 begins with an appraisal of the effectiveness of this research in addressing the three research questions: (1) How do CCGs operate and manage volunteers? (2) What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation? (3) To what extent can a CCG be examined and explained as a community of practice?

Following this, the findings and the conceptual frameworks expressly designed for this research are evaluated in terms of their contribution to the scholastic knowledge.
The suitability of the research methodology used in this study is also assessed. The chapter concludes with a declaration regarding the limitations of this study and some recommendations for future research enquiry and suggestions for interim CCG practices.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Chapter 1 introduced the dissertation and established that this research concerns the operation of CCGs and the management of volunteers. The chapter also expressed that while there has been considerable research about general volunteering, there has been less documented about conservation volunteering (Measham & Barnett, 2008; Ryan, Kaplan & Grese, 2001; West & Pateman, 2016; Wright, Underhill, Keene, & Knight, 2015).

To situate this research, this chapter provides a summary of a review of the relevant general, and conservation volunteering research literature. It uses the literature to characterise volunteer recruitment and engagement in terms of motivation and benefits of volunteering. It also characterises the activities of leaders of volunteer group and provides a brief review of the the features of situated learning theory and the concept of a community of practice (Wenger,1998). This chapter concludes by presenting two frameworks. The first is a framework of volunteering functions in the CCG context based on motivation and benefits of engagement. The second is a framework through which CCG functions can be examined as communities of practice.

2.1 Volunteering

The following sections will define and discuss aspects of volunteering.

2.1.1 Definition of volunteering

Volunteering as a social and community activity is described in a variety of ways in the literature. Hustinx et al. (2010) argue that "volunteering continues to be a social construct with multiple definitions; and what is understood as volunteering is a matter of public perception" (p. 410). Snyder and Omoto (2008) assert that "volunteerism is but one form of a broader class of social action behaviours in which individuals engage as they attempt to individually and collectively address the problems of society" (p. 29). Hustinx et al. (2010) believe that volunteering is a "fundamental expression of community belonging and group

identity and contributes to individuals' social integration" (p. 417). Penner (2002) defines volunteerism as "long-term, planned, prosocial behaviours that benefit strangers and occur within an organisational setting" (p. 448). It can be concluded from these definitions that two key elements of volunteering can be identified. Firstly, volunteering is social in nature, and secondly, volunteering is characterised as an activity within the domain within which volunteers operate.

While volunteering is defined in relatively simple terms, the nature of the volunteering activity is further elaborated in the literature, with multiple meanings of the term in action within the volunteering context (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996). Despite this complexity, Cnaan et al. (1996) identified four common attributes of volunteering. These include "free will participation, no monetary reward, helping a cause and on a long-term basis or in a formal setting" (Cnaan et al., 1996, p. 371). These attributes are congruent with Gill (2006) and Volunteering Australia's (2016) endorsed national definition of volunteering, which states that "volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain" (p. 33). Volunteering Australia's (2016) definition also makes a distinction between formal and informal volunteering. Formal volunteering differs from the informal in that the former situates volunteering activities within an organisation or agency in a structured way, while the latter, is more emergent and temporary (Volunteering Australia, 2016, p. 2). From these definitions, volunteering is seen to be either formal and informal and this context changes the way in which volunteers engage in the domain. Thus, it is important to recognise that the context of the research on CCGs as organised groups will draw on the definitions associated with formal volunteerism.

Beyond the organisation, volunteerism is further defined in terms of characteristics that are associated with the volunteers themselves. Snyder and Omoto (2008) consider that volunteerism refers to "freely chosen and deliberate helping activities that extend over time, are engaged in without expectation of reward or other compensation and are often through

formal organisations, and that are performed on behalf of causes or individuals who desire assistance" (p. 3). These authors identified six characteristics of volunteering, which are presented in Table 2-1 together with an explanation that elaborates on their meaning. The characteristics are associated with aspects of motivation to engage in volunteering activities, the nature of activities, and those associated with the organisational foundations of volunteer groups.

Table 2-1. *Volunteering characteristics.*

Characteristic	**Explanation**
Must be voluntary	Performed on the basis of the participant's free will without bonds of obligation or coercion.
Provide services for others or to further a cause involving some amount of deliberation or decision making	Not reflexive acts of assistance or 'emergency helping'.
Activities must be delivered over a period, with particular interest in helping actions that extend over weeks, months, and years	Not one-time special events or activities.
The decision to volunteer is based entirely on the person's own goals without expectation of reward or punishment	Activities that people do in order to receive pay or to avoid punishment or censure as fully voluntary are not considered as volunteering.
Involves serving people or causes who desire help	Not be imposed, e.g., Legal community service.
Performed on behalf of people or causes, and commonly through agencies or organisations	Does not include simple acts of helping or 'neighbouring', e.g., Sick relatives and child care.

Note. Adapted from Snyder & Omoto, 2008, p. 2.

Snyder and Omoto's (2008) concept of volunteering provides a foundation upon which an understanding of the nature of CCG volunteering can be developed. This foundation allows CCGs to be described as formal, organised, and sustained, without reward for volunteers, and focused on volunteers' motivation to address a problem relating to furthering the cause of coastal volunteering.

2.1.2 The state of volunteering in Australia

Volunteering in Australia has its own characteristics, unique to its social and demographic diversity. Congruent with the broader definitions of volunteering presented in Section 2.1.1, Australian volunteering is "increasingly situated within a broader framework, and defined variously as community participation, civic engagement and social inclusion" (Baker, 2016, p. 3). However, volunteering in Australia also has different characteristics to those found in international studies. A key difference in Australia is the demographic characteristics of volunteers, for instance, gender and age (Baker, 2016). To better understand the operation of CCGs in Australia, it is important to better understand these demographic characteristics, which are presented in this section.

The ABS reported that in 2014, 5.8 million Australians over the age of 15 had volunteered with organisations in a broad range of voluntary sectors in the preceding 12 months. These voluntary sectors were diverse, and included: community service, education, art and culture, emergency response, animal welfare and environmental and conservation (ABS, 2016). In this survey, volunteers identified that their motivations were to help others/community (64%), for personal satisfaction (57%), to do something worthwhile (54%), because of personal or family involvement (45%), to maintain social contact (37%), and to use existing skills and experience (31%).

While volunteer numbers and median hours of engagement in volunteering appear to be high, an overall decline in the rate of volunteering was reported between 1995 and 2014 for those over the age of 18 (ABS, 2015). The implication of this decline is that volunteers are becoming a scarce resource and that there is competition among volunteer organisations for the same pool of prospective volunteers (Randle et al., 2013).

The participation rate of Australian volunteers was reported by the United Nations in their Volunteers Report in 2018. In Australia, volunteering is believed to peak at 40% for 36-45 years old and drops to the lowest rate of approximately 20% for those aged 26-35 years

old and 56-65 years old, with 65+ years old having a slightly higher rate of participation. Those aged 15 years old were reported as being the least likely to volunteer (Gray, Khoo, & Raimondos, 2012). These findings are generally consistent with evidence from other western nations (Kragt & Holtrop, 2019). However, earlier data (Volunteering Australia, 2016) with different age aggregations, differs to these more recent findings, with volunteers across 23 voluntary sectors demonstrating higher participation rates in persons aged 55-74 years of age. Of these older volunteers, 37% were identified as being retired. This data suggests that there is a greater dependence in Australian volunteering on older persons, many of whom are retired. Of those who were not retired, full-time and part-time employees were found to be more likely to volunteer than casual employees or those not currently employed. A key feature of older persons is the amount of time they spend in volunteering duties, estimated to be double that of younger people (ABS, 2015). Many respondents reported that they had volunteered for approximately four hours a week in the previous 12 months (Volunteering Australia, 2016). Many of these respondents are likely to be drawn from the group of older people, who have been shown to be more likely to be highly committed to their volunteering role, contributing more hours to volunteer activities than their younger and middle-aged colleagues (Cutler, Hendricks, & O' Neill, 2011). Furthermore, Gill (2006) identified that older volunteers are likely to have been engaged in volunteering for many years, thus, they had aged on the job, suggesting the importance of attracting younger volunteers and retaining them for life. The Volunteering Australia survey in 2016 indicated that many respondents had been volunteering for over five years.

As well as differences in age, research has also shown gender differences, with women generally volunteering more than men (Volunteering Australia, 2016). In terms of residential status, long-term residents have been found to be more likely to volunteer than newer residents (Davies, Lockstone-Binney, & Holmes, 2018). Furthermore, the numbers differ depending on the location of the community, with 40% of people living in regional

areas having volunteered compared with 30% of people living in urban areas. Despite these numbers, the Regional Well-being Survey (2014) highlighted that the rate of volunteering may be difficult to sustain, particularly in many rural communities that have an ageing population. With the sustainability of volunteer groups under question in this way, it is important that the range of ages and backgrounds of volunteers in CCGs are identified so that planning and succession can be considered when seeking to understand the sustainability of these groups.

The voluntary environment and conservation sectors have been shown to compete with many other areas of volunteering for volunteer interest. Thus, it is important to be able to tap into the motivation, interest, and enthusiasm of volunteers for the environment. Volunteers in Australia show a relatively consistent interest in conservation activities (ABS, 2013; Volunteering Australia, 2016).

The environment and conservation sector attracts a steady core of people who are interested in this type of volunteering. An ABS survey in 2012 regarding community engagement with nature conservation, reported that approximately 30% of Australian adults could be encouraged to become more involved in nature conservation activities in the future (ABS, 2013). The results of a more recent survey are similar, with over 30% of respondents ranking the environment and conservation sector as the one that they would most be interested in volunteering for in the future (Volunteering Australia, 2016). Hence, despite the competition between the environment and conservation sector with other voluntary sectors such as community and welfare, the sector is well-positioned to become the choice of volunteering for Australians (Gill, 2006).

Older Australians are not the only potential source of environment and conservation volunteers. Individuals who are younger, have a higher income, higher education qualifications, and who live in a more socio-economically advantaged area, have been shown to have a greater potential for engagement with nature (Zuo et al., 2015). However, there is a

level of concern about young Australians and their interest in volunteering for the environment and conservation, particularly urban children's engagement with nature (Buta, Brennan, & Holland, 2013). The consequences for these individuals are that they miss out on obtaining important opportunities to develop their knowledge base and are denied the numerous health benefits offered by the interaction with the natural environment (Byrne & Sipe, 2010; Russell et al., 2013). Keniger, Gaston, Irvine and Fuller (2013) believe that children who do not have exposure to the natural environment are less likely to become good environmental citizens as adults.

There is a large pool of potential volunteers who can be encouraged to participate in conservation programs in the future. State governments are addressing the potential gaps by enacting plans to increase volunteer numbers in the future (Gill, 2006). To tap into this pool of interested people, the nature of the CCG in terms of organisation, operation, focus, activity and social structure needs to be better understood.

2.1.3 Leadership and management

A key feature of Australian volunteer groups is the complexity of management and leadership within a hierarchical infrastructure. In an era of increasing controls over the way organisations function, the role of leadership of CCGs is diversifying, from managing conservation activities, to working with funding and government bodies, as well as establishing and working with policy.

Thus, as part of the infrastructure designed to sustain and promote volunteering is the role of the volunteer managers of volunteer-involving organisations, who are responsible for day to day operations as well as networking with other organisations and government bodies (Baker, 2016). The Australian volunteering context is characterised by its multipart infrastructure that includes multiple systems, organisational and policy levels.

Section 2.1.1 classified CCGs as formal groups which require leadership and management. The management of CCGs is a complex role but is critical to the recruitment and retention of volunteers. For instance, volunteers have been shown to lose motivation and withdraw their support from organisations in which there is a lack of expectations, poor management and leadership, meaningless tasks, and hence, poor job satisfaction (Jacobson, Carlton, & Monroe, 2012; Wilson, 2012; Wu, Li, & Khoo, 2015). This section identifies the roles commonly associated with the management and leadership of CCGs.

Landcare Australia (2016) provides organisational guidelines for formal and informal actions associated with the establishment of new community-based conservation groups, such as CCGs. These guidelines include a detailed model for their establishment, operation, and leadership structure. The responsibilities of group leaders and committees are significant and demanding. They include establishing the context and focus of the volunteer group, formalising the type of legal entity the group will become, establishing committees, financial/funding arrangements, finding partnership organisations, convening and running public meetings and leading open discussion. For leaders, particularly those who are employed or who have other responsibilities, the role requires both knowledge and a large time commitment. For instance, when considering the legal entity of the group, which protects group members from individual responsibility and allows funding through grants, the leader must make choices about the type of incorporation available to the group and is required to convene meetings to negotiate a group decision. The role of the leader is also associated with OHS, risk assessment, and associated training of volunteers.

Beyond this organisational responsibility, the leaders are responsible for the social organisation of the group, managing the team dynamics, interactions and activities (Herath, Costello, & Homberg, 2017). Volunteer organisations have reported several issues experienced by leadership in terms of managing volunteers which may potentially limit operations and volunteer involvement (Volunteering Australia, 2016, p. 19). These issues

include the restrictions of government regulations, which delay recruitment processes, finding volunteers who are interested in the domain and tasks, managing volunteer involvement with limited staff, and having more volunteers than the roles which are available.

The combination of organisational and social management contributes to the complexity of managing a CCG and to the overall workload of the leader. Relevant to the leadership of CCGs, the environment and conservation volunteering research literature identified several problems associated with volunteer groups and their leadership. This included volunteer burn-out (Tennet & Lockie, 2013), issues with volunteer retention (Wu et al., 2015), problems with attracting and retaining leaders (Curtis et al., 2014), a feeling of being overtaxed with increasing reliance on volunteers (Measham & Barnett, 2008), problems managing funding arrangements and insurance compliance requirements (Prager, 2010; Tennent & Lockie, 2013) and changes in NRM governance (Robins & Kanowski, 2011; Robins, 2018). These issues are repeatedly cited by Australian community-based conservation groups as being problematic to their operations.

In the face of this challenging list of operational responsibilities of leadership of volunteer groups, the role of leaders, and the way that CCGs are managed are important factors in determining their ongoing success. Snow (1992) identified several factors associated with good leadership of environmental non-profit organisations. These include close attention to best management practices, the nurturing of leaders within the group, the development of good administration structures and practices, and an explicit valuing of knowledgeable and effective people. The size and scope of the organisation determines the best form of leadership that is most effective for each group (Snow, 1992). Invariably, good leadership pays attention to self-reflection, evaluation, and careful documentation of the group's activities, achievements, and mistakes. Snow cautioned against the righteous leader, and conflict such as this emerging within the group, between similar volunteer groups and the professional organisations which often oversee their activities. Indeed, Snow's research

findings identified the debilitating effect of xenophobia and strife. Notwithstanding these cautions, Snow applauded the actions of leaders of environmental non-profit organisations, who battle an extremely complex and difficult role, its challenges and diverse responsibilities, and the way in which leaders scope out their role individually, evolving their practice with the developing needs of their groups. Indeed, Wronka-Posipiech (2016) identified leadership of a social enterprise such as environmental groups as having the characteristics of social entrepreneurship which is participative and appreciative of the importance of individual workers. The social entrepreneur as leader has been identified as fostering common goals, within an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, and similar to Snow (1992), Wronka-Posipiech (2016) identified the dependency of leadership style on the nature of the enterprise, its size and scope.

Perhaps the most significant leadership factor in engaging and retaining volunteer numbers is an approach that acknowledges diverse needs and motivations. At first glance, social aspects, the people who are volunteers and their interactions, appear to be of lesser importance than the other leadership roles that are organisational and operational (Ryan et al., 2001). However, this role is important in terms of building relationships with volunteers. The complexity of leadership is greatly increased when considering that leaders should manage evolving motivations at different stages of participation, provide learning opportunities for all, offer tangible evidence of achievements, support and enable social interaction and fun, improve project organisation, train participants and make effective use of volunteers as human resources (Ryan et al., 2001).

Complicating the leadership of CCGs further, is managing the interactions of volunteer groups with the local community (Few, 2000) with factors coming into play such as balancing the active use of the natural environment with restrictions on over-use and balancing the amenity of the local neighbourhood with the insightful lobbying against over-development of the area. Few (2000) outlined the difficulty of reconciling the range of

roles and agendas of a diverse set of stakeholders and the need for ongoing negotiation without differential power relationships.

Drawing on the research presented in this section, a synthesis of the leadership responsibilities associated with running volunteer organisations is presented in Figure 2-1. It presents a complex role, particularly when considering the complexity of volunteer groups such as CCGs, and the voluntary, part-time, unpaid nature of their leadership. It is also clear from these responsibilities that where leadership fails to meet the requirements of any of these operations, the volunteer group will be reduced in functionality and this will potentially impact on the success of the agency.

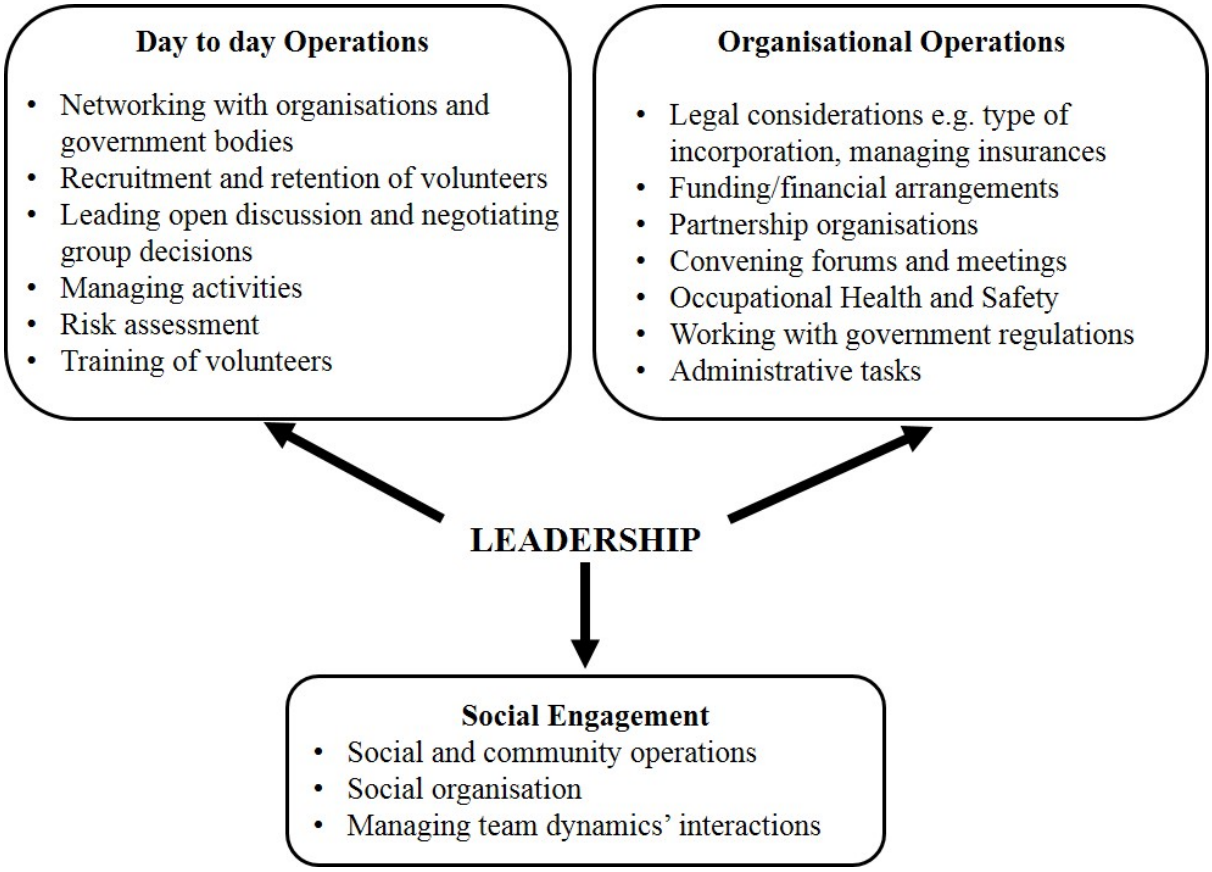

Figure 2-1. Leadership structure of volunteer organisations or CCGs.

The responsibilities of managers and leaders of community-based conservation groups are not well documented. Furthermore, there has been less attention paid to leadership within these groups. The research presented here acknowledges and focuses on the role of the leadership of conservation volunteer groups as they influence the overall success and

operations of the organisation. It identifies the importance of understanding the role of leadership of the CCGs for effective operation, recruitment and sustainability.

2.1.4 Volunteers

Leadership and management of volunteer groups have been discussed separately in terms of the complex requirements of formal conservation groups. It is important to consider that the volunteers who take on this role are effectively volunteers alongside all the others within the organisation and have similar needs to other volunteers who do not necessarily hold formal positions within the group.

2.1.5 Reasons and motivations for volunteering

At its heart, volunteering is a choice made by members of a CCG. Volunteers may have a broad range of motivations to participate and will continue to contribute if their needs are met. The organisational variables discussed in the previous section are identified as important to individuals' decisions to participate and to continue their involvement (Penner, 2002). But potentially and more important, are the individual's dispositional variables, that are regarded as motivational attributes (Penner, 2002). Penner (2002) argues that personal characteristics, together with their reasons for volunteering influence, an individual's disposition towards for volunteering. Clary et al.'s (1998) research, that is still viewed as seminal, claimed that individuals "may be more likely to volunteer in organisations than in other situations because their dispositions motivate them to do so" (p. 1517). Likewise, Esmond and Dunlop (2004) maintained that while "an individual's personal motivations are unique, there are some common types of motivations" (p. 51).

Motivations may be intrinsic and inherently satisfying, or extrinsic and linked to a desirable outcome (Finkelstien, 2009). Gallarza, Artega and Gil-Saura (2013) considered that intrinsic motivation is associated with the hedonic aspect of acting as a volunteer; having fun, developing interests and fulfilling one's expectations and curiosity. Whereas Warner,

Newland and Green (2011) believed that extrinsic motivations such as social recognition and enhanced social networks outside the volunteer group are tangible rewards.

The motivations of individuals to volunteer have also been categorised by earlier researchers as utilitarian (self-oriented), altruistic (other-oriented) and social (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan 2009). Utilitarian motivations are associated with work-skills, employment or resume building; altruistic motivations are associated with improving the welfare of others and social motivations include volunteering to join family and friends (Batson, Ahmad, & Tsang, 2002). These motivations are likely to remain characteristic of contemporary environmental conservation volunteer groups. Furthermore, the motivations to volunteer have been shown to change with the age of the volunteers themselves (de Espanes, Villar, Urrutia, & Serrat, 2015), and to be similar in like-age categories (Burns, Reid, Toncar, Anderson, & Wells, 2008). Older volunteers tend to identify community obligation and service reasons through which they can establish and guide the next generation (Erikson, 1963; Gill, 2006; Pillemer et al., 2016). They remain acutely aware of the future of humankind and the environment (Warburton & Gooch, 2007). They also may volunteer as they transition and age to fill perceived gaps or voids in their lives, for instance children leaving home, retirement and moving to new homes in new locations (Davis, Smith, & Gay, 2005; Rochester & Hutchison, 2002). Associated with these gaps is a need to continue to feel valued and useful (Rochester & Hutchison, 2002; Smith & Gay, 2005). Along with both these motivations is the need to establish new friendship groups when old groups dissolve or are left behind (Rochester & Hutchison, 2002; Smith & Gay, 2005). Younger volunteers' motives appear to differ from those of the older generation, although there is debate in the literature regarding these motivations. It has been claimed that their interest is progressively more dependent on personal interests and needs instead of the more traditional values that motivate older people (Asah et al., 2014; Jardim & da Silva, 2018). While some younger

volunteers are initially altruistic and engage almost daily in pro-environmental ways, this is not regarded as a predictor of volunteering behaviour (McDougle et al., 2011). Where younger people volunteer based on altruistic ideals, it is likely that they may change to more personal motivations over time (Jardim & da Silva, 2018). Bocsi, Fényes and Markos (2017) claim that nowadays, volunteers are prompted by motives such as career development, personal growth, work experience, developing skills, getting a job more easily, making friends, meeting people with similar interests, and taking part in a useful leisure activity. These motivations were related by Jardim and da Silva (2018) as "self" i.e., self-knowledge, self-development, and self-gratification (p.2). Learning and career benefits are also primary motivators for younger people, who have been seen to volunteer primarily to acquire new skills which can lead to employment opportunities (Cho, Bonn, & Han, 2018; Jardim & da Silva, 2018). Scott and van Etten (2013) identified that the promise of personal gain could be used to engage younger volunteers. They investigated volunteering as work integrated learning with tertiary sciences students. This research identified that a high proportion of students found volunteering to be beneficial to their studies as well as to their employment prospects. The gains that were identified included both conservation knowledge and skills as well as gains in personal attributes. However, the value of the development of generic skills and outcomes were not frequently identified.

The data on the social aspects of young people who volunteer are contradictory in the literature. Kick, Contactos, Sawyer and Thomas (2015) found that a key difference between younger and older volunteers was a lack of interest in the social aspect of the former, given the immersion of this generation in social networking. On the other hand, McDougle et al., (2011) found that the promise of enhanced socialisation in volunteer groups was a primary motivation for younger people to volunteer. It is critical that CCGs understand the motivations of younger people to engage in volunteering given the ageing of the present

volunteer workforce. Importantly, volunteers have been found to volunteer later in life when they have volunteered as adolescents and young adults (Independent Sector, 2008).

The most significant motivation of volunteers who engage in the environment and conservation is a commitment to the environment, together with learning about the environment (Ryan et al., 2001). An additional motivation to volunteer and to engage in conservation of the environment is a sense of place. Defining a sense of place has been found to be complex and difficult, and with a person's emotional bond to a place difficult to define and quantify (van Putten et al., 2018). Different scholars have explored the idea of place and sense of place in relation to wellbeing (Sampson & Gifford, 2010), placed based education (Semken, 2010) restorative experiences and meaningful actions (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2005) and pro environmental behaviours (Duerden & Witt, 2010). Ryan et al. (2001) identified the influence that being in nature had on peoples' reflections; on themselves, on nature and in nature, and on using the space and natural surroundings to support pondering about the larger issues of life that are associated with this environment. Van Putten et al. (2018) outlined five categories of the marine environment which are associated with place, person and process aspects of a sense of place, and which then contributed to a sense of place. These include a) the coastal and marine flora and fauna, b) the ecosystem, c) cultural marine connections, d) marine experiences and uses; and e) objects, stories and memorabilia. The first two of these categories were grouped by van Putten et al. (2018) into the overarching category named the marine environment with and the remaining categories being grouped into the human domain. Van Putten et al. (2018) then proposed bonding routes by which each of the categories become pathways to a sense of place. The cultural, artefact links, combined with the experience and uses, establishes social ties and a social attachment to the place which is shared within the community (Tonge et al., 2015). This complex interaction was linked to different types of pro-environment activity. The sense of place leads to stronger identification with the environment, but the social is relied upon to support engagement in difficult

rehabilitation activities. While the social aspects of volunteering are not shown in the preceding section as major motivations to engage, it has been shown that they are more important to committed volunteers. In addition, having fun and meeting new people have been shown to be the single greatest predictor of volunteer commitment (Ryan et al., 2001).

Hustinx et al. (2010) argued that "the study of volunteerism has generated multiple theoretical and conceptual models and yet no integrated theory has emerged" (p. 410). Functionalist theory is one of several approaches that have been used to investigate why individuals volunteer (Clary et al., 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Omoto, Snyder, & Hackett, 2010; Pages, Fischer, & van der Wal, 2017). This approach poses questions about the personal and social aspects that begin, guide and maintain action (Katz, 1960). Clary, Snyder and Stukas (1996) asserted that, according to functionalist theory, "individuals volunteer to satisfy important social and psychological goals; and different individuals may be involved in similar activities but do so to achieve different goals" (p. 487). In addition, Clary and Snyder (1999) maintained that different volunteers pursue different goals, with some pursuing more than one goal at a time. The position taken by this research is that the functionalist approach to motivation to volunteer translates to ways in which individuals operate within CCGs to meet their motivational needs. Hence, there is seen to be an alignment between the perceptions of the volunteers about their ongoing engagement and their motivation to becoming involved. Indeed, Clary et al. (1998) identified this alignment when they commented that their Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) was developed to "understand the motivations that prompt people to become volunteers and that sustain their efforts over time" (Clary et al., 1998, p. 156). The definition of Clary et al. (1998) using function as the defining term, infers the translation from motivation to volunteering, to the functions served through volunteering. Research, concerning community service volunteers from several organisations used the VFI to identify six personal and social functions served by volunteering namely

Career, Enhancement, Protective, Social, Understanding, and Values. These six functions are shown and defined in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2. *Conceptual definitions of the Volunteer Functions Inventory functions.*

Function	**Conceptual Definition**
Career	With the goal of gaining career related experience through volunteering.
Personal Enhancement	To grow and develop psychologically through volunteer activities.
Protective	To reduce negative feelings, such as guilt, or to address personal problems.
Social	To strengthen his or her social relationships with significant others (family and friends).
Understanding	To learn more about the world or exercise skills that are often unused.
Values	To express or act on important values like humanitarianism.

Note. Adapted from Clary & Snyder, 1999, p. 157.

It is reasonable to infer that these functions, when met through volunteering, lead to enhanced engagement and satisfaction.

The relative priority of the functions to volunteers is variable in the research. Clary and Snyder (1999) found the functions of Values, Understanding, and Personal Enhancement to be more important to volunteers than the functions of Career, Social, and Protective (p. 157). The Values function was generally considered to be other-oriented (Briggs, Peterson, & Gregory, 2010; Cornelis; Snyder & Omoto, 2008; Van Hiel, & De Cremer, 2013) whereas the remaining functions were believed to concentrate on personal benefits and thus be self-oriented (Briggs et al., 2010; Cornelis et al., 2013; Peloza, Hudson, & Hassay, 2008). Wright et al. (2015) claimed that the VFI is the most widely used inventory for understanding volunteer motivations. While the functions have been identified as being important in the area of general volunteering, this research seeks to understand priorities in the specific area of Australian CCGs.

Researchers have developed other hybrid models of the VFI. Esmond and Dunlop (2004) used their Volunteer Motivations Inventory to investigate 2500 Western Australian volunteers from multiple organisations. Their research identified an additional four functions to those found by Clary and Snyder's (1999) study; Reactivity, Reciprocity, Recognition and Social Interaction which are shown and defined in Table 2-3. These new functions as motivations to volunteer, can be classified as ego-centric (Reactivity and Reciprocity) and Social (Recognition, Social Interaction). The functions Reactivity and Reciprocity were seen to be more closely related to individual needs, while the functions Recognition and Social Interaction were seen to be socially embedded in relationships within the volunteer group, and potentially beyond. In addition, many of these functions appeared to fit along a continuum. For instance, there is a fine line between Clary et al.'s (1998) function Career and Esmond and Dunlop's (2004) function Recognition, with the differences likely to be embedded in concepts of formality of recognition. The function Reciprocity may be both ego-centric and socially determined depending on the motivation of the volunteer: to give back to the community, or to give to the community as a way of gaining oneself.

Table 2-3. *Conceptual definitions of the Volunteer Motivations Inventory functions.*

Function	**Conceptual Definition**
Reactivity	To 'heal' and address their own past or current issues.
Reciprocity	In the belief that 'what goes around comes around'. In the process of helping others and 'doing good' their volunteering work will also bring about good things for the volunteer themselves.
Recognition	By being recognised for their skills and contribution and enjoyment of the recognition volunteering give them.
Social Interaction	To build social networks and enjoys the social aspects of interacting with others.

Note. Adapted from Esmond & Dunlop, 2004, p. 52.

Various authors have acknowledged the differences in prioritising functions among volunteer groups that have been researched. Like the work of Clary and Snyder (1999), Esmond and Dunlop (2004) found the function Values to be the most important reason for

volunteering. However, in contrast to Clary and Snyder (1999), Esmond and Dunlop (2004) found the functions Reciprocity and Recognition to be more important than the other functions. According to Esmond and Dunlop (2004) the functions Career, Social, Protective, Reactivity and Social Interaction were found to be the least important motivations to volunteer.

Subsequent studies related to general volunteering have reported variances in the prioritisation of functions between individuals, and across voluntary sectors and contexts (Cnaan & Park, 2016; Erasmus & Morey, 2016; Wilson, 2012; Wright et al., 2015; Yeung, 2004). For instance, younger people have been found to be more motivated to gain new skills whereas older volunteers have been found to want to share their knowledge and to give something back (Jacobson et al., 2012; Unell & Castle, 2012). In a more recent Volunteering Australia (2016) study, the functions Reciprocity and Values were found to be the most important motivations to volunteer, with over 40% of respondents rating giving back as the most important motivation. Ryan et al. (2001) found that a desire to help the environment and learn new things were significant reasons for new volunteers, but with time social influences became more important for their retention.

In the CCG context, the actual importance of each function is highly individual. As a hypothetical example, while only 10% of the volunteers may prioritise one of the functions, if they are not satisfied that this is a feature of their activity and thus their needs are not perceived as being met, this could result in a significant loss of volunteer numbers to the organisation. Therefore, in the research presented here, a more appropriate approach is to seek to understand the multiple reasons for engaging in volunteering, both as motivations, patterns of engagement, and as perceived benefits, through which the CCG, as a volunteer organisation, can be better understood.

In summary, the motivation to engage in volunteering, appears to be complex and to vary depending on the context of the activity. The functions of volunteering have been shown

to be associated with personal growth and development; career related experience; personal well-being; social engagement; understanding and knowledge of the skills and/or the 'world', i.e., the context; and finally values-based reasons such as humanitarianism (Gooch, 2004; Koss & Kingsley, 2010; Measham & Barnett, 2008; Wilson, 2012; Wright et al., 2015). The balance between altruistic reasons, social purpose, and personal benefit has been shown in this section to vary significantly from study to study. The studies that were consulted were drawn from 1999 through to the present, and it may be hypothesised that changing demographics and society may contribute to some of these inconsistencies. Therefore, it is important to this research to clarify the motivations of volunteers in the CCG context such that their motivation for participation, level of satisfaction, beliefs and the perceived benefit derived from volunteering, are better understood. Section 2.1.6 reviews the literature and expands on the concepts presented here in order to better understand the patterns of conservation volunteering.

2.1.6 Conservation volunteering

The review of the environment and conservation volunteering research literature showed that there has been very little published investigating individuals' motivations to volunteer for conservation (Measham & Barnett, 2008; Ryan et al., 2001; West & Pateman, 2016; Wright et al., 2015). Clarke (2011) supported this claim in the CCG context by asserting that the "views and experiences of coastal community groups have not been studied comprehensively" (p. 1).

Several volunteer environmental studies have used or have adapted the functions identified by Clary and Snyder (1999) to appreciate what leads individuals to volunteer for the environment and conservation (West & Pateman, 2016). These adaptations have been reported in several studies that have used specific contexts to develop and classify the

functions using a wide range of factors (Measham & Barnett, 2008). The result has been some overlap in meanings across the literature.

In line with general volunteering data, environmental conservation volunteering studies have revealed that volunteers' reasons for engaging can vary in type and in importance (West & Pateman, 2016). Studies have routinely reported the functions Learning, Reciprocity, Social Interaction and Values as being most important to conservation volunteers (Asah et al., 2014; Bramston, Pretty, & Zammit, 2010; Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Gooch, 2005; Liarakou, Kostelou, & Gavrilakis, 2011; Measham & Barnett, 2008; Raddick et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2001; Unell & Castle, 2012; Wright et al., 2015). A review of the conservation volunteering research literature has identified several functions which are regarded as being unique to conservation volunteers (Asah & Blahna, 2012; Gooch, 2004; Guiney & Oberhauser, 2009; Measham & Barnett, 2008; Ryan et al., 2001; West & Pateman, 2016). Table 2-4 lists four additional functions which have been routinely identified across the literature as being influential on individuals' specific reasons to volunteer for conservation.

Table 2-4. Conceptual definitions of conservation volunteering functions

Function	**Conceptual Definition**
Connection to Nature	To enjoy being outside in the natural world.
Environmental Care	Because of their appreciation and concern for the natural world.
Project Organisation	To be involved with a group that is well regarded for its preparedness and achievements.
Sense of Place	To protect and conserve the place they live or enjoy.

Note. Adapted from Gooch, 2004; Measham & Barnett, 2008; Ryan et al., 2001; Wright et al., 2015.

Complicating the conservation-associated functions further, a range of research studies into environmental conservation volunteering have found no clear shared pattern of motivation and engagement and have added several new functions to those already in existence. Across these studies, the two functions Helping the Environment and a Connection

to Nature were common to most, but not all as primary motivations to engage in volunteering (Bramston et al., 2010; Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Guiney & Oberhauser, 2009; Hvenegaard & Perkins, 2019; Wright et al., 2015;). Other functions such as Learning and Social Belonging were also found to motivate volunteers (Bramston et al., 2010; Wright et al., 2015), while others found that the functions Career, and Personal Enhancement were key motivators to engage (Asah et al., 2014).

In the Australian context different studies have found a range of functions to be important to volunteers. For example, Sense of Place (Gooch, 2005) and Leaving a Legacy for Future Generations (Gooch & Warburton, 2007) were found to be important to volunteers. Whereas, Measham and Barnett (2008) found the functions Attachment to a Place, Care for the Environment, Contributing to Community, Learning about the Environment, Personal Development and Social Interaction as being important to volunteers.

This section started with the functions introduced by Clary and Snyder (1999) and has shown that diverse sets of functions have developed from the original set of functions. It identified the complexity and cross-over of terminology and conceptual definitions and added the argument to a set of functions drawn explicitly from the research on environmental conservation volunteering. All these functions were drawn together according to their meanings and are presented in Table 2-5. The table documents the motivations of volunteers to engage, as well as the operations of volunteer groups that meet these needs through engagement with the organisation. These are the functions of the environmental volunteer group, with specific reference to CCGs.

Table 2-5. *Broad descriptions of the volunteering functions*

Function	**Broad Description of Function**
Career	Gaining career related experience through volunteering.

Function	Broad Description of Function
Connection to Nature	Physical and psychological benefit of being close to nature.
Environmental Care	Enact of a sense of responsibility and care for the environment.
Personal Enhancement	Psychological growth and development through volunteer activities.
Project Organisation	Membership of a CCG that is well regarded for its preparedness.
Reciprocity	Helping others and 'doing good' in the belief that volunteering work will bring good things for the volunteer themselves.
Recognition	Recognition of skills and contribution.
Sense of Place	Enactment of a sense of responsibility for their local area.
Social	To strengthen his or her internal social relationships with family and friends.
Social Interaction	To build external social networks and to enjoy the aspects of social interaction.
Understanding	To learn more about the world or exercise skills that are often unused.
Values	To express or act on important values like humanitarianism.

Note. Adapted from: Asah et al., 2014; Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Esmond & Dunlop, 2004; Gooch, 2005; Guiney & Oberhauser, 2009; Liarakou et al., 2011; Measham & Barnett, 2008; Ryan et al., 2001.

It has been outlined in this section how the motivations of volunteers differ, which supports a conclusion that volunteers will have different expectations regarding being satisfied and their needs being met. Factors influencing volunteer satisfaction and retention have been aligned with utilitarian, altruistic and social motivations. Given the complexity of the range and combinations of motivations, it is important to the research presented here about CCGs that the motivations and satisfaction of volunteers within the organisation are understood. This understanding may be particularly powerful when it is linked to leadership strategies and organisational features that are responsive to the needs of its volunteer workforce. Beyond this global issue, it has been demonstrated that motivations to volunteer differ significantly based on cultural contexts (Sloane & Probstl-Haider, 2019). For this

reason, specific local research into the motivations of volunteers in the Australian environmental context is critical to the understanding and functioning of CCGs.

2.1.7 Outcomes of volunteerism: Satisfaction and benefits

Clary and Snyder's (1999) study is one of many studies that has revealed that the successful recruitment of volunteers depends on matching specific motivational functions and volunteer tasks (Erasmus & Morey, 2016). Furthermore, their study showed that those volunteers who received the greatest related motivational benefits experienced greater satisfaction and therefore intended to continue volunteering (Erasmus & Morey, 2016, p. 1349).

Research has found that satisfaction positively influences both time spent volunteering and the length of voluntary engagement (Englert & Helmig, 2017) as well as assisting with their retention (Peachey, Lyras, Cohen, Brueningm, & Cunningham, 2014). The links between motivations and satisfaction are not altogether clear. Nonetheless it has been demonstrated that altruistic, other-oriented reasons for volunteering, leads to greater satisfaction and commitment of volunteers, particularly where volunteers regard their participation as being meaningful (Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Rodell, 2013; Stukas, Hoye, Nicholson, Brown, & Aisbett, 2014). It is reasonable to assume that volunteer engagement is essential to volunteer retention (Huynh, Metzerm, & Winefield, 2012), and "common sense suggests that dissatisfied volunteers are most likely to quit and the research bears this out" (Wilson, 2012, p. 197).

Scholars have identified several environmental factors that positively influence volunteer satisfaction and hence their performance (Cowlishaw, Birch, Mclennan, & Hayes, 2012; Englert & Helmig, 2017). Some of these factors include: transformational leadership (Dwyer, Bono, Snyder, Novm, & Berson, 2013), incentives and rewards (Fiorillo, 2011; O'Brien et al., 2010), setting clear goals, allowing a sense of independence, providing

different tasks, giving feedback and a non-bureaucratic work hierarchy (Studer & Schnurbein, 2013), learning opportunities (Rogalsky, Doherty, & Paradis, 2016), the availability of time (Wilson, 2012), good project management (Ryan et al., 2001), being valued and not overburdened (Locke, Ellism, & Davis Smith, 2003), job satisfaction (Wu et al., 2015), and social interaction (Asah et al., 2014). Given this diversity, it is realistic to expect that CCGs' capacity to satisfy individual volunteers will differ and that different volunteers will have different expectations regarding being satisfied.

The research of Dwyer et al. (2013) indicated that volunteers were more satisfied when their team leaders were "inspirational, showed concern about their development, involved them in decision making, and focused on the meaning of the work" (p. 198). Over time these mechanisms have been shown to become the organisation's core conventions and principles in the way the organisation operates (Ehrhart, Macey, & Schneider, 2014). This effective volunteer management can foster motivation, commitment, and service tenure in volunteers (Nencini, Romaioli, & Meneghini, 2015).

Associated with motivation and satisfaction levels, but not necessarily directly related, are the benefits that volunteers derive from volunteering. Thus, they should be discussed and analysed separately (Sloane & Probstl-Haider, 2019). Simply stated, even if motivation to participate is altruistic, the more beneficial volunteers perceive the experience to be for themselves, the more likely they will be to actively promote membership and participation among their social community, and to continue their own participation.

Wilson (2012) argued that scholars have reasoned for some time that "helping others is beneficial to the helper" (p. 198). As with the literature on motivation to volunteer, research has established that volunteers can derive a wide variety of benefits from volunteering which generally includes improving personal traits and professional skills (Volunteering Australia, 2016; Wilson, 2012). Other benefits include; career choices (Wilson, 2012), enhanced personal and social networks (Koss & Kingsley, 2010), feeling a greater

sense of purpose (Measham & Barnett, 2008), feelings of enjoyment (Muirhead, 2011); gaining knowledge by increasing content knowledge and learning new skills (Measham & Barnet, 2008) and reconnect with nature (Guiney & Oberhauser, 2009). The results of Stepenuck and Green's (2015) review of environmental volunteering monitoring literature also found that personal, social and increased knowledge as benefits, but also, added benefits in changing attitudes and behaviours, and the attainment of voice in decision making, increase in amount and effectiveness of civic participation. Stepenuck and Green (2015) elaborated on the gain of knowledge, which they classified as gaining scientific content knowledge, learning new skills and social learning. The social benefits included friendships and social networks, being proud of their achievements, giving purpose, feelings of self-worth, career choices and becoming attached to places (Gooch, 2005; Koss & Kinsley, 2010; Lawrence, 2009; Measham & Barnett, 2008). A sense of place was seen to be particularly important in attracting and retaining older adult environmental volunteers, with the "meanings and attachments that individuals and groups develop for the locales in which they live, work, and play" (Bushway et al., 2011, p. 198).

Table 2-6 provides a synopsis of the key benefits which have been documented in the conservation volunteering literature.

Table 2-6. *Synopsis of key benefits attained from general and conservation volunteering.*

Benefit	**Source**
Career choices	Gooch, 2004; Wilson, 2012
Enhanced personal and social networks	Gooch, 2005; Koss & Kingsley, 2010; Measham & Barnett, 2008
Feeling a greater sense of purpose	Koss & Kingsley, 2010; Measham & Barnett, 2008;
Feelings of enjoyment and pleasure	Borgonovi, 2008; Koss & Kingsley, 2010; Muirhead, 2011
Gaining knowledge by increasing content	Fernandez–Gimenez, Ballard, & Sturtevant, 2008; Gooch, 2005; Measham & Barnett, 2008

Benefit	Source
knowledge, learning new skills and social learning	
Improved health and well-being	O'Brien et al., 2010; Wilson, 2012; White, Pahl, Herbert, & Depledge, 2013
Increasing knowledge and awareness of environmental issues	Evans et al., 2005; Kordella, Gerage, Papatheodorou, Falkris, & Miltropoulo, 2013; Wyles, Pahl, & Holland, 2016
Reconnect with nature	Guiney & Oberhauser, 2009
A sense of place	Bushway et al., 2011; Gooch, 2005

2.1.8 Towards a CCG Functions Conceptual Framework

While some benefits may be identifiable alongside motivations to participate, such as utilitarian or social motivations, others may not necessarily be identified before engaging with the activity but may emerge through, and as an outcome of participation. Hence, perceived benefits may be viewed not only as a motivation to participate, but also as a source of motivation to continue with the volunteering activity. Given the importance of not only the recruitment of volunteers, but their retention, understanding the benefits they perceive they gain from participation is a priority for any CCG.

Drawing together the motivation and engagement in volunteering as functions, and outcomes as the satisfaction and benefits drawn from participation, Table 2-7 presents a simplified amalgamated framework of these elements to support a better understanding of the nature of volunteering. The alignment between the motivations, sustained engagement, satisfaction and benefits is demonstrated in this table. Thus, the categories as functions can serve research not only into the reasons to volunteer, but also the perceptions of volunteers of satisfaction and benefits.

Table 2-7. *Synopsis of functions and characteristics of engagement and benefits of volunteering.*

Function	Broad Description of Function	Satisfaction and Benefit
Career	Gaining career related experience through volunteering	Career choices, professional skills
Connection to Nature	The physically and psychologically benefit of being close to nature	Reconnect with nature
Environmental Care	Enactment of a sense of responsibility and care for the environment	Feeling a greater sense of purpose
Personal Enhancement	Psychological and physical growth and development	Improved health, personal growth
Project Organisation	Participating in a CCG that is well regarded for its preparedness	Good project management
Reciprocity	Helping others and 'doing good' in the belief their volunteering work will bring good things for the volunteer themselves	Helping others is beneficial to the helper
Recognition	Recognition of skills and contribution	Self- and external recognition of contribution and achievements
Sense of Place	Enacting a sense of responsibility for the local area	Enhanced belongingness and ownership of the local area
Social	Strengthening his or her social relationship with work colleagues, family and friends; strengthening of his or her existing social relationships	Enhanced social engagement with others
Social Interaction	Building of social networks and enjoyment of the aspects of social interaction with others	Feelings of enjoyment and enhanced personal and social networks
Understanding	Learning more about the world or exercise skills that are often unused	Gaining knowledge by increasing content knowledge, learning new skills and social learning
Values	Expressing and acting on important values like humanitarianism	Altruism

Note. Adapted from: Asah et al., 2014; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Esmond & Dunlop, 2004; Gooch, 2005; Guiney & Oberhauser, 2009; Koss & Kingsley, 2010; Liarakou et al., 2011.

Table 2-7 identified the strong alignment between functions (motivation and engagement) and outcomes (benefits and satisfaction) associated with volunteering. The same functional descriptors apply to all dimensions and there is a commonality in the use of this

terminology in the literature. Therefore, it is reasonable to reduce the table to a single function with associated broad descriptions that include motivation, benefits and satisfaction. Table 2.8 draws these meanings together to establish a single meaning for each function as they relate to motivations, engagement satisfaction and benefits. The table serves as a conceptual framework through which the research presented here was designed, including research instrument design, data collection, and data analysis. It is noted that Kragt and Holtrop (2019) identified that despite the significant amount of research on volunteering functions, new reasons for volunteering are still being uncovered which might be specific to certain types of volunteering. This is further justification for the research presented here, namely to identify if there are any functions specific to CCG volunteers that lend insight into this area of conservation volunteering.

Table 2-8. *The CCG Functions Framework—motivations, engagement, satisfaction and benefits for volunteers.*

Function	**Broad Description of Function**
Career	Gaining career related experience and professional skills through volunteering.
Connection to Nature	The physically and psychologically benefit by being close to nature and reconnecting with nature.
Environmental Care	Enactment of a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, with an enhanced sense of purpose.
Personal Enhancement	Psychological and physical growth and development, improved health and personal growth.
Project Organisation	Participating in a CCG that is well regarded for its preparedness and good project management.
Reciprocity	Helping others and 'doing good' in the belief that their volunteering work will bring good things for the volunteer themselves, thus beneficial to the helper.
Recognition	Recognition of skills and contribution and associated confidence growth.
Sense of Place	Enacting a sense of responsibility for the local area.
Social	Strengthening his or her social relationship with family and friends external to the CCG.

Function	Broad Description of Function
Social Interaction	Strengthening of his or her social relationships through enhanced social engagement with others; building of social networks and enjoyment of the aspects of social interaction with others.
Understanding	Learning more about the world or exercising skills that are often unused through social learning and growth of content knowledge.
Values	Expressing and acting on important values like humanitarianism and altruism.

Pages et al. (2017) identified the usefulness of the functions model to support understanding of the engagement of volunteers in environmental volunteering. However, they found that a more social-dynamic model that addressed the interactions of the group and its evolution may be useful to support understanding of the group, its roles, activities and interactions in the later stages of a maturing environmental volunteer group. They identified a gap in the literature in this regard, so that the shifting "social, organisational, and environmental attachments, and multifaceted experiences … that are coproduced" (n.p.) may support our longitudinal understanding of the dynamics of volunteering. They recommended the use of narrative experiences of volunteers to support the understanding of these multifaceted experiences.

In summary, the review presented in this section draws together motivations and characteristics of engagement and outcomes and benefits of this engagement into a framework of broad functions of volunteering. The CCG Functions Framework was used to design the research methodology and data collection methods, as well as the analysis of the data, which is presented in Chapters 4 to 6.

The next section of this chapter discusses the notion of communities of practice and concludes with the theoretical framework that is to be used to explain the practice-based operations of a CCG.

2.2 Social learning and community of practice

The arguments presented in Section 2.1 identified that volunteering is essentially social, regardless of the individual's motivations, benefits or role within the organisation. If the CCG is to be understood, the social forms of engaging with the environmental cause, and each other to support concerted action in conservation, must be considered a key element of its function. Learning has been identified in the previous section as being a primary motivation to engage in CCGs. While several social learning theories exist, such as Vygotsky (1962), at an organisational level, one theory that is commonly used in organisational studies is the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Section 2.2 briefly introduces the nature of groups and social learning theory, and then discusses the community of practice in terms of its usefulness to better understand the operations and practice of CCGs.

2.2.1 The social nature of volunteer groups

The definitions of volunteering offered in Section 2.1.1 led to a conclusion that firstly, volunteering is social in nature, and secondly, volunteering is characterised as an activity within the domain. While Social Interaction is identified in Section 2.1.8 as a volunteering function, the research has focused predominantly on a functions approach to individual motivations and benefits emerging from volunteering. This section introduces the concept of volunteering as concerted social action, with the understanding that CCGs operate as groups of volunteers with some level of organisation and management of the group.

Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan (2009) identified the relative paucity of research on the typology and dynamics of groups in volunteering. According to their characterisation, volunteer groups such as CCGs are habitual volunteer groups whereby people volunteer for an ongoing period, engage with others, and potentially become friends. They identified how volunteers define their identity, and how others perceive them through their group participation. Group norms are developed as informal rules to regulate members' behaviour.

Where behaviours conform to group norms, behavioural regularities are identified, whereas behavioural irregularities are interpreted as deviant from those norms (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). Compliance and deviance dictate group interactions and dynamics. Importantly, where group membership is skewed to one gender, age group or other socio-cultural categories, membership of the minority group can become tokenistic, and their perceived behaviours atypical and therefore deviant from the norm (Osili, Mesch, Hayat, & Dale, 2016). The potential outcome of this imbalance is a sense of a minority of group members being part of the out-group peripheral to the functions of the in-group. New members too can be regarded as out-group members until they have conformed with group norms in terms of consciousness, resources and commitments (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). Osili et al. (2016) found that groups with skewed memberships had narrower volunteering activities than those whose membership was balanced. These sorts of group dynamics can lead to volunteer burn-out and a tendency to leave the organisation or where incoming members fail at becoming accepted in-group members (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). A further threat to group norms is that they become so cohesive that they become exclusive and reject new members. The group members can also become attached to their way of doing things that changes are not welcomed. This may lead to sub-groups and subcultures or cliques who aim to change the policies, practices and priorities of the group (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). In the context of CCGs, it has been established in Section 1.2 that volunteers are generally older and that their longevity within the group is common. There exists potential, given these characteristics, for group norms to become narrow and fixed, which may be detrimental to the group's sustainability and readiness to change. The implication for volunteer group leadership is the importance of critically analysing group norms, cliques and broadening membership such that the group norms remain as diverse as possible. Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan (2009) argued that the literature on volunteerism tends to focus on the actions and characteristics of individual volunteers and recommend that a

closer research focus should be developed on the characteristics of the whole group, its features, and processes. Thus section 2.1 segues well into Section 2.2, which examines groups as communities of practice.

2.2.2 Social learning

Learning theories have long been documented in the fields of psychology, educational psychology, and cognitive science with theorists arguing the notions of how humans learn (Nursey-Bray, Harvey, & Smith, 2016). A shift from individual-centred theories of learning emerged in the 20th Century as social cognitive theories of learning developed (Bandura, 1977; Bandura & Walters, 1963). This approach explained learning in social terms, as learners engage in a socio-cultural context through which they learn (Bandura, 1986). The connection between real-life settings and learning as a socio-cultural practice was extended by Lave and Wenger (1991) to theorise learning in their situated learning model. While these authors named their approach a 'community of practice' they did not define it beyond outlining it is an "activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means for their lives and for their communities" (p. 98). Critiques have been made of this concept, including the reference to what appears to be practice embedded as a static concept within the community, and not recognising the role of the newcomer in challenging and evolving that practice (Osterlund & Carlyle, 2003). This regeneration of knowledge has been addressed by Brown and Duguid (1991), however, with their focus on generating new knowledge through social engagement of informal groups, they overlooked the concept of knowledge that is also strongly held by the group.

Wenger (1998) proposed an approach to communities of practice that accommodates both regenerative and stable knowledge within the group. He identified, as a key characteristic of communities of practice, the coming together of individuals to engage in a common enterprise with a shared sense of purpose. The links between communities of

practice and CCGs are not difficult to establish given the core focus of both on social engagement in a common enterprise.

Social learning theory has been used to evaluate collaborative participation in NRM (Cundill & Rodella, 2012; Garmendia & Stagl, 2010; Muro & Jeffrey, 2008; Nursey-Bray et al., 2016; Pahl-Wostl, 2007). It has been used to build understanding of how diverse groups of social actors with "different world views and values" learn to collaborate to achieve successful NRM outcomes (Cundill & Rodella, 2012, p. 12). Through this collaboration, groups can better manage the knowledge transfer processes and risk of the influence of incomplete knowledge to the operation of volunteer groups (Garmendia & Stagl, 2010). Indeed, Antunes, Kallis, Videira and Santos (2009) maintained that social learning is a crucial aspect of the process of organisational sustainability. It is in this collaborative and social environment that CCG volunteers can manage their individual differences in working together to maintain the viability of a CCGs' overall contribution to environmental sustainability.

Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson and Unwin (2005) argued that social learning is distinct from other conventional learning theories in which the individual learns abstract knowledge without any consideration for the setting of the learner. Indeed, "what is learned is profoundly connected to the conditions in which it is learned" (Brown & Duguid, 1991, p. 48). As they further developed the concept of situated learning as a social practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) stated that "in our view, learning is not merely situated in practice … as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world" (p. 35). CCG volunteers learn by engaging in practices associated with conservation programs such as measuring water quality, relocating turtle eggs, removing non-indigenous oysters and planting seedlings. Wenger (1998) argues that these forms of learning are distinctly different to learning about abstract constructs in a classroom, as they involve action and practice.

Conservation volunteers action their contribution to environmental management in precisely this way by engaging actively and collaboratively within their domain of interest. They manage their individual differences in working together to maintain the viability of a CCGs' overall contribution to environmental sustainability. This aspect of volunteer groups such as CCGs strengthens the claim in the research presented here that their function is essentially that of a community of practice. Section 2.2 will explore the foundations of communities of practice.

2.2.3 Communities of practice—an introduction

Wenger (1998) claims that living in the world collectively with others while pursuing enterprises of all kinds involves learning that results in practices. Participation "shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do" (Wenger, 1998, p. 4). Wenger (1998) also claims that "these practices are the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise" (p. 45). These concepts resonate with the concept of volunteer groups as learning organisations that are social and bound by a common pursuit. The community of practice concept is well-situated to better understand the organisation and practice of volunteer groups such as CCGs. Section 2.3 will explore further the nature of the community of practice.

Wenger (1998) argued that communities of practice are to be found everywhere and defines them in the following way:

> Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: A tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other in a community of practice (n.p.).

Wenger (1998) defined three central characteristics of a community of practice, namely the domain, the community and the practice. These, he outlined, were to be built in parallel alongside each other. The domain, he stated, refers to the shared domain of interest, such that a community of practice has a unique identity. For instance, the domain in the case of CCGs is coastal conservation. The community refers to the members of the community of practice, who interact and learn together, and build relationships; thus, volunteers in a CCG become the community. The practice refers to the shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories and tools as shared practice and so the approaches to conservation and activities of the CCG become their community practice. Drawing the meaning from Wenger's (1998) descriptions in his seminal work poses some difficulties. Several meanings of his concepts (for instance, mutual engagement), and the way in which the actual functions of the community of practice link to the brief of domain, community and practice are often vague and ill-defined (Bozarth, 2008; Henderson, 2015; Storberg-Walker, 2008). These authors maintained that this has led to many uses in practice of the framework itself. Indeed, the later work of Wenger (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), presents new applications of the community of practice theory in terms of management, and in which the underpinning philosophy of the framework is not interpreted with due regard to its integrity. This shift to a knowledge management focus has been seen by Cox (2005) and by Pyrko et al. (2017) to forefront knowledge producing processes rather than the more complex social model of learning. It was recommended that a return to a focus on communities working together would be a more suitable perspective through which to understand communities of practice (Pyrko et al., 2017). These authors maintained that the theoretical approaches taken to research about online communities of practice have been seen to be limiting in their appeal to theory or limited by an insular focus on elements of the theory rather than more broadly encompassing the complex nature of communities of practice.

Despite the limitations posed by a managerial approach to establishing communities of practice (Wenger et al., 2002), the principles for cultivating communities of practice are useful in understanding their ongoing health (Couros, 2003). These principles include the following:

- Evolution—being able to tap into the dynamic nature of communities of practice and knowledge;
- dialogue between inside and outside perspectives—supporting new knowledge, skills and practice;
- different levels of participation—all members, regardless of participation level are valued;
- interaction in both public and private community spaces—strengthening private and community connections for instance recruitment;
- value—communities must provide value in return for effort;
- familiarity and excitement—communities need familiar ways of engaging, but should allow spontaneity and challenge to refresh them; and
- rhythm for the community—patterns and tempo of engagement and interactions.

These principles can draw the attention of communities of practice to the way in which they balance stability with change, in terms of the way and places in which they interact, their negotiation of old versus new knowledge, and the way they balance familiar practices with the challenge of new practices. Of interest in the CCG context is the concept of boundary spaces between the private and community action of the group, in which groups overlap with the broader community as well as other CCGs and organisations working in the same area (Martin, 2009).

In seeking to balance the operations of CCGs, shifting too far towards any aspect of their operation can threaten their well-being. Cox (2004) built on suggestions by Eraut (2002) in proposing aspects of enterprise that would militate against its operation as a community of practice. These conditions include challenges of frequent reorganisation, temporary or part-time participants, tight management and task 'ownership', individualised work or tasks,

competitive environments that inhibit collaboration, time pressured environments, spatially fragmented work, and heavily mediated activities. They are important considerations when examining CCG communities of practice, in underpinning understanding of operational features that could be viewed as a potential threat.

In the case of volunteer groups, such as CCGs, the power is in understanding the internal dynamics of the community of practice with the purpose of positioning the functions, engagement, satisfaction and benefits into the context of the organisation itself. Section 2.2.1 presents a critique of key research on community of practice in volunteering groups.

2.2.4 Critique of communities of practice in the research

The previous section identified Wenger's (1998) definitions of the interrelationships among the three characteristics of a community of practice, namely domain, community and practice. These three characteristics will be shown in this section to dominate the way communities of practice are framed in the literature. It is this limitation on scrutiny of the aspects of practice that may have limited insight in the research into the operations of a community of practice. This section will identify issues associated with a lack of explicit detail leading to the conceptual clarity of Wenger's (1998) model, particularly in terms of how the characteristics, dimensions and aspects are often integrated as practice, but conceptually separated as key terminology. It will identify the lack of conceptual clarity which potentially limits the practical usefulness of the community of practice as a well-defined and linked framework with recognisable dimensions in practice.

Smith (2000) recognised a lack of conceptual clarity. To address this lack of clarity, a more comprehensive approach to typifying a community of practice was presented by Smith, Smith and Puyvelde (2016) who drew on the seminal work of Smith (2000) to identify characteristics of a volunteer organisation. Smith's (2000) characteristics are listed below:

- **Founder choices**—Mostly focus on member benefits in their goals; have an informal group style of operation and structure; are high in operational autonomy; are moderate in their local territorial community of practice, activity and membership base; have diffuse goals; use conventional means to achieve conventional goals; have some requirements for entry.
- **Ideology and incentives**—Strong sociability incentives for members; satisfaction from pursuing valued collective goals; satisfaction from helping others; incentive to learn new information; incentive for personal growth; weak economic and work organisation incentives.
- **Structure**—Small local base or territory; autonomy in their structure; operate mainly with volunteer work; are informally organised; practise significant internal democracy; are likely to be branches of some larger organisation; have substantial socio-demographic homogeneity of members; tend to be economically and personnel poor.
- **Processes and operations**—Timing of events and meetings outside regular working hours, intermittent activity, low professionalism of leaders and members, usually low external funding, broad or intermittent political activity, low external power in their communities, low to moderate prestige locally as groups or organisations, have distinctive group action norms, recruitment is mainly informal, socialisation of new members is largely informal, members leave mainly by voluntary termination, do low or moderate horizontal collaboration with external groups or organisations, low personal longevity in group.
- **Leadership and group environment**—Require leadership as essential to their existence, leaders likely to be elected; leaders voluntary and practice low professionalism preference; leaders emphasise personal relationships and kindness;

leaders do not supervise followers or sub-leaders closely; loose priority settings for the group; acquire funds and new members in routine manner, rather than strategic; obtain leaders only from amongst existing membership; low levels of selectivity can be associated with quality leader problems.

- **Life cycle changes**—As they age, communities of practice can increase in size and complexity; often resist increasing complexity; greater number and proportion of leaders; acquire greater assets; achieve greater good will and public recognition; more collaboration and more relationships with other groups/organisation; more external fund-raising, more likely to change group goals through goal succession.
- **Impact and effectiveness**—Provide members with a high level of felt social support, provide members with high levels of felt information gained, provide members with high levels of felt socio-political activation, provide only moderate external political influence, provide members with economically valuable contacts (social capital), provide members with greater happiness/satisfaction, provide members with better health, support the economic system of their society.

The characteristics of Smith's (2000) community of practice framework are detailed and relevant; however, there is a lack of explicit alignment with Wenger's (1998) seminal concept of the community of practice. While Smith's (2000) dimension of impact and effectiveness consider social engagement, the mutuality of a community of practice in terms of enterprise, repertoire and engagement are not always as strong as Wenger's original framing of the concept. Indeed, when scrutinised, Smith's (2000) framework appears to be more managerial in focus.

The literature was reviewed to identify how the characteristics of communities of practice have been interpreted in the volunteering research. A significant body of research was found, focused on the education context in communities of practice, particularly online communities of practice (Chigona, 2013; Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010; Hung, Lee,

& Vishnumahanti, 2014; Reasoner, 2017). However, there is little evidence of a significant body of research on communities of practice in coastal volunteer groups. Furthermore, most publications address elements of practice such as learning, making broad connections back to the community of practice without clear linkage to the framework itself. For instance, Parker et al. (2009) make claims that service-learning mirrors "some fundamentals" (p. 593) of a community of practice through unintentional rather than deliberate behaviours and without a theoretical appeal to the community of practice framework. Nursey-Bray et al. (2016) claimed that social learning was facilitated via communities of practice and evidenced this by outlining the engagement and interplay among various bodies associated with conservation management. They aligned their data with several traits of communities of practice but did not explicate the other aspects of communities of practice that include community and practice. Indeed, the summary table of community of practice was presented as a list of programs and participating organisations, and Nursey-Bray et al. (2016) appealed to Wenger's later positioning (Wenger et al., 2002) on organisational communities of practice by drawing on engagement, imagination and alignment to characterise their list of environmental groups as communities of practice. This positioning, based on an organisational design of communities of practice was also used by Liberatore, Bowkett, MacLeod, Spurr and Longnecker (2018), but was assessed as characterising a community of practice rather than its original intent as design considerations for communities of practice (Wenger et al., 2002). Given the business organisational focus of the narrative of this design by Wenger et al. (2002), the theorising of the community of practice in their context is debatable. Like many in the literature, Pyrko et al. (2017) focused on one element only of the community of practice framework, this time on learning and learning interactions. Thus, their study lost the contextual richness associated with other aspects of the community of practice. Overall, the literature on volunteering and communities of practice appears to be lacking in definitional clarity.

The lack of clear definition is particularly important when organisations seek to enhance or improve their practice as a community of practice, and for a task such as this a clear and unambiguous framework is required. Wenger's (1998) work is highly descriptive and evocative but lacks the framing organisation. Nonetheless, his later work, such as Wenger et al. (2002) lacked the characterising focus of his earlier work, focusing instead on organisation and the framing of community of practice design. Two researchers with promising approaches, namely Storberg-Walker (2008) and Bozarth (2008), returned to the foundations of the community of practice model and framework, drawing from it the aspects of the framework that characterise them and their practice. This approach has great potential in supporting an understanding of the messiness of communities of practice, the inter-personal dimensions of their social structures, the dynamics that inform the focus on the domain, and the practice of the community of practice in question.

As the aim of this research is to explain and understand the nature of coastal volunteer groups, as conservation organisations, and to examine how the groups and experiences of participants align with the principles of a community of practice, Wenger's (1998) original concept of a community of practice was more appealing. Section 2.3 takes this fundamentalist approach in returning to the basics of Wenger's (1998) original framework to draw insight into its nuances and potential.

2.3 Aspects of communities of practice

Wenger (1998) considered that his theory of social learning includes four interrelated aspects of practice, namely, meaning, community, identity and learning. Each aspect has several analytical components that combine to explain or produce a way of understanding communities of practice (Storberg-Walker, 2008). An explanation of the four community of practice aspects follows, the discussion of which includes the organisation of these aspects and underlying concepts by both Bozarth (2008) and Storberg-Walker (2008).

2.3.1 Meaning aspect

Wenger's (1998) describes practice as a process that negotiates meaning as to how we experience and engage with the world (p. 51). This negotiation of meaning is seen to take place where the processes of participation and reification converge during the act of practice in a duality of meaning.

2.3.1.1 Participation

Wenger (1998) defined participation as "the social experience of living in the world in terms of membership in social communities and active involvement in social enterprises" (p.56). Wenger also cited participation as the range of social interactions among participants engaged in a common social enterprise, potentially involving conflict, harmony, politics, intimacy, competition and cooperation.

2.3.1.2 Reification

Reification (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) is defined as a process of reconceptualising the immaterial or abstract, bringing it into being. Wenger (1998) used the term reification to refer the "process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into thingness" (p. 58). These objects could include abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms and concepts that reify an aspect of that practice. Wenger (1998) claimed that reification is central to all practices, such as making, designing, describing and interpreting (p. 59) essentially moving from ideation to embodiment of practice.

2.3.1.3 Duality of meaning

Participation and reification are seamlessly interwoven into practice. Wenger (1998) stated that "this duality is a fundamental aspect of the constitution of communities of practice, of their evolution of over time, of the relations amongst practices, of the identities of participants and of the broader organisations in which communities of practice exist" (p. 65). Wenger (1998) asserted that these two practices form a duality that is essential to the meaning of our experience and to the practice itself. As the two merge into action, from

ideation, to reification, to concerted action and hence participation, the meaning of practice draws from historical roots to become dynamic. It is highly contextual, leading to a unique, community-based approach to practice. The actor and the acted-on become interchangeable as participation shape our individual experience, our communities, our membership of those communities and our shared and individual identities (Wenger, 1998, p. 57).

2.3.2 Community aspect

In associating practice and community Wenger (1998) described three analytical components of the relation by which practice is the source of coherence of a community. These components are mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. Figure 2-2 illustrates the interconnectedness of these analytical components of the community aspect. Identified as being at the heart of the community and aspects of the community of practice, it has even been maintained that "these three processes form the basis for determining the extent to which and the form in which a community of practice is present" (Iverson & McPhee, 2008, p. 179).

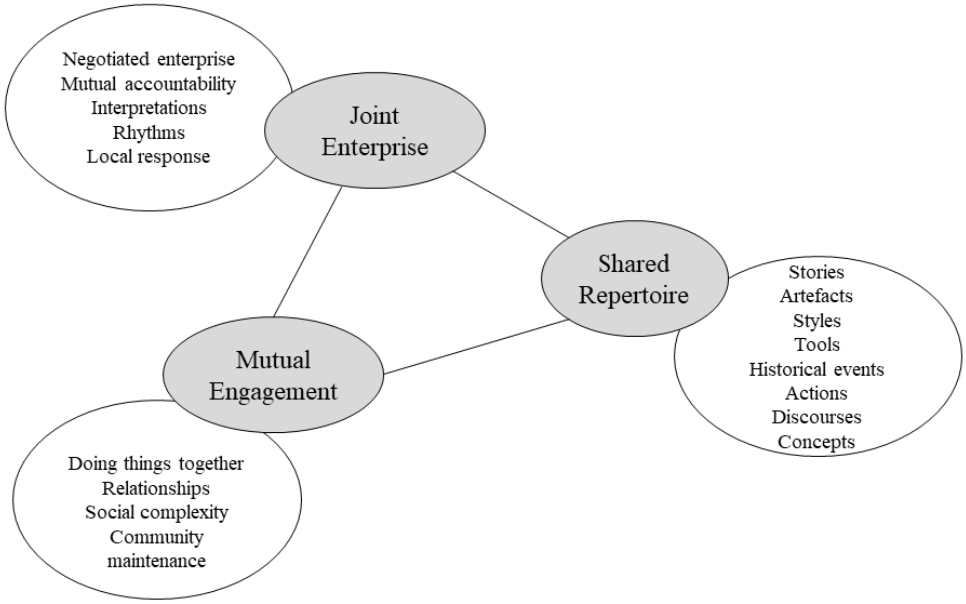

Figure 2-2. Analytical components of the community aspect. Adapted from Wenger, 1998, p.73.

2.3.2.1 Mutual engagement

Iverson and McPhee (2008) concur with Wenger (1998) in arguing that a community of practice cannot function by its definition without mutual engagement through communication and interaction. This mutual engagement is seen by these authors to connect each community of practice member to "multiple knowledge sources, permits joint enterprise and shared repertoire and allows the concrete nature of the work context, to be learned and negotiated" (Iverson & McPhee, 2008, p. 179). The mutual engagement of participants is therefore the source of coherence for the community. Mutual engagement will be seen later to also be an element of community of practice membership itself as the mutuality of engagement. Contributing to the definition of mutual engagement are three concepts, namely enabling engagement, diversity and partiality, and mutual relationships.

Wenger (1998) argued that enabling engagement essentially underpins mutual engagement. Its form can be subtle as a phone call, sharing a meal or being free to talk with one another. He contended that whatever it is to make mutual engagement possible requires

constant attention, meaning ongoing enablement. Furthermore, Wenger (1998) outlined the need for heterogeneity in a community of practice community through which to enable mutual engagement. Individual differences, associated with unique aspirations, problems, place and identity within the community of practice were identified by Wenger as a resource for contributions and knowledge in the context of a rich shared practice. Wenger (1998) proposes that "mutual engagement creates relationships among people which can become deep, very tight nodes of inter-personal relationships" (p. 76). Wenger claims that "these situations involving sustained interpersonal engagement can generate their fair share of "happiness, harmonies, tensions and conflicts" (p. 77). Thus, the richness of communities of practice includes their blending of an assortment of human qualities, perspectives, emotions and values that characterise a range of mutual relationships.

2.3.2.2 Joint enterprise

Joint enterprise is a process collectively pursued by participants. This collective enterprise means that the participants take on mutual accountability and ownership of the practice. Wenger (1998) outlined these characteristics as negotiated enterprise, indigenous enterprise and a regime of mutual accountability.

Wenger (1998) recognised that a diverse collective of people who work together have varying responses to "each other and from day to day" (p. 79). As such, Wenger (1998) considered that joint enterprise involves participants being willing to compromise, being submissive or being assertive in "making their place habitable" (p. 78). Furthermore, Wenger (1998) asserted that they "must find a way to do this together" (p. 79). He outlined the way the day to day realities of a community of practice are produced by participants within the resources and constraints of situations, regardless of conditions beyond the control of its members. In other words, the practice of a community is always mediated by the community's production of its practice; in a sense it is home grown by the collective of the community.

Wenger (1998) compared joint enterprise, as a part of practice, to rhythm being a part of music in that it is not random, it is a resource of coordination and sense-making.

2.3.2.3 Shared repertoire

Communities produce and adopt a shared repertoire as they "pursue an enterprise" (Wenger, 1998, p. 82). Wenger described the repertoire of a community of practice as one that includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, and concepts. He argued that the resources of shared repertoire can be re-engaged in new situations to foster mutual engagement and build new meanings.

2.3.3 Learning aspect

Wenger (1998) outlined how, in a community of practice, the negotiation of meaning evolves over time such that "communities of practice can be thought of as shared histories of learning" (p. 86). Hence, in a community of practice, "the past, present and future live together" as successive generations interact (Wenger, 1998, p. 90). Learning is sense-making. Members make sense by negotiating what matters and what does not; what is important and what is not; what to do and what not to do; what to pay attention to and what to ignore; what to talk about and what to leave unsaid; what to justify and what to take for granted; what to display and what to withhold. Members negotiate and understand when actions and artefacts are good enough and when they need improvement or refinement (Wenger, 1998).

Learning interacts with, and is a process, that contributes to the community aspect of communities of practice. It involves evolving forms of engagement (mutual engagement), understanding and tuning their enterprise (joint enterprise) and developing their repertoire, styles and discourses (shared repertoire). Wenger (1998) considers that "learning is a fundamental to making practice what it is" (p. 96).

2.3.4 Identity aspect

Wenger (1998) asserts that our identity is constructed by the negotiation of the meanings of our experiences as members of social communities. According to Wenger (1998) there is a profound relationship between identity and learning in practice (p. 149). Wenger (1998) contends that learning transforms "who we are and what we do … it is not just an accumulation of skills and information but a process of becoming or avoiding becoming a certain person" (p. 215). Wenger's perspective of identity is that it "inherits the texture of practice" (p. 162). Wenger (1998) considered that identity can be categorised as negotiated experience; community membership; learning trajectory; nexus of membership; and relation between the local ways of belonging with the global.

At the root of the critique presented in Section 2.2.4 was a robust discussion regarding the faithful use of the theory and its language, the fragmentation of the language used (Henderson, 2015), leading to the dissolution of a focus on the complexity of organisational operations. In contrast to its potential in Wenger's (1998) seminal publication as a framework for analysing the internal dynamics of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), the framing concepts have been seen to be used predominantly to understand how communities of practice are controlled (Bozarth, 2008). The more recent publications of Wenger et al., (2002) have emphasised the domain, community and practice that characterises communities of practice, increasingly as a management tool in an organisation context but have paid less attention to the aspects of practice which lend insight into the socio-cultural operations of the group. Thus, while several studies purport to be conducted within the community of practice framework, there is little information about the entire model itself to support understanding of the internal dynamics of a community of practice (Bozarth, 2008). Where some studies have drawn on social cognition, they have referenced the ideas of Lave and Wenger (1991) which predate the more formal ideation of the community of practice by Wenger (1998).

As a consequence of the multiple uses of community of practice in the literature, there is a lack of clarity and conceptual framing that is capable of supporting robust research into the operations of communities of practice. Wenger's perception of the technical language of the community of practice appears to have become less clearly defined. While he defended the value of clearly defined and recognisable technical language in theory, he also maintained that greater flexibility allows for easier cross-over between social theories (Wenger, 1998). This flexible thinking may lead to insufficient definition to support its use on context. Indeed, the community of practice concept has been redefined in increasingly vague terms to the point where common interest substitutes for common enterprise, and leadership of a community of practice resembles managerial practice (Cox, 2005). The review of four publications by Cox (2005) highlights the discontinuities in the understanding of communities of practice not only across the literature, but across Wenger's publications themselves. Indeed, Cox (2005) maintains that "these divergences outweigh the common ground found in the stress on situated negotiation of meaning and the importance of identity in learning" (p. 536).

This flexible thinking in terms of communities of practice has led to insufficient definition to support its use in context. Storberg-Walker (2008) identified the applied use of the community of practice to research contexts but critiqued the lack of focus on theory building to support testing and adapting of the model in practice. As a "midrange theory" Wenger's 1998 proposal was seen to be not only inconsistent, but also too abstract and insufficiently operationalised to support empirical use and testing (Storberg-Walker, 2008, p. 556).

In the context of debate about the nature of communities of practice and given the complexity of the operation of a CCG, indeed any volunteer organisation, it is critical that they are better understood holistically, the internal dynamics and interplay of priorities that

characterise practice within the organisation. Therefore, a conceptual model that supports critical research leading to this holistic understanding of the CCG is important.

2.3.5 Towards a conceptual framework for CCGs

This section presents a framework that takes a holistic perspective on the socio-cultural operations of a community of practice. It discusses perspectives on the concept of community. It outlines the generic, refined but highly functional community of practice framework of Bozarth (2008), based on the work of Storberg-Walker (2008), both of whom based their work on the seminal work of Wenger (1998). The fragmentation of the language used, the dissolution of a focus on the complexity of the socio-cultural context, and the inconsistencies in the community of practice framework have been identified in the previous section as requiring this resolution.

To cut through the multiple meanings of the community of practice concept, Storberg-Walker (2008) returned to the seminal work of Wenger (1998) and tabled the four aspects of practice with their analytical components of practice through which a community of practice could be explained or understood. Storberg-Walker (2008) stated that "to Wenger, these components were the underlying building blocks of communities of practice that combined to explain the complicated social processes of learning, meaning and identity formation through practice." (p. 562). This strategy was an approach through which Storberg-Walker (2008) was able to re-focus the community of practice framework on the theory building that can support testing and adapting of the model in practice. While this framework was an improvement, Storberg-Walker (2008) concluded, through a theory-building research analysis, that the analytical elements did not withstand a critique in terms of level of analysis, or definitional clarity.

Bozarth (2008) worked to address these concerns in her research by applying a modification of this framework to a new research context in which she investigated the

internal functioning of a community of practice. Bozarth's (2008) modification of the framework involved the development of 'markers' which were used to further refine the four interrelated aspects and their respective analytical components of Wenger's (1998) concept of a community of practice. The markers were developed as many of Wenger's descriptions of the analytical terms used "overlapping terms" and some phrases lacked "specificity". (Bozarth, 2008, p. 62). Storberg-Walker (2008) considers that, "from a qualitative research perspective each analytical component must be unique…it is necessary to define each component so there is no overlap in definitions…unique elements require explicit definitions and distinctions in order for researchers to code data…" (p. 567-568). Bozarth (2008) conducted a "deeper analysis and synthesis of Wenger's narrative to extract additional concepts ('markers') to further specify each analytical component" (p.64). The 'markers' were then used these as constructs for the data collection and for the coding of qualitative data in her research. Table 2-9 shows the link between Wenger's (1998) basic aspects, Storberg-Walkers (2008) summary of analytical elements, and Bozarth's (2008) markers that are visible in the practice of a community of practice.

Table 2-9. *Communities of Practice Framework.*

Aspect	Summary of Analytical Component	Marker
Meaning	Reification: forms, points of focus, documents, instruments, projection	Creating points of focus Final product differs from intended use (Bozarth, 2008, p. 64)
Community	Joint Enterprise: negotiated enterprise, mutual accountability, interpretations, rhythms, local response	Enterprise is negotiated Mutual accountability Enterprise is indigenous (Bozarth, 2008, p. 65)
Community	Mutual Engagement: engaged diversity, doing things together, relationships, social complexity, community maintenance	Enabling Engagement (being included in what matters; community maintenance) Diversity and partiality (developing relationships) (Bozarth, 2008, p.65)

Aspect	Summary of Analytical Component	Marker
Community	Shared Repertoire: stories, artefacts, styles, tools, actions, historical events, discourses, concepts	Repertoire functions to further negotiate the enterprise via history and ambiguity (Bozarth, 2008, p. 65)
Identity	Negotiated Experience: Identity emerges as "we encounter our effects on the world and develop our relations with others" (Wenger, 2008, p. 151). Identity exists "in the constant work of negotiating the self" (Wenger, 2008, p. 151) as we give meaning to participation and reification (above). Identity "is not an object, but a constant becoming" (Wenger,2008, p. 154).	Participation becomes reified Participants identify their own markers of transition (Bozarth, 2008, p. 65)
Identity	Membership "…our membership constitutes our identity, not just through reified markers of membership but more fundamentally through the forms of competence that it entails" (Wenger, 2008, p. 152).	Mutuality of engagement, accountability to an enterprise, negotiability of a repertoire (Bozarth, 2008, p.66)
Identity	Learning Trajectory "not a path that can be foreseen or charted but a continuous motion—one that has a momentum of its own in addition to a field of influences. It has a coherence through time that connects the past, the present, and the future" (Wenger, 2008, p. 154). There are five types of trajectories: peripheral trajectories, inbound trajectories, insider trajectories, outbound trajectories, and boundary trajectories.	Identity is fundamentally temporal/evolving Temporality of identity is not linear Identities are defined with respect to the interaction of multiple convergent and divergent trajectories (Bozarth, 2008, p. 66)
Identity	Nexus of Multimembership: "we all belong to many communities of practice…some as full members, some in more peripheral ways. Some may be central to our identities while others are more incidental. Whatever their nature, all these various forms of participation contribute in some way to the production of our identities" (Wenger, 2008, p. 158). Identity entails the experience of multi membership and the "work of reconciliation necessary to maintain one identity across boundaries" (Wenger, 2008, p. 158).	Identity requires multimembership Reconciliation is required to maintain one identity across boundaries (Bozarth, 2008, p.67)

Aspect	Summary of Analytical Component	Marker
Identity	Belonging Defined Globally but Experienced Locally: "In the same way that a practice is not just local but connected to broader constellations, an identity—even in its aspects that are formed in a specific community of practice—is not just local to that community" (Wenger, 2008, p. 162).	Local energy is directed at global issues and relationships (Bozarth, 2008, p.67)
Learning	Evolving Forms of Mutual Engagement: how to engage, what helps and what hinders; establishing who is who, who is good at what, who knows what, who is easy or hard to get along with (Wenger,2008, p. 95)	Members gain CoP-wide awareness of subtleties of relationships (Bozarth, 2008, p.67)
Learning	Understanding and Tuning their Enterprise: aligning their engagement with it, and learning to become and hold each other accountable to it; struggling to define the enterprise and reconciling conflicting interpretations of what the enterprise is about," (Wenger, 2008, p. 95)	Aligning engagement with the enterprise Learning to become and hold each other accountable to the enterprise "Defining the enterprise and reconciling conflicting interpretations of what the enterprise is about," (Wenger,2008, p. 95) (Bozarth, 2008, p.68)
Learning	Developing their Repertoire, Styles, and Discourses: "renegotiating the meaning of various elements; producing or adopting tools, artefacts, representations; recording and recalling events; inventing new terms and redefining or abandoning old ones; telling and retelling stories; creating and breaking routines," (Wenger,2008, p. 95)	Generational discontinuities: arrival of new members causes discontinuities Practice is not "handed down" but is an ongoing social and interactional process (Bozarth, 2008, p.68)

Note. Adapted from Bozarth, 2008; Storberg-Walker, 2008; Wenger, 1998.

While acknowledged to interact, with significant cross-over, these components were used to categorise and classify the characteristics of volunteer groups that were drawn from the literature in the previous section. The result is a framework that responds to Bozarth (2008), Storberg-Walker (2008) and Wenger (1998) and clarifies a focus on the socio-cultural operation of a community of practice. This is well situated to function as a framework that

will support an understanding of the operation of CCGs. This framework is elaborated upon in Section 2.4.

2.4 A communities of practice framework: Environmental conservation groups

Bozarth (2008) proposed that the revised framework shown in Table 2-9 smooths the way for clarifying ideas and for designing a research approach, data collection and analysis. Primarily however, she identified that this framework is potentially useful in helping make sense of how a community of practice works. The framework, with its focus on practice, social transactions and operation of a community of practice promises to support a better understanding of CCGs. It was adopted to inform the framework upon which the research presented here is based.

In developing a new framework for this research, the CCG Communities of Practice Framework (Table 2.10), I generated a concept model first. Initially I used the example of Bozarth (2008) to generate specific markers that could be used to characterise the personal, organisational and social dimensions of an organisation such as a CCG. The markers were intuitively derived from Wenger's (2008) narrative and were used as types of evidence that would be easy to recognise when coding and analysing the qualitative data. The markers identified the operational meanings in practice within a CCG by framing the dimensions as 'we' or 'our' statements. The narrative use of language is intentional, given that this framework is intended for lay people who work to improve their community of practice operations in coastal care. Figure 2.3 presents the concept model which frames CCGs as a community of practice.

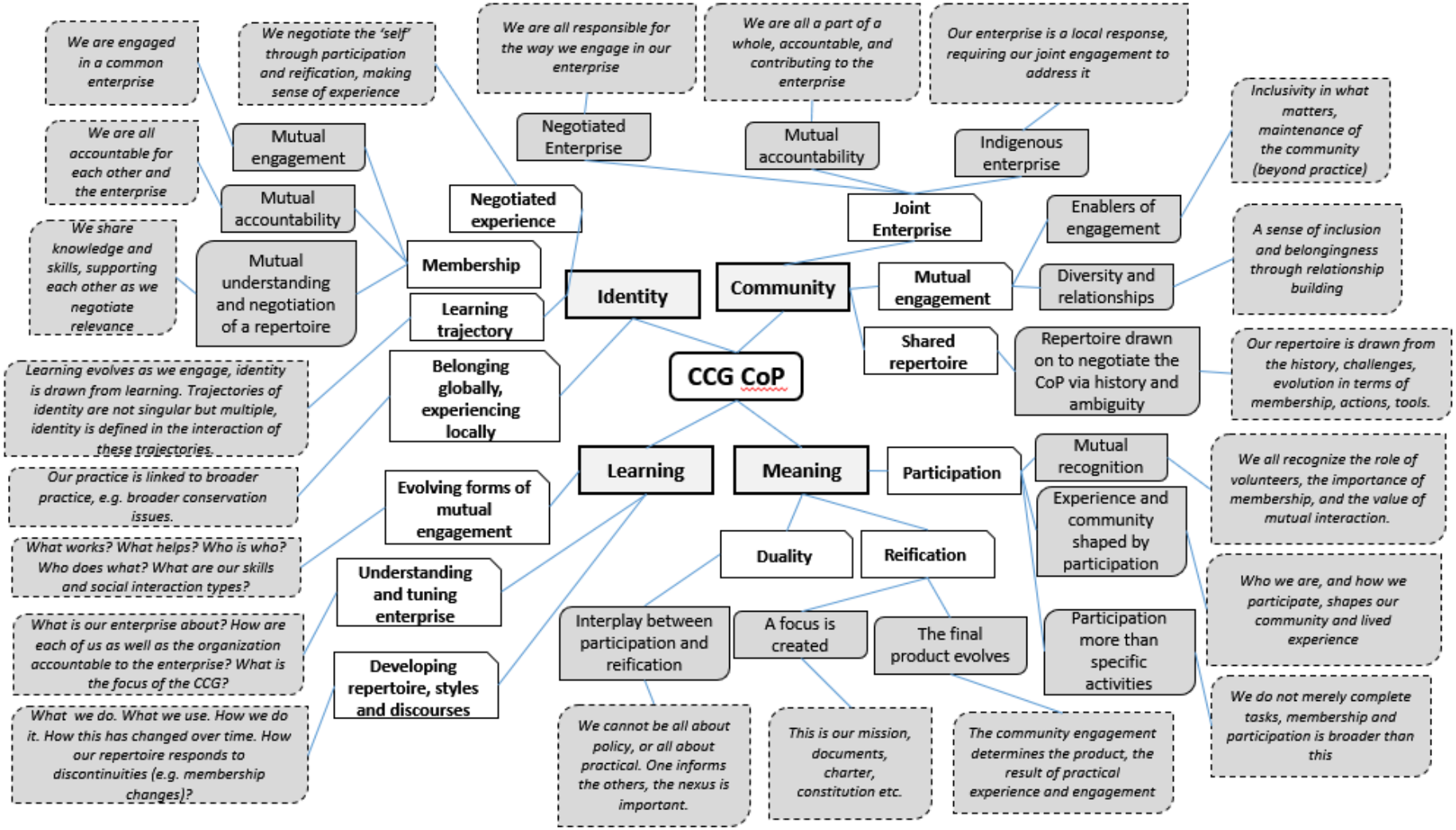

Figure 2-3. A concept model framing CCGs as a community of practice. Adapted from Bozarth, 2008; Storberg-Walker, 2008; Wenger,1998.

The CCG Community of Practice Framework presented in Table 2.10 is a simplified form of the concept model shown in Figure 2.3. The table includes the four aspects of a community of practice with their respective markers that were specifically developed for this research.

Table 2-10. *CCG Community of Practice Framework.*

Aspect		**Marker**
Meaning	M1	We all recognise the role of volunteers, the importance of membership, and the value of mutual recognition.
	M2	Who we are, and how we participate shapes our community and lived experience.
	M3	We do not merely complete tasks, membership and participation is broader than this.
	M4	We have a mission, documentation, a charter or constitution.
	M5	The engagement of our community determines how the final product looks, it is the result of practical experience and engagement.
	M6	We cannot be all about policy or all about the practical. One informs the other and the nexus is important to members, as well as the way we operate.
Community	C1	We are all responsible for the way we engage in our enterprise.
	C2	We are all part of a whole, accountable, and contributing to the enterprise.
	C3	Our enterprise is a local response, requiring our joint engagement to address it.
	C4	We are inclusive of all engagement, and we maintain the community (beyond just practice).
	C5	We build inclusivity and belongingness through relationship building.
	C6	Our repertoire is drawn from history, challenge, change, and evolution in terms of membership, actions, tools etc.
Identity	I1	We negotiate 'self' through participation and reification, making meaning of experience.
	I2	We engage in a common enterprise.
	I3	We share knowledge and skills, negotiating what is relevant.

Aspect		Marker
	I4	My identity and that of the group are drawn from learning as we engage. Trajectories of identity can be multiple.
	I5	Our practice is local but linked to global practice.
Learning	L1	We question: What works, what helps? Who is who, who does what? What are our skills, what are our social interaction types?
	L2	We question: what is our enterprise about? How are each of us, as well as the organisation accountable to the enterprise? What is the focus of our community of practice?
	L3	We ask: What do we do? What do we use? How do we do it? How do we describe what we do? Has this evolved over time, for instance through membership changes?

The CCG Community of Practice Framework presented in Table 2.10 provides an accessible approach to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of CCGs as they are aligned with the characteristics of a community of practice. It has the potential to align the visible characteristics of a community of practice in terms of the four aspects, such that it can be audited for possible improvements and growth in the CCG operations. Given the importance of attracting, retaining, and enabling participation of volunteers in CCGs, this approach has the promise of benefits in terms of sustainability for CCGs

This section has clarified the characteristics of volunteer groups and CCGs. It has reviewed the nature of communities of practice and constructed a framework that draws together the characteristics of CCGs within a community of practice, which is used to frame the research methodology, data collection and analysis of this research. The CCG Community of Practice Framework was not used to frame the collection of data. The data collection was designed to characterise and to better understand the experience and perceptions of volunteers and leaders of CCGs. This data was then re-analysed to assess the alignment of the characteristics of CCGs with those of a community of practice.

2.5 Summary

This chapter firstly presented a representation of several findings from a literature review of the general and conservation volunteering research literature. The review showed that in Australia nearly five million people participate in volunteering annually. Many volunteers are retired and typically participate on a weekly basis. The environment and conservation volunteer sector is a sector of future interest. Overall, the review established that conservation volunteering has been researched less than general volunteering. The review identified the importance of documenting volunteers' reasons for engaging and maintaining engagement with CCGs by understanding their personal characteristics, reasons for volunteering, satisfaction and the benefits attained from volunteering. These aspects have been studied considerably more in the volunteer literature than specifically in the context of environmental conservation volunteering. A conceptual framework, namely the CCG Functions Framework has been presented, upon which the first stage of the research design was based. Furthermore, it is important also to understand the operation of the voluntary organisations. To frame this operation, a CCG Communities of Practice Framework was developed with markers of practice suitable for identifying the aspects of practice. Phase 2 of the research design was based on this model.

The framing ideas and models presented here were designed to respond to the research question that asked: How can understanding the characteristics of coastal conservation volunteer groups contribute to their sustainability? Three sub-questions were asked in relation to this.

Research Question 1

How do CCGs operate and manage volunteers?

RQ 1.1: What is the organisational structure of a CCG?

RQ 1.2: What are the operational functions of a CCG?

RQ 1.3: What are the responsibilities and roles of CCG volunteers?

RQ 1.4: What operational issues does a CCG face?

Research Question 2

What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation?

RQ 2.1: Why do volunteers participate in conservation?

RQ 2.2: What are the beliefs of volunteers about the coastal marine environment?

RQ 2.3: What benefits do volunteers derive from conservation volunteering?

Research Question 3

To what extent can a CCG be examined and explained as a community of practice?

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approaches taken to design research methods suitable to address these research questions.

Chapter 3: Research Approach

Researchers bring to the research process their personal histories and views of themselves, others, ethics and politics (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This frames the way that researchers conceptualise the process, and they bring their philosophical assumptions to the inquiry (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Crotty, 1998; Stage & Manning, 2016). Creswell and Poth (2018) describe this philosophy as being a "view of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows reality (epistemology), the value-stance taken by the inquirer (axiology), and the procedures used in the study (methodology)" (p. 18). Researchers ask four key questions as they frame their inquiry (Creswell, 2009, p. 2), namely:

- What ontology and epistemology informs their theoretical perspective?
- What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
- What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?
- What methods do we propose?

The answers to these questions typically inform the choice of research approaches made by the researcher. This chapter explores the philosophical foundations of this research and examines my philosophy and the framing of this research. It explores the nature of ontology, epistemology and methodological paradigm, justifying the choices made with reference to the phenomenon under investigation, namely CCGs.

3.1 Ontology

It is critical that a researcher interrogate their philosophical assumptions when developing their research design (Creswell, 2009; Crotty 1998, Stage & Manning, 2016). These assumptions are drawn from life experiences involving aspects such as gender, ethnicity, knowledge, values, attitudes and beliefs about the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Saldana, 2013). It is this world-view that informs the researcher's ontology, a set of beliefs that guide action (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) identify the

differences in the sense-making of the philosophical foundations of research in the literature, discussing the variation of terminology that includes traditions and theoretical underpinnings, orientations, paradigms and perspectives, philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks, epistemology and theoretical perspectives. This perspective positions research philosophically as entailing "what one believes about the nature of reality (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (epistemology)" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 8).

Ontology is a theoretical construct that refers to the way one views the world. It is concerned with the nature of existence and the structure of reality (Crotty, 1998, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A researcher's views of the world will lead to different ways of explaining its existence (King & Horrocks, 2010) based on his approach to the nature of social reality (Blaikie, 1993; Cresswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Ontology is often described in terms of realism and relativism (Kim & Horrocks, 2010). Advocates of realism believe the world exists independently and that is made up of entities and structures that have classifiable interactions which are observable, measurable and stable (Bryman; 2012; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thus, a realist's theoretical perspective "entails an ontology of an ordered universe, made of atomistic, discrete and observable events" (Blaikie, 1993, p. 94). In contrast, relativism rejects the realist's notion of existence, by claiming that knowledge and truth is subjective and that it is based on personal experience (Sarantakos, 2016). Therefore, a relativist's view is far more unstructured and diverse than a realist's view.

The nature of the reality of coastal volunteer groups is complex and blends the observable organisational structures and processes with the unstructured and diverse lived experiences of individual volunteers within the group. There is no absolute truth to be found. Understanding is generated through the interpretation of multiple participant meanings, through their social construction of the phenomenon they are describing (Cresswell &

Cresswell, 2018; Crotty, 1998), and thus the lived experiences are context-bound (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The volunteers' individual report of their lived experiences will have been subjectively shaped by them having engaged with other volunteers who have had different cultural upbringings, understandings, life experiences, beliefs and perceptions. This research explores the experiences of volunteers from a relativist perspective.

3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is closely related to and is drawn from ontology. While ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses "how we come to know that reality" (Krauss, 2005, p. 759). At its most basic, epistemology is defined as "how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). A researcher's epistemology provides a philosophical grounding for deciding on the forms of knowledge that are possible, as well as how the adequacy and legitimacy of this knowledge is ensured (Maynard, 1994). It emerges from the previous discussion of ontology that epistemologies are by nature linked to different research approaches given the ontological differences in beliefs about the nature of reality. Where reality is fixed and knowable, positivist approaches are taken, while constructivist approaches are taken where there are multiple realities that need to be interpreted through the lens of experience.

From a positivist approach, the phenomenon is independent of researchers and able to be discovered through direct observation and measurement (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Theory is built and tested and is exempt from values systems. However, from a naturalist or constructivist view, knowledge is fluid, context and time dependent, and is studied through interaction with the subjects of the inquiry. In this way, knowledge is co-created among the knower and the known (Krauss, 2005). In the case of CCGs, the knowledge is co-constructed within and across groups, and is dependent on the social fabric, contextual variables, and operational focus of the group. It is embedded in individuals and groups, and in roles, and

varies with the context as volunteering is enacted. Hence a naturalistic, constructivist approach to understanding their characteristics through the lived experience of volunteers is most appropriate. The research presented here acknowledges the importance of immersion in the multiple realities and experiences of volunteers, thus reinforcing the importance of a constructivist approach.

3.3 Research paradigms

A paradigm is defined as the "basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). It represents the influence of the philosophy and assumptions of the researcher based on the practical decisions about design and conduct of the research (Crotty, 1998). Thus, the researcher's paradigm, as a world-view guides the investigation "not only in choices of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 453). In this way, paradigms shape not only what we see as observers, but also how we understand it (Babbie, 2007).

Following the two ontological worldviews, research has traditionally been divided into two opposing epistemological and paradigmatic camps, namely objectivism (positivism) and subjectivism (constructivism), with pragmatism (mixed methods research) positioned somewhere on a continuum between the two (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.3.1 Positivism

A positivist approach takes the position that "a meaningful reality exists, apart from the operation of any consciousness" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8) which is essentially realist (Bryman, 2012). Positivism emerged from the natural sciences and experimental research, as well as quantitative studies in the social sciences (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). It emphasises empirical data collection, and is cause and effect oriented (Creswell, 2007). Traditionally, positivist methods are concerned with surveys, experiments, and secondary data, and which involve quantitative data analysis rather than qualitative descriptions (Jackson, 2003;

Sarantakos, 2016). Positivism has been associated with empirical inquiry and the discovery of infallible universal laws, all directly observable and measurable (Clark, 1998). While positivists use direct observation and quantitative methods to explain "social life, to predict the course of events and to discover social realities" (Sarantakos, 2016, p. 42), post-positivism is an approach that can use more inferable approaches such as self-report in surveys or questionnaires (Clark, 1998). While positivist approaches aim to uncover the universal truth, post-positivism approaches have emerged which acknowledge the context of the phenomenon and aims to a greater approximation of the truth (Clark, 1998). In the research presented here, while some quantitative data was collected, analysed and reported, its primary aim was to provide a framework of patterns of engagement within which the qualitative data could be situated.

3.3.2 Constructivism

A constructivist's reality is fashioned subjectively through understanding and interpreting conversations and observations, relying on the researcher's personal history to reconstruct the meanings shaped by the social interactions with and of others (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Constructivism acknowledges the existence of multiple realities, all bound to a context and as such, not value-free (King & Horrocks, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher is located as an observer in the world, "attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 3). Constructivism recognises that individuals have their own varied backgrounds, meanings, assumptions and experiences, all of which contribute to a unique perspective and lived experience. The phenomenon is understood through these multiple lenses, through the interpretive work of the researcher. The researcher himself shapes the research through his own interpretive lens and insight into the phenomenon, a role which requires scrutiny as the research progresses. The operation of a CCG is reliant on the

volunteers who populate the group, their lived experience, range of perspectives, variety of reasons for volunteering, and the knowledge that they bring to the group. Constructivist approaches are well-positioned to support the negotiation of the range of lived experiences within the conservation group and is the approach most likely to support the questions addressed by this research. Within a constructivist paradigm, the inclusion of some descriptive quantitative data can provide insight into the patterns and context of the functions of the CCGs, and thus supporting and expanding on the qualitative data in ways that "effectively deepen the description" (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, p.3)

3.3.3 Pragmatism

This section discusses mixed methods/pragmatism as a paradigm, separating it from mixed methods as a methodology. Positioned somewhere between positivist and constructivist approaches, it is a more pragmatic approach which links directly into methodology as an approach that is focused on the practical needs and purposes of the researcher.

The positioning of mixed methods along this continuum has led to a degree of paradigmatic controversy, with this approach often labelled a pragmatic approach to research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). This pragmatic approach has been identified as being "focused on the selection of methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 32).

Christ (2013) critiques this labelling and cites Johnson (2012) in labelling mixed methods research as "dialectical pragmatism" (p. 110) such that this approach has its own paradigmatic characteristics in a trichotomy, rather than fitting somewhere between the two epistemological extremes. By rejecting pragmatism as "the mixed methods research paradigm" (p. 111), Christ rejects the assumption of "a unified, foundational set of philosophical and methodological premises that guides practice within the discipline" (p.

111). He presents a mixed methods approach in a matrix that includes pragmatism, critical realism (post-positivism), and transformative-action. Critical realism, or post-positivism, seeks to uncover different levels of objective truths, while transformative-action seeks to expose inequalities and power structures. Pragmatism as an epistemology presents an approach in which "etic and emic perceptions can co-exist in a single study. Each strand forms knowledge that can be compared and combined increasing the credibility of the study's findings" (p. 112). This mixed package is justified to the degree to which a pluralistic approach responds to research values, goals, needs and priorities (Johnson & Greene, 2011). Christ identifies the practical similarities between pragmatism and critical realism but claims that the differences emerge in the world-view of research, in that pragmatism focuses only on what works, while critical realism has a focus on worldviews on truth and reality.

In this research I take a constructivist world-view, and whilst quantitative methods are used, their purpose is not to do more than deepen the description of the qualitative data. In particular, the lack of any uniquely positivist approach leads me to maintain that this research emerges from a constructivist paradigm.

In research into coastal volunteer groups, two perspectives may be considered (Christ, 2013). An etic perspective identifies a deductive approach in understanding a phenomenon. However, to fully understand the lived experience of the volunteer, an emic co-construction of meaning is critical such at each person's different reality is considered. For this reason, as a paradigm drawn from my ontology and epistemology, this research is acknowledged to be predominantly qualitative. This research draws in interpretivism which is founded on an assumption that knowledge is socially constructed, through experience. It draws in the backgrounds, experiences and assumptions of individuals, in this case volunteers in CCGs, through which lived reality is constructed through social interaction (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 2014). `

This selection draws on my interests and perspectives on coastal volunteering as a researcher, which may be framed in two ways. Primarily, I am interested in the structure and function of CCGs from a leadership perspective, to better understand the ways in which their operations are framed and managed. Secondly, my interest also lies in the lived experience of the corps of volunteers in CCGs, their motivations, interests, experiences, also through an interpretivist point of view. My research approach seeks to understand the multiple dimensions of CCGs at the intersection of the roles of volunteers and leaders, where structure and management interact with perspectives of volunteers to determine the way that CCGs operate. The primary purpose of the data collection was not to assess the alignment of the characteristics of the CCG as a community of practice, but to characterise it in terms of CCG leadership and the volunteer experience. However, to better understand the operations and structure of the organisation itself, I sought an alignment with the CCG Community of Practice Framework as a second-level of analysis of the data. I maintain a position that, as a community of practice, each marker of the aspects of the community of practice should be recognisable within the other data sets.

3.4 Research methodology

Leavy (2017) identifies three elements of research, the philosophical which includes ontology, epistemology and paradigm which have been discussed in Sections 3.1 to 3.3 the praxis which includes the methodology, methods and practices; and the ethical, which includes values, ethics and reflexivity. This section will introduce the praxis, that is the practical decisions about methodology and methods which draw on my philosophy as a researcher, and my insight into the context of the subject of the research.

The nature of environmental volunteer groups is complex. The stated aim of this research is to explain and understand the nature of coastal volunteer groups, as conservation

organisations, and to examine how the groups and experiences of participants align with the principles of a community of practice.

This aim links to the qualitative nature of the research. Whilst the research paradigm is qualitative, a survey was used to collect data from a large sample of volunteers with the purpose of developing an organisational framing of the CCG, which was related to Research Questions 1 and 2.

Qualitative research methodology is drawn from a philosophy that is constructivist and relativist (Bryman, 2012; Crotty, 1998, King & Horrocks, 2010). This methodology is characterised by its focus on studying things in their natural settings, and sense-making based on the meanings that people bring to the phenomena under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A second key characteristic of qualitative methodology is its capacity to move beyond the 'what', 'how many', 'where' and 'when' questions of quantitative research to address the 'why' and 'how' questions that describe processes and behaviours (Hennink et al., 2010). The narrative qualities of qualitative research are intrinsically more interesting to a broad audience than numbers are (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). This narrative quality is also more relevant to the focus of this thesis, which is about understanding experiences in a CCG.

Contextual elements, often missed in quantitative research, are a focus of qualitative methodology resulting in rich data which lends deeper understanding of the phenomenon that has been experienced (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln et al., 2011). Qualitative data methods typically involve in-depth interviews of individuals, focus groups, observations, and a review of documents or artefacts. For the research presented here, a decision was made to use interviews of both CCG leaders and volunteers to draw on their lived experience of their participation in the group to address Research Questions 1 and 2. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the design, development and administration of this instrument.

3.4.1 Qualitative research methodology

It emerges from the previous section that while qualitative methodologies were central to this research approach, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Each has its own purpose, and it is in the integration of the qualitative and quantitative data sets that the context, conceptual understanding, and lived experience of participants can be better understood.

Drawing together the threads of my ontology, epistemology, paradigmatic world-view, and discussion of methodologies, a qualitative research approach is justifiable. I have progressively developed an argument for the use of constructivist approaches as a way of developing insight into the phenomenon of CCGs.

3.5 Research design

Sections 3.1 and 3.2 outlined my world view, ontology and epistemology. It established a case for the use of qualitative research methodology for the research of CCGs. The next step in the research process is the selection of methods for data collection.

It has been emphasised from the start that the selection of instruments is drawn from my world view and philosophy with instruments such as the survey and interviews being able to satisfy the qualitative requirements of the task (Sarantakos, 2016). The framework that is provided by good research design is important, given that it frames not only the collection but also the analysis of the data (Bryman, 2012). It is the interface between my philosophy, world-view, and methodological choices and the approach in practice and should therefore provide guidelines or procedures that enables this translation into practice (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

My world-view has been shaped by the nature of the conservation volunteer groups under investigation. The sub-research questions are drawn from the aims and purpose of the research that seeks to better understand CCGs as particular types of conservation volunteer

groups with unique characteristics. Research Question 1 aims to identify the broader concepts of CCG organisation, structure and management. Research Question 2 aims to investigate the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers about their lived experience as participants in the group. Research Question 3 aims to conduct a second-level analysis of the data collected in response to Research Questions 1 and 2, and to examine the alignment of the characteristics of a CCG and experience of participants with the aspects of a community of practice using the framework developed in Section 2.4 and shown in Table 2-9.

This section has detailed the research design adopted for this research, including a justification of the selection of instruments, and the analysis of collected data.

3.6 Data collection methods

As stated earlier, the researcher makes choices in research methods based on their world-view, the nature of the phenomenon under inquiry, and the research questions that are drawn from the mix of the two. The qualitative methodology used in this research included a primary focus on qualitative data with a lesser focus on quantitative data. Table 3-1 aligns the instruments used with their core focus and the research questions.

Table 3-1. *Data collection instruments and research questions.*

Instrument	Data Focus	Research Question
Survey —quantitative element	Motivations to participate in CCG Benefits of volunteering in CCG Beliefs about coastal marine environment	Primary: RQ2: (RQ2.1, 2.2 & 2.3)
Survey (open-ended questions) —qualitative element	Motivations to participate in CCG Benefits of volunteering in CCG Beliefs about coastal marine environment Possible open-ended reference to leadership and management of CCG.	Primary: RQ2: (RQ2.1, 2.2 & 2.3) Unanticipated but likely: RQ1: (RQ1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4)

Instrument	Data Focus	Research Question
Individual Interview —volunteers	Motivations to participate in CCG Benefits of volunteering in CCG Beliefs about coastal marine environment	Primary: RQ2 (RQ2.1, 2.2 & 2.3)
Individual Interview —leadership	Organisational structure of CCG Operational functions of CCG Roles and responsibilities of volunteers Operational issues	RQ1: (RQ1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4) Unanticipated but likely: RQ2: (RQ2.1 & 2.2)
Secondary analysis of data using the CCG Community of Practice Framework	Alignment of CCG with characteristics of community of practice	RQ3

The quantitative survey data has been identified as a sound choice for documenting the patterns of motivations, activities and beliefs about CCGs, and is a suitable approach to answer elements of Research Question 2. The quantitative data was supplemented and augmented with qualitative survey data as open-ended items, which sought to broaden and clarify the concepts drawn from the quantitative data. Qualitative data was collected in semi-structured interviews with both leaders and volunteer corps members to construct a broader and deeper understanding of the experience of volunteers as they work within these structures. This supported a better understanding of the personal and socio-cultural experience of volunteering. In summary, two types of instruments were used. The first instrument was a survey questionnaire with closed Likert-type, multiple selection, binary choice, and ranking items, and open-ended items. The second instrument was two semi-structured interview schedules, which were used respectively with a selection of leaders, and volunteers across the groups.

3.6.1 Survey questionnaire

Survey instruments provide a quantified description of trends, attitudes and opinions of a population. While they can be used for purposes such as finding relationships among variables or longitudinal changes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the purposes of the survey in this research was for descriptive questions to identify patterns in those trends, attitudes and opinions of volunteers. Specifically, the survey was designed to answer Research Question 2: What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation? However, given that the survey may have also been responded to by the leadership of the group, it is possible that the survey addresses elements of Research Question 1.

The purpose of the survey instrument was to gather data from volunteers regarding their:

- reasons for volunteering;
- level of satisfaction;
- beliefs concerning the coastal marine environment;
- CCG activities including roles;
- benefits derived from volunteering; and
- demography.

The functions of volunteering were presented as a framework in Table 2-8. The functions of motivation and engagement, and those of satisfaction and benefits gained by volunteers were synthesised into a single framework and justified in Chapter 2 as involving common concepts.

Several existing instruments were reviewed for suitability and relevance to the context of the research presented here. A brief overview of these instruments follows.

Social psychologists have used a functional approach to better understand volunteer motivation. Clary et al. (1996) developed a survey, the VFI to assess the Career, Enhancement, Protective, Social, Understanding and Values functions that motivate

volunteers to engage (p. 487). While the research presented here has an interest in motivation, the structure and focus of Clary et al.'s (1996) survey was seen to be largely ego-centric and focused on the individual volunteer. Hence, it was deemed to be insufficient for the purposes of this research. Furthermore, the survey was focused broadly on volunteerism, and does not accommodate the critical differences of a CCG. O'Brien et al.'s (2010) instrument and research focussed on conservation activities; however, this was directed towards the benefits experienced by individuals as they worked in nature conservation that were explicitly linked to health of the natural environment. Again, while potentially useful, the ego-centric nature of the survey, and the directed focus left it insufficient for the purposes of this research. Guiney & Oberhauser (2009) also investigated volunteers in the natural environment. Their questionnaire focused on motivations and benefits; however, the focus was broad and non-specific, and was ego-centric in terms of little focus on any volunteering organisation. O'Neill (2001) investigated the charitable and volunteering behaviour of individuals in California. The research was linked to charitable institutions and individual contributions to their causes, which was seen to have little alignment with the CCG research context presented here. In much the same way, the research of Wong, Chui and Kwok (2010) used the Volunteer Satisfaction Index to measure volunteer satisfaction in China. Satisfaction is one element of the research presented here, which is more holistic and aimed at a cultural understanding of not, only volunteer participation, but the organisation as context.

Overall, existing instruments such as those reviewed here are useful in examining certain elements of volunteering with a focus on benefits and motivations of volunteers. However, none have the holistic focus that is required by this research in order to respond to the research questions. This holistic focus is critical to a comprehensive view of the CCG, which is a focus of this research, and which is addressed by Research Question 3. This question will be responded to by a secondary analysis of the data, aligning the concepts

identified in the data with the aspects of a community of practice. For all of these reasons, it was deemed to be essential that a new instrument was developed that was explicitly aligned with the research purpose

The development and details of this survey instrument are addressed in Chapter 4.

3.6.2 Interviews

The literature presented in Chapter 2 identified the heterogeneity of volunteer groups in terms of age, education, identity, motivations, experience, and socio-cultural perspectives. This can only lead to diversity of experience in volunteering within CCGs, which is unable to be fully understood using quantitative means.

The benefit of interviews is their capacity to gain insights from the ordinary people who experience the phenomenon, and who are in touch with the object that is being studied (Franklin, 2013; Perakyla & Ruusuvuori, 2011). In this way detailed insights are gathered from participants about their experience and the phenomenon as well as unexpected issues that might arise from other data or in the interview itself (Bryman, 2012; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). The interviews support insight into the thinking of individuals of a group, and differences between members in different roles within the group (Adams, 2015). Interviews lead to data that is essentially heterogeneous in nature, drawn from unique perspectives and participant experiences, and to augment data discovered in the quantitative data collection such as surveys (Kelle, 2006). Interviews are time-consuming, and resource-intensive; thus, interviews are generally conducted where small numbers of individuals can provide the required data (Adams, 2015).

The benefit of interviews to the research presented here was the enablement of authentic knowledge regarding the subjective, unique realities of the leaders and the experiences of the volunteers. Furthermore, the interviews provided an opportunity to clarify my understanding of things by checking it against participants' perceptions, to explore new

information as it arose in the interviews, and to add a qualitative context to the existing quantitative data.

Semi-structured interview schedules were used in this research. Semi structured interviews aim for a balance between highly structured interviews and open-ended interviews. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) identify characteristics of semi-structured interviews as the mix between more and less structured questions as they are called for, the flexibility in the way questions are used, the provision of specific data that is required from all participants, and the predetermination of issues that are to be explored, albeit without predetermined wording or order of questioning. This approach was the most suitable interview approach in maintaining enough structure to allow comparability of key elements across interviews whilst allowing space for emerging and unanticipated information.

The questions asked in the semi-structured interviews were based on Patton's (2015) question types which include questions on experience and behaviour, opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory questions, as well as demographic and background questions. The questions were constructed to respond to the research questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) in terms of how CCGs operate and manage volunteers (Research Question 1), to identify the perspectives of leaders and volunteers with regard to their participation (Research Question 2), and through the responses to these questions, to provide data to support alignment with the community of practice markers in terms of the operations and context of the CCGs. The questions were organised in a schedule that was used to structure each interview. Whilst the schedule provided a cross-interview scaffold, the order of the questions was variable, and there was space for open-ended questioning in each interview.

The questions focused on the experiences of the participants. To analyse the interview data, the transcripts were categorised initially into open categories, and the data within each category were then aligned with the CCG Functions Framework. Where there was data that

showed no alignment with the functions, a new function was investigated (Schmidt, 2004). If there was enough data across the interviews to support a new category, the categories were named, and defined and data discussed as evidence of the new functions.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the design, development and administration of the two interview schedules used in this research.

3.7 Data analysis

This section outlines the approaches and processes that were used to analyse the survey and the interview schedule data that was collected by the data collection instruments.

3.7.1 Survey data

The quantitative items of the survey were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics. Distribution graphs and percentage tables were generated, which supported pattern-searching and conceptual understanding of each of the six concepts underpinning the questions. The main themes for analysis were used, as informing dimensions of CCG volunteering functions, to structure the items as discussed in Chapter 4. They were drawn from the conceptual framework of functions of CCGs presented in Table 2-8. The functions were separated into the four informing dimensions of the framework identified in the review of literature, viz., (1) reasons for volunteering; (2) level of satisfaction; (3) CCG activities (including roles); (4) benefits derived from volunteering. Two additional informing dimensions were added to identify the nature of CCGs more specifically (rather than broad reference to conservation volunteering). These were: (5) beliefs concerning the coastal marine environment; and (6) demography. The sixth dimension was considered critical considering the ageing population and the reliance in Australia on volunteer conservation groups. Details of this analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

The open-ended items were categorised according to the six informing dimensions of the framework. They invited respondents to add additional information as they saw fit.

Responses to open-ended survey items were collated. Data from each item were inspected and analysed to identify any recurrent patterns or themes (Athens, 2010; Blumer, 1969; Saldana, 2016). An open coding approach was taken, in which the data was read and re-read to identify label clusters of data (Saldana, 2016). The participant responses were collapsed into key categories, grouped within each of the labels, and re-read for meaning. These categories became the key themes of analysis. I used NVivo software to code and categorise the meanings of the open question responses using key words. Microsoft Excel was used for the descriptive statistical analysis of the quantitative data. The data within each theme was examined for alignment with the CCG Functions Framework, and where alignment was not found, new functions were proposed. For instance, based on the data reported in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2, three new functions were proposed, which were drawn from themes in the data. These were Global Sustainability and Conservation, Global Social Networks, and Personal Gain.

The analysis of the survey data was used to inform the development of the two interview schedules and to address Research Questions 1 and 2. The findings of the analysis of the survey are presented in Chapter 5.

3.7.2 Interview data

Interview participants were assigned with individual codenames to ensure their anonymity. Furthermore, where specific contexts were mentioned, such as turtles or saltmarshes, the responses and data used was sufficiently generalised not to identify the particular location of the 'island' or 'beach' or 'turtles or the type of 'saltmarsh'. Participants were interviewed in two groups, namely the leaders and volunteers of the CCGs. The interviews were recorded and then individually transcribed by me. This transcription was completed systematically after each interview on the same day of the interview so that it was still 'fresh' in my mind. I considered that by re-listening to the interview commentary, I

would be drawn 'closer' to the meanings of the participants' views and perspectives. NVivo software was used to assist with the interpretation, coding and categorising of the transcript meanings. The data from the individual interviews of leaders and volunteers were analysed in the same way as the qualitative survey data using open coding concerning the functions of leadership and management of a CCG. These open codes were then grouped into categories which became themes. The data and themes were then aligned with the categories of organisational structure of CCGs, operational functions of CCGs, responsibilities and roles of CCG volunteers, and operational issues faced by CCGs.

The coded interviews were examined, and through a method of purposeful sampling (Cresswell, 2013). Five leader interviews, and four volunteer interviews were selected as being representative of the cross-sample of perceptions of the group of leaders and volunteers.

These interviews were presented as narrative vignettes, which best represented the lived experience of the leaders and volunteers. Through narrative, researchers can present the experience of individuals holistically, opening its richness and complexity (Webster & Mertova, 2007). While the research presented here is not fully aligned with narrative inquiry and does not seek more than a snapshot of the experiences of leaders and volunteers in CCGs, it is nonetheless a valid method by which to report these experiences. These stories go beyond narrative as a rhetorical structure and support an analytic examination of the "underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates" (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 3). The use of narratives can provide a compelling record of the lived experience of individuals, rendering this experience in relevant and meaningful ways (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Hanrahan & Cooper, 1995). They support the identification of recurrent themes across multiple narratives, cause and effects of choices and lessons learned, as well as helping to identify what works, mistakes that have been made, and better solutions to

problems (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003). Narrative methods of presenting and analysing the stories of the volunteers and leaders were used to present the semi-structured interview data. Thematic coding of the data would have lost the richness of the context of the CCGs, the affective dimension, and the cause and effect of events in the life of the CCG.

The narrative vignettes were drawn together by a process of coding, drawing together within identified categories, and examined and reported within emergent themes. These vignettes are presented in Chapter 6.

3.8 Recruitment of survey respondents

This section describes the process for the recruitment of survey respondents. The key criteria for inclusion in the research was individuals who were voluntarily engaged in CCGs. The survey was designed to be distributed to the broadest possible number of volunteers in CCGs across all states of Australia. As a recruitment approach, "probability sampling is planned to select a large number of cases that are collectively representative of the population of cases that are collectively representative of the population of interest" (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 81). Using this approach, participants have an equal opportunity of being selected from the population. In the case of CCGs, this broad probability approach aimed at collecting data from a range of CCG types, including the size of the group, the type of coastal zone of activity and its complexity, the organisational and management characteristics, and the focus of the conservation work.

As there was no obvious way of directly contacting CCGs, I asked the Chief Executive Officers of 32 coastal NRM regions to promote the survey to their regional volunteer networks. I also asked several coastal marine conservation organisations to promote the survey to their respective volunteer networks. The foci of these organisations included bird conservation, marine debris collection and monitoring, ocean and beaches, dolphin protection and research, sea turtle conservation, shark conservation and cleaner oceans.

Volunteering Australia and Volunteering Queensland were also approached and agreed to promote the survey.

A sample of approximately 400 respondents was anticipated. Two hundred and seven surveys were completed. The response rate was lower than anticipated, and practical concerns such as timelines dictated the duration of the survey's availability. While this number is disappointing, it is not atypical of survey research, particularly online surveys (Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003). This approach to respondent recruitment was nonetheless seen to be probabilistic (Teddlie & Yu, 2007), despite limitations in terms of sample size. The data was seen to reach saturation in all the survey questions, in terms of the repetition and identification of key themes.

3.9 Recruitment of interview participants

This section describes the process for the recruitment of participants for the leader and volunteer interviews.

Probability sampling techniques are not always possible in social science research (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). In non-probability (purposive) sampling, randomisation is not seen as important in selecting samples from the population at large. Furthermore, the researcher is subjective as he decides which elements are to be included in the sample based on his definition of what data is required and from whom (Etikan, Musar & Alkassim, 2016). The reasoning behind purposive sampling is that the data is likely to lend understanding that may not be relevant to the whole population, in this case, all volunteer organisations. Instead it is reasoned that purposive sampling, using a small number of cases, will yield more in-depth data about a specific phenomenon (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). This can be achieved through the purposive identification and choice of individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable or experienced with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In many social science contexts, purposive sampling can be further narrowed to

become convenience sampling. This occurs when certain practical criteria are imposed on the sampling procedure such as proximity, time, budget or willingness to participate (Etikan et al., 2016).

In this research, whilst probability sampling was used to recruit survey respondents, purposive, and convenience sampling was used to recruit participants in the leader and volunteer interviews. The interviews were therefore particularly vulnerable to selection bias. The research protocol, in which individuals were selected for interviews based on shared context, but diverse ranges of operations was designed to support the broadest possible insight into the operations of CCGs. Thus, the approach to sampling 10 leaders and 18 volunteers for interviews used a maximum variation sampling method (Etikan et al., 2016). Sampling occurred across a range of sizes of organisation, conservation focus, leadership structures, coastal zones, and volunteer demographics. Whilst bias is acknowledged, triangulation of data and the use of the functions and community of practice conceptual frameworks supported insight into the breadth and depth of the experiences of coastal conservation volunteers. The rationale for gaining such a heterogeneous sample is that any commonality found across a diverse group of cases is more likely to be a widely generalizable phenomenon than a commonality found in a homogenous group of cases (Robinson, 2014). As Robinson (2014) outlines, this heterogeneity supports findings that are not seen as the preserve of a single group or closely-related groups but is supportive of application from one context to another. Nonetheless, and characteristic of small-scale, case-based qualitative research, generalisability to other volunteering contexts, whilst possible in some cases, may be limited and should be used with care. To counteract questions of unwarranted generalisations, it is important to recognise that the data presented in this research is limited to a relatively small but diverse number of CCGs located along the

coastline of Australia (surveys and leader interviews) and the State of Queensland (volunteer interviews).

The limitation to the numbers of volunteers and leaders who were interviewed ensured that the individuals within the sample were recognised as unique identities, whose voices were defined and locatable, rather than being subsumed into a mass of data and becoming anonymous (Robinson, 2014).

3.10 Research validity, reliability and trustworthiness

All research must result in knowledge that is valid, reliable, and be produced in an ethical manner. If results from research are trustworthy, users of the research can have confidence in its findings. It must be noted that the concepts of validity and reliability have normally been associated with quantitative research. In qualitative research, rigour is more closely aligned with trustworthiness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Despite moves to reconceptualise validity and reliability in qualitative research as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, more contemporary moves simplify the rigour of research into two forms, namely methodological and interpretive (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). A key issue which has led to a lack of consensus amongst the research community is the critical difference between different forms of qualitative research, resulting in multiple ways of demonstrating validity and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When reporting qualitative research, the detail with which the data is reported should be enough to justify the researcher's conclusions (Firestone, 1987). Whilst this research presents quantitative survey data, the use of qualitative data, and reporting as narratives of experience provides such detail.

Qualitative research should match as closely as possible the reality that is being described. This is credibility or internal validity. In the research presented here, the use of narrative vignettes drawn directly from the interview data is closely aligned with the

participants' narrative as they outlined their experiences. Thus, there are minimal layers of researcher interpretation when data was reported. Through this constructivist model (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) multiple interpretations of reality were identified in the narrative of the leaders and volunteers, allowing me as the researcher, to uncover holistically and as closely as possible the reality of their experiences. Nonetheless, I acknowledge, concurring with Maxwell (2013), that reality and validity are relative, and are closely related to relationships, purposes and circumstances of the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through triangulation, by identifying the convergence of multiple sources of information through multiple interviews, the methodology supported a closer correspondence between reality and the research. Triangulation was also employed through comparisons between the data collected by the surveys and the interviews of both leaders and volunteers. As outlined by Patton (2015), this triangulation enhanced the credibility and quality of the research findings.

My position as a researcher also influenced the integrity of the research. Whilst I clarified my position in the introductory sections of this thesis, I brought to the data collection two models drawn from the theory, namely the CCG Functions and the CCG Communities of Practice Framework. Thus, I entered the data analysis with an interpretive framework which focused the research on perspectives on the phenomenon. Nonetheless, the integrity of the research was maintained by allowing for emergent data that was not aligned with the interpretive frameworks, and through which the research was re-focused.

Whilst quantitative research seeks to generate replicable findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), qualitative studies does not seek replicability because of the fluid nature of human dynamics and the contexts within which behaviours are exhibited. Lincoln and Guba (1985) conceptualised reliability in qualitative research as dependability, in which the results consistently make sense of the data collected. The methodology of this research has left a

clear audit trail, such that the way data was planned, collected, analysed and presented are explicit.

The research presented here, as a qualitative study, was not focused on broader generalisability, a characteristic which is acknowledged as a feature of this type of research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2106). It has taken, however, an approach that supports extrapolation (Patton, 2015) to think about other applications of the findings. The functions of CCGs were clarified in the data, and the existing framework drawn from research was modified. This modified function framework is potentially applicable to other research where understanding of the functions of volunteering is important. The CCG Communities of Practice Framework was drawn specifically into the context of CCGs, but the origins of this framework as generic characteristics of communities of practice can be re-customised to suit a range of new contexts. Thus, whilst generalisation may be limited, the extrapolation of the research is supported. The reader will be able to "compare the fit" with their situations" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 255). Furthermore, the sampling strategy for both the surveys and interviews ensured that a variety of contexts and cases were considered, to broaden the variation of research findings. This was seen by Patton (2015) as supporting a broadening of applicability to different contexts.

The methodology outlines the importance of using a narrative approach to the presentation of the interview findings. This approach was selected in preference to standard coding and categorisation of concepts in order to engage with the rich context within which the leaders and volunteers developed the stories of their experience. This rich description of a smaller number of CCGs supports greater understanding of the context, and therefore decisions of readers about transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

My ethics as a researcher were critical to the trustworthiness of this research. In the context of the range of difficulties experienced by the CCGs, both leaders and volunteers, the

interviews often became politically and socially charged, and required ethical reporting such as all voices being heard, but the effect of criticism was communicated in context with sensitivity. This ethical thinking is dependent on relationships (Lincoln, 1995), and once the quantitative data was analysed, it became evident that there were strong political and social issues that were uncovered. To maintain relationships with interview participants, a decision was made to interview the volunteers face to face, rather than online, to ensure that I, as interviewer was responsive and remained ethical throughout.

The research project received ethics approval H13/12-197 and is attached together with relevant documentation in Appendices A to C. The ethics approval process required the identification of risks, together with risk mitigation strategies. It required the informed consent of participants. The research project was audited against the ethics approval and was found to be compliant. The ethics approval process addressed risk and risk mitigation in terms of recruitment, confidentiality, impost on participants, security of data, its storage and disposal, and the forms of dissemination of results.

The agreed protocols in the ethics application for deidentification of data were followed and audited by the supervisory team. For more details refer to the documentation in the appendices).

3.11 Summary

This chapter has presented the philosophical assumptions that underpin this research. The use of qualitative research methods to address the research questions was justified. An overview of the data collection instruments, data analysis and the research sample and ethical approval was provided. The design, development and administration of the data collection instruments are discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Instrument Design Development and Administration

Chapter 3 presented the underpinning philosophy, research methodology and design for this research. It justified the inclusion of four research instruments, namely a survey questionnaire, interviews of leaders and volunteers, and a secondary analysis of the data using the CCG Community of Practice Framework. This chapter describes as Phases 1 and 2, the design, development and administration of each of the instruments used to collect data in this research. Chapter 3 outlined the review of existing instruments to ascertain their usefulness for the research context within which this research was conducted. As explained in Chapter 3, the narrowing of the focus to a specific framework of volunteer functions, and the characteristics specifically associated with CCGs led to the development of new instruments suited to the purpose. This chapter then describes, as Phase 3, the tool for analysis of the data to align the volunteer functions and the organisation with the characteristics of a community of practice. Figure 4-1 shows the research phases and articulation between each data set.

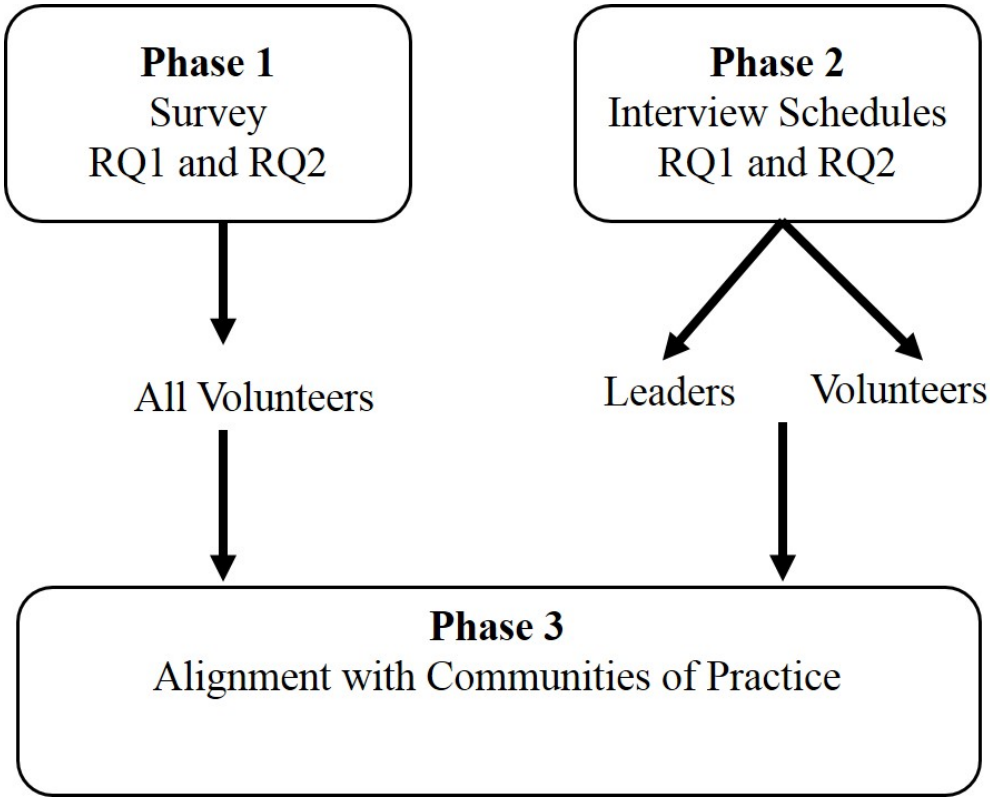

Figure 4-1 Instruments and phases of research

4.1 Phase 1: Survey—volunteers in CCGs

The survey was designed to respond primarily to Research Question 2: What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation? However, the inclusion of open-ended questions left the instrument open to addressing in part Research Question 1: How do CCGs operate and manage volunteers?

The survey instrument was based on the CCG Functions Framework (Table 2-8) which was drawn from the four informing dimensions that were identified in the literature. These were reasons for participating, level of satisfaction, activities and benefits associated with volunteering. Consideration of two further dimensions associated with the specific nature of CCGs, namely beliefs about the coastal marine environment and volunteer demography were also used. Together, these six informing dimensions are:

- Reasons for participating in conservation

- Level of satisfaction with their CCG
- CCG activities including roles
- Benefits derived from volunteering
- Beliefs about the coastal marine environment
- Demography of volunteers

The CCG Functions Framework, already presented in Table 2-8, and the informing dimensions, are presented in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. *CCG Functions Framework and informing dimensions.*

Function	**Broad Description of Function**	**Informing Dimension**
Career	Gaining career related experience and professional skills through volunteering	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Connection to Nature	The physically and psychologically benefit by being close to nature and reconnecting with nature	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Environmental Care	Enactment of a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, with an enhanced sense of purpose	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Personal Enhancement	Psychological and physical growth and development, improved health and personal growth	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Project Organisation	Participating in a CCG that is well regarded for its preparedness and good project management	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities

Function	Broad Description of Function	Informing Dimension
Reciprocity	Helping others and 'doing good' in the belief their volunteering work will bring good things for the volunteer themselves, thus beneficial to the helper	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Recognition	Recognition of skills and contribution and associated confidence growth	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Sense of Place	Enacting a sense of responsibility for the local area	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Social	Strengthening his or her social relationships with family, peers, and work colleagues	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Social Interaction	Strengthening of his or her social relationships through enhanced social engagement with others; building of social networks and enjoyment of the aspects of social interaction	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Understanding	Learning more about the world or exercising skills that are often unused through social learning and growth of content knowledge	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities
Values	Expressing and acting on important values like humanitarianism and altruism	Reasons for participation Satisfaction Benefits Activities

The CCG Functions Framework is aligned with Research Question 2, and it informed the development of the questions of the survey instrument. The instrument was also informed by the two additional dimensions, namely beliefs about the coastal marine environment, and demographics. In order to map CCG activities, one question was included that asked respondents about their activities in the CCG, which is aligned to Research Question 1.

4.1.1 Design, development and administration of the survey

This section details the design, development and administration stages of the survey, which was enacted in three stages, which are presented in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2. *Design, development and administration of the survey.*

Stage 1: Design	Stage 2: Development	Stage 3: Administration
Conceptual framework	Survey structure, length and format	Sampling
Items; content and style	Pilot testing	Promotion of survey
		Administration of survey

4.1.1.1 Survey design

This stage involved the generation of the survey question's content and type. Items were designed, using the CCG Functions Framework, and organised and grouped within the four informing dimensions of the framework, together with the dimension of beliefs about the coastal marine environment and demographics. When planning the survey items, I was cognisant of the balance required between comprehensive data and the optimum time to complete the survey. Table 4-3 presents the survey-informing dimensions together with the number of questions that were initially generated for the instrument.

Table 4-3. *Informing dimensions and items of the survey.*

Informing dimension	Initial number of indicators
Reasons for volunteering	36 + 1 open-ended item
Level of satisfaction in terms of reasons for volunteering	36 + 1 open-ended item
CCG activities	5 + 1 open-ended item
Benefits derived from volunteering	11 + 1 open-ended item
Any other further comments re volunteering	Open-ended item
Beliefs about the coastal marine environment	10 + 1 open-ended item
Volunteer demography	8 + 1 open ended item

The nature of the research question and the data determined the type of survey item that is used. Both closed and open response items lend themselves to quantitative methods (Bryman, 2012); however, only open-ended response items are to be analysed using qualitative methods. In this qualitative research approach, it has already been established that quantitative data was useful to map the field, and to examine distributions and patterns. This approach was used to create questions related to the volunteer functions. To understand these functions further, and to allow for unanticipated answers, qualitative responses were also supported through open-ended items. Response types varied depending on the nature of the item.

Item 1 was structured to gain informed consent, therefore required only an acknowledgement in a checkbox that informed consent was given.

Where responses were sought on an ordinal scale to assess respondents' opinions, perceptions or feelings about issues, Likert scale response questions were used (Dilman & Smyth, 2007). Associated with each set of Likert scale items was an open-ended item to capture unanticipated information and explanations as suggested by Nemoto and Beglar (2014). Likert scale response items were used for Items 2 and 4. Item 2 used statements aligned with the volunteer functions, and provided four levels of satisfaction with coastal volunteering, namely 'always met', 'mostly met', 'sometimes met', and 'not met at all'. Item 4 provided a five level Likert scale namely 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'unsure', 'agree', and 'strongly agree'.

The volunteer functions statements in Item 2 were also used to generate a binary selection of responses in terms of importance, namely 'not important to me', and 'important to me'. The rationale behind this item design decision was to provide greater insight into motivations for continued engagement as well as the operations of the CCG as per Clary et al.'s (1996) definition of 'functions' of volunteering.

Item 3 was a multiple response item, aimed at identifying the general volunteering activities of volunteers in their community. This item aimed to understand more broadly the competing priorities in local volunteering, as well as the nature of the volunteers themselves. The responses presented categories of engagement across three dimensions of time, namely in the last five years, the last 12 months, and anticipated future engagement. An open-ended component was added to capture elaborations, or unanticipated responses.

The statements in Item 4 all related to the beliefs of respondents that underpinned their membership with CCGs. They presented a range of beliefs-related statements, all drawn from the literature presented in Chapter 2. The item included an open-ended response to capture elaborations, or unanticipated responses.

Item 5 was aligned with Research Question 1, asking respondents about the nature of the organisational work in which they engaged. The item was a multiple option checklist, listing the common activities of volunteer conservation groups drawn from the literature review in Chapter 2. The item included an open-ended response to capture elaborations, or unanticipated responses.

To assess the range of relative importance of the perceived benefits of being a member of a CCG group, Item 6 asked respondents to rank a series of stated benefits. These benefits were drawn from the CCG Functions Framework. Item 7 item included an open-ended response to capture elaborations or unanticipated responses about additional benefits attained from volunteering.

Items 8 to 15 were demographic questions. Item 8 asked respondents to nominate the duration of their membership with their current organisation using three scales, namely, less than a year, between one and five years, and longer than five years. Item 9 asked respondents to identify their age category on a seven-point time scale. Item 10 used four categories to ask respondents about the nature of their current employment. Item 11 asked participants about

their gender. Item 12 and 13 asked respondents if they lived fulltime in the area they volunteered and if so, for how long. Item 14 provided three options for those who did not live in the area. Item 15 asked respondents how they how had heard about the group they volunteered for.

4.1.1.2 Development considerations

In this stage the structure, length, format and survey items were developed and configured for the instrument to be pilot tested.

The structure of the survey expedited the answering of all survey items and was aimed at improving the response rate (Dillman et al., 2009). I considered the number and types of items to be used in the instrument. The following aspects were considered when developing the structure of the survey:

- The survey began and ended with items which were easier to respond to than those items in the main body of the survey instrument;
- the language that was used was easily understood so that the instrument did not take too long to complete and to motivate respondents to provide optimal answers;
- Likert scale response items, multiple selection, ranking, binary, and open items were used;
- demography items were placed towards the end of the survey to accommodate the attention of respondents; and
- the survey was divided into sections to align items with the key purpose of each section.

An initial structure for the instrument was developed and is shown in Table 4-4.

Table 4-4. *Initial framework of the survey instrument.*

Part	Content
A	Introduction: Welcome and explain research to respondents
	Consent to participate in research
	Ethical approval statement
B	Five themed items: reasons, satisfaction, beliefs, activities and benefits

	Volunteer demographic questions
C	An invitation to participate in interviews
	Close: Thank respondents for participating in this research

The survey items were developed iteratively and cross-checked against the research aims and questions of this research across three versions in order to:

- Rephrase questions to suit the item scale used;
- design the style and presentation of Likert scale response questions;
- check questions for ambiguity and repetition;
- assess the relevance of questions in relation to the research questions and the conceptual framework (The CCG Functions Framework);
- randomise questions within each section of Part B of the instrument;
- establish and standardise the typography used;
- evaluate the sequence of questions to ensure that there was an appropriate progression;
- provide respondents with instructions for completing the questions; and
- assess the survey's completion time.

The length of the survey was a key consideration when asking volunteers for their participation. A survey that takes longer than approximately 20 minutes can contribute to respondent fatigue and reduced completion rates (Vaus, 2013). In order to obtain a satisfactory response rate, the aim for this survey was a completion time of no more than 15 minutes.

The volunteers in this research participated from a range of geographic locations across the coastal states of Australia. For this reason, an online survey was considered appropriate. For those participants who requested a paper survey, a hard copy of the survey was made available.

4.1.1.3 Pilot testing

Pilot testing of survey the instrument is recommended to ensure that the instrument operates well and is sufficiently clear and unambiguous to respondents (Bryman, 2012; Teijlingen and Hundley,2001). The pilot questionnaire was administered in the online survey format using Survey Monkey to 11 volunteers from two CCGs that were local to me.

I used two administrative documents for the pilot test; the Survey Facilitator Checklist (Appendix D) and the Survey Pilot Test Questionnaire (Appendix E). The Survey Facilitator Checklist was used to ensure that all the pilot test respondents received the same information about the survey before beginning to complete it. Respondents used the Survey Pilot Test Questionnaire to record any issues that they may have had in completing the instrument.

Respondents generally indicated that the survey was easy to understand and to complete. Respondents took between 14 to16 minutes to complete the instrument. Suggestions for changes were minimal and these were made in response to feedback. The Likert scale responses in one question were difficult to read and one question was not numbered. The layout of the instrument was reviewed by me to improve its overall presentation. Four of the original pilot test respondents were asked to reassess the revised version of the survey. No further comments regarding the instrument were received.

SurveyMonkey was used to present the online survey. It was licenced and administered using CQUniversity's Learning and Teaching Research Centre professional SurveyMonkey account. In this way ethical considerations such as protection of identity and confidentiality of information were maintained.

To accommodate the online survey environment, a survey completion bar was inserted into Item 1 so that it was a compulsory question for participants to provide informed consent to use their data. The informed consent process was designed to comply with CQUniversity Human Research Ethics Review Committee University terms of approval.

Without acknowledgement of informed consent, respondents were unable to access the balance of the survey.

The survey was tested for useability and functionality by four respondents. Respondents were issued with the Survey Pilot Test Questionnaire (Appendix E) to provide feedback about the instrument. The questionnaire had one additional question, "Are there any technical problems in accessing or completing the survey?" Respondents were emailed the following link to access the online survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CEVSurvey. Respondents were asked to access and complete the survey online from outside the university environment to simulate actual respondents completing the instrument. Apple and Windows branded computers were used to access the survey online to determine whether the instrument could be accessed by both types of operating systems. Generally, the pilot test respondents indicated that the format of the online survey was easy to understand and to complete. Respondents took between 16 to 18 minutes to complete the instrument. Appendix F presents a copy of the online survey used for this research.

4.1.2 Administration of the survey

As stated in Section 3.9, a purposive sampling approach was taken. I asked the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of 32 coastal NRM regions and seven coastal marine conservation organisations to promote the survey to their respective volunteer networks. All the CEOs who were approached agreed to promote the survey and to encourage their volunteer networks to participate in this research. I had CQUniversity Ethical research approval to recruit survey participants using networks, websites, phone, email, meetings, conferences and project meetings. The environmental/conservation organisations that supported this research are listed in Appendix G.

After the CEOs had expressed their interest to participate, I emailed each CEO an information sheet about the research. The information sheet could then be distributed to the respective organisation's volunteer networks (Appendix B).

In addition, I asked the CQUniversity's media department to assist with the promotion of the survey. I wrote a press release that was the distributed to media outlets across Australia which resulted in me being contacted by interested parties. As a result of the press releases, I was also invited to participate in two radio interviews. I approached Professor Andrew Short to donate a copy of 'Coasts of Australia' (Short & Woodruffe, 2009) and a copy of '101 Best Australian Beaches' (Short & Farmer, 2012) which were to be offered as prizes to individuals who completed the survey. There was difficulty with this given that the survey respondents were not identifiable. Therefore, I donated the books to the two local CCGs who had participated in the pilot testing of the survey.

4.2 Phase 2: Interviews

As outlined in Section 3.7.2, selected leaders of CCGs, as well as general volunteers were interviewed individually, using interview schedules. This section documents the design of these interview schedules.

4.2.1 Design, development and administration of the leader interview schedule

This section details the stages in the design, development and administration of the LIS. These stages are presented in Table 4-5.

4.2.1.1 Leader interview schedule: Design considerations

The first phase of the Leader Interview Schedule (LIS) was its question focus based on emerging themes from the literature. The second phase was the creation of the interview questions themselves. Finally, protocols were established for the administration of the survey.

Table 4-5. Design, development and administration of the survey

Stage 1: Design	Stage 2: Development	Stage 3: Administration

Literature review themes	LIS structure	Sampling
Question type and sequence	Pilot testing	Promotion of survey
		Administration of survey

As shown in Table 4-5, this stage considered the literature review themes, interview question type and sequence.

Interviews can be conducted on a scale from structured, to open-ended, with semi-structured approaches situated between the two extremes (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Franklin, 2013). In making the decision about the appropriate method to use, it was acknowledged that a response to the research questions was required as well as unsolicited insights into the leadership, structure and function of the CCG in question. I chose to use semi structured interviews in this research. Silverman (2006) considers that semi structured interviews are used to target a general topic area where the direction taken by the interview process is led by the responses from the interviewee.

In designing the questions for the LIS, I considered the type and sequence of the interview questions. The questions for leadership were drawn from and designed to respond to Research Question 1. The review of literature presented in Chapter 2 and summarised in Figure 2-1 identified that conservation group leadership responsibilities and operations fall in three key areas: day to day operations, organisational operations, and social engagement. In alignment with these three key areas, and in response to Research Question 1 regarding operation and management of CCGs, the following themes were selected to underpin the questions in the leadership interviews:

- CCG operation
  - The organisational structure of the CCG
  - The roles and responsibilities of the leaders
  - Operational functions of the CCG

- Management of volunteers
  - Recruitment
  - Retention
  - Training
- Operational issues
  - Factors limiting effectiveness
- The future
  - The role and position of this CCG in future coastal marine conservation.

4.2.1.2 Development considerations

In this stage the structure and length of the LIS were developed and configured for the instrument to be pilot tested. Minichiello, Aroni, and Hays (2008) argue that in semi structured interviews there are "no fixed wording or order applied to the interview questions" (p. 51). However, I did give the questions some structure in that they were short and conversational in tone, with clarity to support understanding as recommended in the methodology literature (Berg, 2009; Bolderstone, 2012; Gill et al., 2008).

The interview sequence was designed to include several phases, commencing with an 'ice-breaker' and a few non-threatening questions to set the interview participant at ease (Gill et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 2009). The purpose of the initial phase of the questionnaire was also structured to support greater understanding of the nature of the research and to gain the informed consent of the participant. The second phase of the interview focused on the key conceptual understandings of the interview, seeking meaning and clarity on the topic of CCGs. At the conclusion of the structured questions, an open-ended discussion was supported to probe details and to identify other issues important to the CCG.

The duration of the interviews was considered important to ensure a balance between interview fatigue and frustration when developing the length of the interview (Berg et al., 2009). Given the literature review revealed that length of interviews should be between 20 minutes and 60 minutes (Gill et al., 2008), the interview was designed to be no longer than 60

minutes. The structure of the interview, shown in Table 4-6 was developed in response to these considerations.

Table 4-6. *The structure of the Leader Interview Schedule.*

Part	Content	Item
A	Introduction	Welcome participant and explain research.
	Informed consent information	CQUniversity Human Research Ethics Review Committee University approval.
	Participant consent	Ask participant to sign consent form.
B	'Ice breaker'	How long have you been a volunteer? How long have you been an Office Bearer with this group? What conservation outcomes has the group achieved?
C	CCG operation	What is the organisational structure of …? What are the roles and responsibilities of …? What are the some of the operational functions of …?
	Operational issues	What issues limit CCG effectiveness?
	The future	What are your thoughts concerning future coastal marine conservation?
D	Close	Invite additional comments and thank participant for their participation.

Within Part C, the thematic elements were expanded to include probing questions about each theme. Table 4-7 provides a sample LIS question and its associated probes related to the theme of CCG operation.

Table 4-7. *Sample question and associated probes related to the theme of CCG operation.*

Theme	Sample Question	Probe
CCG operation	What is the organisational structure of …?	Are officer bearers elected? How long do officer bearers serve? What do office bearers do? How do you plan for office bearer succession?

The LIS is presented in Appendix H.

4.2.1.3 Pilot testing

Gill et al. (2008) assert that instrument pilot testing "establishes if the schedule is clear, understandable and capable of answering the research questions, and if, therefore, any changes to the interview schedule are required" (p. 292). Furthermore, Turner (2010) contended that pilot testing should be conducted with "participants that have similar interests as those who will participate in the study" (p. 757). I acted on this advice, and addressed the duration of the interview, determined the suitability of questions and fine-tuned the interview process.

As I was conducting semi structured interviews the participants were not given the interview with the questions prior to the interview. I considered this would have compromised the depth of examination in to this topic (Silverman, 2006).

I invited two CCG leaders to participate in pilot testing the LIS. As stated in Section 3.8.2, a voice recorder was used to record each interview. The pilot test interviews took 59 and 57 minutes respectively to complete. Participant feedback regarding the LIS was positive and complimentary.

4.2.2 Administration of the leaders' interviews

As stated earlier in Section 3.11, 10 CCG leaders, whose CCGs had been presented with Australian government awards for excellence in activities associated with significantly improving their local coastal and or marine environments, agreed to be interviewed. While this sample of CCG leaders may be perceived to be biased, the aim was to identify organisation and leadership that was recognised to be effective. I used the following process to coordinate the interviews with each CCG leader:

- An introductory phone call was made to the CCG leader to:
  - explain the research;
  - invite the leader to be interviewed; and

- coordinate an agreeable interview time.

- An email was then sent to those leaders who had agreed to be interviewed, containing an information letter and participant consent form. (Appendices B and C).

The interviews were conducted via Skype or phone and recorded using a voice recorder. The average duration of the interviews was 62 minutes.

4.2.3 Design, development and administration of the volunteer interview schedule

This section describes the design, development and administration stages of the Volunteer Interview Schedule (VIS) which was very similar to that of the LIS. The VIS was developed to further explore the quantitative data collected by the survey and to address the following research questions:

- Research Question 1; How do CCGs operate and manage volunteers?
- Research Question 2; What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation?

4.2.3.1 Design and development considerations

The design and development of the VIS followed the same design and development process as the LIS.

The focus and questions of the VIS were drawn from the review of literature presented in Chapter 2, the conceptual frameworks presented in the CCG Functions Framework in Tables 2-7 and 2-8. The focus and questions were also drawn from the responses to the survey. The key themes used for the VIS were:

- recruitment;
- satisfaction;
- beliefs about the coastal marine environment; and
- benefits attained from volunteering.

These themes were further developed by posing probing questions aligned with the framework. Table 4-8 provides a sample of a question and associated probes related to the theme of satisfaction.

Table 4-8. *Sample question and associated probes.*

Theme	Question	Probe
Satisfaction	What do you like about volunteering?	Are you happy with how the group operates? What is good about what you do? Are there any frustrations in being a volunteer?

The structure of the LIS interview schedule was also used to structure the VIS. Table 4-9 presents the structure of the VIS.

Table 4-9. *The structure of the Volunteer Interview Schedule.*

Part	Content	Item and Question
A	Introduction	Welcome participant and explain research.
B	Ethical approval	CQUniversity Human Research Ethics Review Committee University approval.
	Participant consent	Ask participant to sign consent form.
	'Ice breaker'	How long have you been a volunteer? What have been the highlights in volunteering?
C	Recruitment	How did you get involved?
	Satisfaction	What do you like about volunteering? What do you dislike about volunteering?
	Activities	What sort of things does your group do?
	Benefits	What have you attained from volunteering?
D	Close	Invite additional comments and thank participant for their participation.

The VIS is presented in Appendix I.

4.2.3.2 Pilot testing

I used the same process as that used to pilot test the LIS to pilot test the VIS. Two volunteers, who had participated in the pilot testing of the survey instrument, were asked to pilot test the VIS. A voice recorder was used to record each interview. The duration of the interviews was 59 and 62 minutes respectively. Participant feedback did not recommend any changes or improvement to this instrument.

4.2.4 Administration of the volunteers' interviews

I followed the same process as the LIS administration to coordinate the interviews with local CCG volunteers.

As stated in Section 3.11 I approached volunteers from five local CCGs to be interviewed. I attended five CCG working bees to explain the research and to invite volunteers who were interested in being interviewed. Eighteen volunteers agreed to be interviewed. I gave each of these volunteers an information sheet and an interview consent form (Appendices B and C).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were recorded using a voice recorder. I used the Interview Facilitator Checklist and the VIS in each interview. The interviews took on average 62 minutes to complete. All interviews were conducted during business hours in the homes of the participants.

4.3 Phase 3: Alignment with community of practice

The review of literature presented in Chapter 2 culminated in the CCG Community of Practice Framework, drawn from the work of Wenger (1998), Storberg-Walker (2008), and Bozarth (2008). This framework explicitly identified the markers (or visible characteristics) of CCGs in context that aligned with the aspects of practice.

The markers were used as categories within which the data that was initially coded, according to the CCG functions, was re-analysed and classified using these markers of practice within a community of practice. The aspects of the communities of practice framework within which the markers were organised are shown in Table 2.9 and include meaning, community, learning and identity. The functions align well with these aspects:

- Social, Social Interaction aligned with community;
- Understanding and Career aligned with learning;

- Connection to Nature, Environmental Care, and Reciprocity aligned with meaning; and
- Personal Enhancement, and Values aligned with identity.

This instrument supported a response to Research Question 3. Whilst the functions supported a general analysis of the motives, satisfaction, activities and outcomes of volunteering for individuals, the CCG Community of Practice Framework supported analysis that was more collective in nature, focusing on the characteristics of the CCG rather than those of the individual volunteer. Nonetheless, it was valuable to use the perceptions of individuals to inform this analysis.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has documented the design, development and administration of the survey instrument and the leader and volunteer interview schedules that were used in this research. It has justified the selection of the instruments, as well as their design. The chapter has outlined the pilot study conducted as authentication of the instruments. It outlined the structure of the survey and the interview schedules as well as the way they were implemented. Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings from the survey instrument and from the interview schedules. Chapter 7 presents the findings from the secondary analysis of the data using the CCG Community of Practice Framework.

Chapter 5: Survey Findings and Analysis

The previous chapters have presented the literature, philosophical assumptions, methodology, and the design and development of the data collection instruments used in this research to address the stated research questions in Chapter 1. This chapter presents the findings of the survey data. The survey was administered to 207 respondents. The closed-response items of the survey were based on the CCG functions outlined in Chapter 2, with the instrument itself discussed in Chapter 3. As outlined in Chapter 3, the open-ended items were analysed using coding and thematic analysis, with the findings presented using the themes drawn from the data, followed by alignment with the CCG functions. The main survey question categories and item ordering are shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1. *Survey categories and item numbers.*

Theme	**Item**
Volunteer demography	8-15
Reasons for volunteering	2
Level of satisfaction in terms of reasons for volunteering	2
Participation in volunteering	3
Volunteer beliefs about coastal environments	4
Activities	5
Benefits attained from volunteering	6 and 7
Open-ended final item	

The survey data is presented in this section, using the themes as organisers. While it is noted that demographic data was the final item of the survey, it is presented here as the first item for discussion.

5.1 Volunteer demography

Item 8 asked respondents to specify how long they had been volunteering with their CCG. Just over half (55%) of respondents reported that they had been with their organisation for over five years. Over a third (35%) of respondents had been volunteering between one and five years with the balance of respondents (10%) having volunteered for less than a year. The data suggests that there is a relatively high longevity of membership within the organisation and that more than half of the volunteers would have built a considerable repertoire of skills and insights into their CCG's environmental work over at least five years. It may also be assumed from this data that generally the volunteers are sufficiently satisfied with their CCGs to continue to work with them. The CCG membership is seen to be generally stable however, there may be implications in terms of the new membership and how they are inducted and included in the activities and structure of the CCG

Item 9 asked respondents to indicate their age. Figure 5-1 shows that older people volunteered much more than younger people. There is a trend showing an incremental increase in volunteer numbers in each age category up until 70 years of age. It is apparent that volunteering participation drops abruptly from 31% of 60–69 years old to 12% of 70–79 years old. Notwithstanding this, the latter age group still outnumbered younger volunteers, aged 30–39 years old and 20–29 years old, with 10% and 6% respectively. Overall, over 65% of respondents were over 50 years of age with those aged 60–69 years participating the most in volunteering (31%). This data is evidence of the reliance of volunteer organisations on an older workforce. This is reinforced by the absence of volunteers aged between 15 and 19 years old.

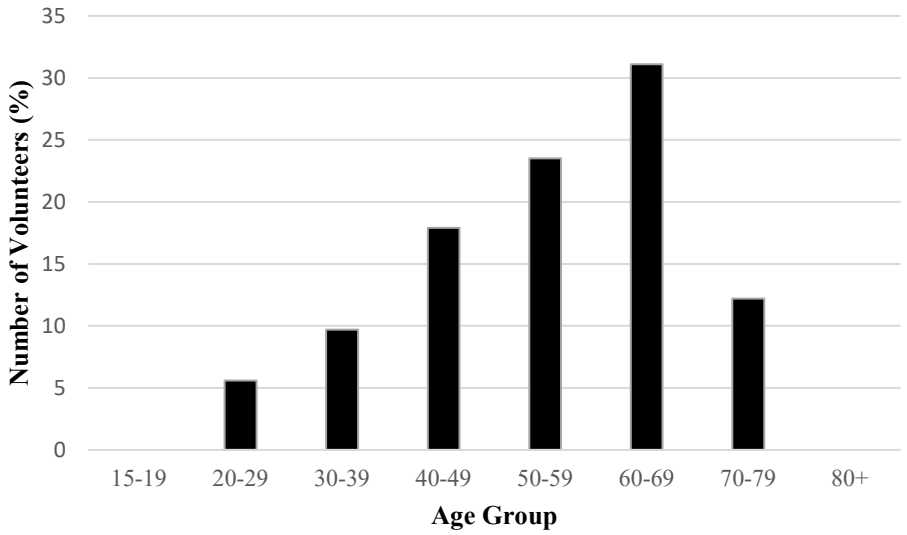

Figure 5-1. Age of volunteers.

Item 10 asked respondents to specify their employment status as full-time, part-time, unemployed, student or retired. This data is shown in Figure 5-2. Volunteers were drawn from all four groups; however, retirees (34%) were most strongly represented group in volunteering activities. Nonetheless, 55% of respondents were engaged in full-time or part-time employment. Persons in full-time employment comprised 29% of individuals whilst persons in part-time employment numbered 26% of the volunteers. Both the unemployed and full-time students contributed less to the volunteer corps at 5% each.

Item 11 asked respondents to denote their gender. Fifty eight percent of volunteers were female with the remainder, 42%, being male. Females appear to engage in coastal conservation volunteering somewhat more than males.

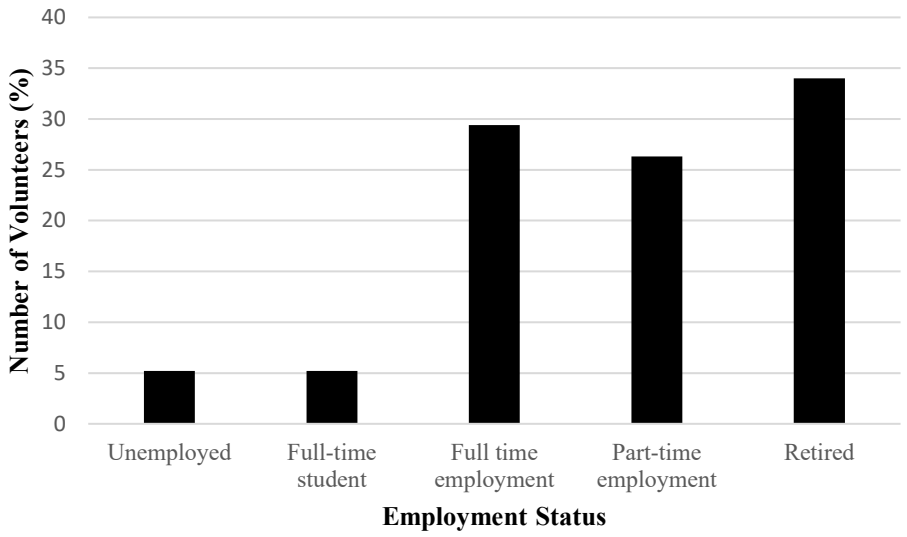

Figure 5-2. Volunteer employment status.

Items 12, 13 and 14 asked respondents about their residential statues in the local area. Close to 80% (78.1%) of respondents lived full-time in their local area and most had been doing so for more than five years. The number of individuals who were resident in the local area for longer than a year, but less than five years was 19%, with 2.9% resident for less than a year. This data indicates that most of the volunteers are long-term residents of the local area.

5.1.1 Summary of demographic data

The data presented in this section indicates that the CCG volunteer workforce is an ageing one, with older people volunteering more than younger people for coastal conservation. The percentage of volunteers within each age group of CCGs progressively increases up until the age of 70. Hence, volunteers over 60 years of age make up over 40% of the volunteer workforce, with those under 39 years of age having reduced involvement in volunteering. Individuals younger than 29 years of age are under-represented in the volunteer group, with 5% of volunteers belonging to the 20–29 group, and no volunteers younger than 20 years of age. There appears to be no volunteers of school-age or recent school graduates (nominally between 17 and 20 years of age). It is reasonable to assume that many of the 34%

of the volunteer workforce that indicate that they are retired and belong to the older age groups. Nonetheless, 58% of volunteers are still employed either full-time or part-time. The employment status and age of volunteers support a reasonable conclusion that many of the 60–69-year age group are still in part-time or full-time employment.

Furthermore, the results suggest those volunteers who are inclined to participate in voluntary coastal conservation make a longer-term commitment which may underpin CCG sustainability. The apparent ageing of the volunteer workforce and associated implications will be examined further when the data are discussed in Chapter 7.

5.2 Volunteer history: Past, present and future

Item 3 asked respondents about their volunteering participation. The responses, categorised as the number of participants selecting each category, are shown in Figure 5-3. The data shows that respondents' principal voluntary involvement in the past five years and the present has been volunteering for the conservation of the environment. Many respondents were also involved in other voluntary sectors with the education and training, and community and welfare sectors being the most frequent.

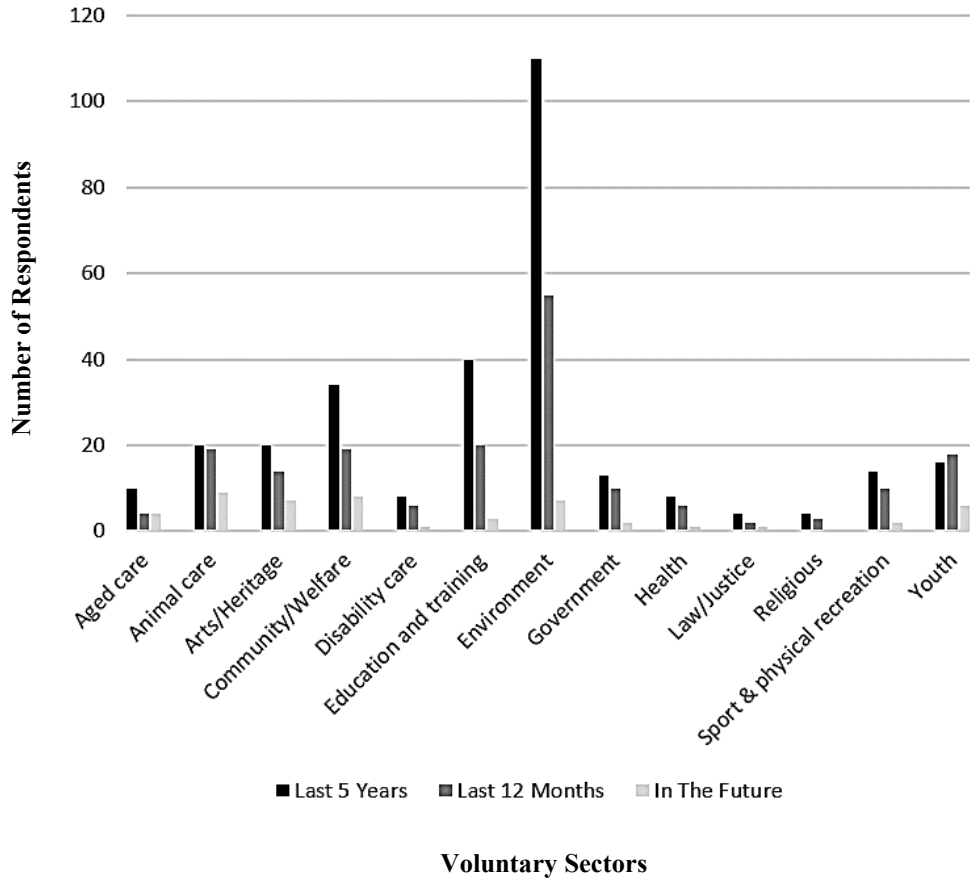

Figure 5-3. Volunteer participation history.

One hundred and ten respondents identified that they had been engaged in volunteering for the last five years, whilst fifty-five respondents indicated that they had been engaged in the past 12 months. The gap in numbers between the number of respondents (207) who are all members of CCGs, and those identifying being engaged in environmental conservation volunteering (165) is contradictory. Despite the successful piloting of the instruments, the responses for this item show evidence that this item may have been misinterpreted by some of the respondents.

However, there is validity in interpreting the trend that is demonstrated here. It is reasonable to assume that as volunteers age their level of participation slows down. This anomaly is worthy of further investigation and has been recommended for future research in Chapter 9.

5.3 Motivations for volunteering

Item 2 included two types of item, namely a closed multiple selection item which asked respondents to indicate the importance to them of a range of motivations to volunteer in coastal conservation. This data is followed by the analysis of an open-ended response requesting details of other motivations to volunteer in coastal conservation.

5.3.1 Motivations for volunteering: Multiple selection item

Volunteers were asked to identify the relative importance of a range of motivations to volunteer in CCGs. As stated in Chapter 4, the items in this section of the survey were drawn from the literature and the CCG Functions Framework presented in Chapter 2. The rating of importance provided a measure of the individual's motivations and reasons for volunteering. The response to the multiple selection items is shown in Table 5-2. It presents the percentage of volunteers who rated each item as being either important, or not important to them as motivations to volunteer. The table represents the alignment of each item with the CCG Functions Framework, together with an aggregated frequency of the importance of each function. From the table, it is apparent that respondents considered the functions of Environmental Care (96%), Values (94%) and Reciprocity (93%) to be the most important reasons for volunteering. While the functions of Environmental Care, Values and Reciprocity rated highly, the functions Sense of Place (92%) and Connection to Nature (91%) were also regarded as important by respondents. Conversely, the functions Social (19%), Recognition (38%) and Career (40%) were regarded as still being important to many volunteers, but universally. The collated data of all functions is presented in Table5-2. A detailed analysis of this data, focused on individual functions, is presented in the sections that follow. For ease of reference, the relevant data of Table 5-2 has been isolated, copied, and presented in each section.

Table 5-2. *Importance of functions as motivation to volunteer in CCGs.*

Function	**Item**	**Not important (%)**	**Important (%)**	**Not important (% Av)**	**Important (% Av)**
Career	I want to gain new skills and work experience	35	65		
	I want to add my volunteer experience to my resume for employment	80	20	66	34
Connection to Nature	I want to improve my chances of getting employment	84	16		
	I feel good when I am working with and for nature	2	98		
	I feel good when I am out in nature	3	97	9	91
	I want to work in the outdoors	21	79		
Environmental Care	I want to act for my concerns for the coastal environment	1	99		
	I want to fulfil my commitments to the environment	8	92	4	96
	The environment is important to me	2	98		
Personal Enhancement	I want to feel better about who I am	49	51		
	I want to increase my sense of self-worth	54	46	48	52
	I want to feel good about being a volunteer	39	61		
Project Organisation	I want to join an organisation that is highly regarded for what it achieves	34	66		
	I want to in a well-resourced group	51	49	37	63
	I want to work in a well organised team	24	76		

Function	Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
Reciprocity	I feel obligated to conserve the coastal environment	3	97		
	I want to give something back to the coastal environment	7	93	7	93
	I want to do something worthwhile for the coastal environment	3	97		
Recognition	I want to be recognised for my contribution by this organisation	75	25		
	I want to make a recognisable contribution	34	66	62	38
	I would like to be acknowledged by others for being a volunteer	76	24		
Sense of Place	I want to improve this place as it is for everyone	8	92		
	I am attached to the place where I volunteer	15	85	8	92
	I want to preserve my local area	1	99		
Social	I want to participate in volunteering that is valued by my friends and family	72	28		
	I want to be involved in volunteering as it is a family tradition	81	19	81	19
	I want to contribute to volunteering as my work colleagues think it is a good thing to do	91	9		
Social Interaction	I am seeking enjoyment from working with other people	42	58		

Function	Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
	I want to build my social networks	47	53	45	55
	I want to make new friends	46	54		
Understanding	I want to share my expertise, skills and abilities with other volunteers	22	78		
	I want to gain knowledge, skills and abilities	24	76	17	83
	I want to learn more about the coastal environment	7	93		
Values	I want to act on my coastal beliefs	3	97		
	I want to make a meaningful contribution to society	9	91	6	94
	I want to contribute to my local community	3	97		

The multiple-choice item responses indicated a range of importance values placed upon the functions (motivations) of participation in the CCG. The level of importance was linked in the question to the key functions for engaging which was outlined in Chapter 4.

Table 5-3 shows the importance placed on the Career function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-3. *Function Career—importance.*

Item	**Not important (%)**	**Important (%)**	**Not important (% Av)**	**Important (% Av)**
I want to gain new skills and work experience	35	65		
I want to add my volunteer experience to my resume for employment	80	20	66	34
I want to improve my chances of getting employment	84	17		

The data in Table 5-3 shows that for 20% and 17% of volunteers respectively, adding experience to a resume or improving chances of employment was important. While employment was not seen as important by other respondents, 65% identified the importance of work experience. On average, the function of Career was regarded by two-thirds (66%) of respondents to not be an important motivation to volunteer. Overall, for 34% of respondents, the function of Career was seen to be an important reason to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-4 shows the importance placed on Connection to Nature function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-4. *Function Connection to Nature—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I feel good when I am working with and for nature	2	98		
I feel good when I am out in nature	3	97	9	91
I want to work in the outdoors	21	79		

The data in Table 5-4 shows that with very few exceptions (2% and 3% respectively), participants placed great importance on the positive feelings that emerge when working in and with nature. Although the number of individuals who experienced positive affect when working in a natural environment were high, not all those individuals (21%) agreed that it was important to be working outdoors. Hence, it appears that a connection to nature is still felt even working indoors for the environmental cause rather than being out in the environment. Overall, the function of Connection to Nature was seen to be important by 91% of participants.

Table 5-5 shows the importance placed on the Enhancement function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-5. *Function Personal Enhancement—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to feel better about who I am	49	51		
I want to increase my sense of self-worth	54	46	48	52
I want to feel good about being a volunteer	39	61		

The data in Table 5-5 shows the importance of the function of Personal Enhancement to more than half (52%) of the volunteer respondents. Fifty-one percent identified that volunteering was important to feel better about whom 'I am' and 46% wanting to increase a sense of self-worth. These two items reflect the importance of volunteering activity to individual identity and self-concept. Greater numbers (61%) also identified the importance of feeling good about being a volunteer. Thus, affect, self-concept and identity were elements of the function Personal Enhancement that were regarded as an important motivator by 52% of respondents.

Table 5-6 shows the importance placed on the Environmental Care function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-6. *Function Environmental Care—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to act for my concerns for the environment	1	99		
I want to fulfil my commitments to the environment	8	92	4	96
The environment is important to me	2	98		

The data in Table 5-6 shows that, as would be reasonably expected, for nearly all volunteer respondents (96%) the function of Environmental Care was an important motivation to volunteer in a CCGs. The importance of the environment (98%) and concern for it (99%) were rated the most important reasons followed by a sense of fulfilling commitments to the environment (92%) by respondents. Thus 8%, while identifying the importance of Environmental Care as a function of their engagement, do not feel a personal commitment to engaging in this activity and likely have other motivations linked to environmental care.

Table 5-7 shows the importance placed on the Project Organisation function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-7. *Function Project Organisation—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to join an organisation that is highly regarded for what it achieves	34	66		
I want to in a well-resourced group	51	49	37	63
I want to work in a well organised team	24	76		

The data in Table 5-7 shows that while not universal, three-quarters (76%) of volunteer respondents wanted to work in a well organised team with two-thirds (66%) of volunteer respondents wanting to be a part of an organisation that is well regarded for what it achieves. The level of resourcing of the group was regarded as less important by half (49%) of the respondents. Overall, the function of Project Organisation was not important to 37% of volunteers, perhaps reflecting a commitment to the functions of the organisation in environmental care rather than to the organisation itself.

Table 5-8 shows the importance placed on the Reciprocity function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-8. *Function Reciprocity—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I feel obligated to conserve the coastal environment	3	97		
I want to give something back to the coastal environment	7	93	7	93
I want to do something worthwhile for the coastal environment	3	97		

The data in Table 5-8 shows that overall volunteers considered the function of Reciprocity to be the third most important function (93%). Feeling obligated to conserve (97%) and wanting to do something worthwhile for the coastal environment (97%) were the most important motivators followed by wanting to give something back to the environment (93%). 7% of respondents were not primarily motivated to give back.

Table 5-9 shows the importance placed on the Recognition function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-9. *Function Recognition—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to be recognised for my contribution by this organisation	75	25		
I want to make a recognisable contribution	34	66	62	38
I would like to be acknowledged by others for being a volunteer	76	24		

The data in Table 5-9 shows that overall the function of Recognition was regarded as important by 38% of participants. With similar ratings, being recognised for their contribution (25%) and being acknowledged by others for volunteering (24%) were seen to be important by around one-quarter of respondents. However, 66% of volunteers considered it important that there was a recognisable difference in the environment as a result of their contribution. Thus, the function of Recognition was assessed as more important in terms of visible environmental outcomes, than recognition as volunteers.

Table 5-10 shows the importance placed on the Sense of Place function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-10. *Function Sense of Place—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to improve this place as it is for everyone	8	92		
I am attached to the place where I volunteer	15	85	8	92
I want to preserve my local area	1	99		

The data in Table 5-10 shows that the conservation of the local area was a motivation shared by almost all the participants surveyed (99%), and the goal to improve the local environment was also seen to be important (92%). To a lesser extent being attached to the place where one volunteers was regarded as important by 85% of respondents. Thus, a sense of personal attachment to the place where volunteers function in the CCG, while important to most volunteers, is seen as less important than the conservation functions themselves. Overall, the function Sense of Place was an important motivation to 92% of volunteers in coastal volunteer contexts.

Table 5-11 shows the importance placed on the Social function as a motivation to participate in volunteering. This assesses the motivations to engage that are initiated by others in social contexts that are outside the CCG itself, such as colleagues, workmates, and family.

Table 5-11. *Functions Social—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to participate in volunteering that is valued by my friends and family	72	28		
I want to be involved in volunteering as it is a family tradition	81	19	81	19
I want to contribute to volunteering as my work colleagues think it is a good thing to do	91	9		

The data in Table 5-11 shows that overall the Social function was the least important motivation to engage in volunteering (81%). Nonetheless, 9% of volunteers regarded their work colleagues' views on volunteering as important. Furthermore, several respondents regarded volunteering as important to family tradition (19%) and valued by friends and family (28%). In this instance, family and friends appear to have had a greater influence on some respondents than work colleagues. While just under 20% of volunteers identify that external social influences were motivations to engage, this is still significant in terms of the way it equates to the numbers of volunteers in the organisation.

Table 5-12 shows the importance placed on the Social Interaction function as a motivation to participate in volunteering. This function can be discriminated from the function Social, in the preceding section, by its focus on within group social interaction.

Table 5-12. *Function Social Interaction—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I am seeking enjoyment from working with other people	42	58		
I want to build my social networks	47	53	45	55
I want to make new friends	46	54		

The data in Table 5-12 shows that over half (55%) of respondents regarded the function of Social Interaction as an important motivation, in extending and interacting with their friendship group through volunteering. More than half of volunteers sought enjoyment in working with others (58%), seeking new friendships (54%), and broadening their social networks (53%). However, for just under half of the respondents to the survey (45%), social functions were not key motivators in engaging in coastal conservation volunteering.

Table 5-13 shows the importance placed on the Understanding function as a motivation to participate in volunteering. This function includes the sharing (giving and receiving) of new skills and knowledge regarding coastal conservation practice.

Table 5-13. *Function Understanding—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to share my expertise, skills and abilities with other volunteers	22	78		
I want to gain knowledge, skills and abilities	24	76	17	83
I want to learn more about the coastal environment	7	93		

The data in Table 5-13 shows that for most volunteers, non-specific learning about the coastal environment was important (93%). As motivations to engage in volunteering, gaining and sharing specific knowledge and skills related to conservation activity was seen as less important, at 78% and 76% respectively. Hence, learning more about the environment as a holistic function is a prime motivator. When viewed from the opposite perspective, between 22% and 24% of participants did not view upskilling and expertise to be an important function of the CCG. Overall, the function of Understanding was not seen as an important motivator by 17% of respondents.

Table 5-14 shows the importance placed on the Values function as a motivation to participate in volunteering.

Table 5-14. *Function Values—importance.*

Item	Not important (%)	Important (%)	Not important (% Av)	Important (% Av)
I want to act on my coastal beliefs	3	97		
I want to make a meaningful contribution to society	9	91	6	94
I want to contribute to my local community	3	97		

The data in Table 5-14 shows that overall the function of Values was identified by respondents (94%) as the second most important motivating factor for coastal conservation volunteering. All dimensions of this function were rated important motivations by between 91% and 97% of respondents. Values and beliefs about the local community and coastal area were stronger motivations (97%) while broader contributions to society were rated as important by slightly fewer volunteers (91%). This indicates that the volunteering activity of many participants was motivated by values around the local area rather than broader societal engagement.

This section has presented the analysis of data from the closed responses of the survey which identified the importance of motivations to volunteer in coastal conservation. To summarise this data, it is evident that there is wide diversity in the motivations of individuals to engage in volunteering in this context. The source of cohesion that holds the groups together appears to be the shared motivation in terms of the functions of Environmental Care, Connection to Nature, Values and Sense of Place, volunteer beliefs about the coastal environment, and the desire or need to give back to the environment. While these are the motivations identified as important by most volunteers, it is critical that the other functions,

as motivations that lead to engagement and satisfaction, are met. The diversity of activities of CCGs will be discussed later. However, at this early point in data analysis, it may be identified that there is a wide diversity of skills, interests and motivations of individuals who engage in multiple layers of voluntary conservation activity. The loss of even a small number of volunteers whose motivations to engage are not met with fulfilment potentially impacts the function of the CCG, at the least because of the loss of the diverse skills different individuals bring to the group.

5.3.2 Motivations for volunteering: Open-ended responses

Seventy-three respondents used the Item 2's supplementary open response item to provide more information about why they had chosen to volunteer. I used a three-level coding process (Saldana, 2013) to analyse the open question responses, resulting in the identification of preliminary codes, key codes and themes. For example, the respondent comment, "I care desperately about the environment" was assigned the preliminary code of Environmental Care which eventually emerged as a key theme.

Saldana (2013) maintains that the grouping of codenames is based on "regularity and similarity [of codenames] to analyse their meanings" (p. 9). The initial coding process of the qualitative data generated five preliminary codes which became confirmed through the data for logic, suitability, and relevance. These codes are: Conservation/environmental care; Education/research documentation; Engaging with nature/sense of place; Future generations; and Giving back/reciprocity. The outcome of further analysis using open coding developed three additional codes: Concerns; Personal advantage and Social and community engagement. As the codes were discrete and identified different meanings they could not be subsumed into other codes. Hence I categorised them as key themes. These themes are presented in Table 5-15 along with illustrations of respondent commentary keywords within each theme.

Table 5-15. *Reasons for volunteering themes and commentary keywords.*

Theme	Commentary Key Words
Concerns	Disappearing, plundered, extinct, mess, losing
Conservation/environmental care	Environment, protect, conserve, save
Education/research/documentation	Educate, knowledge, skills, document
Engaging with nature/a sense of place	My place, my local area, ownership, where I live
Future generations	Future generations, children, grand children
Giving back/reciprocity	Giving back, putting back, help
Personal advantage	Personal advantage
Social and community engagement	Social, community engagement

The qualitative data supports insight into why individuals volunteer for the environment.

5.3.2.1 Concerns

It was apparent that many volunteers were involved in coastal conservation because of their concern about overpopulation and development pressures "plundering marine resources with "little regard for the ecosystems that underpin them" both locally and globally. As one respondent stated, "we live on, use and abuse this planet and people need to start taking some responsibility for the mess we are making and start taking action to help where we can". Another stated, "I think it important to take a stand to protect the environment … we are at risk of losing the very thing that is special to me".

Respondents identified losses such as the "disappearance of fragile coastlines and native species that have gone locally extinct or getting close to becoming extinct". Respondents also recognised that this is an international complex global problem which requires urgent attention.

5.3.2.2 Conservation/environmental care

Some respondents were quite specific about their conservation focus, for instance "to save the loggerhead turtles that lay on Flats Beach". Others were more general, identifying

that they wished to, "reverse the trend of trashing their backyards". Conservation for the future was a recurrent theme, as was preserving biodiversity and the habitat for wildlife. For others, motivation to conserve was centred around waste, including plastics from urban kerbs, gutters and drainage systems which is "killing marine life and birds and the prevention of dredging and dumping in and near the Barrier Reef". While many were motivated to conserve the marine environment, others were focused on waterways, developed areas and catchments which were seen to influence the coastal environment.

5.3.2.3 Education, research and documentation

Respondents identified a need to extend their reach by being able "to educate others and engage more people for their own good and the good of the environment".

For many, their volunteering activity was initiated as a need to document change as a result of perceived changes in their own marine recreational environment, for instance a response stated, "I believe that most of the marine organisms I enjoy scuba diving and monitoring won't be around in ten years' time. I want to take photos and document them". This interest in documenting environmental change was common. One response identified how s/he had watched changes to the coastal environment over many years of residence in the area, stating that s/he "wanted to document the impact of changes in land use by just systematically monitoring shorebird populations over time" Another considered a research purpose addressed by voluntary labour assisting in the "surveying of marine ecosystems, was an area of research which is poorly resourced". Many open-ended responses identified the importance of being part of the awareness-raising in others, "I can use my knowledge to help others become more aware of our coastal and marine environment and hopefully improve their behaviour towards a more positive impact on this environment".

Many referred to more specific education goals, with one identifying that s/he "enjoys passing on information and skills and expertise to others regarding coastal development and management". Others wished to contribute to broader knowledge about the coastal marine environment by engaging in continual marine animal research programs and "educating our young people of the importance of taking care of the land and coastal waters". One individual considered his "skills to be unique and useful in the citizen-science arena" while another individual stated, "I was a trained bush regenerator and felt my skills could help community groups with getting their work done".

Learning was, for some, a valued motivation, such as learning to identify indigenous plants, the coast, its history and culture. The motivation to educate through volunteering was succinctly summarised by the individual who stated that "the only way to drive legislative change that will benefit the environment as a whole, including coastal environments, is to have a vocal, well-educated population prepared to fight for the right policies".

Overall, volunteers see themselves in a wide range of education activities, ranging from specific species monitoring and protection to education of the community and politicians. They see themselves as being responsible for developing their own knowledge resources to assist in their volunteering work.

5.3.2.4 Engaging with nature—a sense of place

Many respondents commented on their motivation which was associated with immersion in the coastal environment. As one response puts it, quite simply, "I just love the beach". Others identified the link between volunteering and their coastal recreational activities such as surfing and diving. Those who mentioned living in the local area also identified the sense of ownership of and place in the local environment, with one individual stating, "I live on the coast!".

Many found a sense of place associated with the natural environment in any of its forms, with which they "feel a spiritual connection". One response outlined how "my connection to the environment is something I feel deeply—sense of belonging/harmony". This sense of affection for volunteering in the coastal environment was also identified by the volunteer who stated, "I want to help preserve my local river system. it gives me pleasure to see and utilise this beautiful environment".

Overall, a sense of place was seen in the data to have an emotional (affective) component associated with the natural environment and the feelings it evokes.

5.3.2.5 Future generations

Leaving a legacy for future generations was noted by many respondents as being of significance to them. This desire for some was based on their enjoyment of "bird watching", "fishing", "the aesthetics of coastal flora and fauna", and "beaches and dunes". Others recognised the importance of coastal environments to human well-being. One individual's opinion encapsulated this sense of looking after and protecting the environment for future generations, "It's the right thing to do for future generations. If we don't help, who will?".

This data highlighted the desire of many to contribute not only to the present status of their coastal environment, but to leave a legacy for future generations.

5.3.2.6 Giving back/reciprocity

Giving back to the environment and to the community was important to many respondents. Some saw this as a sense of giving back to nature to balance their personal gains and enjoyment through their coastal activities. One claimed, 'I am a surfer and have lived within two kilometres of the coast my whole life. It has given me the life I live now, and I want to give as much as I can back'. In the same spirit of giving back to the environment, but this time as a sense of compulsion to correct community impact on nature, one participant stated:

> It's so unnatural and unhealthy to see rubbish washed up on the beach or floating in the sea, and it's unfair to expect the animals and plants who live in the sea to put up with it. It's unhealthy for them just as it is for us to live in a rubbish tip. Someone has to pick it up and it should be everyone!

Regarding their local community, respondents wanted to contribute to "their experience and knowledge to help develop skills in others" in the community and to "hopefully improve their behaviour toward a more positive impact on this environment". As one individual said, "I am a highly skilled coastal professional, therefore I believe it is my obligation to contribute to the community and support coastal volunteering". In addition, respondents considered the wider benefits for the community to be "enhancing a sense of community and belonging and contributing".

This data suggests that there are many motivations to give back, some at a personal level, and others at a level of community and societal responsibility to the environment that has sustained them.

5.3.2.7 Personal advantage

Many respondents provided reasons for volunteering that were not associated with the environment itself. Some of these volunteers identified an element of person gain from their activity. One respondent identified that "helping to improve water quality helps to improve my home and local environment, so there is a strong personal advantage". This sense was shared by others who saw conservation work as "working to protect my home and property". Another was motivated to protect his place of recreation so that there were "more animals to see while diving, and clean water to surf and swim in". For some, the personal advantage was the sense of well-being when they "do something for the greater good".

This element of health and well-being including a spiritual connection with the interdependence of human beings being connected to a healthy natural environment. As one respondent commented, “I love sailing, swimming and fishing. I love the coastal Zen”. Volunteering for some also “offset some of my guilt about not being able to reduce my environmental footprint as much as I should and at least feel that 'I've done my bit”, whilst another shared, “for me it is more sense of self-satisfaction that in a small way my work is doing good”.

This data reveals a range of ways in which volunteering supports a level of personal gain, be it material and financial, emotional, or for personal satisfaction.

5.3.2.8 Social and community engagement

Respondents outlined the importance of participating in a well-regarded, very active group, stating that this “made me feel connected with the broader community”. The community and social role of volunteering was identified by one respondent who stated, “I volunteer because if there weren't volunteers to do the work we do, it simply wouldn't get done! Other agencies can't afford to pay people to do the work that we do”.

The social advantage was also seen to be important to families, with education of children being important. Those for whom social and community engagement was a priority stated that working with the community supported a “holistic sense of well-being” … associated with their volunteering which for them had become a … “driving force and way of life.”

This data identifies the sense of responsibility volunteers have to engage with the community and local conservation, as well as the gains they make through this social and community engagement.

This section has presented qualitative data drawn from open-ended questions regarding the motivations to engage in coastal environmental conservation volunteering. To

summarise the data, it was aligned again with the CCG Functions Framework. The data reinforced all the functions identified in the framework. However, it also raised the potential for two new functions.

The education, research and documentation motivations fit comfortably within the Understanding function and refer to both the dissemination of knowledge and the gaining of knowledge, as well as to the generation of new knowledge through research and monitoring.

The functions of Sense of Place and Connection to Nature were seen to converge in the qualitative data, with the Sense of Place and Connection to Nature identified simultaneously as a single motivation by most respondents.

The Future Generations theme that emerged strongly in the qualitative aligns well with the Values of the motivational functions overview. The same was identified for the qualitative theme giving back/reciprocity and the function Reciprocity.

While both concerns and conservation and environmental care were identified initially within the function of Environmental Care, they were later separated based on key qualitative differences of the ideas expressed by each. The former appeared to reflect a broader environmental issue associated with human influence on, and misuse of the environment. The latter addresses the activities volunteers undertake as conservation and environmental care. Thus, there is potential for a new function, Concerns for the Environment to be added to the CCG Functions Framework.

Qualitative differences emerged between the Social Interaction function in the qualitative data and that in the CCG Functions Framework. The functions outlined the networks and links to colleagues as well as links to family and workplace motivations to volunteer. However, in addition to these local networks, the qualitative data also identified as critical the connections to the whole community (local, national and global) through volunteering, which extended networks far beyond those of the CCG. It is noted at this early

stage in the data analysis, that the increase in global connectedness and networking may have emerged since global engagement with issues such as climate change and sustainability having increased in both pace and outreach since the initial establishment of the functions by Clary et al. (1998) and others.

Not listed in the functions of the CCG was the motivation for Personal Gain that emerged in the qualitative data, with individuals being motivated to improve their property values, lifestyle, and personal amenity which was a less altruistic motivation than those identified in the functions.

It follows that the CCG functions may need re-examination and auditing with the proposition of three new functions: Global Sustainability and Conservation; Global Social Networks' and Personal Gain. Further data analysis in the sections that follow will support or negate these functions.

5.4 CCG activities

As outlined in Chapter 4, Item 5 included two sub items: a closed item which asked respondents to indicate the main general types of activities they had participated in with their CCG and one that invited an open-ended response. This section analyses the closed items first, followed by an analysis of data from the open-ended item which illustrates and extends the understanding of volunteer activities within the CCGs.

It can be seen in Table 5-16 that volunteers take on a broad range of roles within their CCG.

Table 5-16. *Frequency of CCG activities.*

Activity	**Frequency (%)**
Restoration	76
Monitoring	73
Education	64
Advocacy	61
Sustainable living	48

The data shows that more than half of the participants participated in most, if not all the roles identified in the data. This data also indicates that these roles are generally distributed across all members. Seen as core functions of environmental conservation groups, the activities of restoration (76%) and monitoring (73%) were identified as the activities most commonly associated with coastal volunteer work. While these numbers are significant, this data supports an inference that the balance of the volunteer corps may not be directly involved directly in conservation activities, around 25% of all respondents. While conservation activities, directly related to the local coastal area are most frequently undertaken by volunteers, the other activities feature strongly in their activities. More than 60% of volunteers engage in education about, and advocacy for the support of conservation (64% and 61% respectively). Again, the inference is that around 40% of volunteers who responded to this survey are not involved in education and advocacy. The activity identified as being the least commonly shared among volunteers is sustainable living (48%), focusing on working with the community on environmental impact. It appears from the data that while all volunteers are involved in multiple aspects of the CCG organisational activities with a broad reach into activities that are directly, but also indirectly related to the environment itself, there is a likelihood of some specialisation, with many volunteers not associating their engagement with all of the categories of activities that were listed.

5.4.1 CCG activities: Open-ended responses

Thirty-eight respondents used Item 5's supplementary open response to provide more information about the activities in which they had participated with their CCG. The responses to this open item were analysed, coded and categorised as key themes using the three level processes described earlier in Section 5.3.2.

The initial coding process of the qualitative data generated five preliminary codes, which became confirmed through the data for logic, suitability, and relevance: Collaboration and community engagement; Advocacy for the environment; Education; Monitoring and Restoration. One additional code, Administration and leadership (within the group), emerged as a result of further analysis using open coding. As the codes were separate and recognised different meanings, they could not be merged into other codes I categorised them as key themes. These themes are presented in Table 5-17 along with illustrations of respondent commentary keywords within each theme.

Table 5-17. *Activity themes and respondent commentary keywords.*

Theme	**Commentary Keywords**
Administration and leadership (within the group)	Writing, formatting, distribution, organising, publishing.
Collaboration and community engagement	Working with other local organisations, local councils, government, and community groups.
Advocacy for the environment	Advocating, reviewing, opposing, supporting.
Education	Education, talks.
Monitoring	Monitoring, observing, watching.
Restoration	Digging, planting.

Four of the themes described in Table 5.17 were also identified as important in the quantitative data, namely advocacy, education, monitoring, and restoration.

5.4.1.1 Administration and leadership (within the group)

Administration and leadership is a theme that emerged from the qualitative data that was not included in the quantitative item. Administration activities were identified as being a heavy load for some volunteers, and for many, it was a long-term commitment, such as the volunteer who helped "manage the organisation as a member of the management committee, previously the secretary and now the president". Administration involved significant and coordinated work on policy making, both relevant to the group, and beyond. Communication was regarded as a central function to the operations of these groups. Many individuals identified the work that they engaged in, as being part of their volunteer group, such as the day to day operations involved in the formatting and distribution of newsletters, brochures, managing social media and websites. Others also acknowledged the time involved in the "application and administration of grants for environmental focused projects" as well as local fund-raising efforts. Other activities included planning for "on-ground″ conservation actions.

5.4.1.2 Collaboration and community engagement

Volunteers did not work only within their group, but their activity was seen to be collaborative as they engaged with other groups and organisations. This included activities that, for instance, "advocated for or with local Aboriginal people and traditional owners to promote the concept of 'Caring for Country' and 'Closing the Gap' and land rights justice". Another respondent identified that they were presently "working on the South Australian Ministerial advisory committee for the declaration of Marine Protected Areas".

Community work also included working with several local stakeholder groups such as the local "Community Engagement Officer in introducing the REEF Search program to educational and tourism organisations". Furthermore, organisations were involved with other similar regional environmental organisations "on state-wide and federal issues relating to the environment, (offering) support to campaigns run by other community groups". Overlapping

administration and community work, members of CCGs were also involved in the organisation of community events and festivals such as the "Wildflower Festival", events with an environmental theme, and art exhibitions, ranging to "promoting kite making and flying as an alternative to balloons.

Community engagement also overlapped with education as some respondents identified the types of interactions that occurred between conservation groups and community members, which included not only positive relationships but also antagonism. One respondent described the conflict and outcry that resulted from the removal of exotic species and the introduction of native species in public land adjoining their private property. This respondent identified how a successful outcome was enabled through "encouraging some people to a have better understanding of these things".

5.4.1.3 Advocacy for the environment

Advocacy for the environment was described by respondents as being a variety of actions. They identified how their CCGs took a big picture view, as they reviewed legislation and other materials, scrutinising and "researching connections between developers, big business and government departments and the minister in order to build clear pictures of who is responsible for destruction of our beaches".

Respondents outlined the way they responded, through "data collection and analysis, to inform decision making (such as) opposing inappropriate developments". They identified how they worked at local council level, commenting on the town plan, as well as "reviewing policy at the state and federal levels that impact environmental issues". Volunteers lobbied for the environment at public events such as the "corporate Conferences at the Ramada Marcoola, with presentations and field activities as well as delivering sessions at local government forums with council officers and councillors". At the most granular, local level,

CCGs engaged in activities such as lobbying for turtle-friendly street lights in their local area, or the creation of walking tracks through a range of ecosystems.

5.4.1.4 Education

A key function of volunteers within CCGs was education. Respondents identified how they spend time creating articles for community information, and working with schools, councils and the broader community to develop and disseminate educational resources. They also planned and manned educational stalls in public areas. They claimed that their involvement and interest was so that "the more people are aware of their continued existence along the coast and the threats to their existence the greater the possibility of influencing a behavioural change"

Education was not limited to the local community. Several volunteers identified their role in publishing research papers and delivering sessions at conferences and symposiums to disseminate their message more broadly.

5.4.1.5 Monitoring

The monitoring of the coastal environment was identified as a common core activity across all CCGs. These activities included "water testing and monitoring of the physical condition of the river and its surrounds, also monitoring human activity and its impact on the river system". They collaborated with other organisations such as the South Australian Whale Centre to observe and document whales in the local coastal environment. Other monitoring activities included documentation of feral animals and weeds with the aim of instigating control measures. Many reported the monitoring of turtles, hatchlings and marine strandings as being central to their operations. Respondents also identified the "importance of photographing and filming to document the environmental changes as good record keeping".

5.4.1.6 Restoration

By far the most common activity identified by respondents was that of restoration of coastal environments. They described activities such as cleaning up and removing rubbish, auditing marine debris and clean-ups, even including "rubbish from previous decades" after erosion events and flood debris. Volunteers identified how they participated in the control of feral animals such as rabbits in dunes and hind dunes, and feral cats near mutton bird rookeries, as well as the removal of organisms such as feral oysters. Some respondents identified a role in the rehabilitation of native wildlife.

Restoration also involved weed and pest plant control, and the planting and replanting of native trees. Physical works included the "installation of nesting boxes in local bushland", the construction of a "4.7 km walking track", and operations such as "the installation of coir logs to minimise erosion in riparian zones". As one participant succinctly put it, this involved "clearing flood litter, preparing, digging, planting, staking, watering, and maintaining native flora and fauna habitats".

To summarise the qualitative data on activities that were undertaken within CCGs, they were aligned with the CCG Functions Framework, which is shown in Table 5-18. This alignment reinforces the usefulness of the CCG Functions Framework to support the understanding of the motivations, activities, benefits and outcomes of volunteering in the coastal environment.

Table 5-18. *CCG Functions Framework and activities.*

Function	Broad Description of Function	Qualitative data—Activities
Career	Gaining career related experience and professional skills through volunteering	Alignment with university students and experts. Post-career movement in community leadership.
Connection to Nature	The physically and psychologically benefit by being close to nature and reconnecting with nature	Enjoyment of the restoration and monitoring activities.

Function	Broad Description of Function	Qualitative data—Activities
Environmental Care	Enactment of a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, with an enhanced sense of purpose	The operations, restoration and monitoring activities.
Personal Enhancement	Psychological and physical growth and development, improved health and personal growth	Evolution of roles and responsibilities. Advocacy roles and satisfaction.
Project Organisation	Participating in a CCG that is well regarded for its preparedness and good project management	The management and administrative functions. Planning and operational details.
Reciprocity	Helping others and 'doing good' in the belief that their volunteering work will bring good things for the volunteer themselves, thus beneficial to the helper	Helping others, mutual support within and across CCGs and the community more broadly.
Recognition	Recognition of skills and contribution and associated confidence growth	Recognition as experts on a local, regional, national and global stage in order to promote their work.
Sense of Place	Enacting a sense of responsibility for the local area	The sense of place 'our area', 'our zone'.
Social	Strengthening his or her social relationship with work colleagues, family and friends	Crossing over into social, local community events. Collaboration among volunteer groups.
Social Interaction	Strengthening of his or her social relationships through enhanced social engagement with others; Building of social networks and enjoyment of the aspects of social interaction with others	Social relationships through enhanced social engagement with others; Building of social networks and enjoyment of the aspects of social interaction.
Understanding	Learning more about the world or exercising skills that are often unused through social learning and growth of content knowledge	The monitoring and research function and conservation activity, species identification, physical and manual skills to build, environmental understanding through liaison with other bodies and universities.
Values	Expressing and acting on important values like humanitarianism and altruism	The inculcation of values within the community.

As identified in the summary of the section on motivation to engage, three new functions of volunteering specific to coastal conservation were proposed, namely Global Sustainability and Conservation, Global Social Networks, and Personal Gain. The first two are evident in the activities identified by the volunteers who responded to the survey. The third function, namely Personal Gain may be embedded in the activities of monitoring and restoration as a motivation to engage but is not explicitly linked to this data set.

5.5 Volunteers satisfaction

Item 2 asked volunteers to identify whether their reasons for volunteering had been supported and met in their activity within the CCGs. Two items were included. The first was a Likert-style item asking volunteers to identify how each motivation was met, with choices ranging from Always Met, Mostly Met, Sometimes Met, and Not Met.

5.5.1 Volunteer satisfaction: Closed responses

The data in Table 5-19 shows the reasons for participation in CCG volunteer groups. Respondents were asked to identify whether these reasons, as needs and motivations to participate, were met through their participation in volunteering in their CCG. The link between reasons to participate and perceiving these needs to be met is an indicator of satisfaction with the CCG. Table 5-19 shows both reasons to volunteer as functions, and the percentage of volunteers who perceive this function to be met.

Table 5-19. *Volunteer satisfaction by function, importance and being met.*

Function	**Important (% average)**	**Not Important (% average)**	**Always Met / Mostly Met (% average)**	**Sometimes / Not Met (% average)**
Career	40 ↓	66 ↑	53 →	47 ↓
Connection to Nature	91 ↑	9 ↓	88 ↑	12 ↓
Environmental Care	96 ↑	4 ↓	82 ↑	18 ↓
Personal Enhancement	52 →	48 →	70 ↑	30 ↓
Project Organisation	63 ↑	37 ↓	67 ↑	33 ↓
Reciprocity	93 ↑	7 ↓	83 ↑	17 ↓
Recognition	38 ↓	62 ↑	65 ↑	35 ↓
Sense of Place	92 ↑	8 ↓	76 ↑	24 ↓
Social	19 ↓	81 ↑	45 →	55 →
Social Interaction	55 →	46 →	68 ↑	32 ↓
Understanding	83 ↑	17 ↓	72 ↑	28 ↓
Values	94 ↑	6 ↓	83 ↑	19 ↓

Icons in the form of arrows were used to identify trends in the data. They were added to the rows to identify greater or less than average for that row. The upward arrows indicate a percentage of responses greater than 60%, thus trending towards agreement. The downward arrows indicate a percentage of responses below 40%, thus trending towards disagreement. The horizontal arrows identify averages between 40 and 60% where there was neither a strong agreement nor disagreement with the functions' level of importance. It must be noted that the two datasets are not linked.

Overall, the data shows that most of the functions are perceived by participants to be met at least most of the time within CCG group activity. When the percentage frequency is plotted against the functions (as shown in Figure 5-4) except for the Social and Career

functions (both of which fit outside the community of practice of the CCG), between 60 and 88% of respondents felt that they are met by the CCG.

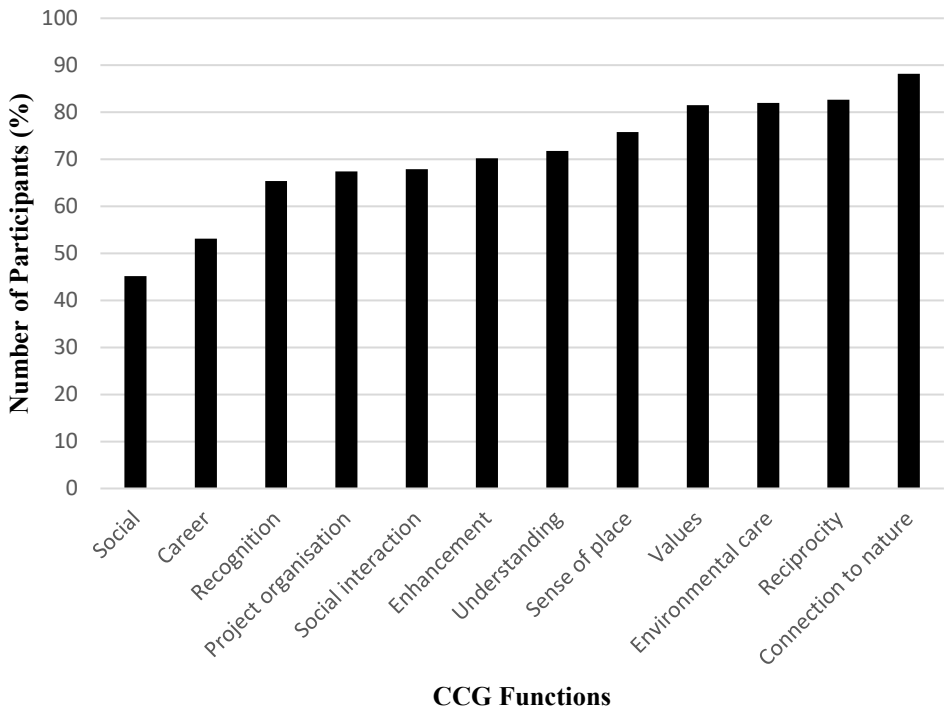

Figure 5-4. Frequency (%) of participants who identify CCG functions.

There appears to be room for improvement. So, depending on the intrinsic value placed on the function, there is a reciprocal set of data which identifies that between 24% an 35% of respondents feel that the functions of Sense of Place, Understanding, Personal Enhancement, Social Interaction, Project Organisation and Recognition as a volunteer are not always met in the CCG. The functions of Connection to Nature, Reciprocity, Environmental Care and Values are seen by less than 20% of participants to be not always met by the CCG. Thus, functions associated directly with conservation activities are seen to be better met than personally oriented functions in general, with organisational activities such as the functions of Project Management, Social Interaction, Understanding and place-based activities fitting somewhere in between.

The data shown in Table 5-19 identifies areas in volunteering where expectations are exceeded, even where they were perceived to be unimportant. For instance, while less than half (40%) of participants identified the function of Career as a reason to participate, more than half found that this was generally met. While just over half of participants (52%) identified the Personal Enhancement function as a motivation and 70% found that participation in the CCG supported this function. The satisfaction with the function Social Interaction was similar, and while 55% of participants identified it as primary motivator to participate, 68% felt that it was met in their CCG activities. In addition, while only 19% identified that there was an external social motivator to participate, close to half (45%) of participants felt that external social functions had been met.

The data shown in Table 5-19 identifies areas where expectations are generally met. Establishing or maintaining a Connection to Nature was regarded as important by almost all the participants (91% agreement) and was seen to be always or mostly met by 88% of respondents. Thus, it can be inferred that close to 90% of participants believe that this function is met by the CCG. Also important to participants (96%) was the function of Environmental Care, although there was a slightly lower perception that this function had been met (82%) by respondents. Growing or contributing to peoples' understanding of the environment was seen to be important to 83% of respondents, and with 72% perceiving this function to be met, there is potentially a small group of individuals who do not see this function to be met.

Table 5-19 shows that there are functions that are regarded as important by volunteers, but which are seen to be less comprehensively met by the CCG. The Reciprocity function was seen by most participants (93%) to be an important function of volunteering, however with 83% believing that this function was met, or mostly met, there appears to be a gap in expectations and satisfaction in this area. This gap was slightly larger when

considering the importance of the function Sense of Place to 92% of participants, while only 76% of participants felt that this was met by participation in the CCG. Again, there is a potential gap between volunteers' motivations to participate, and their needs for volunteering being satisfied.

Overall, as shown in Figure 5-5, which presents a scatterplot of importance (%) and functions which are always or mostly met (%), as importance rises, in general the functions are seen to be met, indicating general satisfaction with the functions of the CCG. The graph shows the clustering of the data, with active environmental conservation functions clustered at the high end, and other functions distributed across the balance of the plot. It also shows, as identified in the discussion above, that some functions are seen to exceed expectations in terms of motivations to engage, and others, below the line may not meet expectations in terms of being perceived to have been met.

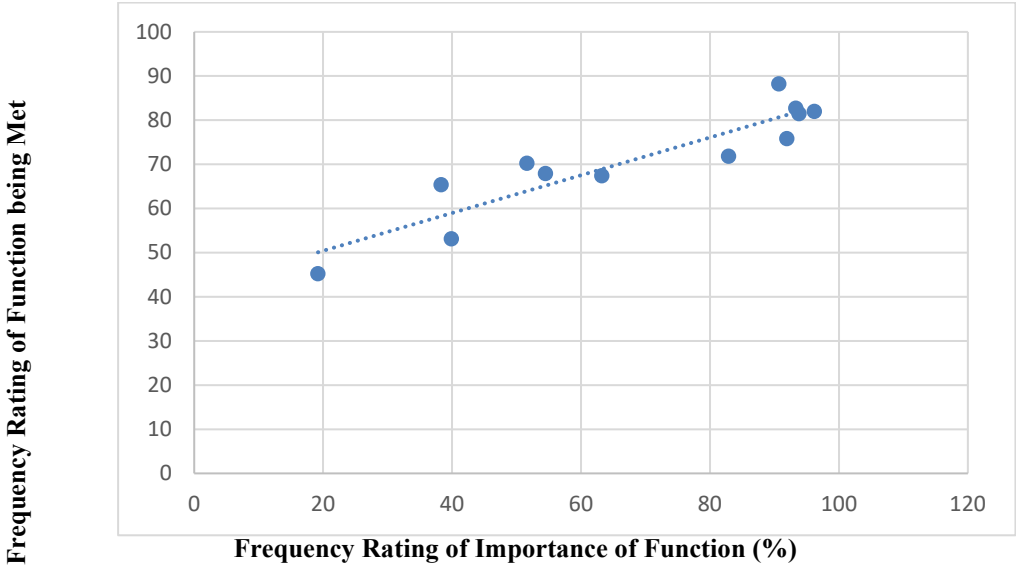

Figure 5-5. Importance of function versus rating of being met.

In summary, ranking of the closed-data responses identifies three clusters of functions which can generally be ranked in terms of perceptions of being met by volunteers. The functions identified as least met by fewest of the volunteers are those associated with personal factors such as Career, Recognition and Social functions. Loosely clustered in the

middle, in terms of numbers of volunteers who identify these functions as being met, are those that are associated with the organisation and its functions, such as the functions of Project Organisation, Social Interaction and Understanding. At the top end, and with which there is consensus that participation in the CCG meets these needs are the environmental aspects of volunteering in CCGs are, namely, Values, Reciprocity, Environmental Care and the Sense of Place within the environment. Again, these functions reflect the diversity of the individuals who gather together within CCGs to perform a range of complex activities and taskes with the key purpose of conservation of the coastal environment. The graph in Figure 5-5 shows that there is a general alignment and relationship between the importance of the function, and it being perceived to have been met through volunteering in the CCG. Thus, general satisfaction can be identified in all functions of the CCG.

5.5.2 Volunteer levels of satisfaction: Open-ended responses

Seventy-three respondents used the Item 2's supplementary open response item to provide more information about how their level of satisfaction in terms of their reasons for volunteering being satisfied. The commentary of this open question was analysed, coded and categorised using the three level processes described earlier in Section 5.3.2.

The data was complex. Individuals took the opportunity to add further detail to their motivations and reasons for engaging with volunteering in CCGs to justify their assessment of satisfaction. Often, the degree to which volunteers' needs were met were implicit in their response rather than explicit, and therefore had to be identified by inference based upon what they said. Most of these individuals made statements related to satisfaction with their activities and organisation, stretching beyond needs being met to an evaluation in terms of satisfaction. For instance, when claiming an effective conservation role within a council area one respondent said, "for over 50 years, with many successes in conserving coastal assets (we) created a broadly accepted community sentiment around (our region) which is barely

evident (elsewhere) because there has not been as effective engagement". This individual is clearly satisfied with their role and the outcomes of conservation, and their pride in the achievement reflects motivations and needs being met.

While the quantitative item required a closed response in terms of these functions being met, the qualitative data led to the identification of a far more complex understanding of the functions of the CCG. When the two were compared, the functions approach used in the Likert-type questions appears to be an over-simplification of the complexity of environmental volunteering.

5.5.2.1 Volunteering functions

Where organisations were linked to the maintenance and improvement of areas such as coastal reserves and national parks, they were generally identifying as meeting volunteers' expectations. Several responses did not explicitly identify needs being met, but it was present in the wording of responses, such as, "I became a volunteer because I can, not because I have to, and I love it".

Similar comments communicated implicit meeting of volunteer needs, such as, "the organisation I volunteer with constantly provides me with inspiration to do more, to do it better and to help others on this journey". Many identified that the pleasure of seeing changes in the environment brings was its own reward. In terms of knowledge generation, several responses identified the reward they get in having the opportunity to participate in citizen-science and using their expertise for the benefit of the environment. This clearly expresses satisfaction in this function of volunteering.

Many individuals grouped functions together. One stated that "educating others about the importance of preserving the natural environment and building an environmentally sustainable community were needs that were mostly met".

Another commented in terms of the function of project organisation, reciprocity, and social interaction that, “I am very satisfied with the organisations that I am involved with, they are well supported and resourced and full of like-minded people (all from diverse backgrounds) coming together for a common good”.

For others, satisfaction is more personal, and associated with personal enhancement, with one individual stating that, “I have not rated my level of satisfaction to some questions … for me it is more a sense of self-satisfaction that in a small way my work changes something”.

This internal sense of meeting needs was also associated with seeking a personal sense of balance: “To a certain extent I offset some of my guilt about not being able to reduce my environmental footprint as much as I should”.

The function of Understanding was identified across the data as being generally met, such as in the comment that, “educating others about the importance of preserving the natural environment and building an environmentally sustainable community are mostly met”. One individual discussed how they:

> Started volunteering on the coastal environment because I was a trained bush regenerator and felt my skills could help community groups with getting their work done. Overall, I was satisfied and felt that my skills were and are put to good use.

Many volunteers also identified satisfaction in the mere act of engaging in conservation activities, for instance meeting the need to “achieve extraordinary things for the environment”.

As stated earlier, the data was often lacking in direct reference to the meeting of the needs and individual reasons for volunteering. This data set was rich in terms of identification of spiritual connections with nature and the local environment which in itself provided satisfaction for these participants. For instance, “health and well-being, including a spiritual

connection with the interdependence of human beings being connected to a healthy, natural environment". As in the previous example, these individuals gain intrinsic satisfaction through the mere act of volunteering and contributing to conservation of an environment that they love.

Overall, drawing on this data, it appears that in general, and in agreement with the quantitative data on volunteer satisfaction, most individuals feel that the functions of volunteering are met in terms of satisfaction.

5.5.2.2 External organisations

However, there are some exceptions to the functions theme, such as the influence of external organisations and people on the satisfaction of volunteers. One individual who had experienced a variety of external supports and barriers commented that her involvement with one project led to great satisfaction and motivation to continue:

> The early Shorebirds 2020 Project Officers from Melbourne were extremely supportive, and I spent every summer for about 5 summers presenting at weekend workshops we were hosting in our area … again an incredibly positive experience … they also featured our work in their publications and genuinely recognised and encouraged my leadership.

The foregoing suggests that the collegiality of individuals within the project organisation was of critical importance, but also that the formal recognition of this volunteer's knowledge, skills and insight in the local area was sufficiently valuable as to be publishable.

5.5.2.3 Personal needs vs conservation needs

For many, the question of satisfaction was problematic, and the concept of 'meeting needs' was irrelevant in the context of volunteering in terms of a job that just "has to be done". A comment was made about expectations of needs being met: "Expectations seems an

odd measure to use as it assumes, we always expect something. Connecting with people and Mother Nature is simply a pathway to express and experience unconditional love". Another concurs with this position, expressing a perception that there are insufficient numbers to support the cause, but identifying that even if their needs are not met, this is viewed as motivation to continue, "the task is enormous, and the workers are few. The challenge remains and is a strong driver to me".

A range of factors were identified in the data that led to a sense of dissatisfaction or unhappiness with the operation of CCGs. These fit into two categories. The first category includes those factors internal to the operations of the CCG and the second includes those that are external to the CCG.

5.5.2.4 Volunteer numbers and dynamics

Of concern across the data set is the impact of low volunteer numbers on a sense of personal and organisational satisfaction, emerging strongly as an organisational need that was not always met:

> It is difficult to get volunteers and few people are keen on a structured commitment or regular meetings. Organisation then falls to the few to do. This is a problem with all volunteer groups. In small communities the pool of volunteers is also small, and this limits the amount that you can do which can be frustrating.

The dynamics among volunteers within the organisation, including its leadership, are also identified as leading to dissatisfaction. It was succinctly commented that the organisation "is composed of people, so it is not absolutely perfect!". Another respondent identified how they "recently had much turmoil within our organisation. We were treated as subordinates. We should be enjoying what we do. We should be doing it for love".

The impact of leadership and membership changes was identified to have long-term implications in terms of satisfaction. One volunteer recalled how:

> The level of satisfaction is low because the place has been taken over since 2009 by persons of one political idea and whose aim is power and money in the form of expenses and creating themselves jobs or part-time work and ethnically cleansing the organisation of community persons and volunteers.

The concept of "ethnic cleansing" infers that the old school volunteer, and/or the existing corps of members were forced to withdraw from the organisation. Clearly factional beliefs can be the source of great dissatisfaction within a CCG.

5.5.2.5 External organisations and recognition

As another internal factor but closely linked to organisations and bodies external to the group, the economic and financial maintenance of the organisation through cycles of funding was identified as being a problem in which organisational needs were not met: "Funding though is a bit hit and miss as targets set by the government are not always what your local group needs in that year. This makes it hard to get continuity".

External factors are more commonly identified by volunteers as impacting their sense of satisfaction. Several volunteers felt the need to raise issues associated with "the local government, who are the land managers, and who really make the rules, lay down the conditions for volunteer projects etc". Reward for effort appears in the data to be linked in a large way to the organisation overseeing projects, and which are out of the control of local volunteer groups. In one case, a volunteer stated, "The QWPS [Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services] projects were a little effective and rather rewarding experiences, but the CEP [Communities Environmental Program] programs tended to be a complete waste of time". The sense of making a valued contribution is often threatened by individuals and organisations outside the CCG:

> We can help to save the turtles on our little beach, and I get no thank you from senior people. We buy our own gear and some senior staff still put shit on us. And we know

> they cannot do it as they have no staff to look after our beach. We have learned that with knowledge comes respect as we keep our own stats we sometimes disagree with some experts, we have the facts to disagree with them. (But they) just dismiss us and me.

This sense of having their expertise dismissed by experts was a consistent theme across many volunteer responses. One volunteer thought that "if I provided good solid data over a long period of time then this information could be used by environmental managers to better inform their management priorities. Sadly, this has rarely been the case". A sense of this was further communicated by volunteers that "without peer reviewed publication of my work, many of my observations and opinions are often relegated to a kind of second-tier status". A concern about gender inequity was also raised in this regard, with an opinion that "had I been a bloke I don't think my volunteer status would have been such a handicap".

This contrasts with the sense of satisfaction that a volunteer expressed when her work was rewarded by funding, and her insight was rewarded when she was given a position to train the volunteers. While operating within umbrella organisations with reduced dependency on funding and governance of the CCG, volunteers communicated some discouragement when the organisation in charge used volunteers' work, pushed for media opportunities with "dodgy data" and was found to lack integrity and professionalism. These organisations also forced volunteer groups to wait for unacceptable time periods for reimbursement of expenses. Given that most are retirees, the wait of many months was seen to be "a nightmare".

Often, volunteers communicate a sense of working against the system and people who surround them. One individual identified the nightmare of corruption at all levels of society, feeling that their efforts would come to nothing, and could be regarded as a "drop in the ocean, a waste of time". This perception was explained by another as being the questionable connection among "big business/mining/developers etc. and governments".

In summary, reviewing the qualitative data on satisfaction of volunteers are generally happy with the functions of their CCG until challenges arise to their leadership structure and function. Where leadership and organisational ethos is more democratic and based on consensus, there is little in the internal functioning of CCGs that significantly threaten satisfaction. The dynamics within the organisation when cliques of individuals emerge threatens the satisfaction of all. There are also perennial issues such as funding and volunteer numbers that influence the sense of sustainability of the CCG itself, but the data indicates that these factors are often regarded as opportunities rather than obstacles. The biggest threat to the satisfaction of volunteers apart from inter-personal dynamics is the organisational and political structure within which they work. Volunteers communicated that the greatest threat was the questioning of their capability to manage coastal environmental programs effectively in terms of their expertise as non-professionals or their academic credentials. The data contains several narratives of persistence in the face of these obstacles. But in an increasingly challenging environmental context, addressing the external issues appears, from the data, to be a great step towards the satisfaction of volunteers and longevity of their CCG. The data shows good alignment with the CCG Functions Framework, as shown in Table 5-20.

Table 5-20. *CCG Functions Framework and satisfaction.*

Function	**Broad Description of Function**	**Qualitative data—Satisfaction**
Career	Gaining career related experience and professional skills through volunteering.	Career and skills development are met for those to whom it is important.
Connection to Nature	The physically and psychologically benefit by being close to nature and reconnecting with nature.	The spiritual connection with nature is well met.
Environmental Care	Enactment of a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, with an enhanced sense of purpose.	Generally, well met for all participants as a primary function of the CCG.

Function	Broad Description of Function	Qualitative data—Satisfaction
Personal Enhancement	Psychological and physical growth and development, improved health and personal growth.	Sense of satisfaction and fulfilment is well met. Enhancement of health and well-being.
Project Organisation	Participating in a CCG that is well regarded for its preparedness and good project management.	Well managed groups with sound leadership leads to satisfaction. However, autocratic actions or a lack of respect leads to turmoil.
Reciprocity	Helping others and 'doing good' in the belief that their volunteering work will bring good things for the volunteer themselves, thus beneficial to the helper.	Satisfaction that contributions are called for and valued in terms of doing good for the environment and the organisation.
Recognition	Recognition of skills and contribution and associated confidence growth.	Those seeking recognition are generally satisfied that they are rewarded. However, a barrier to satisfaction is the sense of not being recognised by many of the respondents.
Sense of Place	Enacting a sense of responsibility for the local area.	Satisfaction is expressed at the job complete.
Social	Strengthening his or her social relationship with work colleagues, family and friends.	Not addressed.
Social Interaction	Strengthening of his or her social relationships through enhanced social engagement with others; Building of social networks and enjoyment of the aspects of social interaction with others.	Social interaction is rewarding and well met when it is sound. But conflict among members poses a threat to the CCG if it is present and can lead to factions.
Understanding	Learning more about the world or exercising skills that are often unused through social learning and growth of content knowledge.	Educating others and being educated about the environment is met with satisfaction.
Values	Expressing and acting on important values like humanitarianism and altruism.	Satisfaction is measured by many as altruistic, the knowledge that they have done good. This need is met.

While there is good alignment with the CCG Functions Framework, one factor is not identified in the literature, and which has emerged as a strong influence on motivation and satisfaction in volunteering, as well as the range of activities in which the volunteers engage. This is an influence external to the CCG of government policy, structure and requirements of organisations within which CCGs operate. It is the strongest influence on the functions of leaders but influences satisfaction in a range of areas such as a sense of being valued and achieving the aims of the organisation which affects all volunteers in the organisation and their recruitment, satisfaction, and subsequent retention in the group. It is proposed that this is a function that should be added to the CCG Functions Framework, particularly in this era of rapid political change, strong environmental threat, reduced funding, and reducing volunteer numbers in conservation groups. Thus, added to the proposed functions Global Sustainability and Conservation, Global Social Networks, and Personal Gain there should be a new function namely, External Organisation.

5.6 Perceived benefits of volunteering

Item 6 included two types of item, namely a closed item which asked respondents to rank the benefits they had derived from volunteering and one that invited an open-ended response. This section analyses the closed items first, followed by analysis of the data from the open-ended item which illustrates and extends the understanding of the benefits that volunteers derive from their volunteering.

5.6.1 Benefits: Closed responses

The quantitative data shows that, ranked from one to four, as is developing across all data sets, the primary motivation and benefit is seen to be to protect the local environment, particularly the coastal environment, through enhanced knowledge and skills, and to reflect on and recognise the achievements in conservation.

Ranking below these benefits are those associated with working in nature, the social support of family and friends, work aspirations, and recognition. Ranked lowest are the benefits associated with friendships and the identity as volunteer. Table 5-21 lists the ranking of the benefits.

Table 5-21. *Benefits attained from volunteering.*

Ranking	Statement	Function
1	To protect where I live	Environmental Care
2	I have learned more about the coastal environment	Understanding
3	I have given back to the coastal environment what it has given me	Reciprocity
4	I am personally satisfied about my efforts for the coastal environment	Satisfaction
5	Being outside working with nature is enjoyable and fulfilling	Reconnect with Nature
6	My family and friends are happy that I am volunteering for the coastal environment	Social
7	Volunteering is helping me to get paid work	Career
8	My expertise, skills and experience are recognised by the organisation	Recognition
9	I have made new friends	Social Interaction
10	It is just good being a volunteer	Enjoyment

5.6.2 Benefits: Open-ended responses

Eighty-respondents used the question's supplementary open question to provide more information about the benefits they had received from volunteering. The commentary of this open question was analysed, coded and categorised using the three level processes described earlier in Section 5.3.2, and from which themes emerged.

The initial coding process generated five codes confirmed through the data for logic, suitability, and relevance. The outcome was the development of six themes, which are

presented in Table 5-22 along with illustrations of respondent transcript keywords within each category.

Table 5-22. *Benefit categories and commentary keywords.*

Category	**Commentary Key Words**
Environmental awareness	Awareness, responsibility.
Environmental achievements	Restored, regrew, achieved, helped, supported, recovery.
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge, skills, understanding.
Links to community and social benefits	Local community, networks, social connections.
Friendship	Friendship, friends.
Personal skills, opportunities and benefits	Speaking, leading, managing, communicating, career, job, experience.

The qualitative data, regarding the benefits identified by volunteers, reinforces what has become a message that is consistent across the data, that is the diversity of priorities of coastal conservation volunteers.

5.6.2.1 Environmental awareness

Volunteers identified the importance and benefit of having environmental awareness, "I have become more aware and understanding of other environmental issues; and have come to greater appreciation of the commitment and dedication of some of my fellow members on a broad range of environmental issues".

This awareness was also expressed as appreciation, of the local environment such as "our fragile coastline". Awareness was not only identified as a personal benefit. It was also seen as an opportunity, in terms of "a duty to create awareness and a sense of individual responsibility to protect the environment". This volunteer concluded that "it is good to know that I'm using my skills and resources to contribute to this cause".

5.6.2.2 Environmental achievements

Across this, and other datasets, individuals expressed appreciation such as seeing the rehabilitation tasks progress and stating that "seeing an area revegetated where once kikuyu and weeds proliferated", the landscape recovering, and "actually achieving improvements in erosion control, water quality and other benefits to the environment" as well as one comment that s/he felt they had "possibly stopped further abuse of the environment". Some volunteers identified the tangible benefits in managing populations of organisms, such as a sense of feeling "rewarded by helping protect endangered shorebirds". At its broadest, one volunteer identified the perceived benefit to them of "helping repay man's debt to mother nature". The environmental achievements were associated with individual roles as well, such as the individual who identified how his/her achievement was in gaining representation on government appointed advisory committees and councils, and thus contributing to policy direction and development.

5.6.2.3 Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding emerged as a strong theme in the qualitative report on perceived benefits. The knowledge dimension was, for many, learning about "biodiversity", "plant taxonomy", and "a more intimate knowledge of the local area, local native plants and animals", as well as its history. Specific skills were also identified, such as the development of "standardised protocols to assess fish distributions and subtidal marine debris loads". The benefit of the enhancement of knowledge at the professional level was also identified, one respondent identifying that it was developed through "exposure to informed and critical writing by experts in the field of environmental protection, climate change, sustainability issues, economics and the environment".

Knowledge and understanding were linked to the organisation itself. One respondent represented this benefit when he/she identified "a more focused understanding of how not for profits work, and their continual uphill battles to continue the work they do".

Many learned about issues such as the "culture of leadership and change in a community group focused on environmental protection, including a greater appreciation of power and authority".

Learning about the management of human resources was also a key benefit identified by many in the qualitative data. Many respondents identified a growth in their understanding of functions such as "policy making in terms of political expediency, and legislative frameworks". Associated with policy is the growth in awareness, also seen as a benefit, of the way in which funding applications are created, submitted and acquitted. For many though, this insight was also linked to comments about the lack of true democracy, a sense of being pawns in a bigger political game, and difficulties when working with policymakers.

5.6.2.4 Links to the community and social benefits

It was apparent that many volunteers considered that their involvement with a CCG had allowed them to connect more with their local communities in that they had developed "social connections with like-minded people", had increased their "networks and partnerships", had formed "closer collegiate relationships", felt that they had made a "contribution for the benefit of the community" and "had got to know people in my local community and shared experiences with them". Apart from the engagement with like-minded people, several respondents identified the benefits they had experienced in forging connections with the ideas of people from many different backgrounds. A number identified the benefit of being acknowledged for their contribution and role in environmental protection within the community and beyond. The links were not only social links, with respondents

identifying the importance of linkage to the community environmental resources as a sense of place and belongingness.

5.6.2.5 Friendship

Many volunteers considered that their participation in volunteering had resulted in good relationship with "like-minded friends" being formed. One individual's comment sums up volunteers' sentiments, "I consider that I belong to a tribe, the friends I have made as an environmental volunteer make my life worthwhile".

These links extended beyond the immediate local community, into the community of coastal volunteers, as volunteers identified the perceived benefits of actions and outcomes such as "building a state-wide network of underwater volunteer groups". Such actions were identified by others as contributing to "wide ranging long-time friendships across Australia".

5.6.2.6 Personal skills, opportunities and benefits

Personal skills growth as a benefit was identified in numerous areas. Many of the volunteers stated how they gained skills and experience in communication activities such as "public speaking, interacting with the media", and rallying support. Others identified skills growth in organisational leadership, such as "confidence in taking leadership roles within groups, coordinating and co-managing large projects" and "organising events".

Also associated with the theme of knowledge and skills, were volunteers who believed the experience that they had gained had increased their prospects for employment. One individual claimed that volunteering "helped me get practical experience while I finished a four-year degree in Environmental Science". Another respondent observed that it "providing directions for their career".

The benefits were more personal for many, particularly retirees, in maintaining fitness and lifestyle, always having something to do, keeping active, and helping them to "maintain a sense of purpose" in retirement.

Volunteering also provided some respondents with opportunities that they otherwise may not have been able to experience. Some of these opportunities included: “Free diving, seeing private properties and access to remote areas by boat, networking at the national and international level and gaining experience and professional regard”.

In summary, the benefits identified in the qualitative data revealed greater insight into the quantitative data. The themes of environmental awareness and achievement are aligned with the coastal conservation motivations that underpin the identity of the CCGs. Knowledge and understanding of the conservation environment were also identified as an important benefit emerging from volunteering. However, beyond the environment itself, the organisational functioning featured strongly in the responses of many who identified the benefits in learning how organisations functioned both in the local community and through interaction with policymakers and government bodies. The social and community functions of CCGs emerged as themes in the data, albeit not as strong as the environmental outcomes as benefits. The less altruistic and more individual motivations of volunteers were also present as perceived benefits, which included mental and physical well-being, activity and identity work in terms of maintaining a meaningful existence and purpose through volunteering. The Career function also emerged as an important benefit to some.

5.7 Uncategorised open-ended question

Respondents were asked, in the final survey item, to add any information they wished to share beyond that covered by the survey.

Seventy-eight responses were analysed using the qualitative methods described earlier. These responses affirmed the data already presented in identifying the diversity of motivations, activities, experiences and perceived benefits in volunteering. Some themes were threaded throughout the responses. These include the dependence on government both in terms of legislated support of the environment, and as funding bodies; the problems with

attracting volunteers; and problems emerging when a divide is perceived between volunteers and non-volunteers in the community.

5.7.1 Project achievements

Several responses identified the importance of recognising successful projects, the "tangible results you think volunteers feel they have achieved for their pet project". There was a tangible sense of pride in responses that did identify achievements. From the responses provided, these achievements are made in the face of significant barriers and obstacles to the ongoing functions of coastal environmental groups. While many, if not most of the responses, identified the nature of these barriers, a few individuals also proposed proactive solutions. Nonetheless, the responses identified many projects or initiatives that were failing due to a lack of support or manpower.

5.7.2 Coordination and management of CCGs

Volunteers identified the lack of coordination and support from environmental agencies, which is seen to lead to "inefficient, ineffective or even counterproductive outcomes, and as a result "volunteer burn-out is common". Also identified across numerous responses was the lack of communication between, and the coordination of adjacent volunteer groups. A coordinated approach to environmental management was suggested by several participants, exemplified by the suggestion that "all programs could benefit from pooling the knowledge (and resources) of the individual organisations together, and this would simplify reporting and accessing coastal volunteering information for volunteers and administrators".

In terms of the functions of CCGs, the research and monitoring activities across different organisations were also identified as being poorly coordinated as "I know of at least three different organisations undertaking underwater biodiversity surveys, but they don't work together or even as far as I know, communicate with each other". One volunteer

articulated their "vision for Victoria and then Australia-wide where environmental groups can, metaphorically, hold hands around the entire coast … also standardisation of group nomenclature around the country". The latter was explained in terms of ease of cross-connecting and networking volunteer groups. This ambition was shared by many, who aimed to link like-minded, complementary groups. This function is seen by some to be the responsibility of the groups themselves, others see this as a function of the agencies.

5.7.3 CCGs and government

Others reiterated their passion and dismay at the loss of coastal environments, their irreplaceable nature, and the imperative for "government to listen and start being EFFECTIVE in restoring and improving our coastal environment into the future".

Governments wer claimed to be unresponsive in the face of such dire need. This is the issue raised commonly in this set of responses, "volunteer work is appreciated but under-valued by government and business. More funding for programs and program coordinators is needed". This critique of government went all the way to policy, and federal and state frameworks. Other political issues raised include the threat to funding when volunteer groups "make waves", and the balancing act between lobbying and overstepping these boundaries. This is claimed to sometimes "attract the label of being a non-effective group, a label that doesn't help recruitment". Nonetheless, the benefit of working with government agencies where policies support this work is acknowledged to be successful, opening a window for the supported enhancement of CCGs.

5.7.4 Group dynamics and leadership

Group dynamics emerged again, and the destructiveness of the actions of individuals within the group in terms of "membership of other groups and ownership of the area" was mentioned as a reason why groups potentially may not survive.

While retirees are in the majority in coastal volunteer organisations, they were identified by some to be difficult to work with, and "stubborn in their approach to land management, not open to contemporary ideas about coastal land management".

This attitude is identified to be similar across numerous groups. This respondent described the difficulty of full-time working parents in maintaining their support for volunteer groups and the lack of consideration of their needs by those who no longer have these responsibilities.

Other conflicts were identified in terms of the way the CCG operates and approaches its functions, nominally called "quality control". This participant identified the technical weaknesses of their organisation's approach to environmental volunteering, and the sense that this approach was not leading to the maximum environmental benefit.

5.7.5 CCGs, non-participation, and the wider community

One respondent introduced the issue of a sense of separation of CCGs from the community, including a two-way lack of understanding between these groups. They identified how "invisible volunteering is to the wider community", stating that while the community expected clean beaches and the environs, they "have no idea who cleans up after them" after events such as Australia Day, in which "proud Aussies waving their flags leave their rubbish everywhere". Volunteers indicated that they are often misunderstood, and even abused by locals who have no understanding of their work.

A few respondents communicated impatience with those who do not volunteer, particularly with what was seen to be the trivial reasons for non-action. This includes "reasons that vary from selfish to downright silly, ignorance of the Australian bushland and of natural landscapes". A frustrated respondent said:

> The community included people who would be happy to see the foreshore reserve cleared of bush vegetation and concreted over. As long as green lawns and roses are

> the acme of their landscape appreciation, there will not be a lot of local support here for coastal preservation or restoration.

Another respondent outlined the perceived reasons why people do not volunteer in CCGs, including:

> I don't like weeding; I have a bad back; I have to get my exercise by cycling/walking; I have a dog and have to walk him; I work and I don't have time to volunteer; I don't work but I mind my grandchildren; I need to use my spare time for family activities; I am afraid of snakes; I am lazy and just like to walk at the beach; I am not interested.

Others took a more sympathetic approach, outlining how the diverse set of volunteers require different approaches to support their participation including praise, energy from others, encouragement, and coaching. For instance, a suggestion was that once the link is made through community education initiatives between tourist dollars, land and property values, and conservation of the natural environment, a greater range and increase in numbers of volunteers may be attracted to CCGs. A further suggestion is that routine tasks such as weed pulling are not popular while planned family events such as National Tree Day, or Australia Day attract families who often stay because they feel valued and accepted. One response identified the often-single mindedness of conservation and environmental concerns of environmental volunteers, which are seen to "outweigh the importance of building up the community of people with strong relationships". This respondent continued to outline the importance of mutual respect and acknowledgement of diversity and difference, through which individual styles and preferences are considered in establishing an environment within organisations that is far more community-minded and meets everyone's needs. This approach was seen to have potential in addressing the sense of mutual distrust and lack of understanding between volunteers and non-volunteers within the community.

The age of volunteers, and the identification of retirees as the most common element of membership has been seen to be a problem with sustainable membership. Table 5.1 indicated that 65% of volunteers were over 50 years of age with most of them being retired. Several respondents showed concern about the lack of younger volunteers and about what could be done to attract them A re-examination of the survey data supported respondents' comments about the participation of younger individuals in voluntary coastal conservation. Suggestions to address this include a greater focus on environmental education in schools and citizen-science programs to attract working people. A key issue that is seen to influence community members' decisions to volunteer is that of relevance and mutual understanding and engagement:

> Some new programs are needed which better cater for the interests, rights, opinions & needs of all the parties concerned with coastal environments, particularly for those residents directly affected by any activities. I'd like to see much greater objectivity & balance as far as attitudes, conditioning, and planning is concerned. I'd also like to see private residents encouraged to help in worthwhile functions (of relevance to them).

In summary, this optional and open-ended data set identified several barriers and obstacles facing CCGs. At all levels, volunteers claimed there was ignorance about the desperate plight of the environment, resulting in environmental lobbyists and volunteers being "discounted and sidelined". State and federal governments were identified as being increasingly "aligned to meeting profit-driven expectations of big business" in the face of an increasing ethos of "me first" within the nation. In contrast, formal financial and material support of environmental conservation was seen to be steadily reducing. A lack of understanding of environmental challenges facing the coastal community was threaded throughout the commentary of this data set. This lack of education and insight was associated

not only with local community members, but across business, industry, local, state and federal governments.

Non-volunteers were cited as not participating due to ill-health, competing priorities, the increasing busyness of life and a lack of prioritisation and awareness of the importance of coastal environmental conservation. Volunteers are cited as being engaged and concerned about the degradation of the coastal environment and are primarily retired. A lack of volunteer numbers is a theme that stretched across the data, including a focus on the need to recruit younger volunteers. However, a younger volunteer who was employed and had a family stated that they experienced issues with intractability and resistance to updating and changing approaches and methods due to the longevity of the leadership and the group. This was, they stated, a common factor across many groups that they had interacted with. Conflict within the group was also associated with long-term personal "ownership" of activities, routines and approaches, which was also seen to be a cause of reduced volunteer numbers, and withdrawal of support by many.

In summary, threaded through the data was the theme of a potential lack of mutual understanding between volunteers and the community. Some volunteers were highly critical of the conservation values and motivations of the community. Others identified the perceived lack of compromise between the needs of the community and the priorities of the environmental groups. They communicated the importance of establishing positive community relationships based upon diversity and personal needs, while also promoting the needs of the environment.

Finally, in the face of reduced volunteer numbers and resources, a key issue confronting CCGs is the lack of coordination across the groups, which would enhance the sharing of these resources, knowledge and expertise, as well as local knowledge and research

across the groups. This coordinated environmental management was seen to be more effective than the fragmented approach currently in practise.

Earlier data sets have identified the potential for new functions to be added to the CCG Functions Framework. These are Global Sustainability and Conservation, Global Social Networks and Personal Gain, and External Organisation.

Drawn from the current data set, critical influences as affordances and barriers to the operational functions of CCGs, motivation and satisfaction and perceived benefits of volunteering are three important functions. These are:

5.7.6 Community engagement

While this function might be subsumed into the function of Social Interaction, the latter is defined as individually determined social functions rather than that of the organisation and group of conservationists. While External Organisation has been proposed as a new function, the community engagement of conservation groups is separate and dependent on good relationships across the community. It is potentially unique to the conservation volunteering movement in that it directly influences the values and practices of the community, and interaction of competing priorities such as, for example, vegetation vs vista.

5.7.7 Coordination and interaction among the CCGs

The lack of coordination, where it is missing, is seen to lead to significant challenges to the operations and outcomes of coastal conservation. In the coastal conservation context, which is acknowledged to be unique, the coordination leads to enhance effectiveness and operational functionality given the continuity of the environment itself and interaction of ecosystems.

While CCGs may have operated in the past with loose political and governmental controls, in the climate of increasing neo-liberalism, CCGs are no longer able to function

without constraints, barriers, but also the affordances and supports of funding models. Thus, the already-proposed function of External Organisation is reinforced as a reasonable addition to the CCG Functions Framework, through which greater understanding can be lent to the operations and activities of CCGs and their volunteers.

Thus, in summary, it is proposed that six new functions be added to the CCG Functions Framework: Global Sustainability and Conservation; Global Social Networks; Personal Gain; External Organisations; Cross-Conservation Group Networking; and Local Community.

The next chapter will present a series of vignettes which are drawn from the interview data. The vignettes' purpose is to elaborate and develop a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of both leaders and the volunteer corps in CCGs. These characteristics and experiences are further explored using the CCG Communities of Practice Framework through which the holistic functioning of the CCG as a potential community of practice can be explored.

Chapter 6: Interview Findings and Analysis

This chapter further explores the nature of CCGs through individual interviews with selected leaders and volunteers. The purpose of these interviews was to develop a deeper insight into the lived experiences of leaders and volunteers in CCGs. As explained in Chapter four, the personal accounts of five leaders and four volunteers were selected as a representative cross-section of volunteers' experiences. These accounts are presented in vignettes. The experiences of the other leaders and volunteers interviewed were not presented as vignettes as a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of the leaders and volunteers had been achieved and there was no new substantive information acquired (Miles & Huberman. 1994).

The leaders (or leadership couples), whose vignettes are presented in this chapter, were given the pseudonyms of Peg and Al, George, Betty, Hamish, and Wilma and Fred to protect their identity. The volunteers (or couples) whose vignettes are presented in this chapter, were given the pseudonyms of Gomez, Jack and Jill, Valerie, and Morris.

As outlined in Chapter 4, in order to provide a concise, coherent, and in-depth insight into each volunteer's experience in CCGs, and the meanings they made of that experience, the data in this chapter are presented in the form of narrative vignettes. Data for these vignettes were drawn from the individual interviews held with each of the leaders or volunteers. The alignment of the leaders' and volunteers' perceptions with key emergent themes is presented in conclusion as a summary of each set of vignettes.

6.1 Leadership vignettes

This section presents a set of narrative vignettes drawn from interviews with those in leadership in CCGs. The narrative is a contextualised reconstruction of the interview transcripts.

6.1.1 Peg and Al

Peg and Al have engaged in volunteering since December of 1992 helping turtles in the tropical north across 18 beaches and two islands. Al recalled that when walking their dog along the beach:

> We would see the tracks on the beach and then we saw an ad in the local paper asking anyone interested in forming a turtle watch association to go to the Environmental Pollution Authority (EPA), as it was in those days … we went along for the meeting and the rest is history.

Peg and Al commented that helping turtles is a complicated and heavily regulated activity. Al applies for special turtle permits every three years. The permits stipulate rules that must be followed when they are on the beach handling the turtles, to gather data, to excavate turtle nests, and to count the eggs after the hatchlings are gone. Al said, "We measure them when they come into lay and check them out for any injuries … six of us have tagging licences … we've been tagging on our beach since 1993, so we are expert at it".
Peg added, "Last year we had two turtles, one of them was tagged the first time back in 1994 and she still had her original tag and the other one was tagged in 1998". Peg and Al know there are probably somewhere between 50 to 90 turtles that lay in the area, so they are responsible for 10% of the known flat back turtle population on the eastern seaboard of Queensland. On their beach they usually have around 24 to 30 nests per year. As a turtle lays three times in season they get 10 maybe 12 turtles on their beach per season. Thus, Peg and Al's role in turtle conservation is not insignificant.

Peg and Al discussed their CCG's structure. In the group's first year Al was the Chairperson with no structured committee. Peg said that they incorporated their group so that they could get their own funding and handle their own finances. The roles of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer have not changed that much. Peg has been the

treasurer since 1994, and until the present "there have only been three secretaries" said Al. Six of their members have been there from day one and are now all retired. The group does have a few others around the age of 40 and a couple in their 50s. Those who are still working their occupations vary from engineers to street sweepers. Overall, Peg and Al's account suggests longevity and stability in the leadership and membership of their CCG.

The group meets every two months and has "roughly 30 financial members". Peg and Al agreed that no one baulks at the membership fees of $15 for a single and $25 for a family. The fees were only ever set to make people realise "that it's not a club, it is an organisation, and we do have costs". Al said that a lot of their volunteers do not come to meetings because many of them are "40 kilometres up the road, but they're still quite happy to do their bit on the beach every year". Al stated that there are probably another 30 people who are not members who also walk beaches. These people know what the group does and alert Peg and Al when they see turtle tracks, nests on the beach, or injured or dead turtles. Peg commented they are all probably good environmentalists and could identify the importance of monitoring turtles, "If we see any dramatic changes with the turtle it indicates that there is going to be dramatic change with everything else in the marine environment".

Thus, Peg and Al coordinate a medium-sized group of volunteers, drawn from a range of employment backgrounds as well as those who are retired, as well as those formally associated with the CCG through membership, and those who cooperate with them in conservation work.

Peg commented on the lack of understanding by the community of the role of their environmental group and remarked that, "Some people don't realise what the group does and the hours we put in". The group usually engages in their activity in mid-October for the laying through until middle of January; and then around mid-December or around Christmas time as the hatchlings start to emerge. It is not unusual in some seasons for the group to go

through until the end of February or beginning of March as a few turtles come in late to lay and their eggs hatch later. Al says their volunteers are on the beach at night for three weeks out of four.

Peg and Al's normal routine is to go down about an hour and a half before high tide and stay an hour and a half after, as the high tide determines when the turtles are going to come in. Some nights the turtles come in late and they end up being there for about five hours. If Peg and Al do not walk the beach at night, they walk the beach in the morning from 5. 30 am looking for turtle tracks so that they can record if the turtle has been in or not and to check out the nest. This usually takes a minimum of an hour. If relocation of the nest is required, it takes at least another hour. Al noted that another member goes over to the two islands once a week in his tinnie, "as he can't afford to go over every day", to record the nests that are there. Different people take responsibility for different beaches and everybody looks after their own beach to collect their own turtle data. All the data sheets are given to Al who then puts all the information into the university's program. Thus, the conservation activities of the group are conducted by volunteers who are independent and expert at their job, and with minimal coordination.

Peg identified that members of the community do not understand the nature of their conservation work and recounted a story about a woman who abused her for interfering with nature. Peg said that she told the woman:

> If I leave it here, the next big tide is going to go over it and they're going to be drowned … I'm certainly not doing this for the fun of it … it's hard work moving those eggs and sometimes it takes an hour and sometimes even longer!

Al added, "As you can see, we have to be really careful in the eyes of the public … many people don't understand that most problems relating to turtles are caused by us anyway".

The conservation role of volunteers in this CCG is identified as being significant, with long hours and commitment. It is also apparent that community support is present where community members are informed about the role of the volunteers.

The recruitment of new volunteers is a problem overall for this group. Al explained that a lot of people think when they come and join turtle watch that "they can go and do what they want with the turtles". However, they require training and must be in possession of a permit to interact with turtles. Quite often it takes more than one season to train a person because there are only a few nests on the beach, or they might not even see a turtle in that season. The newcomers must be taught what to do while walking the beach at night without a torch and shown "what's what because it's so easy to chase a turtle away". Al described what typically happens with several initially enthusiastic volunteers when he stated:

> They get all excited and come down and walk with us and they see the turtles come in late … we teach them everything and they see the hatchlings come out and go … then that's it, we don't see them again!

Peg communicated a belief that these people are "just not prepared to put in the time and to walk the beach and to be on the beach at night". Al elucidated further:

> We try to impress upon them that they don't have to do what we do by going down the beach at night, they can just walk the beach in the morning looking for tracks and when they find a track they can record where the tracks were, the area on the beach and the date.

Al and Peg have developed knowledge and insight over the years through which the group can then work out, from these observations, the approximate expected date of hatching and keep an eye on the nest until hatching:

> After the hatchlings are gone, we gather data about the measurements of the egg chamber, how many eggs were laid, how many were fertile, how many weren't to give a good account of the numbers of the eggs that are laid on the beach.

The monitoring and conservation of turtles in this CCG is described by Peg and Al in this exchange as not only being time-consuming, but knowledge-intensive which can be a barrier to recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Recruitment is also hindered by the requirement for turtle permits. Peg outlined that the permits will not allow anybody under the age of 18 to be involved in the gathering of turtle data. This, she explained, made it difficult for them to get new younger members. Peg and Al have observed over the years that it is the younger people who are more interested than the older individuals. Hence the permit system is an issue limiting volunteer recruitment. Al elaborated, "We get many school kids coming to us during turtle season to work with us but how long is a young adult going to keep coming back when they can't have hands on work with the turtles?" Peg said:

> What we have to do is to bite the bullet and approach the EPA to try to get some of these hard and fast rules relaxed a little as we have many, many young school children come down and help people in rebuilding the habitat, actively planting trees, weeding and with supervised turtle hatchings and nesting.

Peg and Al saw the permit system as a missed opportunity to recruit from the younger generation as "we haven't got any really young people at all". Thus, the permit system, in precluding youngsters, limit the efforts of the CCG in ensuring sustainability of the group.

As a result of the foregoing factors, succession planning is problematic for the group. By their own admission Peg and Al are not getting any younger. Peg stated that as they slow down, one of their members is 30 to 40 and is a responsible person and that they have asked him if he could possibly take over their beach because "it is only a little beach". Nonetheless,

planning for their succession is complicated by Peg and Al's expectations of the right person to replace them. Al explained:

> We have been doing this for so long, it's our beach … we've got to really strike the right chord with the person who we think has the right attitude to take over … anyone who comes along that doesn't fit that bill we don't do any further training with them … we have been doing what we have been doing for so long and the information is so important in our eyes, we're not just going to pass it off and have what we've done broken up and destroyed.

Hence, in the context of succession planning, Peg and Al's individual ownership of their practice may reduce the number of people deemed suitable to take over and poses an additional threat to sustainability of the group.

Peg and Al's group has developed good relationships with various stakeholders. Four years ago, the council gave the group the use of a buggy to go on the beach for turtle season. Peg added, That's the only way Al can get down to the beach". The council drop it off at Peg and Al's place from the beginning of October for their use until the season finishes. Peg explained, "It's good because they supply petrol, registration and servicing … if they need to use it through the day, they pick it up and drop it back here".

They also work closely with their local NRM Region body and regional council running coastal protection programs. The group designed two sided aluminium signs which provide information about the turtle lifecycle on one side of it and some do's and don'ts on the other side of the sign. They initially got funding from their NRM Region to create six signs costing around $1,100 each. Other councils liked the signs so much that they installed them as well. There are now signs across 30 beaches. Peg said she believes one of the reasons they have good relationships is because they have "always had people on other committees … we have been working with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority … quite often

we were sending turtles up to Townsville to the turtle hospital". For instance, Peg and Al said:

> We were on the beach at two o'clock one morning and when the hatchlings finished, we found this little white hatchling … we took it and they christened it 'Minty' and he was a big draw card up there until it died 18 months later.

They identified through this exchange the value of cooperation and interaction with a range of authorities to support their conservation work. Peg stated, "Volunteers do what they do because they love what they do". She presented a personal view that "they do not want or need recognition … if it comes by the by, it is a nice thing".

Al and Peg's story appears to be typical of many of those who are involved in coastal conservation volunteering for a lengthy period; enduring personal commitment, subject matter expertise, the development of extensive networks and a strong sense of ownership.

6.1.2 George

George is a founding member of his CCG, which has now been operating for over 20 years. The initial activity of the group in the early days was focused on weeding and vegetation regeneration every third Sunday of the month. They removed "truckloads of large woody weeds and box thorns the size of a shed and replaced them with beautiful coastal vegetation and there was a return of a whole heap of different plants and birds and animals into the area".

George believes that the group's efforts "were extraordinary as they changed the landscape". But he added that as an outcome of their enthusiastic action, "they managed to kill most of the mother plants". He stated that they had to regenerate with seedings, which failed to engage volunteers as the regeneration activities "became very boring and it was very difficult to engage people in the activity because it took time, with not a lot of reward at the

end of it". Consequently, and to keep his volunteers engaged, George attempted to reinvigorate the group by creating new activities through community projects to engage them.

To engage with the community in this way, the group changed its focus to education through activities like walks, talks and seminars, and flight nights. The group also developed in unanticipated and unplanned directions. Illustrating this, George said that they lobbied for five years to get a marine sanctuary declared and that when it was declared he said, "Oh crap, I suppose we're going to have to do something now, aren't we!". George was unable to engage in this activity as he does not dive, but relied on others, for instance, "people sticking their heads under the water and coming up with incredible footage of blue devils for him to look at".

More recently the group has developed an interactive website, a CD, a Facebook site, a YouTube film, a range of interpretation materials and an App. George thinks it is a good motivating force for a group like theirs to find new, better, different and more engaging ways of engaging the community. For instance, he recognises the importance of attending the Sea Star café on a Tuesday morning, when all the kinder mums are gathered there, to put up a stand and just sit there and talk to them about the group's app and their Facebook site. The evolution of the group from its roots in environmental regeneration is significant.

Apart from the conservation and education functions, George outlined the way in which the group has been forced over the years to take a leading role in some activism in their town because of a major demographic shift in the last five years. He says, "If you asked me five years ago, I would have said 90% of the community know who we are, know what we do and support what we do … but now I really don't know". He also thinks, "They're kind of a mix of baby boomer retirement stuff and upwardly mobile people … tend to be 30-something, a couple of kids, dual incomes, they're mobile and I suspect some of them have fairly healthy mortgages as well".

The change meant that they group were forced to engage in battles that they had previously won, as new people, "unaware of those kinds of battles, now aspire to do exactly the thing that we stopped". On the other hand, there are many in the community that support the group. George recalls an occasion that still amazes him, "a gentleman, who I thought I would never ever rub shoulders with politically, walked into my house, put a $1000 on the counter and said, there you go, there's your fighting fund, don't let these bastards win!".

George's statements refer to three evolutions, the first a shift in the demography of the area, the second the increased risk of volunteer boredom, and the third a shift in the focus of the CCG's activities to accommodate the first two changes.

George identified that his group is your standard incorporated group in these terms:

> Constitutional stuff … we have our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the office bearers are elected … it satisfies the requirements of the incorporation more than anything else … the meeting itself should take about four minutes, and the rest of the time should be taken up with some food … we do it at the local bowling club so the drinks are cheap … it is just an opportunity for people to just hang out and have a bit of a talk.

The AGM attendance is usually about 30 with 15 to 20 apologies. He estimated that the core group consists of a dozen people. However, attendance has varied depending on what project or projects the group is working on at the time. To illustrate this, George suggested that if they decided to run a blue ocean film festival, they would need more volunteers for doing "ticket sales or sticking posters up or arranging the chairs or whatever, doing press releases". In terms of the core function of the CCG, the numbers of volunteers needed for a weed working bee would be markedly different. There is no shortage of volunteers for this function. George stated, "We wouldn't need any more volunteers … I know that sounds very harsh, but basically, I wouldn't know what to do with them … I couldn't find them enough

jobs". Overall, George identified a diversification of the roles of his CCG, and a concomitant diversification in the types of volunteers and activities that it engages with. Although it is a formal, incorporated group, the CCG does not meet regularly as a whole group, and George stated:

> We don't meet once a month, you know, like the last Tuesday of the month, we've never done that. Ever since I introduced red wine to our ordinary meetings, they have become reasonably shambolic … we meet for two or three hours … as it gets closer to deadlines, we spend more time … if I put $20 an hour for the hours, I've spent for the group my superannuation would probably look a lot healthier!

Thus, the meetings of the group are not formally scheduled, but are emergent depending on their activities at the time.

A requirement of incorporation, the group's annual membership fees are $10 for individuals, $25 for families and $50 for major corporations. George outlined the occupations of members: "Nursing, film and screen-writing, museum curator, public service, teachers, Chief Executive Officers of quite major organisations and then there are people like me, who work in a caravan park!". In addition, George stated a belief that "all those backgrounds and economic things really can go out the door when you get a room full of people whose common touching point is the environment".

Two of their members are also presidents of other coastal groups. The community connections of the volunteers are important. To illustrate this, George identified that one volunteer also runs her own business selling advertising space: "She allocates a page every week, at least one page, whether it be hooded plovers or to us or the sustainability group".

George communicated the belief that winning the support of the community involves finding new, better, different ways of engagement. He explained:

> You must hit the refresh button on a fairly regular basis … you just have to switch it up a bit, you know… think off the wall, think about the people who are in your community already and how you can use those people. … if you've got an active arts group in the town, OK, what arts project can we come up with that we can do jointly?

Hence, for George it is all about using the skills that are already in the community. Shaking his head from left to right he said, "the worst thing that anybody can say to you is no*"*. He went on to say that the group is still coming up with ideas having to work out ways to implement some of the ideas. He added, that later in the year he was thinking of:

> … doing a blitz …a fish dive but change it up a bit …do some crayfish measurements or some abalone measurements and try to get a feel to the size of some of these critters … count the birds and the moths and the bats and the plants and a few other things … take photo … people can come along and do the hands on stuff and actually be involved … they can get their teeth into it!

However, George also emphasised that it is just as important to go down to the Sea Star café on a Tuesday morning, put up a stand and sit down and talk to all the kinder mums about the group's app and Facebook site.

George considers that part of getting people interested and knowledgeable and building on their passion "is to actually find something for them to do". He regards this as a bit of a conundrum:

> For me it's like, hmmm, you mean I have to do what I've done for the last 15 years except I've got to do it all again and come up with more and new interesting ways of dealing with it.

He said that he considered it to be worthwhile organising to sit down once a year with other local groups:

> They are going through the same issues as everybody, ah yeah … how does that work, can I steal that idea, yes go for it, what are you doing with this … all of my best ideas I've stolen from someone.

That is another thing he quickly added, "Don't be afraid to steal ideas … you're not plagiarising, you're just adapting to the local environment!".

He expressed his willingness to help anyone with the group's resources, "If they have an idea or have something they want to trial or have something they want to do like a citizen-science project, but they have to take the lead with it". George communicated the importance of engagement with the community, which requires creative thought, networking and organisational skills, personal drive, a supportive attitude and a willingness to try something new.

In terms of leadership of his group, George stated that he just keeps "getting re-elected as president". By his own admission, "Occasionally I get excited about something and get a group together and go, this is what I am going to do, how are you going to help me?". He communicated his critical leadership role, stating that if he went to the AGM in a month's time:

> That's me, I am done, thanks very much for the last 20 years, I'm out of here. [I am] not sure what would happen … just finding people to take on the next area of responsibility is a problem … there is no real succession plan.

George communicated his perception on the importance of individuals in leadership role when he said, "unless you've got somebody in the community, who is upward and mobile and driving the whole thing then a whole heap of those groups just isn't going to start".

George's account infers a leadership structure invested in a single, charismatic leader, and with the autonomy and central decision making he communicates, it appears that planning for leader succession is an issue for this CCG.

6.1.3 Betty

Betty's love of the environment was fostered by her teacher parents who loved nature. Her Christmas holidays were spent "finding out about things and knowing about stuff". Her dad told her that he "always wanted to teach her not to be frightened of things like snakes and spiders". Since her childhood days Betty said that she has "always loved being in the garden and getting my hands dirty". When she and her husband moved to the local region six years ago, she wanted to make the place where she lived "a more environmentally pristine place, to make a difference and to find out more about the place". In hindsight Betty said she considers that volunteering allowed her to integrate into her new community six years ago. She said she believes that "if you're coming from somewhere else … it allows you to create your tribe". Having had three careers, corporate PR, a small press monitoring business and social work, volunteering also allowed Betty to have a break from the work she had done and allowed her to "get into something that fitted in with her new life". Betty's account echoes the sentiments of many volunteers' reasons for participating in coastal conservation. Betty is strongly motivated by a love of nature, as well as a need for social belongingness. Her comments confirmed that volunteering offered her a range of benefits in this regard.

Shortly after arriving in the area Betty approached her local council coordinator to enquire about joining a group. In response, it was suggested that she start her own. As she did not know anything about plants, she joined an established group and a sea collecting group in order to find out more about the ecology of the area. After 12 months she started her own local group as she felt she "probably knew enough to start the group". The local council required her to get eight to ten people together to form a group, otherwise it would not "put the resources in to support it". Betty used a letter box drop to encourage eight locals to join. Of the original eight members, one has died, two have dropped out and two have relocated. For Betty, volunteering is about your phase of life and she stated that, "Typically, you will

find in these groups that most people are retired … we do have some people with families, but they tend to come intermittently".

Betty considers that in her local area's volunteers "tend to age and it's very hard for people to keep growing and keeping new blood coming in". However, as Betty said, "luckily for us, new people have come". The group has been going for five years now and meets for two hours once a month, for 10 months of the year to weed and plant beach access. According to Betty the group "has a spell over the Christmas period as it's too darn hot and some people go away". Betty said her time commitment to volunteering was not very big, three hours every three weeks out of four and then a couple of hours every three weeks plus the local nursery on a Saturday every couple of months. Betty also impressed that she would not want to volunteer in a situation where she could not be away for a month as she and her husband travel a lot, "If I felt like I had to be there, and I couldn't have that flexibility, it would be a pain".

Betty's narrative seemed to be indicative of many CCGs. Group start up relies on one individual having a strong sense of purpose. Older individuals tend to self-select themselves into small groups that consist of like-minded 'locals' who are willing to give a few hours of their time on a regular basis. Betty outlined how the group has also formed two spin off groups from their group; one is in the national park and the other is in a creek area. The national park setting is a much-degraded piece of land which accumulates all the drainage from an adjacent housing estate. Betty stated, "It's a mess, so a few of us decided that maybe we could have a little bit of a go on a Thursday morning".

She identified how the 'creek group' is essentially "a one-man band named Geoff who has been there for quite some time". Betty explained that Geoff also supports her main volunteer group. She has said to him that he really needs to get some extra help for himself, "as doing it on your own is not the way to go". Geoff took leadership of his group on the

premise that Betty could cover for him when he was travelling. She agreed, "We started his group up and it's going really great guns … it is a lovely little section and it has sparked a lot of people's passion down there … word of mouth has attracted some young enthusiastic people".

Betty's narrative identified the importance of inter-personal relationships, ownership and a sense of place of the 'patch' each group is responsible for. This model of small group ownership of smaller patches of land has been successful in the case of this group. It may be inferred that smaller, more personal groupings of volunteers are more supportive and engaging, particularly, as Betty states, in recruiting younger people to the cause. Betty claimed that keeping people enthusiastic and engaged is essential to keeping the group together. She communicated a belief in positive reinforcement combined with reliability and contact with volunteers, stating that you should tell people, "you are doing a great job, send emails after meetings and make sure that you bring supplies". For Betty it is also about using people's interests and skills. She recounted, about one her colleagues, "Sandy is passionate about the environment, but he is also a horticulturist who does garden work, so he trims our trees".

Betty outlined the leadership structure and approach of her CCG. She stated that the group is incorporated, and "we've got plenty of people in the group with skills so there are no problems with administering it and doing all that stuff". Betty then added that her group is different in that the volunteers nominated her as the boss because she is not bossy. She stated. "I think there is something in that … I don't want to own it". With a broad smile Betty stated that this leadership function suited their group:

> We have been able to incorporate that next generation and I think we have done it because we don't want to be the big bosses of it and we want to respect and know

> what other people's skills are and give them space to use them … we need to engage more with younger people and not get too cliquey.

Betty expressed the belief that groups sometimes "get a little bit picky because it is easy in a group to become comfortable and unconsciously and not realise that you're not being inclusive". Betty recounts that, in contrast to her group, she has also heard stories about other groups where people are domineering or who want to be totally in control and will not accommodate other people's skills or capabilities because they feel threatened. Betty's remarks infer that volunteer engagement and recognition is important to group cohesion, and that acknowledging and using each member's skills, knowledge and abilities further strengthens group capacity. Her account also highlights that group sustainability is most reliant on an inclusive and consultative, informal style of leadership which overcomes the issues of recruitment of younger members.

Betty concluded with a personal reflection on the outcomes of volunteering, saying that she now understands how Aborigines feel about their connection to country:

> I now don't feel like part of the human race, I feel like part of the whole of life on this planet … it's almost like a meditative thing … I did meditate and when you do you really get a sense of wholeness, a sense of being connected to everything in the world and that's what being here does for me now … you don't feel like a human, you feel like every single creature and plant is part of what you are, part of the whole network of what everything is.

6.1.4 Hamish

Hamish's group started 21 years ago as a Landcare group of local farmers but really "cranked it up" when they formed an estuary restoration project about 15 years ago. The catalyst for this was a political decision that was not supported by most local people and who had been advocating for the local environment and for the local Aboriginal people. The group

has been revegetating salt marshes across 80 sites on an island which is 14 kilometres long and seven kilometres wide. The sand and limestone island is located in the estuary of an iconic Australian river and was cleared in the 1830s for grazing and cropping. The state government, local council and 30 private landholders support this project. Hamish stated that, "The project just continues to grow. The aim is to not turn anyone away providing they're happy with the constraints under which we're prepared to work". The bigger vision for the group is associated with global warming, climate change and loss of biodiversity. Hamish expressed this concern, "This incredibly fragmented landscape is going to lose so many plants, birds and other animals, unless we do our bit on the island to reconnect it all by using salt marsh and revegetation".

Hamish outlined the leadership structure of his CCG. The group has a typical committee structure, with a chairperson and treasurer. Other people also sit on the committee such as the nursery manager and Hamish who is the coordinator for projects on the island. Hamish stated that they are "not a perfect group of people but that they are all really committed to working to the same ends". Each year committee members are nominated from the floor at the AGM. Hamish claimed that "one of the fortunate things we have had has been longevity of people involved in the committee". He illustrated this longevity with examples, stating that "our secretary has been involved for maybe seven or eight years and our treasurer would be close to five years". Hamish has been "kicking around since he retired in 2001/2002". He said that, "Longevity is really seen as a positive for us because it has given us continuity and an understanding of the history of the group and all that kind of stuff". He highlighted the importance of this longevity, stating that, "the only stability here is the local people as governments will come and go". The committee meets every month in a reasonably formal way to reports on the various parts of the operations of the group; financial, nursery and specific projects. The group interacts with government departments,

receives funding from government departments to coordinate activities like woody weed removal on the island.

Hamish said that committee membership in this CCG is “not necessarily always plain sailing and sometimes things can get a bit manipulative”. He elaborated by describing some strong-headed people and a couple of people who are real perfectionists who “get up each other’s noses sometimes”. But Hamish identifies that the committee debate can be defused by “moving into territory where we don’t interfere with each other”. Hamish said that there have been times when he has come home and wondered, “Why would I persist with this bloody group? Sometimes you forget why you’re there”. Hamish said that at times he feels quite isolated because he is the only male on the committee.

As with many groups with strong leadership and an ageing retiree volunteer workforce, succession is problematic: “Every now and again the group has a bit of a panic and when they ponder about what will happen if one of us goes down”. Hamish thinks it is unresolvable. He would like to be able to be able to pull back in two years’ time or so, but he suspects there is nobody to take his place, particularly when most of their group members are older or ageing. The question of succession puts the CCG in a difficult position regarding its ongoing function in the environment.

To supplement volunteer numbers, Hamish explained that in the past they applied for funding to employ local people to plant, with the rest being done on a volunteer basis. Since then, the group established a community network of nurseries in several towns around the lakes. The nurseries now generate approximately $200,000 per year for the organisation. For example, the group gets paid $1.60 per forestry tube, and $1.60 per plant for planting and guarding. To maintain these operations, Hamish and the nursery manager are employed in paid positions for three days a week. These operations take the pressure off the group in

terms of funding and paying non-volunteers to carry out restoration and conservation work, enabling significant augmentation of volunteer numbers and impact.

The group has a membership of about 80 with an active volunteer base of 15 to 20. The rest are weekenders or holiday makers. Hamish says that the group has working bees twice a month on the first and third Tuesday in each month from 9.00 am to midday "to keep on top of the nursery" which holds about 50,000 plants. The main nursery is located on a local council-owned public reserve with the support of the council. The group sourced funding for the cyclone perimeter fence, the sheds, the automated watering system, other equipment, and the nursery manager's office. The nursery produces almost 400,000 plants of 40 different species in one season. Seeds are collected in summer from the island with planting beginning in April and finishing in August. In addition, the group pays people every year to come in and "work solid for a couple of weeks with a team of about 10 people".

Hamish outlined his group's strategies to retain and attract volunteers which includes ongoing recognition and thanks for their contribution. He explained how they try to treat their volunteers "very specially and make sure that they are well-organised so that when they come, they're not wasting their time". Every year or couple of years in Spring the group runs bus tours to the island to show the volunteers, who work in the nursery, what has been done with the plants that they have raised in the nursery "because many of those people are older characters, retired people who can't get out much into the paddocks during the winter time to plant or get out there to have a look". Hamish recalled that in the past the group has also organised luncheons and trips on old paddle steamers to thank their volunteers.

Unlike some of the other CCGs, training of new volunteers is informal, and approached as an 'apprenticeship' with existing members. Newcomers are asked what they are interested in and then they are buddied with somebody who knows the ropes and understands the expectations. They work alongside that person until they are sufficiently

confident to do the things that are expected of them. Hamish said that there are a range of activities that volunteers engage in, such as transplanting, washing and sterilising planting tubes, filling tubes with soil and board identifiers and weeding out forestry tubes.

Hamish volunteered an opinion on formal conservation organisations such as Landcare. He identified the impact of bureaucracy which he believes takes people away from getting the stuff on the ground done. Apart from umbrella organisations, Hamish discussed the nature of peoples' experience with committees, outlining the negative effect of bad experiences in organisations where committees did not work, or trying to contribute to organisations where members are not aware of what the committee achieves. One of the dangers of umbrella organisations, which are generally government sponsored, is their "bureaucratic concern about their own reputation rather than achieving what needs to be done in this country".

Despite problems with umbrella organisations, Hamish believes the group's experience within the local community is very positive. He identifies how their group is invited to address community groups like Lions and Rotary. He also discussed their engagement with smaller organisations such as local gardening groups to upskill the local community about their nursery practice. Hamish recalled that one of the farmers on the island was "pissed off with their tree guards because some of them blew off and his cattle ate them!". Apart from such minor issues, Hamish did not believe that there are not too many people who would publicly clash with them because they are well known and respected for what they do.

Hamish concluded the interview by reading something he wrote and presented on a recent bus tour:

> In the present circumstances it is far too easy for concerned people to feel utterly powerless, to address or improve the environmental circumstances we're in. This area

> remains on a knife edge ecologically. While fresh water flows down the river may have returned, our place, the lower lakes, may well only have limited time left before they succumb to complete ecological collapse. Climate change will make these circumstances worse and the politicians sit on their hands, and the lobbyists who are the exploiters of the river, continue to delay change hoping that the present environmentally inadequate draft basin plan becomes law. Our project is about hope and a small group of people making a serious practical difference to the environment of this island in the centre on an ongoing ecological crisis. Come and join us.

6.1.5 Wilma and Fred

Wilma and Fred's backyard is behind a large coastal sand dune. On the seaward side of the dune an open beach stretches for kilometres north and south. When they moved here 16 years ago, from a place further south, their sandy backyard was overgrown with Pepper Trees and asparagus plants and "just a lot of rubbish". Wilma was still working then and Fred, who was already retired, would spend his days sorting out their backyard and beyond, weeding and replanting. Wilma stated, "It is an absolute joy to for us to see what we have been able to restore, so satisfying to see the results". It emerged early in the interview that Wilma is the driving force in this partnership and is clearly the leader of the group. Fred declared that he does the weeding and supports Wilma with things. Wilma outlined her time commitment per week, comparing it with Fred's contribution:

> If you average out what I do, because I get grants, we go in fits and starts, getting plaques, signs, stakes, crystals, watering plants. I reckon Fred would do half a dozen hours per week and mine is probably about 20 hours. I spent most of yesterday afternoon and evening, probably six hours, doing minutes and tidying up details of who to contact, sending off letters from the meeting we had on Sunday which was a two-hour meeting and the preparation of agenda and stuff before that.

With this investment of time and skill, Wilma emerges as a key individual in the leadership structure of the CCG and its operations.

Their association with their group began in 2000 with a few informal conversations with other interested people. The initial function of the group was rehabilitation and revegetation of the local environment. It grew from there, and they "decided to take it to the next level". The group were mostly retirees. The CCG has a local function within the immediate environment, and Wilma outlined how their "group is all about protecting the amenity of our local environment". The group started initially to challenge a planned roundabout and the road proposed to encroach into their area. The group was successful in resisting this development, and this was followed by a proposed high rise which they were also successful in resisting. Then there was the use of a local community park for a car park "which would have destroyed the easy meandering, take your baby for a stroll on the road in the evening or morning". The membership and volunteer numbers were identified by Wilma as fluctuating once any resistance was successful, stating that, "when we won, and it was all finished the numbers dwindled away". Nonetheless, it was this pressure on the local community that reinforced and provided cohesion for the group. Wilma expressed a belief that it brought "everybody closer together and from that a community of interest and group of friends formed". She identified how this cohesion supported the growth of the group in drawing together a "community of interested people". Wilma elaborated:

> We are not rednecks and we are not rude to people. We are made up of solicitors, barristers, physios, educated people in the group as well as ordinary Joe Blogs. But we are a powerful little group, full of clout!

Hence, apart from their ongoing restoration work, such as weeding, and planting activities Wilma believes that the group has become like a hub:

> People come to the meetings because they think we have influence and the reason they often come is because they have a problem that they want addressed and if council wants an opinion about something, they will also ask us.

For instance, she identified this issue: "We're asking Noosa council if they are cutting off Landcare because we will need it replaced with booklets, brochures, information".

She outlined the group's need to remain informed as they "are the local representatives of this natural environment in our communities". She outlined the growing reliance of council on their opinions and operations, discussing how they approached her to inform the development of the next brochure. Leaning forward, Wilma said, "I was hoping they would have some ideas seeing as how they are the planners!".

Because of their close relationship with local government, the group is often frustrated by the requirement to deal with red tape and public authorities. They claimed that, "When you want to get something done, and you have to go through the council and the state government, it takes forever!". This frustration leads to burn-out, and Wilma and Fred described how this happened with one of their friends, faced with "the ongoing lack of understanding by councils and authorities". Wilma took this in her stride however, stating that, "this happens if you choose to live in environments like ours".

Fred commented on the shifting gender structure of their group:

> Strangely, there seems to be more women than blokes. When we first joined this group there were probably more men than women. Some of the men have passed away but with no replacements. I am probably the most recent male to join this group!

Wilma added, "it is disappointing that we don't get younger people as we could always do with many more hands as there is plenty to do". She described how some of the younger people who joined the group have since dropped out because of a perceived threat from some people in authority. Wilma identified that their president is "a lovely bloke" but

said that he does have “some authority”. She discussed her perception of the leadership of other groups with whom they should be linked and identified how this was not going to occur because the leader:

> Makes it impossible, she just drives everybody away. She just is very difficult to handle, and she wants to lead the world, so we just let her go. She does have a couple of her colleagues up there and she does do some things, but it is a shame she is such an overbearing person.

From this discussion Wilma clarified that autocratic and domineering leadership posed a significant barrier not only to the attraction and retention of volunteers, but also to the cooperation among and between similar, like-minded groups in the local area.

An issue further impacting on volunteer attraction and retention is the lack of younger volunteers. Wilma shared that she and Fred have spent much of their time trying to figure out why “we can’t get more young people, why we can’t get that next generation?”. She suggests that the younger families had little kids that are too little. She has also approached teenagers to discuss their involvement with local conservation. She stated, “[I] had an opportunity to reach the 15-17 age group to talk to them about sand dunes and vegetation. Some of them said that down the track they will try to get involved”. But she says that this has not yet occurred. Their organisation is also involved with a splinter group that accidentally developed in community discussion with the local council. They called it a community collective as it involves younger people from many of the other groups such as the tennis club, the bowls club, the surf club. One of the collective’s initiatives is a kindy veggie-village, which is a community garden. Wilma discusses how their sense of isolation, being this group down the end of town, is reduced by mixing with people who come from all over town: “It is a much more rewarding group as far as there is inter-communication on a much broader scale with the younger people. We are the conduit, we link it”. However, to date,

Wilma said, “They don’t look at volunteering and the weeding. They love what we do, yet they haven’t moved to help us”. The organisation has approached the surf club who tried to contribute to conservation, “but they’re volunteers who volunteer for surf lifesaving. It is hard to expect them to contribute more hours”.

Fred and Wilma’s approach to attendance is flexible and understanding. Wilma welcomes people to “come any time, come once, come regularly” but thinks commitment is something many people have issues with because “coming on a weekly basis is a fair big commitment, which is what our group does”. Retirees started the group and weekends were for their grandkids, families and church. Some members have suggested changing it to a weekend day, but it does not suit Wilma and Fred: “[Our] grandkids play sport on the weekends and sometimes we are ferrying one of three boys in any direction to football or cricket”. Thus, Thursdays works well for them. Without considering those people who have work commitments, the rostering and scheduling of the group’s conservation activities is problematic, and more greatly complicated when considering those with formal time commitments such as employment.

When Wilma and Fred moved to the local area, they knew no one, and “for us volunteering offered us friendship and on top of this we were able to do things under the umbrella of the environment”. Wilma identified how they like learning about the bush and the animals that live around here, and outlined how they “keep a tab on the birds and know that there are 67 species that come through here on a regular basis and we know about the frogs too … we can’t get enough of the learning part of it”.

6.1.6 Leadership vignettes summary

Five leaders were presented through individual case vignettes illustrating the history of their CCGs histories, their practice and leadership functions within their CCGs. The initial reasons for engaging with CCGs varied across the group. For three of the five (Wilma and

Fred, Betty, and Peg and Al) the inspiration to engage came with residency and engagement with the immediate environment. Wilma and Fred, and Peg and Al commenced as leaders of their groups, starting with informal activity which quickly developed into organised activity and more formal conservation activity as CCGs. Both groups identified an ongoing focus on their domain of interest. For Peg and Al, it was turtle monitoring and conservation. For Wilma and Fred, it was coastal vegetation rehabilitation. After 12 months with an existing group, Betty started her environmental conservation group four years ago. Like Wilma and Fred, her group engaged in vegetation rehabilitation. George too was a founding member of his group. His links to his local area were not as explicit, with his interest spread across a range of activities. However, his group started in a similar fashion to Wilma and Fred's group in vegetation regeneration, shifting later to community engagement and education, and social media. In contrast to the other four groups, Hamish's CCG group emerged from an earlier collective engagement of local farmers in Landcare. Thus, this CCG had group leadership from the start, and focused on the conservation and restoration of a local estuary and island system. Hamish's group expanded their operations; however, these maintained a direct connection to the project focus itself. For instance, they established a network of nurseries to support revegetation operations, and while they engage in education this is explicitly focused on their conservation work. While the other four groups maintained their engagement with their original project, George's group had diversified activities within the areas of community education and awareness-raising.

The practice of the five CCGs was different for all, particularly in relation to sense of place. Wilma and Fred identified how the CCG has become a social hub for local conservation and amenity work, and which had grown to become an influential organisation in the local community. Betty's group too involves scheduled conservation activities which are driven socially. Betty works with rehabilitation of the local area. Her initial group worked

in a limited geographic area of significance to volunteers. Her model for the enhancement of her group is to develop new groups, which also take responsibility for a small local area to which they have a commitment, thus a sense of place is central to their engagement. The sense of place has been extended from its original context of conservation to one that is a social and community place. This sense of community and social cohesion is not evident in Peg and Al's account, with temporal and geographic separation of members of the group—for instance, morning and evening walkers, those who patrol their own beaches, or visit different islands. However, sense of place is important, as they refer to 'their beach', and each individual monitors their own 'place' within the program. Peg and Al act as coordinators of the monitoring and tagging and liaise with the university program within which they work. George, as president of his group from the start, started the group's activities in coastal dune rehabilitation as their 'place', and to enhance its amenity to residents, but has since evolved to broaden the group's focus to environmental education and community engagement. George outlines the shifting nature of active membership, depending on the nature of the cause they are engaged in. Much of the activity George describes, such as the coordination of film festivals, is dissociated from the local area, and more broadly based on community awareness. This activity also includes significant lobbying activity. While the other groups engage directly in conservation activities, George identifies that his volunteers are involved in a range of activities such as selling tickets to events, which he claims is important to maintain freshness in their activities. In the case of Hamish's group, the conservation work is based on a sense of place and respect for the island itself, with much of the regeneration occurring on private land, or state or local government sites. This links localised activities and concerns across the island in a network of people all engaged in the same conservation vision which is to connect the salt marshes from property to property with revegetated areas. Thus, the sense of place varies from a highly localised sense of belonging

to ‘our beach’ to a far broader sense of connection between places within a larger area. For George’s group, the sense of place appears to have given way to a broader, more global perspective of conservation.

The vignettes presented five different models of leadership. Wilma and Fred described their group as a ground-up organisation with common interests and commitment which emerged in response to a threat to their local environment and its amenity, generally associated with development. Peg and Al outlined how their group was formed at a public meeting. In this time their group has had stable membership with most of their members having transitioned from work into retirement. This demographic is also common in Wilma and Fred’s group. Betty promotes distributed leadership of her group, based on skills and expertise, whereas George promotes the importance of having someone in the community who is prepared to take on responsibility, highlighting the importance of strong leadership. Of all the groups, Hamish’s group appears to have the strongest formal leadership structure, and he is in a paid position as leader, with all the accountability requirements to a variety of stakeholders.

All five leaders are responsible for some core functions within their group, which range in complexity. The groups all have formal leadership structures and manage their own grants, writing process and finances. Wilma acknowledges her role in getting grants and managing the core functions of the group. With incorporation, Al was the founding chairperson so that the group could manage their own funding. A committee formed around him with long-standing committee roles, with Peg becoming and remaining treasurer. Betty’s group is sponsored by the local council and is also incorporated, with individuals with sound expertise across the group in leadership roles. She is the nominal leader of her group. Hamish identified a standard committee structure that included a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, and other committee people in different roles. These committee members are elected at the

AGM. Similarly, George identified that his group was also incorporated with a leadership hierarchy to satisfy the requirements of incorporation.

Wilma and Fred's group ran formal meetings with an agenda. Meetings for Peg and Al's organisations were bi-monthly; however, due to the dispersed geographic distribution of volunteers, not all are able to attend meetings. George's AGMs were held to satisfy incorporation requirements, with the balance of the time dedicated to socialising. George identified a core of about a dozen people, with greater planning responsibility, with meetings among this group scheduled when required, rather than regularly, and with changes in timing dependent on the nature of the cause that the group is engaged in. His group projects were usually the result of group brainstorming, as well as his own ideas. Thus, some of the described activities were attributed to the group, while others were communicated as being George's own ideas for activities within the local community. Betty identified that her group came together once a month for two hours to weed and plant the beach access. She made no reference to formal AGMs. Of all the groups, Hamish's group was described as having the most formal committee structure, meeting monthly with formal reporting requirements. Whether committee members or key stakeholders in specific areas, the greater the complexity of the group, the more regular the planning meetings take place. However, the formality of the committed structure appears to be linked to the leadership style of the group, and small groups ran formal committee meetings alongside larger groups, while George's group, although large and complex, was more eclectic in its approach to formal meetings.

All groups, except for Betty and Hamish's, had trouble in working with formal organisations including local council and funding bodies. Wilma and Fred cited problems in dealing with the red tape and inaction from councils and authorities. For Peg and Al's group, the permit and training system was heavily regulated, and the group is also answerable to a university research group involved in the program. These controls were no longer

problematic for George's group, which was involved with authorities in the role of lobbyists and protestors. Betty, because of her very localised functions together with her use of team expertise, worked in a more limited political context and was supported by her local council. The most complex of the CCGs in relation to formal organisations and accountability was Hamish's group. Despite the complexity, the group worked in harmony with the support of the State government, local council and 30 private landholders. Nonetheless, while this group no longer worked with Landcare, Hamish identified the barriers posed in this and similar organisations in terms of bureaucracy, to both conservation activity and the engagement of individuals in committee work.

Recruitment of volunteers was regarded as problematic by Wilma and Fred, and Peg and Al. In contrast, George maintained that there was insufficient conservation work for the volunteers they had, and that there is an abundance of volunteers when community groups such as film societies were tapped into. An issue for the former two CCGs was youth recruitment. For Peg and Al, this was because the permits do not allow participation by people younger than 18 years. Furthermore, there were training implications for all people involved in turtle data gathering. While school children were engaged and interested, without flexibility in the EPA rules, this funding for volunteers was likely to be lost if they could not actively engage with the turtles. Wilma and Fred worked with youth groups across their region, and even though youth were interested and stated that they would get involved in the future, this had not yet occurred. Wilma and Fred identified problems with authority and young recruits, who, they claimed, found an authoritarian environment difficult to work with. Other groups with strong and non-negotiable leadership were also identified as having difficulties in retention of volunteers. In contrast, Betty's group had no shortage of volunteers, and she credited the youth involvement in her groups as being a consequence of a conscious avoidance of cliquey behaviour and overbearing leadership. Through his group's

strategy to tap into other community groups, George communicated that his group's volunteer status was healthy. While Hamish identified an active volunteer base of 15 to 20 people, he identified the contribution of weekenders or holiday makers who volunteered while on the island. Hamish's group also supplemented volunteers with paid work in the nurseries and for planting. Nonetheless, Hamish too identified problems with an ageing volunteer workforce. In summary, despite increased difficulties in attracting young volunteers, there is no consistent pattern of recruitment of new volunteers. It does appear that more diverse organisations are able to recruit enough volunteers as to be sustainable while smaller operations have trouble. However, recruitment of younger volunteers is also linked to the social climate and leadership of the group.

The way that volunteers participate in conservation activities varies across the groups. For George's organisation, activity is focused around events with an associated ebb and flow of volunteer numbers and activities. Peg and Al's volunteers often work in small groups but also as solitary persons in turtle conservation. Betty's groups are focused on land care and regeneration in regular, scheduled group activities. However, Wilma found that scheduled activities were increasingly difficult given that their group was predominantly made up of retirees who were also actively involved in their families' lives. Designed to suit retirees, the group's scheduled meeting time on Thursdays was likely to preclude membership of people in employment. Hamish's group activity was distributed across several areas. Working bees were held regularly in the nursery, while a formal workforce maintained the nurseries. Scheduled, episodic working bees were also scheduled, which also included a paid workforce to complete tasks such as planting. Episodic activity was also scheduled for periods when visitors to the island extended the volunteer workforce. Thus, for some of the CCGs, activities were regular, on a need's basis, while others ran scheduled activities to achieve conservation goals.

For Peg and Al, community engagement was often enacted on the beaches during their activity, although it can be problematic when community members are not well-informed about their conservation activities. However, they were also active in other bodies such as NRM, and regional council and they work closely with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Wilma and Fred work with other community groups as a conduit for inter-communication of various community members. They identify how any threat to local environmental amenity draws together all members of the community. Betty identifies the importance of word of mouth among the community and its contribution to volunteer recruitment. For her group, community engagement was at the heart of their volunteering philosophy and activity. George's group also maximises the potential of the whole community in areas as diverse as film making and the arts. Because of the nature of their conservation work, and the need for engagement with organisational stakeholders and local land holders, Hamish's group has forged strong bonds with the community. They are supported by other groups and are well-respected within the community. All groups participate in regular discussions with local councils in their domain of interest. Thus, engagement of the community is important to all groups, particularly when activities impact on the perceived amenity of the community, but also when groups such as George's take on lobbying roles in the face of human pressures on the environment.

For four of the groups, leadership succession was viewed as problematic. There is an inference regarding Wilma and Fred by the nature of their membership who are all retirees, coupled with difficulties in recruiting new, younger volunteers. Peg and Al, while acknowledging that they are not getting any younger, are quite selective about the transition to new leadership. They claimed ownership of conservation on their beach and that they actively reject individuals who do not fit the bill in terms of attitude. They would approach individual volunteers to take over their domain as they age. George stated that there was no

succession plan. He was unsure about what would happen if he resigned from the organisation after 20 years of creating it in line with his own vision and identified that there was no succession plan. Betty identified no succession problems, mainly because she never took an approach in which she claimed to 'own' the group. Betty discussed how she acknowledges expertise and group achievements and maximises the way that skills are used across the group's activities. In contrast, Betty identified the problems associated with domineering leaders, a lack of inclusivity and therefore comfort within the group, leading to volunteer attrition. Hamish did not identify succession issues; however, he did identify the importance of stability in the group, and the relative longevity of the leadership within the group. He retired in the early 2000s which indicates a likelihood of a leadership change sometime in the future. Potentially, Hamish's group is buffered by its strong organisational structure and distribution of expertise, including younger people who are in paid employment by the group. Overall, despite succession plans in some of the groups, the leadership transition in the future is likely to be strengthened by younger volunteers in the group, and the ageing volunteer workforce that typifies most of the volunteer groups poses a potentially significant problem to succession and sustainability of the groups into the future. CCGs require individuals who are committed and dynamic to initiate their groups. Where leadership is invested in the leaders themselves, in autocratic approaches, implications exist for the retention of volunteers, particularly young volunteers. In contrast, where leadership is distributed and acknowledges the strengths of all volunteers, succession and leadership does not reside in any one individual, and generational volunteering is enabled.

In summary, the leadership vignettes support greater understanding of the leadership and structure of CCGs. CCG activities take many forms, namely those which maintain a connection to core local conservation activities (practical) and those which have evolved into education and lobby groups within their communities. Demographics are similar for most

groups in terms of an over-reliance on retirees as a volunteer workforce and as leaders of CCGs. Potential solutions to broadening the age bracket specifically include wider engagement with the community and approaches that target the interests of volunteers. Overall, the vignettes identify the importance of leadership in establishing and maintaining the CCGs, and the critical problems that emerge when leadership changes. They pose challenges to sustainability in terms of recruitment of younger volunteers. They also provide a commentary on the importance of leadership skills among leaders, and the distribution of leadership according to expertise and qualifications. Overwhelmingly, autocratic leadership is seen as problematic across all groups. All CCGs liaise closely with supervisory organisations and local councils, but with varying degrees of engagement. The leaders' vignettes raise issues with the engagement of volunteers where full support of stakeholders, including government and authorities is not provided.

6.2 Vignettes of volunteers

In similar fashion to those of the leaders, vignettes were constructed of a selection of individuals who identified as volunteers in the group and who held no formal leadership status. The vignettes were drawn from individual interviews and were selected to provide a cross-section of the experiences of CCGs as communities of volunteers. The vignettes are limited to four, because as with the leader interviews, the inclusion of any more would not add to the data and to the experiences presented here (Miles & Huberman,1994). The four individuals (or couples) presented here in the form of vignettes are Jack and Jill, Valerie, Gomez and Morris.

6.2.1 Jack and Jill

As a child Jill's family moved around a lot in country Victoria. She said she always liked the bush part of the suburbs and would head for the creek or something like that when she could. Over the last 20 years, Jill has always been in clubs, societies or art related

societies. Jack, her husband, agreed that as well as bringing up children Jill has always been involved in something in terms of volunteering. He added that Jill usually ended up being on the committee or as the president or the vice-president.

Jill and her husband, Jack moved to the local area about 12 months ago from another coastal town 20 kilometres to the south. In their previous location Jill was a member of the local coast care group for five years. Jill started volunteering with that group because of the introduction by her friendship group. As stated earlier, Jill volunteers in more than one context, and she identifies that she has found that people tend to volunteer for more than one agency or group like meals on wheels or the community nursery.

Jack identified that in their previous location, local community issues arose that were identified as being "not good". Jack joined the local Residents Committee and quickly realised that most of the people were "old, inept and didn't have the life skills to be able to fight issues". He said that he opened his mouth a few too many times and the next minute he was running the organisation. His first action was to change the group to a Residents Association which meant that if you lived there it did not matter whether you were a renter or whether you were an owner, you had the right to have something to say. Jack indicated that he was "able to put back into the community by using the skills that he has". Jack said he is having a break for 12 months but intends to join the region's Parks Association, as it is very strong.

When she moved north, Jill was concerned about her volunteer work in her previous locality, stating that she was "not going to continually drive south" to engage. Thus, by word of mouth and getting to know people, she joined this local conservation group and met "some very interesting and intelligent people straight away". She claimed that her new group is very different to her old group. She stated that "her new group makes it clear that if you have to go to do anything then you should not feel guilty". Her weekly commitment to her new group is

one morning a week for four hours: three hours weeding and planting and about an hour afterwards chatting. Jill is also involved in spotting logger head turtle tracks and nests during turtle season. She explained that she is "not allowed to do any digging or stuff like that, I just keep an eye open and if I see tracks or a nest, then I wait there, and they come down and measure". As well as spotting turtles Jill also contributes to the dead Shearwater bird report. Jill volunteers because:

> I like to put a little bit of something back when you live in an area like this. I've had a good life and that kind of thing so to put something back is probably the easiest way to explain why I volunteer.

She added that she likes volunteering because it allows her to think that she has done something that is helping and because it provides the opportunity to meet interesting people which expands her knowledge. Jack agreed, stating:

> I watch what she does because I don't weed, and I think Jill volunteers for two reasons. It is the camaraderie of being able to be with people of a like-view and secondly the fact that maybe she's doing her little bit.

Jill believes people do not volunteer because "it means a bit of work, it means putting themselves out, it means a commitment to something". Jill said that they have a friend who lives in the area and who thinks that the concept of volunteering for anything that others should be paid to do is wrong. Jack stated that his friend is, "Not in the real world because governments and organisations do not have the money to physically do all the things that volunteers do". He said that, "Volunteers play a very significant role in community … where would we be without the [State Emergency Service] SES?".

Jill discussed personal barriers to volunteering and stated that sometimes she does not always feel like going, "particularly if it is a really stinking hot day, and because its tiring". But when she thinks about the big picture and questions her motivation to help, she always

gets there. However, she said, “Once you get out there and you’re with the people in the surroundings you forget about all of that and when you see the results you feel a whole lot better!”.

Jill shared the opinion that volunteering action in the environment is important for awareness-raising. She stated that, “If more people get together to volunteer, people will sit up and realise how much rubbish is on the beach”. Jack’s perspective is very different to Jill’s. He compared environmental degradation with the wearing of seat belts, stating that, “There has been no legal ramification for their inaction”. He said frankly, “I’m sorry the comment of people will do the right thing, people will not do the right thing until they are faced with consequences”.

6.2.2 Valerie

Valerie is 80 years of age and stated that, “As far as volunteering is concerned, I suppose in this household it is a way of life … it is an integral part of our life”. Her parents volunteered and she and her husband included their three children in volunteering. Their youngest daughter has lived overseas for many years and has volunteered in India and Egypt. Valerie and her husband raised money socially for an Indian orphanage “for a long, long time”. Valerie said that apart from volunteering for the environment she and her husband were active members in their church and that “there is a lot of volunteering there”. She outlined how “we deliver meals, rehearse in a singing group, provide musical direction in the local theatre group and go out and sign to people in nursing homes”. For Valerie volunteering “is about giving something back and it’s also a feeling of living and the well-being of others and caring for others in the community who are not as well off as you are”. She adds, “In the case of being a member of this group volunteering is of course a love of environment”.

Valerie and her husband moved to the local area from Melbourne many years ago because they fell in love with the place and they have loved it increasingly so since then.

Valerie said that she got involved after reading a letter to the editor 21 years ago about the approval of an eight-story building that appeared to have been rushed through in three days. Valerie decided to write a letter and so her association with the group began.

Valerie identifies a contradiction between peoples' motivations for living in a beautiful area, and their actions in establishing a residence there, particularly holiday homes. She stated that "people come and look around and see that it is a pristine environment and a very beautiful place to live". She described how they come and "build a huge dwelling on it, which takes up most of the land and then they're absentee owners!". Valerie regrets the loss of the land along the beachfront, particularly over the last six to seven years, where buildings have taken up all the land, people have cut down all the trees around it and there is no replanting, and "sadly, the birdlife here is changing rapidly".

Valerie outlined the social benefits of becoming a member of a volunteer group. When she moved here from Melbourne, she and her husband were strangers. Volunteering provided them with the opportunity to meet a lot of people, most of whom have become their friends. One of the major highlights for Valerie is the fun they have together as a group. She said that, "We talk with one another, we've made friends with one another and now we socialise with one another".

Valerie believes that another big part of volunteering is commitment: "We're great believers in staying with those sorts of commitments". Valerie expressed that commitment brings a "collective love of the environment and a wish to preserve and maintain this pristine environment in which they live".

Valerie's group is quite small and has about ten volunteers. She weeds on a Thursday morning and in-between times, when they get schools to come and help with major plantings, of say, 350 plants. The group may also meet fortnightly or monthly depending on the projects. The group includes people who cannot do physical work. Valerie said, "Once you

get to your 70s you just don't have the strength … you might have the resilience, but you don't have a lot of strength to do the physical things".

Her husband cannot "bend to weed anymore as his knees are bad". Nonetheless, there is a role within the group for all volunteers. Valerie explained, "One lady does all of our fund-raising for us and applying for grants; over the years she has secured several hundred thousand dollars in funding". She added there is another lady "who also bakes cakes for our morning teas".

While Valerie does not mention whether their group is incorporated or not, the inference is that if they apply for, and secure funding, they are self-managing and therefore incorporated with a committee structure. But Valerie did identify that, "They are a wonderful group of people and I am glad that there are no bossy people who feel they know how to do things best". Thus, again making inferences, there is a committee and president, but they are not hierarchical or autocratic.

Valerie is somewhat frustrated that more people do not volunteer. She stated that. "They know fit and capable people who are perfectly able to join a weeding group, but they don't!". She said that she never asks but assumes it could be because they are more deeply involved in something else or perhaps it could be laziness. Valerie said that several of her friends openly admire her for volunteering. However, she said that she thinks a "lot of their friends think she is quite mad". Valerie identified that when people are passing by, while they are weeding, they often call out, "You're doing a good job!". She then quipped, "they're generally riding a bicycle down to have a cup of coffee somewhere!".

6.2.3 Gomez

Gomez takes on several roles in his local community in addition to his full-time employment as a local council member; rugby union club registrar, regional rugby union selector, the Parents and Community High School Committee, Clean Up Australia organiser,

chorister, amateur actor and conservation volunteer. He stated that he proudly wears his volunteering hats for all the organisations with which he is involved, and he believes that they have supported him to become a representative of the community. Like many other volunteers, Gomez's activity is spread across numerous organisations within the community.

Gomez' involvement with his group began about 10 years ago: "I was walking through the park one day and I saw a sign there and people with their heads down, bums up and asked them what they were doing. I thought it was interesting and asked what was involved". At the time he says; I was flat out with work and could not get there". Gomez explained that, "Once I could … I haven't looked back, I have loved it ever since!".

The group meets one Sunday a month for three hours, but Gomez sometimes cannot make it due to other commitments. He also lives near little park reserve which is a "very pristine piece of bushland in among suburbia". It has been heavily impacted by residents extending their backyards into the bush, or making their own plantings, or dumping weeds. Gomez acted alone, adopting the bushland, and asked his "crew" to help stem the weed invasion in December and January when the group does not have regular working bees.

In respect to the group's achievements Gomez has been amazed with "what can be achieved by a hardy half-dozen of souls who really want to move forward with something". He has a simple philosophy to what he does:

> You don't try to tackle the whole lot at once, you tackle it in small bites. You set yourself a goal to achieve within the space of time you are allowed. Every time I go in there, I do that—I don't set out to clear the whole area in one day, just usually a few square metres depending on what the weed is and how difficult it is the remove. You set a realistic target … you don't set unrealistic goals.

When asked about the benefits of volunteering Gomez states that "too many people miss the opportunity". Gomez presented a belief that volunteering affords an individual "the

opportunity to influence, to be readily involved, and to be engaged in things happening right here at your doorstep".

Gomez stated that to him there is no reason to "have so many lonely people out there". He explained how he has met people, created networks, enhanced his local area, learned a lot about aspects of how committees run, how the natural environment survives, what issues the environment faces and how to deal with these issues. He explained also how one of the group's members has now got qualifications and now has a part-time contracting business out of volunteering. Gomez identified his love of the camaraderie created by like-minded people and enjoys the real sense of satisfaction of completing tasks. Apart from the "passion" of what they are doing Gomez also claimed that the social interaction for most of the group is a huge highlight: "Jan's sandwiches and baking goods are the envy of most of the other groups".

Gomez expressed a wish for more people to volunteer in these groups, stating that, "It's always the same, it's a small core of people who really see the benefit of this and actively engage in it on a regular basis". For Gomez, "the clue to volunteering is to find something you're genuinely interested in. It makes it far easier to volunteer and if you want to pursue it, it will bring its rewards". It is apparent from Gomez's commentary that in the regard to benefits there may well be something on offer for everyone who volunteers. He also highlights the benefits to the broader community which is not limited to those for retirees only.

The growing difficulty of recruiting volunteers across all sectors is an issue that Gomez is familiar with. Gomez said that he understood that people have "busy lives and some people just don't want to, and it's like a particular job isn't right for everybody".

He went on to discuss a more general issue with volunteering, identifying how his high school canteen has had to employ paid staff because they struggled to find volunteers.

Gomez stated that, “Society has changed a lot. In the past there would have been a lot more willing to assist”. However, Gomez does identify that in areas such as sporting groups there are less problems finding volunteers because the parents want to give back to a sport that their child is engaging with. Gomez believes also that:

> Complacency has crept into a lot of people’s lives. If you have a good strong volunteer base that is doing all the work, others turn around and tend to say somebody else is doing it, I don’t need to step forward.

As coordinator of the local Clean Up Australia Day, Gomez has found difficulty finding volunteers, even in a town with 35,000 people:

> This is an event that has captured the nation for over 20 years … yet here in a place where we advocate our green credentials, less than 1% of the population engages every year … so it’s a hard sell.

Gomez believes that advocacy is critical for the sustainability of environmental conservation volunteer groups. He thinks that conservation volunteers should not be afraid to tell others what they do, why we do it and what they get out of it: “I don’t think we advocate enough for our groups”, he says. Gomez’ narrative provides some insight into some of the difficulties of volunteer recruitment; availability, level of interest and care. His narrative also suggest that groups could be more effective in promotion.

In Gomez’s opinion the local area’s aged population has the time and willingness to devote themselves to volunteering because they wanted to stay engaged and active. He acknowledged that having time is one of those restrictions for a lot of people but:

> Like anything if you want to do something you find time, you rearrange your life schedule because something means something to you … so many people don’t give it a chance, don’t give it the opportunity until they don’t have all those other things in their life getting in the way … they miss out and that’s sad.

6.2.4 Morris

Morris grew up in Papua New Guinea and in his words, “they were never far from the bush”. He is not currently working very much at all on a paid basis these days and wants his life to have purpose. He said that, “You wake up in the morning and you want to have a purpose. Volunteering helps me with that, it’s like you have a job”. Up until last year he had been volunteering with SES partly because it was an outdoors activity. He left the SES because of the group leader who was getting very officious. Morris said that for this leader it was “all about climbing up the ladder … you couldn’t do something unless you were credited for it”.

Morris’s group meet on the first and third Saturday of each month for a few hours. He stated that on any given day there would be anything from two to six volunteers presenting for duty. He said that most of the volunteers are 60 plus, “I am not sure what their backgrounds are, but I don’t think any have environmental backgrounds”. He stated that he had also joined ‘Waterwatch’, which is a three-hour commitment monthly. Morris said that he is not dedicated to one group and that when he had time he would go and work with any number of groups in his local area. He stated , “there is so much effort required to make the whole area much more the way it should be”. Morris said he gets considerable satisfaction out of seeing the result in achieving something. He also finds that volunteering provides him good exercise and that it is good for his mental health since “being outdoors in nature with peace and quiet allows you to just to slow down to think”.

Morris said that learning about the bush was a key reason for him deciding to begin environmental volunteering. He explained that “[One] learns about the species and about the weeds that are there and the general ecology of the place, what the problems are and what one can do about it”.

He has observed that finding people to volunteer is difficult and that environmental volunteering is not well publicised. He explained further, stating that, “People commonly see the SES and lifesavers in the paper, but the general public doesn’t know that there is a lot of volunteering going on with environmental work”. Morris said that his fellow volunteers joined their group through word of mouth or by seeing what the group was doing. He communicated that the group is appreciated by the community and that often people would walk past and thank them for what they were doing. He said that he often replies, “you are welcome to help out as well sometimes”. He added, to illustrate the problem with new volunteer recruitment, that they recently dropped off 120 flyers about their group and only received one response.

Morris considered that apart from the attitude of the group’s members and the technical and logistical support that councils provide, good leadership is essential to the group. He said that, “You need somebody that is very good at leading and getting out and getting things done or organising things without being bossy about it, just enthusiastic and supporting other people that are there”.

He also said:

> You gotta have leadership that is not dictatorial or that has the wrong agenda. Volunteers have to be able to do what they are there for. There should be an understanding that if you don’t turn up it’s not a big deal. Leadership that can make or break an organisation.

Morris reflected on his own group, stating that “so far this group’s leadership appears to be really good”. His leader had a “very good handle on all the departments, oversees all the departments and forges good links to many people in different departments”. He concluded by saying that, “Without her, it would be difficult for us to do as much as we are doing!”.

6.2.5 Volunteer vignettes summary

The vignettes of the volunteers provide additional insight into the functions of CCGs. They add to our knowledge of the motivation for and benefits of volunteering, the activities in which volunteers engage, and their perceptions of the organisation and leadership. They also provide insight into the operational lives of volunteers. This section presents short vignettes drawn from interviews with Morris, Valerie, Jack and Jill, and Gomez.

Except for Gomez, all the volunteers are retirees. Gomez is a volunteer across several contexts, as well as a local council employee. All the volunteers have a varied history in volunteering. Valerie comes from a volunteering family and has engaged in this activity her whole life. Gomez is involved in a variety of volunteering contexts, including sporting and community groups. As a country girl, Jill has always been involved in volunteering, often in leadership roles, until retirement to the coast. Morris has volunteered with the SES and transitioned to environmental volunteering through Jill's friendship group.

Individuals' reasons for engaging in environmental volunteering vary across the group. Gomez is action-oriented and has engaged in restoration and conservation of a bush block alongside his residence as well as in working bees run by a local CCG. Apart from a passion about the environmental conservation aspect, Gomez is motivated by the opportunity to engage with others in the community, enhancing his networks through the camaraderie of working with people with beliefs similar to his own. Morris' motivation is the sense of purpose volunteering provides, physical and emotional well-being, as well as the satisfaction in seeing the results of the group's activities. He volunteers across numerous environmental groups to spread his contribution further. Apart from the sense of helping others and contributing through volunteering, Jill's primary motivation is social, including the camaraderie of working with like-minded others. Valerie was motivated out of a sense of concern for the environmental impacts of building and development in sensitive coastal areas.

Knowledge is also a motivation for all volunteers, learning about the bush, ecology and ways in which positive action can restore and conserve it. Overall, the combination of contributing with a sense of purpose and engaging in social camaraderie appear to be the major motivations for engagement in these CCGs

All the volunteers in these CCGS engage in routine activities such as weeding and planting, with more active roles as their knowledge and insight developed. They all identify the importance of a narrow focus on the activities at hand so that the tasks become more manageable. But by tacking the small things, as Gomez identified, the volunteers feel a part of a larger conservation goal. The leadership of CCGs is important to volunteers' satisfaction. All identify the contribution of leadership which is not demanding, or "bossy", which acknowledges the contribution of the volunteers. However, Morris also includes the leadership skills of those able to manage volunteers and activities. They also acknowledge the varied contribution of others, including those who do not engage in the physical activities of the group but who support it in other ways. Aligned with all the motivations discussed earlier, the benefits of volunteering that are generally shared among the group except for Morris, include a sense of well-being, the fun of being a part of a group, and the sense of achievement of engaging in the activities. Morris places greater value on the physical and mental benefits of volunteering, and the sense of peace that the outdoors supports.

The group introduced a variety of reasons why environmental conservation volunteering is challenged by a lack of volunteer numbers. A primary reason raised by Morris is the lack of public information about what volunteers do for the environment. But common to all these volunteers is a perception that there is a lack of interest among the community at large, who acknowledge the work of volunteers, but fail to get involved themselves. Reasons proposed by Jill and shared by Valerie include a lack of capacity of non-volunteers to commit themselves to anything that takes effort, while Gomez believes that there is a complacency

and belief among the community that someone is already doing the job and hence no volunteers are required. Gomez also identifies competition for volunteers, including sporting groups, and the role of parents in supporting their own children in this area which draws from available volunteer numbers.

Common to the leaders, the volunteers' vignettes also highlight the proportion of ageing people in the volunteer workforce, although Gomez believes that volunteering could be promoted as a way of reducing loneliness among the retiree population.

In summary, the volunteers' vignettes have a lot in common with the leaders' vignettes. The leadership style of leaders is important to the sustainability of the group and membership retention. The social aspects of volunteering are seen to be more important to the volunteers than to leaders. Finally, the focus of volunteers is greater on weekly activities while that of leaders includes the big picture of the broader conservation context, management and engagement with government and policy, and funding.

Chapter 7: Alignment of CCGs with Communities of Practice

The data presented and discussed in Chapter 6 assessed the motivations, beliefs, and perceived benefits of individuals in engaging in volunteering in CCGs. It also assessed the structure, function and activities of CCGs from a leadership perspective. Whilst understanding the individual motivations for, and benefits from volunteering, as well as the activities and operations of the CCG, it is equally important to understand the community and practice of these group. This approach can inform CCGs as they form, as they seek improvement, and as they evaluate their operations. Communities of practice have been discussed in Chapter 2 as offering opportunities to not only understand the way that shared-interest groups function and operate, but also to improve this by using the framing ideas of a community of practice to interrogate and change aspects of the group.

Figure 2.3 appealed to the clarification presented by Bozarth (2008) and Storberg-Walker (2008) to display visually the markers of the analytical components of the four aspects (meaning, community, identity and learning) of Wenger's (1998) community of practice model. It developed each of the markers further, by extending them into statements of recognisable features of CCGs that align with the intent of the markers. It illustrated how the work of Bozarth (2008) and Storberg-Walker (2008) was extended to encompass the unique context of volunteering in coastal conservation. Table 2.10 was drawn from Figure 2.3 and shows the alignment between the aspects and analytical components of community of practice and the markers that were identified in the context of CCGs.

Emerging ideas and key themes were presented in the data in Chapter 6 and were analysed through the lens of the functions of CCGs. This data was then re-coded and used to align the characteristics and experience of volunteers in CCGs with the characteristics of communities of practice. The markers of the analytical components and the aspects of community of practice were used to categorise the data, aligning it with each marker. The

data was further categorised to uncover both positive and negative examples of each marker within the CCGs, alongside potential implications associated with this alignment to the functioning of the CCG.

It is noted that whilst there is much research cited in Chapter 2 on communities of practice, there is a significant difference between environmental volunteering and other forms of volunteering (such as in health care, meals on wheels, schools and classrooms). This difference is due to the voluntary and emergent nature of the CCG as an independent organisation with its own leadership structure and function, all dictated by the domain of conservation within their function and run by volunteers. It would be generally meaningless to classify many other types of volunteering as communities of practice where their limited operation is defined within a hierarchy such as schools and hospitals. But the situation is different with CCGs and similar types of organisations, and the CCG Community of Practice Framework is a very useful way to characterise their operations.

This chapter is divided into four main categories representing the aspects of the community of practice model; meaning, community, learning and identity. It is further divided into sub-sections representing the markers of each aspect. The data is presented and discussed within these sections. Discussion of this data is presented in Chapter 8.3.

7.1 Aspect: Meaning

7.1.1 M1 Participation—mutual recognition

This analytical component of the aspect meaning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We all recognise the role of volunteers, the importance of membership, and the value of mutual recognition*. Whilst most of the volunteers identified motivations to engage with coastal conservation that transcended recognition of their contributions, to maintain the well-being of the organisation, acknowledgement of all the volunteer roles, and affirmation of the

value of their contributions is critical. This aspect of the CCG community of practice is non-negotiable. Without volunteers, the organisations cease to exist.

Volunteers identified in Section 5.5.2 how they were self-monitoring, with personal recognition of their role seen in the self-satisfaction that their work was seen to change the environment. The role of volunteers was also strongly recognised by their peers across the data sets, particularly in Section 5.5.2, not only in conservation, but in collegiality, supporting learning and belongingness within the group. This was evident in the qualitative survey data, but the strongest evidence of the way the role of volunteers was recognised was presented in the vignettes in Section 6.1. These vignettes illustrated that underpinning volunteer contributions to conservation were the functions of the group that supported and recognised them, emphasising the importance of catering, organisation, friendship, collegiality, and the commitment of others in the group. Mutual recognition was seen, in the data in Section 5.6.2, to be associated with being able to use one's knowledge and skills to the betterment of the group and the environment, as formal recognition of the volunteer's contribution. Recognition was also seen, in the same section of data, to be the formal nomination of individuals to groups external to the CCG to present the group's position more broadly in ways that might influence policy. The leaders outlined how important it was in their CCG to ensure that the volunteers' efforts were recognised. This recognition came in the form of social functions and reward, but importantly, in the case of Hamish's group, the reward and recognition were seen to be in taking volunteers on field trips to see first-hand the results of their labour. The partners of the volunteers presented in the Section 6.1 vignettes such as Jack and Al were quick to praise their others for the contribution they make. Leaders such as Hamish, George and Betty outlined how they made a concerted effort to recognise their volunteers in tangible ways. One of the most critical ways to recognise the achievements and efforts of volunteers was identifying the evidence of improvement in the environment that

was the focus of their work. The importance of their concerted contribution to the cause was a prime bond that established the community and helped avoid attrition when social matters were problematic.

This component of the community of practice can be problematic when there is a lack of recognition of the role of volunteers. Volunteers identified on occasion in Sections 5.5.2 and 5.7 that their perspectives, insights, proposed changes to established routines were rejected by groups with strong histories of fixed ways of doing things, which led to their disengagement with the group. A threat to the sense of being valued as a volunteer was also seen to be under external threat with organisations and groups outside the boundaries of the CCG being seen to place little value on the contributions, knowledge and skills of the volunteers. In the context of leadership and running of the CCG, it is useful to re-visit this component, to ascertain whether acknowledgement has been adequate, whether it requires addressing, and to establish protocols within the community of practice that underpin mutual recognition. This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework draws in the functions Recognition, Understanding, Reciprocity, Project Organisation, Career and Personal Enhancement.

7.1.2 M2 Participation—experience and community shaped by participation

This analytical component of the aspect meaning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *Who we are, and how we participate shapes our community and lived experience. The meaning of volunteering shapes not only the way volunteers work within the community but the way they engage with the broader community within which they live*. Whilst this component is grouped within the aspect of Meaning, it is cross-linked also to the aspects of identity and community. The qualitative data identified broadly how CCG volunteers recognised themselves as an entity apart from but situated within the general community in which they operated.

In Section 5.3.2, participants discussed their motivations to engage in volunteering in their CCG. Their contributions extended into what motivated them to continue volunteering, which is interpreted as informing our insight into how they define their participation. Their responses were categorised within the categories of conservation, concerns, education, engaging with nature, future generations, reciprocity, personal advantage, and social/mutual engagement. This multiplicity of motivations and ways to participate can be seen in the data in Section 5.4 to have shaped the experiences of volunteers through the activities in which they have engaged. For instance, concerns about waste has led to the cleaning up of waste from urban kerbs, gutters, and drainage systems to "reverse the trend" of trashing the environment. For those who wished to educate others, the outcome in their activities has been initiatives within the community as a way of broadcasting the education message. For those concerned about changes in populations, the activities have become centred towards monitoring and researching. For others, such as Valerie, reported in Section 6.2.2, an interest in a proposed development application triggered a lobbying response and established the foundation of her group. Yet others, in Section 5.3.2, identified how they were motivated by their own experience as scientists and bush regenerators, sharing their knowledge with the conservation group and thus influencing their practice.

While conservation is the foremost concern of all volunteers, for some there is an interest in social engagement with others, and community belongingness through which the CCG's social fabric was developed.

By their nature, CCGs were engaged with the broader community as they sought to address perceptions of sustainability beyond their own boundaries.

The successes of groups such as George's CCG impacted on the whole community experience of conservation. Hamish too changed the perspectives and motivations of the community on his island. Wilma and Fred enabled the physical sustainability of their local

environment through their lobbying actions and raised awareness and passion within their varied community to continue to lobby in this area. Their daily lives were driven by this commitment, for instance in the qualitative survey data presented in Section 5.5.2, it was stated that, “I am always pulling a weed when I’m on my walk”.

This component is a powerful aspect of the CCG community of practice. Formal recognition through auditing of the way in which the CCG community itself is supported in shaping its own direction, albeit alongside official requirements, is important. This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework is characteristic of the nature of conservation volunteer groups, by which volunteers table their own skills and interests, proposals and ideas through which the group defines their operations and engagement with each other. There are links between this aspect and the entire cross-section of functions.

7.1.3 M3 Participation—more than specific activities

This analytical component of the aspect meaning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We do not merely complete tasks, membership and participation is broader than this*. The data reveals a range of ways in which this component is expressed within the CCGs surveyed in this research. For some, such as Betty’s group, participation of some volunteers was limited to turning up and planting or weeding. For others, participation was more broadly engaged with multiple initiatives, including the sustenance of the social group itself.

The CCG functions outline the characteristics of volunteer engagement in terms of motivation, satisfaction and benefits. These functions extend far more broadly than simply completing the conservation task. The data in Sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 outlined the development in volunteers, through participation and membership, of personal attributes, professional/career skills, qualities such as persistence and commitment, the development of creative solutions to problems, a growth in personal and community knowledge and skills, and personal and social belongingness. Thus, membership included the practice of numerous

conservation roles, establishment of connections and working with funding bodies. It was far broader than just conservation activity. In fact, given that 75% of volunteers identify direct engagement in conservation tasks, it can be deduced that some volunteers did not identify that the latter was part of their role. Many volunteers participated by liaising with the broader community such as George's group, as shown in the data in Section 6.1.2. Others contributed to their organisation by writing funding applications such as Jill, in Section 6.21. But the contribution as a member of the group extended beyond these activities and included the social support, mentoring, collegiality and maintenance of a community which acted as group cohesion. Other broader functions of membership were the affirmation of others, and acknowledgement of their contributions, a key focus in groups such as Betty's and Hamish's in Sections 6.1. 3 and 6.1.4.

This component was seen to be variable across all the CCGs studied. It ranged from quite narrow and prescribed activity such as regular weeding and maintenance of a local patch of vegetation to community engagement activities, political lobbying and education. As with all the components, there are cross-links to other aspects, for instance recognising the diverse skillsets held by volunteers, through which diversification of focus could occur. Whilst it is not necessarily recommended that all CCGs continue to redefine and evolve their activities and roles, it is important for them to audit their operations and ensure that these are justifiable within the constraints of membership and budgets. It is also important for them to recognise that where broader skills are not required, the interplay with the functions that motivate, and reward volunteers may mean reduced recruitment of members. Associated with this component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework were the functions Social Interaction, Project Organisation, Reciprocity, Sense of Place, Personal Enhancement, Environmental Care, and Values.

7.1.4 M4 Reification—a focus is created

This analytical component of the aspect meaning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We have a mission, documentation, a charter or constitution*.

All the CCGs presented in the vignettes, as well as documented in the survey data were identified as being incorporated, with a management structure and constitution. They all applied for their own funding for the projects that they undertake. Some worked within the jurisdiction of an organising body such as the turtle conservation work of Peg and Al, documented in Section 6.1.1. Many were supported by local council, such as Betty's group, in data presented in Section 6.1.3. The formal aspect of group organisation was interpreted more loosely in some than others, for instance Peg and Al, and Hamish held regular, formal meetings while George held meetings on a need's basis.

The formal structure and constitution of the CCGS were established to serve insurance and funding purposes, hence had committee structures. The committees were reported in Section 5.4.1 to be populated by long-standing individuals who rotated within the roles on occasion but had longevity in their roles.

This component of CCG Community of Practice Framework links to the function Project Organisation.

7.1.5 M6 Duality—participation and reification

This analytical component of the aspect meaning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We cannot be all about policy or all about the practical. One informs the other and the nexus is important to members, as well as the way we operate*. Whilst CCGs must have formal polity and operational foci, the practical is the medium through which most volunteers engage. As an organisation, ensuring tight links between policy and practical will ensure that the operations are streamlined and effective.

The CCGs fit within the umbrella organisations which fund and support them. For this reason, they are policy-driven to a degree with priorities dictated by funding and organisational priorities. However, all the CCGs documented, particularly in the vignettes, outlined how their membership was a ground-up initiative, which invariably commenced with a practical conservation focus. The vignettes of all the volunteers presented in Section 6.2 identified their commitment to the local environment in terms of revegetation, monitoring and conservation. For the volunteer corps, policy was acknowledged but not raised as a significant issue. However, for the leaders in their vignettes presented in Section 6.1, policy was a key issue because of their reliance on umbrella organisations or local council regulations. For instance, Peg and Al's turtle conservation group was constrained under the policy for this type of work, including the exclusion of younger volunteers. The separation between the perspectives of the volunteers themselves, which focused predominantly on their practice, and that of the leaders, which focused significantly on management of the way the group interpreted policy and adhered to guidelines such as Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and risk assessment is testament to the way in which the group operates at the nexus of policy and practice. Most groups kept the balance under control, evidenced by the lack of focus of the volunteers on policy. Nonetheless, the responsibility for interpreting and enacting policy was shown in Section 6.1 to be a significant workload issue for leaders, identified as leading to burn-out in many cases.

This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework identified the way in which policy and practical are interdependent in the functioning of the CCG but separated by the actions of the leadership of the group. As a marker of communities of practice, this component is important to recognise and maintain so that the practical and theoretical alignment is maintained. This component relates primarily to the function Project Organisation.

7.1.6 M5 Reification—evolution of final product

This analytical component of the aspect meaning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *The engagement of our community determines how the final product looks, it is the result of practical experience and engagement*. This final product was an important focus of the members of the groups. In coastal conservation, particularly weeding and revegetation, and other types of maintenance, the end-product is highly visible and the reward for effort is easily recognised.

Each CCG engages in conservation approaches that are driven by the interests and focus of their members. The activities documented in Section 5.4. acknowledged these approaches. For some groups, a priority was the removal of pollutants and litter with a clean beach and catchment area as an outcome. For others, it was weeding and revegetation with visible improvements in the local environment. For yet others, such as Peg and Al, the conservation focus was on turtle conservation and logging data about returning numbers of turtle nests and tagging evidence of their work. Whilst Hamish, identified that his group's goal of the revegetating areas around salt marshes on his island, was evidence of their success. The final product for groups such as George's, shown in Section 6.1.2, was successful presentation of their ideas and work to members of the community in multiple community events, participation in meetings and functions of the community, successful lobbying activities, as well as the traditional revegetation activity. For this group, evidence of success was the full engagement of the community.

The vignettes of all volunteers, presented in Section 6.2, identified the significant, visible outcomes of their conservation work and the sense of gratification individuals experienced when the outcome was unexpectedly better than anticipated.

When considering this component of CCG Community of Practice Framework, it is evident that each group drives its own agenda and way of meeting this conservation agenda

through a range of different, visible outcomes. However, it is nonetheless important for CCGs as communities of practice to be explicit in identifying the end-product of their work so that actions and intent align with expectations. This component links to multiple functions, including Environmental Care, Recognition, Reciprocity, Social Interaction and Understanding.

7.2 Aspect: Community

7.2.1 C1 Joint enterprise—negotiated enterprise

This analytical component of the aspect of this community is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We are all responsible for the way we engage in our enterprise*. While individual responsibility for the operations of the enterprise is assessed in Chapter 6, this section draws together the data aligned with this aspect to consider the ways in which the community and its operations are co-constructed by the collective membership.

The data reported in Chapters 5 and 6 provided evidence of the ways in which all group members carried a sense of responsibility for their collective enterprise. The domain within which they operated, and the way the group defined their functions also defined the way they engaged in conservation work. For some, such as the data presented by Betty in Section 6.1.3, all group members engaged collectively on conservation tasks such as weeding and revegetation. Where other activities were introduced, in different sections of the environment, Betty outlined how she recommended new groups be formed within the organisation. Overall, however, despite some fragmentation in terms of collective action, Betty's group was responsible for the coastal environment, sharing responsibility for the greater conservation work that they conducted collectively. Other groups, such as George's group were reported, in data presented in Section 6.1.2, to conduct a greater variety of tasks, with different sets of volunteers taking responsibility for each of the tasks, or sub-tasks. Nonetheless, when related

back to the enterprise, the focus of all the activities was on the enterprise that defined their CCG.

The data addressing motivations to engage, presented in Section 5.4.1 identified layers of engagement in enterprise, as volunteers positioned their sense of responsibility for the environment. These motivations were often linked to this sense of responsibility. For instance, the qualitative data categories shown in Table 5-15 shows responsibility for conservation enterprises that stemmed out of concern for the environment, the need to conserve for future generations, to save the local environment, or to educate people about the environment, to research for greater understanding, and an additional responsibility to give back to the environment. This responsibility focused on enterprise dealing with single species survival such as turtles, seagrasses, communities of plants, soil infrastructure, marine and coastal fauna, as well as land use around the zones of interest. Others situated their interest in a larger, more global conservation context. Even so, a single cohesive factor drew together all these areas of enterprise, that is the conservation of the local coastal environment.

Within the enterprise of coastal conservation, the way groups engaged in the enterprise of conservation ranged with many operational similarities and differences. This is shown in the data presented in Table 5-17 and Section 5.4.1. Operations to support engagement in coastal conservation included administration and leadership, collaboration with communities, advocacy and lobbying, education functions, monitoring and restoration of their sites of interest.

The field of enterprise of each CCG was differentiated to accommodate local differences, and this brief was addressed through the formal incorporation process which identified the group's mission. The qualitative interview data presented in the leadership vignettes in Section 6.1 outlined the focus of each of the CCGs. By being incorporated it is the membership's responsibility for the leadership, focus, operations, and direction of the

CCG and the way it is led and run. This responsibility, while embedded in the formal organisational structure and scheduled meetings, has been shown in the data to be variable, with some CCGs remaining quite democratic such as Betty's group, and others outlined in the data, for instance George's group, as being leader-centred. There were benefits and drawbacks from groups who do not broadly share responsibility for the way the CCG operated, and the way it enacted its role in the environment. Gomez, among other participants in this research, identified in the qualitative interview data the problems of leadership that was dictatorial in terms of attracting volunteers. Another issue associated with centralised leadership was the problem of succession. George indicated how he believed his group would fold if he resigned. This appeared to be a common problem, with data in Section 5.5.2, on volunteer numbers and dynamics pin pointing that the type of commitment required in this sense was difficult, and in the organisation generally fell 'to the few'. Where the data identified that this ownership was not a significant feature of the group, research participants communicated concern about the well-being of the group, belongingness of individuals, group cohesion and satisfaction. This was particularly evident in the data presented in Section 5.7, as well as the qualitative interview vignettes in which participants took the opportunity to compare their well-functioning CCG with others, they had been involved with in their volunteer work.

One qualitative survey response stated, *"*since I run the organisation you are asking if I am satisfied with me?" This reflects a somewhat autocratic approach which was commented on in the uncategorised data. One of the key summary items drawn from the vignettes is the critical importance of allowing volunteers' autonomy and responsibility for engaging in the enterprise using their own skillsets while still contributing to the collective effort. While not directly related to any of the CCG functions, this aspect of the community is linked to many

of the functions where it supports for individuals' recognition, project organisation, career, personal enhancement, environmental care, a sense of place, understanding and values.

In summary, the data presented comprehensive evidence supporting this analytical component of the CCG Communities of Practice Framework, namely that all individuals demonstrated a sense of responsibility for the way that they, and others, engaged in the enterprise, namely coastal conservation work. Individuals drew their motivation to volunteer from a variety of sources of meaning to each, however despite these differences, all individuals identified with the mission of the CCG they were involved in, and contributed together to the way its activities, and functions were planned and executed. One of the primary links to the CCG volunteering functions was to the functions Sense of Place and Environmental Care as individuals sought to enact a sense of responsibility for the local area. In this, there was commonality and a shared focus on engaging in key activities.

Where the data showed negative influences on this marker of a community of practice, it was likely to be associated with less distribution of leadership, a more centralised leadership style, and with difficulties in ensuring sustainability of the group. This community of practice approach is valuable in monitoring negotiated enterprise across the group and ways in which it could be enhanced.

7.2.2 C2 Joint enterprise—mutual accountability

This analytical component of the aspect community is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We are all part of a whole, accountable, and contributing to the enterprise*. The data presented in Chapter 6 identified the overarching sense of accountability to the coastal environment. In similar fashion to the previous section, this sense of accountability was drawn from a range of motivations and perceived benefits. Nonetheless, it was a cohesive element across all CCGs examined that individuals felt accountable in varying degrees. Some

for smaller functions such as advertising or catering, others for broader functions such as running a nursery to grow stock for replanting.

Data presented in the previous section identified differences across the group in terms of their leadership structure which varied from participatory to relatively autocratic. It will be identified in this section that there was evidence in the data nonetheless that demonstrated significant responsibility taken by most members in terms of selected operations of the group as a distributed model. Where shared responsibility was not evident, the potential of threats was raised although the sense of accountability was enough to retain these individuals as volunteers in the CCG.

The data showed that individuals certainly felt that they were responsible for the overall scope of CCG operations. Thus, despite centralised functions in terms of organisation in many groups, the data in general, reported shared responsibility for the enterprise, with most of the groups identifying distributed ownership of individual tasks but shared responsibility overall for the way that tasks were completed. This is particularly noted in the activities identified in Section 5.4.1 which showed that there is significant overlap in the activities listed, with frequencies, for instance, involved in restoration and monitoring, and education and advocacy ranging from between 61% and 76%. Some CCGs were noted to be run with shared responsibility such as Betty's group, which was seen in Section 6.1.3, to share responsibility for operations. Others operated as a collective of individuals who contributed to a broader cause such as Peg and Al's turtle conservation group, with data reported in Section 6.1.1. However, most of the volunteers identified in the data shared a sense of individual and collective responsibility for the way they engaged in conservation activities, as well as mutual support and collegiality. The quantitative data in Table 5-16 outlines a range of roles and activities that were distributed across all volunteers. This indicates that most volunteers were engaged as a part of the whole organisation, all working

together to the cause. The vignettes identified the cohesive force of the environmental cause, for instance outlining how volunteers persisted in the organisation despite leadership and organisational changes because of their commitment to the conservation work. There is strong evidence therefore, drawing from the Environmental Care function, that mutual accountability is a key feature of the community of practice in CCGs.

The qualitative interview data presented as vignettes in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 were particularly powerful in identifying the importance of having all volunteers contribute in individual ways to the collective effort. Thus, these dimensions of the community of practice do not imply that all individuals share all the practices, but that they have ownership of several tasks and functions, as well as a sense of individual and collective responsibility for the way they engage in the CCG as an enterprise. The overall conclusion is that responsibility for balancing the way individuals perceive their accountability and contribution to the CCG is placed on the leader as well as the members of the group in terms of these two dimensions, such that they should support individual ownership of tasks that contribute to individual and collective responsibility for the way the enterprise operates. Included in this concept is some cross-over with the social aspect of operation and mutual responsibility for inclusivity.

In terms of the CCG functions, the data presented in Sections 5.3, 5.5 and 5.6 identified motivations, satisfaction and benefits reported by individual volunteers. This analytical component of the CCG Communities of Practice Framework identifies the opportunities provided in a CCG to provide operations that support multiple ways to contribute, individual accountability in activities which contribute to the whole CCG and its overarching purpose and brief. As an example, the data in Section 5.6.2 identified that knowledge and understanding was a strong theme in the qualitative report on perceived benefits of volunteering. The construction, enhancement and dissemination of knowledge is therefore an important contribution to the operations of the CCG, with accountability to the environment,

other volunteers, and supervising bodies an essential element. Without this single aspect of volunteering, the success of the enterprise would certainly be compromised.

It will be identified later in Section 7.5 that where this aspect of CCG operations is not approached with a focus on accountability, the status, success and well-being of the CCG and its members might not be well-served.

Overall, in summary, the data shows that the way in which being part of a whole, accountable and contributing to the enterprise is expressed differs depending on the nature, scope and function of the CCG. Nonetheless, in terms of the core purpose of the CCG in coastal conservation, this component of communities of practice is important. It links to the functions Environmental Care and Project Organisation in their focus on individual motivations and ways of engaging with the central purpose of conservation. Overall, individuals expressed joy and reward in seeing that their contribution had led to tangible outcomes, leading to a greater sense of accountability to meet the next target outcome.

7.2.3 C3 Joint enterprise—Indigenous enterprise

This analytical component of the aspect community is described, in the context of CCGs as: *Our enterprise is a local response, requiring our joint engagement to address it*. The reference to indigenous implies the origination or natural occurrence in a particular place (Oxford Dictionary). Whilst generally used in terms of communities of people with a historical continuity with the land and location, in terms of the community of practice, it refers to the place where people live and operate. In contrast, engaging in volunteering for aid work overseas would be considered not to be indigenous.

This component is shown across the data as being a particularly strong function of CCGs. It was well-referenced in the data, but with variations depending on the scope and brief of the CCG. In the case of the CCG of Peg and Al, the data in Section 6.1.1 showed an individual focus and ownership of each volunteer's unique local zone, namely a beach or an

island. These dispersed conservation operations were overseen by Peg and Al as leaders of the group, who discussed how they coordinated joint operations in the CCG. Betty contributed to an understanding of this dimension of the CCG Communities of Practice Framework as she followed Peg and Al's model of splitting the group into sub-groups, each responsible for a given area. George's group took an approach that was embedded in the local community's involvement in conservation, and his definition of joint engagement was the coordination of distributed groups of individuals all contributing to the community response to conservation in his area.

The leaders and volunteers in the qualitative interview data presented in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 outlined how each group of individuals held responsibility for their local beach, foreshore, sand dune zone, or strip of vegetation. Whatever the motivation, perceived benefit or satisfaction of volunteers in engaging, the local area was the source of cohesion of the group. The 'local' was emphasised across the data, in alignment with the functions Sense of Place and Environmental Care and evidenced by statements such as "I love this place". However, even when motivations were more closely aligned with function of Personal Gain, such as the property value and amenity of the area identified in the qualitative data in Section 5.6.2, this interest still resulted in an investment in the local environment. It was seen in the data that most volunteers regarded themselves as an important element of the community. This local response drew also on the Sense of Place data presented in Section 5.3.2 which identified motivations to volunteer, and individual connection to their own place. C3 is also linked to data in Section 5.5.2, documenting respondents' satisfaction at the outcome of their activities on the well-being of their local environment, or their jubilation when they can influence political decision making such as the lobbying activity of Gomez or the community support gained by George. An issue identified in the data, such as that in Section 5.7, was the lack of coordination among CCGs, identifying how much more effective they would be if

there was less local duplication of approaches, learning, skills and activities. This introduces a tension between the importance of the local response and engagement to address local issues, and the benefits between a more coordinated approach in which there is potential for volunteers to feel a sense of losing their local independence and ownership. Data from the vignettes illustrated this well, for instance, where Betty's group had the capacity to extend their reach and amalgamate several groups, they elected to split the group into sub-groups, all with a focus area. The volunteer interviews identified that one of the principle motivations to volunteer was "our stretch of beach, or our island".

This component of CCG Communities of Practice Framework identifies the local response and its importance to the community is possibly the strongest feature of CCGs. It is strongly linked to the previous section identifying the importance of mutual accountability, and when linked these two markers of the aspect Community become a powerful 'engine' which drives coastal environmental conservation. Chapter 6 identified the importance to individuals of the functions Sense of Place, Environmental Care, Values and Connection to Nature. As a collective community of practice, these functions contribute to markers that identify the indigenous nature of their engagement.

7.2.4 C4 Mutual engagement—enablers of engagement

This analytical component of the aspect of community is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We are inclusive of all engagement and we maintain the community (beyond just practice)*. This marker is not explicitly linked to the operations and conservation activities of the group but is able to lend a focus on the way the community of people, as volunteers, is nurtured.

As identified in C2, the volunteers were characterised by a range of skills and practices. Inclusive engagement was seen to support the specific skills of the volunteers by using expertise and sharing knowledge where it was most valued.

The CCG does not merely engage in conservation activities but is maintained as a community. The leadership vignettes presented in Section 6.1 identified the importance of inclusivity and the steps taken to build a community through recognition, rewards, and social events. Betty discussed the sense of creating a tribe within which volunteers belonged, as well as the importance of inter-personal relationships. She also recognised the importance of valuing the skills of all volunteers, similar to George's approach. Hamish outlined the importance of rewarding volunteer efforts in a range of ways. The community aspect identified here is evident in the data, for instance Gomez's discussion of the ways in which all volunteers contributed to a community that interacted socially as well as through volunteering activities. There is tension between being inclusive and maintaining the community. In several the groups there was such a strong community, particularly of retirees, that inclusivity was lost as individuals were left feeling that they did not belong or were not fully accepted in the group. This was discussed in the section in Chapter 6 on demographic factors, as well as the social aspects of volunteering. Given the difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers, it is important for CCGs to consider the aspects found in C4 and how they balance inclusivity with community maintenance.

The functions that describe individual motivations to engage and benefits drawn from volunteering are crucial to the establishment of a strong community. Maintaining this community involves drawing understanding from these CCG functions and differentiating approaches to suit all individuals who volunteer. It has already been noted in Chapter 6 that the greater the diversity within the group, the more sustainable the group. A characteristic of this aspect of the communities of practice is how it is often aligned with the functions identified by different groups of volunteers as being important. For instance, it relates to the careers and employment focus of younger people in the group, and the social functions of older people. Hence, it stretches across all the CCG functions in addressing the full range of

motivations, perceived benefits and sense of satisfaction through volunteering. This component of the CCG Communities of Practice Framework is of high importance, particularly when considering ways in which to attract younger people to volunteering. The closer a leader of a CCG focuses on enabling mutual engagement, the more diverse will be the membership, and the greater the sustainability is of the volunteer group.

7.2.5 C5 Mutual engagement—diversity and relationships

This analytical component of the aspect community is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We build inclusivity and belongingness through relationship building*. Volunteering is dependent on the goodwill and motivation of its human resources. These volunteers are likely to find their participation and experience enhanced when the group engenders a sense of inclusivity and belongingness. To achieve this goal, the CCG must focus attention on the way in which relationships are built within the group.

The data documenting individuals' satisfaction with volunteering in CCGs presented in Section 5.5.2 identified the inclusivity of these organisations, in which persons from diverse backgrounds work together for the common good. Relationships are generally identified in the qualitative survey data and the vignettes as strong. Jill identified how their CCG supported the engagement of those who were no longer physically capable of restoration work. Jill and others, such as Valerie and Gomez, discussed the lack of judgment and acceptance of the individual commitments of group members outside the group and the non-judgmental acceptance of their contributions. Peer support and friendships were identified by most of the volunteers in the vignettes as central to volunteering. The data presented in Section 5.6.2 identified the power of belongingness as being akin to tribal, with life-changing friendships emerging. Despite its importance in parts of the data, relationships were not prioritised in the motivations, benefits or satisfaction data as strongly as environmental motivations. But the interview vignettes of both leaders and volunteers

presented in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 demonstrated the importance of these relationships and collegiality, as well as belongingness to those who volunteered and documented the efforts leaders make to ensure collegiality, such as social functions (identified by Gomez), social meetings in George's group, get-togethers identified in Hamish's group. While some volunteers such as Betty engaged through a need for social belongingness in the group, others such as George identified how the shared mission in environmental volunteering established its own inclusivity by reducing the interests of a diverse set of people to a single 'touching point'.

Nonetheless, inclusivity is not a feature of all, with the data in Section 6.2 also identifying the lack of inclusivity in organisations with leadership turmoil and factional divisions among members, to the point where volunteers felt they were treated without respect and as subordinates. Thus, they no longer felt that they belonged in the group. In addition, where relationships became strong and lost inclusivity, cliques were identified in the qualitative survey data presented in Section 5.5.2, which threatened the sense of belongingness and community. For those who participated in the CCGs, this sense of belongingness was important. However, the references made in the qualitative survey responses and the vignettes to a lack of new volunteers, especially young people appeared to be attributed to a lack of relationships and inclusivity that consider the needs of younger people. The 'bossiness' (Morris) and often downright unpleasantness (Betty) of some group leaders was seen in the data presented in Section 6.2 to have developed in response to a perceived threat to their role, but ultimately resulted in attrition and a lack of interest by new potential volunteers. While mutual acceptance and inclusivity is a community aspect that is a shared responsibility of all members, the data also showed in Section 6.1. how debate and conflict can be defused by separating responsibilities and ownership of activities.

Very much the same as C4, this component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework is of high importance. It too stretches across all the functions which determine individual characteristics of volunteers and their engagement with the CCG. By auditing the group through the lens of inclusivity and belongingness, the leaders and volunteers will be able to identify areas that are effective and potentially those for improvement or enhancement. The sense of being accepted, and belonging to a group, will strengthen the breadth and depth operations of the CCG if it is extended to all regardless of individual characteristics by recruiting and retaining volunteers with a broad skillset.

7.3 Aspect: Identity

7.3.1 I1 Negotiated experience

This analytical component of the aspect identity is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We negotiate 'self' through participation and reification, making meaning of experience.* This marker refocuses the community on the individual, however frames individual growth through participation in the community of practice. Thus, it allows the interaction and engagement of individuals in the field of enterprise and supports collaborative and individual meaning-making.

The data presented across all items identified how individuals perceived themselves and their identity through their participation. Their motivation to volunteer was often identified as a self-label, defining their unique identity within the organisation. Section 5.3.2 presented data outlining how individuals perceived themselves as educators, documenters, surveyors, and researchers. Others outlined a more spiritual sense of identity in their volunteering engagement, discussing a sense of self and harmony. The quantitative data presented in Section 5.3.1 showed that around half of respondents were motivated to volunteer for self-enhancement purposes. They outlined in the data in this section how they wished to be seen by the community, therefore discussing the identity they presented to the community.

They also presented a sense of belongingness, labelling themselves as contributors, environmentalists, and having a strong connection with the CCG community. The reification is presented in data in Section 5.6.2 as volunteers discussed the visible benefits of their work to the environment, and the renewed commitment to their activity as a conservationist. They also discussed in this section their social identity as they came together for a common cause.

Individuals identified in the data presented in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 how they were seen by the community to be environmentalists, and that they were labelled as environmentalists. All the qualitative data sets identify that the volunteers wear this label with pride. The nature of the 'self' was variable. For some it was the philanthropic self, such as Valerie. For others it was the change-maker self, such as George and Hamish. For Betty, the 'self' was an active and collegial practitioner in the social practice of conservation. Thus, there were multiple definitions of 'self' within this dimension of the community of practice. All these individuals identified growth in their sense of self through active environmental volunteering. While not all stated that identity growth was of prime importance, for those who were motivated by self-worth and identity growth this need is fulfilled particularly well. Reification, as a process by which the social relations among the CCG are perceived as inherent attributes of the volunteers is important as the conservation values underlying the activities and interactions of the group become seen as those of the individual. This social aspect can be seen in data presented in Section 5.6.2 in which one volunteer observed how watching his/her fellow members' dedication reified their own dedication to environmental issues.

Reification and identity were potentially problematic where volunteers' sense of identity as conservationists was not recognised by external organisations and bodies such as scientists, governments, and supervising bodies. The data presented in Section 5.5.2 identified how support from supervising project officers, and recognition in publications enhanced the sense of identity of an individual as her work was seen to be accepted and

valued. This individual outlined the motivational effect of this recognition. This same data section identified however how poorly impacted volunteers were when they felt a sense of empowerment and valuable contributions within their group, which was not recognised by external bodies. However, the data also demonstrated that although this led to dissatisfaction with volunteering, the focus of this satisfaction was the external body, and the perception was shared that it was not a lack of expertise on the part of the volunteer himself. This perception was similar when volunteers discussed their relationship with other groups in their community, but the individual who contributed this data also iterated that this led to a perception of 'them and us' which did not serve to diminish her own sense of self and identity.

In summary, the aspect of identity is an important characteristic of CCGs which sustains engagement. The aspect also lends resilience to volunteers in the face of opposition or a lack of understanding of their contributions and expertise. It is sufficiently important that leaders of CCGs raise greater awareness and shared affirmation of the group and individual identity to enhance this resilience and engagement. It is also an element of enough importance that the governing and supervisory bodies maintain an awareness of how their engagement with CCGs should acknowledge the growth of individuals within the CCG and understands how conservation volunteers have a unique and shared identity with their groups. This aspect of the community of practice model links particularly well to the functions Personal Enhancement, Values, and Recognition.

7.3.2 I2 Membership—mutual engagement

This analytical component of the aspect identity is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We engage in a common enterprise*. Throughout the data it is apparent that volunteers perceive a collective approach and a shared identity which are defined through their engagement with the enterprise of coastal conservation.

This component is threaded throughout the data. It has already been addressed in Sections C1 and C2. The common enterprise is local conservation work, which has been seen across the data sets to comprise multiple activities and contribution types. Thus, participants who bake for after-activity barbecues or morning teas, such as the functions identified in Gomez' vignette, or those who contribute through publicity, such as the functions identified in George's vignette, or Jack and Al's more limited contributions as they age, are all seen to contribute to the enterprise of coastal conservation alongside individuals such as Betty who directly contributes to the weeding and replanting. The coastal environment can be seen in the data as unique because of the effect of individuals drawn from their personal, social and family engagement at the beach. Hence, it is identified by volunteers as being more than enterprise. It is a passion and commitment and the enterprise itself, as outlined in Section 5.5.2, was the key driver that attracted and sustained volunteer engagement. This is evident also in the data in this set where participants identified conflict among the group members and leadership challenges, but despite these sources of dissatisfaction, it appeared in the data that these volunteers continued to engage because of the broader enterprise of coastal conservation. In the same way, where volunteers experienced financial 'nightmares' waiting for reimbursement of their expenses in Section 5.5.2, they did not indicate that this was sufficient to distract them from their operations in the enterprise.

Hence, engaging in a common enterprise is a force of cohesion that holds together the variety of individuals and the dispersed nature of the tasks they engage in and contributions to the CCG, and is also the force that acts in the face of dissent and challenges to the social fabric of the CCG. Common enterprise is a marker of CCGs, strongly contributing to the shared mission of conservation work in coastal regions which strengthens the organisation as a community of practice. This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework is

linked to the functions Social Interaction, Reciprocity, Environmental Care, Connection to Nature and Project Organisation.

7.3.3 I3 Membership—mutual accountability

This analytical component of the aspect identity is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We hold individual and shared accountability*.

The accountability is shared across the group for the conservation works and achievements. While the activities presented in Section 5.4 outlined the broad operations of the CCGs involved, the qualitative data in Section 5.4.1 supported insight into everyone's contribution, which tended to be a smaller sub-set of the activities across the group. This data reflects the data presented in the vignettes in Section 6.2, which supported this distributed responsibility for the group's activity. The AGM of the CCGs were not always seen in the leaders' vignettes as drawing a lot of interest such that the management of the CCG rested in the hands of a few. However, the qualitative data presented in the vignettes also identified the range of roles and activities that were 'owned' by each of the individuals in what has been described in Sections C1 and C2 as a distributed model. This affirms that the volunteers take individual responsibility for tasks, and shared responsibility for the overall operations of the CCG. The most collective model presented in the vignettes was that of Betty's group, in which there was strong cohesion when working together, and little evidence of individually determined activity. On the other hand, the collective accountability was nonetheless strong in groups such as George and Hamish's, in which there were significant divisions of responsibility for a range of activities, and in Peg and Al's group in which all volunteers were accountable not only for their own beach, but to the group and the enterprise. Accountability is seen in the data as being personally driven; for instance, in Section 5.3.2 where individuals are strongly motivated to contribute to the environment, and in which their accountability is to improve their local environment. Accountability is also taken on as community

accountability in the way that CCGs liaise and work with local councils to support and enable their conservation work. This personal and collective accountability, much like I1, is strong in the area of coastal conservation due to the contextual features that wed individuals to the local environment.

The qualitative survey data and vignettes identify people such as Betty's groups who take on responsibility for their local patch of land. Some, such as Geoff (in Betty's group), and the turtle worker identified by Peg and Al, operate as individuals. Peg and Al operate a lot of the time as a couple. Others work with larger groups, but all hold themselves accountable for their beach, or their plots of land, or their turtles. Ultimately this small group and individual accountability is the shared domain of the entire group.

This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework is a key characteristic of these groups. Despite the overarching management of the group by the elected committee, the data presented evidence of individuals taking the lead in aspects of the operations of the CCG, holding responsibility and accountability as individuals on behalf of the group for successful actioning of these operations. This aspect of the community of practice spreads across all the functions as they determine the attributes and skills that the diverse group of volunteers bring to the group. This component of the CCG community of practice can differ depending on the diversity of the group. As the group starts to recognise a more diverse set of contributions, for instance ranging from weeding and planting, through education and into social media campaigns, they can see the articulation of everyone's actions with the others, in organisational operations with activities that are mutually accountable.

7.3.4 I4 Membership—mutual understanding

This analytical component of the aspect identity is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We share knowledge and skills, negotiating what is relevant*. By nature of their conservation focus, CCGs are heavily invested in skills and knowledge. There are a wide

range of skills involved, that include not only conservation work, but organisational knowledge, community insight, social media and advertising, creative enterprises amongst many others. Practice is at the heart of a community of practice, including the repertoire of skills and knowledge (Wenger, 1998). Thus, this analytical component must be central also to our understanding of the operations of CCGs as a community of practice.

The function Understanding was a key motivator of importance, not only sharing knowledge, but gaining from shared knowledge and skills. The quantitative data presented in Section 5.3.1 identified that 78% of participants felt that sharing understanding was important to them.

The data presented in Section 6.1 shows the way knowledge is negotiated. For Hamish this is critical, and his organisation uses buddies and peer support to help individuals learn. Peg and Al share the knowledge that they have learned not only with others in the group, but with other organisations and groups. The data in Section 5.3.2 identified that these people too pass information, skills and expertise to others that includes marine animal research programs. General education too was identified as a key motivation to engage in volunteering. But characteristic of the CCG, the primary sharing of knowledge and skills is among the community itself. Respondents in Section 5.3.2 identified how they developed their own knowledge resources as a group to assist in their own volunteering work. That the knowledge is shared is evident in the vignettes, as leaders and volunteers described the concerted achievement of members of the group in their actions, with shared knowledge and practices such as standardised protocols, to conduct their work, is shared in Section 5.6.2. It is notable in Section 5.6.2 that knowledge was not merely identified as direct conservation work, but that volunteers also shared insight into the way that leadership functions, power and authority, human resource management and policy making, and funding applications are constructed.

George is not only a 'sharer' but gains from shared knowledge in his role as leader of his group. At times, this aspect of a community of practice can be a limitation to a CCG when the knowledge and skills were invested in one individual, without opportunities for the negotiation of what is relevant. At times also, as noted in Section 5.5.2, there was a perception among the group that existing practices were difficult to change with new contemporary insights, strategies and techniques rejected in favour of the group's strongly-held knowledge.

Thus, the component of the CCG Communities of Practice Framework deals with knowledge sharing and development that is beneficial when it is open to new ideas but may be problematic when it is closed and reliant on traditional ways of thinking. It was noted in the data that mutual sharing of knowledge was not limited to the internal practices of CCGs. It was important that the sharing occurs also through engagement with the professional and research communities outside the confines of the CCG. This component links to the functions Project Organisation, Social Interaction, Understanding and Values.

7.3.5 I5 Learning trajectory—mutual understanding and negotiation of repertoire

This analytical component of the aspect identity is described, in the context of CCGs as: *My identity and that of the group are drawn from learning as we engage. Trajectories of identity can be multiple*. Wenger (1998) stated that the learning trajectory has "coherence through time that connects the past, the present, and the future" (p. 154). Particularly for those such as long-term volunteers, the learning trajectory has redefined their identity within the CCG multiple times. At the very least, volunteers enter the organisation as novices, and move towards becoming experts and leaders in at least one, if not more areas of activity. Taking an organisational perspective on this learning trajectory rather than mapping individual learning and identity growth can support the intentional structuring of the CCGs to maximize collective growth in knowledge, skills and organisational identity.

This component, the multiple learning trajectory, can be influenced by the type of group and scope of engagement in the environment. Where groups are small, and their conservation focus is limited such as Betty's group, the data does not identify any significant change in-group activities that require learning or identity reconstruction. In this aspect, the group may be quite static. Perhaps because Betty's group is small in terms of active members, this unchanging nature of its work is not a threat. However, for other groups such as those of Hamish and George, changes in local contextual variables led to change in the way the groups operated and had of necessity diversified their practices. For many groups, conservation work has shifted from weeding and revegetation to lobbying against development and infrastructure projects where they are seen to be potentially damaging to the environment and its amenity. Where group membership has been more diverse, again such as in George and Hamish's groups, new members bring in their own unique knowledge, which is shared among the group and leads to a shift in-group and individual identity. For the volunteer corps, across the qualitative survey responses and the vignettes, their reference to the collective group identity is drawn from their practise. For instance, being a rehabilitation volunteer implies having shared knowledge about weeds, native plants and planting techniques. Volunteers discussed in the survey responses how they learned about leadership and management of the group, as well as how they learned about conservation, and monitoring of ecosystems and populations. For the leaders of the groups, there are multiple identities such as; lobbyist (Betty), social support (Valerie), political backer (Gomez), leader of the group (George) and turtle workers (Peg and Al). The leaders have multiple trajectories, as conservation volunteers themselves, but also as leaders responsible for managing group activities, funding applications and spending accountability, reporting, liaising with umbrella organisations and local stakeholders, and broader environmental activity such as education, publicity and lobbying.

The meaning of this component implies that as knowledge shifts, identity and group identity shift. The data revealed two approaches to organisational knowledge and identity shift. The first was a contraction to well-established routines with minimal challenge to the collective knowledge base. The second was an approach in which maximum diversification and growth was part of the group's strategy. This may be a critical element that supports sustainability of community of practice, and the data indicates that those who had diversified their operations had experienced fewer challenges in recruitment of new volunteers. This aspect of the CCG Communities of Practice Framework links to the functions of Understanding, Recognition, Reciprocity, Social Interaction, Project Organisation, and Personal Enhancement.

7.3.6 I6 Belonging globally, experiencing locally

This analytical component of the aspect identity is described, in the context of CCGs as: *Our practice is local but linked to global practice*. This component is a strong marker of practice in a CCG, with concerns about the broader environment extending beyond those for isolated locations. However, the degree to which the organisation explicitly links their practice to this broader conservation context is variable.

Across the data, the CCGs identified the importance of their local focus. This was the way they recruited volunteers who had a vested interest in the local coastal environment. Nonetheless the links with broader practice are evident in the data. Leaders called for closer links among CCGs so that knowledge and skills were shared among them, broadening the field of practice and ensuring consistency. While the conservation activities were local, the volunteer respondents identified broader environmental concerns. They expressed in Section 5.3.2 their concern about the Australian and the global environment, and for some, their activity was seen to be enacted in the fact of global changes such as climate change. Thus, volunteers shared big-picture environmental fears and dreams, as well as those associated

with their local environment. Conservation is seen to be more than just the local environment, but part of a global strategy. This is not surprising given the continuity and linkage of coastal environments by marine environments and their influence. Therefore, the data presented in Section 5.3.2 identified how some of the volunteers participated in global conferences, sharing knowledge and insights beyond the local area. Others identified how they use the global scientific literature to inform their practice in their local area. However, for most of the volunteers and their leaders, although they shared a broader concern about global sustainability, their focus was on their particular "marine area", "patch", "island" or "beach".

When engaged in lobbying work, the respondents identified in the vignettes, the issues with the increasing population and property development in what was previously a quiet coastal zone, and their lobbying in these areas crossed beyond the local, and into state and national arenas. Nonetheless, CCGs such as Betty's group were tightly focused on a narrow local context, Betty stating that she advised volunteers from other areas to establish their own small group rather than broaden the focus of her group. Whilst this local focus was the foundation of the success of many of the CCGs, qualitative data in the surveys identified the limitations of this model in terms of a cohesive and integrated approach across the CCGs.

Thus, in terms of this component, there were clear local and global links made within the practice of coastal conservation which were acknowledged to mutually influence local practice. This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework links particularly to the functions Sense of Place, Environmental Care, Connection to Nature, Values, and Understanding.

7.4 Aspect: Learning

7.4.1 L1 Evolving forms of mutual engagement

This analytical component of the aspect learning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We question: What works, what helps? Who is who, who does what? What are our skills, what are our social interaction types?* This component is an important characteristic of CCGs. All the individuals and groups identified engagement in specific categories of activity, and outlined the skills required to contribute in that area. As an organisation, these questions extend beyond the work tasks themselves, and tap into the way that mutual engagement is supported within the CCG. The intent is not only conservation skills, but also the skills that ensure that a healthy, social community is maintained.

The operations of a CCG were shown in the quantitative data presented in Section 5.4.1 to encompass multiple operations and activity types. While direct restoration and environmental monitoring were the most common activities at around 75 % of volunteers, education and advocacy were also common activities engaged in by volunteers, at 64% and 61% respectively. The qualitative data presented in Section 5.4.1 detailed the activities of volunteers which was broadly distributed across many areas of expertise including writing, formatting, publishing, liaising with other organisations, advocacy work, education, presentations, and running community events, as well as monitoring and restoration. These operations all require specific skillsets. The reports across all data sets identified individuals with specific skills, who took responsibility for aspects of the operations of the CCG in question. For instance, George identified in Section 6.1.2 an advertising executive who promoted and publicised his organisation's activities, and Valerie identified a group member in Section 6.2.2 who was responsible for fund-raising and grant applications.

Social interaction was variable, and at the discretion of the volunteers themselves. While all engaged in the organised activities, not all were seen to attend formal meetings such

as the AGM, which was negotiable. George identified in Section 6.1.2 the flexibility of their group's approach to meetings, while Hamish's organisation was more structured.

Strongly featured in CCGs, and outlined in the data shown in Section 6.1, was the giving and exchange of information. Hamish's group employed him because of his skillset, and he in turn identifies the skills of others in the group. Betty discussed the importance of using the expertise in her group. George too used the range of skills and the expertise of all members of his group and the community beyond to serve the variety of functions of his CCG. A close focus on personal skills and approaches were seen at times be problematic. For instance, the personal filter that Peg and Al used for nominating their successor placed limitations on who could volunteer in their place, and therefore potentially reducing the sustainability of their group.

The data showed in Section 5.5.2 that while most groups remained flexible in terms of their formal leadership arrangements, this was problematic in terms of organisation with the task remaining with the few who were willing to engage. Where questioning was not a feature commonly seen in more established groups with limited conservation activities, frustration was seen to emerge in Section 5.5.2, with the lack of negotiation leading to a sense of not being valued. The cliques that were identified in the same section also limited the volunteers' capacity to question the operations and distribution of expertise across the group, leading to dissatisfaction within the CCG.

This component of the CCG Communities of Framework is seen to be critical to the well-being and sustainability of the group. It forms the foundation for learning amongst the group, but it also forms the foundation for socialisation and identity-building (both individual and collective). Understanding how the group engages with the task and with each other supports leadership decisions that have implications across the sphere of interest. Associated with greater diversity in membership and activities, ongoing questioning about activities,

approaches and the locus of expertise supporting greater inclusivity which has been discussed in C1 and C2. This component links to the functions of Personal Enhancement, Project Organisation, Recognition, Understanding and Values.

7.4.2 L2 Understanding and tuning enterprise

This analytical component of the aspect learning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We question: what is our enterprise about? How are each of us, as well as the organisation accountable to the enterprise? What is the focus of our community of practice?* This component is central to the overall operations and purpose of the CCGs given they are established to engage with an aspect of coastal conservation with specific activities as their mission. It is important that CCGs revisit their enterprise to refocus and maintain accountability where required.

This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework is unquestionable. Across the entire data set, despite some differences in motivation, perceived benefits and ways of engaging in the organisation's operations, all volunteers are committed to the conservation of their local coastal area. The quantitative data presented in Section 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 identified the perceptions of volunteers of a range of motivations to engage. Nonetheless, the qualitative data in Section 5.6.2 identified how volunteers saw their group as cohesive and focused on a singular goal of conservation despite a range of backgrounds, skills and interests. They communicated pleasure and delight in Section 5.6.2 in seeing gains in their local environment and raised community awareness as a result of the efforts of their group. The enterprise of CCGS was invariably seen to be strongly focused on local environmental issues, with clear-cut organisational roles and responsibilities. The leaders and volunteers in their vignettes communicated a strong enterprise identity and their unique focus of each CCG within the broader enterprise of coastal conservation. However, difficulties were experienced in some in which the mission of the CCG had drifted over time. For

instance, shifting from coastal care to political environmental lobbying. Whilst this evolution is a natural response to the context and social environment within which the CCG operates, it is important as a community of practice that the mission is clarified, and the enterprise is continuously tuned as changes occur.

This component is evident across all data sets, with the enterprise, coastal conservation, being the focus of the group in each case. Associated with this component are the functions Environmental Care, Project Organisation, Reciprocity, Recognition and Understanding.

7.4.3 L3 Developing repertoire, styles and discourses

This analytical component of the aspect learning is described, in the context of CCGs as: *We ask: What do we do? What do we use? How do we do it? How do we describe what we do? Has this evolved over time, for instance through membership changes?* Whilst CCGs are clear about what they do, and how their operations have evolved, this is potentially an aspect of their operations that is not regularly checked and refocused. A more formal recognition of the repertoire and discourses of the community of practice would support more seamless establishment of best practice operations in the field.

This component was seen to be quite variable in the data. For instance, many of the volunteer groups such as Betty and Valerie's groups are seen to operate automatically with well-established approaches to weeding, planting, monitoring and local area conservation. For instance, the weeding and planting activities outlined in the qualitative survey data and the vignettes are described as constant and unchanging. The turtle monitoring functions of Peg and Al's group discussed in Section 6.1.1were shown to be relatively unchanged over time. However, groups engaged in activities that extended beyond these monitoring and restoration functions, were seen to ask questions about the nature of their operations and new directions in response to the evolution of the context within which they operated.
For instance, like many others, George communicated the shifting social environment around

his local conservation area, and Valerie discussed the growth in building operations and influx of new residents to her area. For Valerie's group, the focus has remained on the weeding and planting activities that had sustained the group in the past. Others such as George use different approaches which are constantly evolving. They moved into lobbying for their environmental cause, and as George stated, they developed new approaches and activities to meet the needs of new operations that emerged from these actions. This group uses approaches such as a local film festival to promote the environment or establishing procedures after new projects have been funded. They also shifted into social media to keep currency in their engagement. Hamish's organisation too was seen to have diversified over time, to include a financial base (their nursery) for their activities which has resulted in an additional paid workforce to engage in conservation work. Maintaining existing processes and approaches can result in streamlining and greater support of volunteers. However, a potential threat is the longevity of some leaders and volunteers in the organisation such as that referred to in the qualitative survey data and in Morris' vignette. This has led to skills and practices that are not allowed to evolve with new ideas which has led to some attrition from the organisations in question.

This component of the CCG Community of Practice Framework is one that shows promise in terms of the recruitment of new volunteers. Where the CCGs such as Betty's and Peg and Al's have remained stable over time with little change in membership or practice, those such as George and Hamish's groups were able to tap into new residents, growing communities and new ways of working socially to continue with recruitment and engagement of a broader section of the population. By auditing their practices intentionally, CCGs can affirm those practices that are still relevant whilst weighing up initiatives seeking change where necessary. These changes were enabled by strong leadership in both of these cases but will also be enabled by open and transparent exchange of ideas and proposals for change.

This component is linked to the functions Project Organisation, Recognition, Understanding and Social Interaction.

7.5 Summary

In summary, it is shown in this section that the characteristics of a community of practice are well aligned with those of CCGs as identified by the volunteers in the survey and interview data. Whilst the functions outlined in the data identify the individual priorities when volunteering, the interviews and qualitative survey data alluded strongly at times to the organisational, social, learning, and identity elements which featured in the individual experiences of coastal conservation volunteering. The interplay between and amongst the CCG volunteering functions and the aspects, analytical components and markers of communities of practice are clearly identified in the data. However, as organisations in which volunteers commit significant time and effort, understanding the nature of the organisation and the way it operates at all levels is a priority. The aspects of the communities of practice model of Wenger (2008) are valuable in this respect, given their alignment with the functions of individual volunteers. The markers of communities of practice can be recognised across all the CCGs in varying degrees of complexity. However, as in the case of factors such as the diversity of membership, range of activities, formality of links between activities and the mission of the enterprise, some of the CCGs do not fully align with the underlying markers of some of the aspects of communities of practice. In order to understand the organisation itself, and endeavour to meet the needs of volunteers, the community of practice analytical components as statements of practice may be useful to fine-tune, refocus and renew the structure, function, and operations of CCGs. While all the identified groups were functioning well, affirmed by the ongoing participation of the volunteers who participated in this research, their responses to questions in both the surveys and the interviews raised several questions about issues in CCGs that potentially threaten their ongoing function. These

questions related to recruitment and retention of volunteers particularly young people. Some of the CCG leaders stepped in with prior experience in leadership. Others appear to have no leadership credentials. In both cases, the inter-personal skills and acceptance of contributions and change appear to be critical to the well-being of the CCG. The CCG Community of Practice Framework analytical components C1, C4, C5 and C6 all address elements of evolution, inclusivity, relationships and engagement. These elements are critical to the recruitment and retention of new volunteers. The data raised a threat in each of these areas attributed to the longevity and stability of the CCG, often desirable, but likely to reduce belongingness of anyone who has different characteristics associated with age, experience, and visions for the organisation. Often, the data does not identify problems with the volunteers themselves, but with the leaders of these CCGs who are seen to range from being resistant to change, to lacking in inter-personal and negotiation skills. This intractability is likely associated with the longevity in the roles of leadership of many of the volunteers, with histories of up to 20 years recorded in the data. While succession remains a problem, challenges to leadership and the sense of personal ownership of their CCG are unlikely to emerge. The data sets identify that most of the leaders of the CCGs, indeed most of the volunteers are retirees in an ageing volunteer workforce with insufficient young and energetic people to take their place. This is exacerbated by the perceived need of some to hand select their successors such that the practices they have always adhered to remain the same. In the area in question, it is evident that these practices have become best practice. But without negotiation, succession may become an issue for this group as well.

In contrast the analytical components C1, C4, C5 and C6 are strongly relevant to the operation of Hamish and George's groups. Both have evolved significantly into new community areas and enterprises. By drawing a more diverse community of volunteers, evolution and change is an integral part of the way they operate. Neither group has a shortage

of volunteers and are notable for diversity and inclusivity. If the sustainability of these two groups were to be questioned, Hamish's group is likely to continue with new leadership. George's group is somewhat dependent on his charismatic leadership but given the diversity of membership they are likely to remain viable. Betty's group is a third group that has had to diversify and adapt to change as a function of their lobbying activity. This activity has recruited membership from professional ranks through to blue collar workers. It is likely that there is a successor present in this diverse group who will nominate to replace Betty should she decide to resign.

The data in this research is drawn from volunteers in functioning CCGs. The qualitative survey data identified several CCGs that were in existence in the past and which had disappeared over time. The combination of age, lack of community interest, insufficient youth engagement in many of the volunteer groups appear to have led to the type of contraction of community dimensions of the community of practice. Potentially these elements could lead to the gradual diminishing of CCG volunteer membership and ultimately the dissolution of groups.

In terms of the aspect of meaning, the CCGs meet all the requirements of a community of practice. The shared focus and meaning of conservation of the natural environment is cohesive. Although members do not advertise a need for affirmation, this is generally provided by the leadership of the CCG as well as community members and other volunteers. For all volunteers, it is the evidence of change to the environment as a result of their action that motivates and drives them further. An issue however, that poses a potential barrier to the function of the CCG, member satisfaction and retention, is the impact of policy from umbrella organisations and government, both local and state. The data has identified a few CCG leaders having "burned out" because of the difficulties of dealing with organisations. Those in leadership identify in their vignettes that even when local organisations such as

council are supportive of their efforts, there are still significant barriers in getting permits and permission and meeting all the guidelines and policies to engage in their core work. It is notable that most of the volunteers who are not in leadership did not identify this as problematic in their activities within the organisation.

Learning is an aspect within which there is good alignment between the CCG characteristics and the community of practice. This aspect is well mapped against the characteristic of CCGs identified in the data. In the analytical component L1, there is evidence of two significant differences however. In several CCGs, for instance, in Peg and Al's group, there appears to be well established practices in turtle conservation which is likely to be best practice. Nonetheless Peg and Al identify that they liaise strongly with their supervising organisations such as universities and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) which ensures that any new knowledge is disseminated among their group. Jill's account of her practice indicates that she is limited to activity that is often unchanging, requiring little learning. However, she, like all the other volunteers, does have some activity requiring knowledge and insight such as turtle tracking and the dead Shearwater project. Of all the groups, Hamish and George's groups stand out again as those who engage in the most diverse and timely learning activities as their functions have evolved and shifted. Most telling is George's comment that "without shifting activity volunteers would be lost out of sheer boredom".

The aspect of identity is well aligned with the characteristics and practices of the CCGs, including the way that volunteers engaged in identity work associated with their status as an environmental volunteer.

In summary, the joint focus of this research on individual motivations and perceived benefits as volunteering functions, as well as organisational health as communities of practice has been a useful lens through which to better understand the CCGs that were studied. They

provided opportunities to audit the groups and recognise room for growth and improvement, as well as enhancement of their functions. The CCG Communities of Practice Framework supported greater understanding and clarity about the organisations themselves, as a practical tool through which their operations could be examined.

Chapter 8: Discussion of Findings

Chapters 5 and 6 presented the findings and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative survey data and the leader and volunteer interview data. This chapter draws the data together to address Research Questions 1 and 2 and concludes with a discussion regarding the alignment of CCGs to the concept of a community of practice. The three Research Questions identified in Chapter 2 are listed below for convenience:

Research Question 1

How do CCGs operate and manage volunteers?

RQ 1.1: What is the organisational structure of a CCG?

RQ 1.2: What are the operational functions of a CCG?

RQ 1.3: What are the responsibilities and roles of CCG volunteers?

RQ 1.4: What operational issues does a CCG face?

Research Question 2

What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation?

RQ 2.1: Why do volunteers participate in conservation?

RQ 2.2: What are the beliefs of volunteers about the coastal marine environment?

RQ 2.3: What benefits do volunteers derive from conservation volunteering?

Research Question 3

To what extent can a CCG be examined and explained as a community of practice?

The data presented in Chapter 6 demonstrated that separating the structure and function of the CCGs is difficult with every individual identifying a unique set of functions that motivated them to join and to volunteer in CCGs. Demography, particularly employment status and age, was linked to the motivations to engage and the benefits identified as emerging from volunteering. In the CCGs surveyed demography also influenced the ways in which CCGs were managed, structured and operated. The unique nature of the coastal

environment and the diverse foci of coastal conservation volunteering in Australia underpinned not only the motivations and perceived benefits drawn from engaging in volunteering but also the way that the groups were structured and operated.

Hence this section uses three conceptual categories to integrate the motivations and experiences of volunteers with findings about the leadership, management, and operations of the CCG: demography and environmental volunteering, the social milieu of leadership and volunteering as community practices, and the unique nature of coastal volunteering in contemporary Australia. The section culminates in the reconfiguration of the CCG Functions Framework, drawn from Table 2-8, to present new functions drawn from the data. Section 8.5 addresses Research Question 3 by discussing the alignment of CCGs with the CCG Communities of Practice Framework (Table 2-10) presented in Chapter 7.

8.1 Demography and environmental volunteering

This section will discuss the influence of demography on motivations to volunteer, and perceived benefits and satisfaction from volunteering in CCGs. It draws on the functions Career, Social Interaction, Personal Enhancement, Understanding, Recognition, Project Organisation and Values.

The United Nations Volunteers (2018) identified the most common age of individuals who volunteer their services in Australia is between 36 and 45 years. In addressing Research Question 2 the data presented in this research identified an older age distribution, with the most active age group being between 60 and 69 years of age. Thus, in contrast to the general volunteering statistics, the core of the CCG workforce is significantly older, and is like that reported in a Volunteering Australia (2016) report. The data also showed that younger volunteers are not well represented in CCGs, with only 15% of volunteers aged between 20 and 39 years, and none under the age of 19. A significant gap in the volunteer corps is the participation of school-age youth, and those in the immediate years after graduation from

school. This leads to questioning about the way in which the local coastal environment features in school education, as well as the message communicated during school excursions to the coastal zone. The literature presented in Chapter 2 identified the importance of engaging younger volunteers to sustain their engagement in nature conservation in the future (Buta et al., 2013; Byrne & Sipe, 2010; Keniger et al., 2013). Overall, as identified by Cho, Bonn and Han (2018), the motivations of the younger generation are different to those of older volunteers. This generation has been shown by these authors to be primarily associated with personal benefit including the functions Value, Career, Learning and Self-Esteem. In contrast to the importance of social functions in the data presented here, the literature has shown that the younger generation place no value on social benefits (Cho et al., 2018). Thus, CCGs are faced with two apparently contradictory problems. It appears that without the sustained contribution of older volunteers, particularly retirees, they may cease to function. Without the input of a younger age group, the ongoing contribution of CCGs maybe threatened by reduced participation and by the steadily increasing median age of volunteers. The needs of both groups of volunteers must be supported by CCGs as they are sometimes quite divergent. As a result of investigating Research Question 2 a clear message emerges from the data for CCGs to work towards engaging young people in volunteer work to support their motivations and needs within a group of existing, older members, and through this to sustain the environmental conservation work into the future. It is acknowledged that a limitation of this research is the representation of younger volunteers in the survey responses given that informed parental consent is required for their participation.

Also related to the demography of volunteers in CCGs and responding to Research Question 2 leaders were asked how they recruited volunteers. This question had a general focus and did not specifically question strategies to engage volunteers based on characteristics such as gender or age. However, the interview data did reveal strategies that

appeared to appeal to and engage younger volunteers. These strategies, such as those of Hamish, and George's groups were more broadly focused in the community and included the broadening of the CCGs operations to engage individuals through a variety of activities, roles and possible contributions. The data identified how George's group continued to evolve by employing innovative strategies to keep their community engaged and interested in coastal conservation. It emerges from the data that the way that CCGs approach their operations is important in engaging volunteers with different characteristics. This data adds to the understanding of the operations of volunteer groups, specifically supporting this function in CCGs. The link between operational functions, roles and responsibilities of volunteers that is established here responds not only to RQ 1.2 and 1.3 but flows on to RQ 1.4 in identifying the importance of the approach to operations of CCGs, and the way in which these operations determine the nature of the CCG and its volunteers.

To better understand these links, it is important also to understand the motivations of volunteers to engage and persist in volunteering in CCGs. The data presented in Chapters 6 and 7 is congruent with that presented in the literature in linking these functions to the age of volunteers (Davis et al., 2005; de Espanes et al., 2015; Gill, 2006; Pillemer et al., 2017; Rochester & Hutchison, 2002; Warburton & Gooch, 2007). The motivations to volunteer, the levels of satisfaction, and perceived benefits are all linked in the data to the age of volunteers. It is noted that, at times, inferential links were all that were available within the limitations of this research project and that there are grounds for further research in this regard. Whilst there is research on age-related functions in general volunteering, future research that specifically addresses CCGs is called for.

For many volunteers, as found in the general environmental volunteering literature (Measham & Barnett, 2008; Ryan et al., 2001; West & Pateman, 2016) motivations were linked to a need to contribute back to the environment (Reciprocity and Environmental Care),

support its ongoing health for new generations of people (Reciprocity and Sense of Place), a concern about the environment that has developed over time (Reciprocity and Environmental Care), contributing to and gaining from collective knowledge (Career, Personal Enhancement, Recognition and Understanding) , and social functions (Social and Social Interaction),that include belonging to an interactive community as well as gaining social credit in society. Many of these motivations are age-related. For instance, Career is a function of younger people, whilst Reciprocity is more likely to be a function of older people. As an example, in terms of human lifecycle, the function Reciprocity appears to be related with retrospective giving after receiving benefits from the environment over time. There are multiple references in the data of volunteers having enjoyed the environment and wishing to protect it for similar enjoyment of future generations. The focus on community belongingness seen in the data presented in Section 5.6.2 and the interview data presented as vignettes in Section 6.2 is also associated with a need to feel connected socially to others with similar interests. While these lifecycle connotations may be common to all volunteers, the data, for instance referring to retirement status, supports an assumption that these functions are those that are important to older volunteers. It must be clarified that social connection was not identified in the quantitative data as a motivational function of importance, but it emerged in the qualitative data on satisfaction and benefits presented in Section 5.6.2 as well as the interview vignettes in Section 6.2 as being an important function that served to attract and retain volunteers within the CCG. In particular, the interview data identified how important each of these factors was regarded by older volunteers, particularly the social aspect and belongingness. Associated with the social aspect, indeed highlighted across all data sets, is the importance of being engaged, and feeling valued, which is associated with a positive sense of well-being and identity, again an important element identified in the literature (Davis et al., 2005; Rochester & Hutchison, 2002). Associated with these elements too was the data

identified in Section 5.6.2 which related how volunteering gave individuals a sense of purpose. This benefit of volunteering, particularly for older people was identified in the literature (Cutler et al., 2011).

There was reference in the data to some volunteers who were focused on protecting the value and amenity of their property investment. This, combined with commentary in the interview data and data in Section 5.7 with regard to holiday homes, young families and 'cashed-up' new residents lead to an inference that many who focus on this aspect are likely to be younger, but coupled with older persons who have moved to the coast in their retirement years. The review of literature failed to identify common and significant reference to this function of volunteering beyond a reference to a sense of place (Carter, Dyer, & Sharma, 2007; Brown, Raymond, & Corcoran, 2015) and to conservation activities of landholders (Gooden & Grenyer, 2019). These authors found that the motivations of these landholders were mixed, extrinsic and intrinsic factors (including property value, amenity, and conservation values) which led to excellent environmental outcomes. However, these publications differ to the motivations of landholders in the data presented here. These individuals do not necessarily engage in conservation activities on their own land but engage in conservation of public lands with a view to maintaining and enhancing their property interests and amenity. This data presents new ways of understanding the unique motivations of coastal volunteers, expands the way Sense of Place is understood as a function, and responds to RQ 2.1. In relation to Research Question 1 the distribution of ages across the volunteer groups was identified in the demographic data presented in Section 5.1 as being polarised and not well balanced, significantly, with more older persons leading and participating in the groups. This was seen in the data shown in Sections 5.5.2 and 5.6.2 and the interview vignettes as potentially limiting the engagement of younger volunteers in some of the groups with issues such as power politics, ownership, and resistance to change. The

effect of an unbalanced membership, in this case age and experience, has been shown in the literature to be potentially divisive as more rigid norms are established, and new ideas are resisted (Osili et al., 2016). Other factors of inter-generational volunteering are the difficulties in acknowledging and working around the working and family commitments of those who are not retired, which was attributed in the data as reducing the participation of these younger persons. Again, the literature has identified the negative experience of these peripheral participants, who are not included in the in-group of the CCG (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). There is significant overlap between the demographic influences identified here and the social engagement discussed later in this discussion chapter. The data raises the complexity in multi-age CCGs in terms of attracting and maintaining the interest of volunteers. It identifies the interplay amongst the dimensions identified in Research Question 1, namely organisational structure (RQ1.1), operational functions (RQ1.2), and roles and responsibilities (RQ1.3), with those identified in Research Question 2, particularly the motivations (RQ2.1), beliefs (RQ2.2), and perceived benefits (RQ2,3) of volunteers. This complexity and interplay are worthy of future research to explicitly link the functions and organisational aspects to the demographic characteristics of volunteers. Overall, across all volunteering contexts, and in the case of CCGs, the nature of organisations is likely to be further challenged by the impact of the ageing workforce in Australia.

Chapter 1 introduced the political context of volunteering in Australia with Chapter 2 identifying declining participation in volunteering in Australia (ABS, 2015). The demographic data presented in Section 5.1 and the qualitative data across all data sets, and particularly the leaders' and volunteers' vignettes in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 identified the heavy dependence of CCGs on retired individuals, including those who had volunteered prior to transitioning to retirement. The raising of the pension age in Australia to 67 (Department of Human Services, 2018), in combination with many years of low interest rates

(https://tradingeconomics.com/) with associated issues for self-funded retirees, are likely to be a challenge into the future as fewer persons of an age that is compatible with the type of work completed by CCG volunteers are available in the population (Gill, 2006). There is an opportunity, however, for some growth of the pre-retirement workforce. For instance, mature-age unemployed persons aged 55-59 can meet their mutual requirements and therefore be eligibile for benefits by volunteering for 30 hours a week (Department of Human Services, 2018). The demographic data identified 5% of current volunteers as being unemployed, while the mature-age unemployed statistics are significantly higher.

To maintain viability, CCGs could consider ways to tap into this pool of potential volunteers. One of the approaches of significance, drawing from the literature (Gill, 2006) is to encourage people to pursue volunteering causes earlier in their middle years, given the organisational longevity of volunteers once they have started to engage. In addition to this the Australian government could develop 'bigger picture' strategies to engage our future citizens, children, to respect and care for nature as adults (Keniger et al., 2013).

The lack of individuals under the age of 30 participating in CCGs poses a challenge to the sustainability of these organisations. It has been acknowledged in an earlier section that school-age youth may not be represented due to the method of sampling, however the low numbers of individuals below the age of 30 supports the conclusion that the data is valid. The data may hold some clues to managing this issue and attracting younger volunteers. Many of the CCGs represented in the data, who identified difficulty in attracting younger members, were presented as unchanging in their operations and focus. In contrast, organisations such as George and Hamish's have maintained an expanding and community-embedded model which has led to a far broader cross-section of volunteers in the organisations. This leads to a supported inference about the link between groups which can support generational shift through diversification of their activities and approaches to volunteering. For instance,

George outlined how his group reaches groups of mothers with early childhood-age children, and how his group intentionally interacts with them. Hamish's group ventured into commercial functions with their nurseries but were also able to draw in multi-age volunteers and holiday makers because they broadened their range of activities. In contrast, groups such as the one Valerie belongs to are narrow and traditional in their focus, relying on small numbers and repetitive activities to maintain their environmental focus. Despite these examples, and broadly across both the survey data and the interviews, individuals such as Valerie, and Peg and Al expressed concern about the low numbers and lack of new volunteers. The literature identified how narrowed operations with an unbalanced workforce can lead to a sense of otherness in those volunteers who are not part of the core group (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; Osili et al., 2016). These authors identified the benefits and inclusivity that a greater diversity and more broadly distributed norms of engagement have on conservation group sustainability and membership. This distribution is relevant not only to age, but to other demographic and socio-cultural characteristics of volunteers. The linkage between retirement and age is self-evident. The data indicates that Hamish and George's groups appear to be succeeding better than others in recruiting a broader diversity of participants, including families, that are drawn from the wider community. The data supports the findings in the literature, in concluding that the more diverse the operations, and the more distributed their activities are, the more likely they are to be change-capable and accommodating of multi-age membership (Osili et al., 2016). As identified earlier in this discussion, the data addressed in this section identifies the complexity of the interplay between the operational characteristics of CCGs and the demographics of volunteers.

This turns attention to the data shown in Section 5.4 which identified a wide range of activities, the most prominent being restoration and monitoring of the target area. Whilst 75% of the volunteers identified this as a core activity, not all volunteers are involved directly in

restoration, and contribute in other ways. One of the contributing factors identified in the data such as that provided by Valerie, Jack and Jill, and Peg and Al is the reduced physical capacity to contribute as volunteers aged. A variety of activities are crucial to engaging not only those who cannot physically engage in manual work, but those with special skills. For instance, George identified the value of individuals who were engaged in community arts, education, press releases, lobbying, and social media. Indeed, more than 60% of volunteers were involved in education and advocacy. In response to Research Question 2, particularly RQ 2.2, it can be concluded that whilst most volunteers are physically active in the act of conservation through monitoring, planting, and clearing, there is also significant emphasis placed by CCGs on other activities that are able to raise the profile of their cause within the community. Whilst this does not engage directly with conservation work, it is nonetheless shown in the data to be critical in securing community support, attracting volunteers, and lobbying government and organisations.

Whilst the research focus has been on identifying why volunteers elect to engage with coastal conservation, the question of why they might not engage is also important. The qualitative commentary, presented in Section 5.7 and in the leaders and volunteers' vignettes in Sections 6.1 and 6.2, identified potential reasons why people do not volunteer is of interest. It appears that communities are generally supportive of conservation but the types of visible activities they perceive volunteers to engage in, such as weeding alongside footpaths, are just not attractive to them. Hamish's organisation has shown that where money is able to be raised through linked enterprises, paid employment can be offered to support the volunteer workforce and to get the job done to engage volunteers in more attractive activities. This is an aspect of volunteering that can call upon far broader skillsets and from more diverse groups of people and is worthy of further consideration if CCGs are able to engage in paid enterprise.

It has been established that the activities of CCGs include a strong focus on physical conservation activities, education, lobbying and engaging with communities through media. Less frequent in the data were references to broader activities such as engagement in local events, festivals and other community events. Yet this type of engagement was seen by George to be fundamental to their links with younger people in the community. The data does not identify whether these links to younger people are translated into their engagement as volunteers. In a similar fashion, rather than the typical regular, scheduled activities (such as planting and weeding), Hamish's group extends their reach to tourists and visitors in event-type activities. It can be reasonably inferred that these types of events are suitable for volunteers who are not able to volunteer on a regular basis, but who have compatible skillsets. Strategies, such as these, are shown in the literature to be important in gaining an interest in volunteering in younger people. Given that the data shows that not only did the volunteers engage over many years, but that they had engaged in many other types of volunteering over the years, the importance of engaging younger volunteers appears to be important. Gill (2006) showed that this is an aspect of volunteering and older people, that they had been engaged in different contexts over years, and as such volunteering had become a way of life.

While it was evident that recruiting younger people was problematic the data did not reveal what specific strategies CCGs use to attract younger people apart from leaflets, flyers, displays, and some visits to schools. Nonetheless, the lack of younger volunteers was considered to most likely be due to generational differences. The data presented in Section 5.7 did identify the perception of younger people of a lack by understanding of older volunteers of the pressures facing young families and people as well as their preferred ways of engaging. Thus, it is recommended that CCGs seek advice and guidance from the group of

volunteers they are seeking to attract in order to better meet their motivations to engage and to continue engaging in conservation work.

For those volunteers who were young enough to be concerned with careers, an average of 40% of volunteers saw this as an important function, 47% found that this requirement was not fully met by their CCG volunteering. The results also showed a scarcity of Generations Y and Z in the CCG volunteer membership. The literature revealed that these generations have very different motives for volunteering and outcome expectations. For some of these individuals volunteering is more about 'what is in it for me' in relation to 'career related resume building' (Cho et al., 2018; Handy et al., 2010; Jardim & da Silva, 2018). An opportunity exists here for more explicit links to career progression. For instance, the activities could be linked to VET competencies with formal recognition of embedded knowledge and skills as prior learning through links with local providers. Furthermore, the benefits that are identified in the data in terms of personal growth such as public speaking, liaising with important people and seeing a job through to completion, are powerful 21st Century skills which are called upon by employers. There is an opportunity here for CCG leaders to document and authenticate these skills as resumes for employment of younger persons. Another volunteer identified the benefit of practical experience while completing a degree in Environmental Science. There is clear potential in this area for the CCGs to liaise more closely with universities and training bodies to formalise their relationships and support ongoing two-way relationships. These types of actions can act as motivators to young people to engage, and to maintain engagement through a buy-in to the conservation function of the CCG.

The qualitative data also established a level of dissatisfaction with some organisations who had autocratic "bossy" leaders, or which were prone to cliques and conflict among the group. These findings support previous research findings acknowledged in the literature

(Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; Osili et al., 2016). The qualitative data found this aspect of CCGs to be a significant deterrent to youth engagement with the organisation. Furthermore, the retention of existing volunteers was threatened by organised "cliquey" challenges to their norms, which left them feeling disenfranchised and disengaged from the CCG. The management of this sort of deterrent is more complex, and it might be suggested that leaders and managers of CCGs are all offered training in facilitating more democratic processes, distributing leadership and expertise across the group, and managing conflict.

8.2 Who are we and what do we do together? Leaders, volunteers and social interaction

This section will discuss the data that relates to individuals, group interaction and leadership within the CCG. This includes the functions of Social, Project Organisation, Personal Enhancement, and Recognition. As with all the data, there is considerable overlap among the functions and their incorporation into this section is based on convenience and linkage in the data. As the discussion chapter progresses from individual functions to a greater focus on the collective within the CCG as an organisation, this section will present a discussion of the data relating to personal growth (nominally intrapersonal communication), social interactions among volunteers and individuals outside the CCG (inter-personal communication) and leadership functions which provide the foundation for these interactions.

Figure 2-1 drew from the review of literature on the leadership of volunteer organisations, with a focus on coastal conservation. These operations included organisational, day to day, and social engagement leadership. To understand each of these operations, it is important to first understand the nature of leadership in CCGs that was identified in the data. The leadership data demonstrated a wide cross-section of attributes and approaches. Some leaders such as Peg and Al were embedded in their local context, with loosely structured procedures across the different locations, and with apparently minimal coordination. Other

leaders such as George represented a more charismatic leadership approach, with diversification occurring within a strong central control of the group. This model supported movements in unanticipated directions, but with leadership invested in the nominated individual(s) as central managers of the groups. Other leadership styles, for instance Betty's were similarly invested in a central leader, however the enactment of this type of leadership was based on positive social interaction amongst volunteers, and the leader acted more as a social broker than a manager. The final leadership model was a highly organised group of central people with a critical investment in the area, who managed diverse aspects of the group, such as the model followed by Hamish's group. These four leadership models could be described as:

- A satellite model with smaller volunteer groups loosely connected to the central leadership structure (Peg and Al) each with some autonomy;
- A charismatic, transformative leadership model (George) as a community broker;
- A rhizomatic and inclusive model in which other smaller groups were formed as off-shoots of the original group (Betty) each with their own social brokerage; and
- A cluster business model in which numerous individuals took leadership in areas of interest or activity such as that of Hamish's group.

Each of the leaders represented here developed his/her own leadership style, which was linked to the type of operation, its scope and diversity, as well as the size of the group they were working with. This diversity was identified in the research by Snow (1992) and Wronka-Posipiech (2016).

The data presented in Chapter 6 and identified in the literature (Herath et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2001; Snow, 1992; Wronka-Posipiech, 2016) highlighted the inseparability of

leadership from the social functions of the CCG. While other, easier-to-define factors such as the organisational and operational appear to be of greater importance, the role of the leader is seen in the literature as being most important in terms of building relationships with volunteers (Ryan et al., 2001). It can be drawn from the leader interview data that indeed, each of these leaders were invested in their people. None of these leaders presented their leadership style as autocratic. They demonstrated the aspects of good leadership that were identified in the literature by Ryan et al. (2001), including rewards for achievements, a range of motivations and activities that evolved with the volunteers and the group, support and explicit opportunities for social interaction and fun, close attention to effective organisation and explicit valuing of volunteers. Indeed, positive leadership attributes were also identified in Section 6.2.4 as being a good organiser without bossiness, with enthusiastic and supportive valuing of the people who contribute. However, not associated with the leaders who were interviewed, the data presented in Section 5.5.2 identified other aspects of leadership that were less supportive of volunteer engagement. Many volunteers expressed their dissatisfaction with their group's leadership, with some identifying how leadership treated them as subordinates, and which was perceived to be self-serving and power-grabbing. Leadership that was considered to be dictatorial was regarded as detrimental to CCG volunteering and was even described as having the potential to break up a group. These observations in the data appear to be distanced from the social entrepreneurial model of leadership which was acknowledged in the literature as promoting mutual trust and respect (Snow, 1992; Wronka-Posipiech, 2016). Leadership that rested in cliques of volunteers was also criticised. Section 5.5.2 introduced problems with factions forming. In one case, a leadership overhaul by a newly-formed faction was referred to using strong wording such as 'ethnic cleansing'. Section 5.7 saw data identifying that factions were generally linked to age and occupation, with small groups of retirees sometimes seen as intractable, resistant to

change, and not open to new ideas about environmental management. This was seen to lead to technical deficits in the way the organisation conducted its business, inefficiency and attrition. Indeed, the literature identified that skewed memberships was seen to lead to narrower volunteering activities than those whose membership was balanced (Osili et al., 2016). This is problematic, particularly when it is recalled that efficient operations are regarded as characteristic of effective leadership (Ryan et al., 2001). Not all volunteers saw leadership as being invested in individuals or small groups, thus losing the leaders the opportunity to acknowledge and meet the diverse needs and motivations of all volunteers, identified in the literature as critical (Ryan et al., 2011; Wronka-Posipiech, 2016).

Linked to social benefits, and evidenced in the data, several respondents identified how volunteering led to a growth in their own leadership skills, and many individuals were shown in the data to take on what is identified in Figure 2-1 as leadership roles. Thus, it appears that leadership in many of the groups was quite broadly distributed among the membership. This is an important feature of these CCGs when considering the high levels of burn-out in the leaders of volunteer groups where leaders face increasing and daunting workloads and responsibility (Byron & Curtis, 2001).

From this data, it becomes clear that the social dimension of leadership, identified in Figure 2-1 as social engagement, and which includes social organisation and managing team dynamics are likely to be one of the most critical functions of leadership in maintaining a productive and engaged group of volunteers. While it is likely that many CCG leaders have experience in their working lives in leading groups of people, it cannot be assumed, and any strategy and/or training provided by umbrella organisations to enhance leadership skills would be of benefit.

The third dimension of social engagement in Figure 2-1 is social and community operations. In the case of CCGs, this dimension is complex. It will be shown in Section 8.3

that coastal areas are characterised by a range of human activity that makes conservation activity complex. At the heart of the complexity is the range of community expectations that were identified in the data of what is acceptable interaction with this environment. The literature has shown that poor negotiation with the local community not only raises ethical issues but can lead to self-defeating efforts at conservation and rehabilitation (Few, 2000). Combining community engagement and advocacy were the activities that were outlined in the data in the educational sphere, not only in schools, but within the broader community and beyond. CCGs were seen in Section 5.4.1 to engage with community groups, not only in positive ways, but also in managing somewhat antagonistic relationships with property owners and resident. The latter was viewed in the data as being a form of encouraging these residents to a better understanding of conservation. These interactions are not well addressed in the literature and appear to be a characteristic unique to CCGS because of their nature (as outlined in Section 8.3). Engagement with the community was seen in Section 5.6.2 to be a difficult balancing act, but where mutual understanding, together with individual differences were respected, and conservationists tempered their passion with a sense of compromise, better outcomes were seen to occur. This type of activity straddles a boundary between direct activity in conservation work and lobbying at a more personal and community level. Lobbying is not unique to environmental groups, with activism identified as emerging from social volunteering such as in education, political, and social programs (Eliasoph, 2013). Leadership which engages the diverse skills of the community was particularly notable in George's group, which actively engaged in any social, educational or cultural community activity that was able to raise the profile and awareness of his CCG and its operations. This approach was mirrored in the work of Hamish and Betty's groups, where community expertise was seen to be attractive, and supported within the groups.

Apart from social engagement, Figure 2-1 showed that leadership operations also include organisational and day to day activities. The data presented in the qualitative data and the leadership vignettes identified complexity within the leadership roles of CCGs. Indeed, the activity themes presented in Table 5-17 identified activities of all CCG volunteers that were associated with leadership in Figure 2-1. Thus, it is likely that the leadership roles that are outlined in Figure 2-1 are more broadly distributed across the groups.

Organisational operations identified in Section 5.4.1 were like those identified in the literature (Curtis et al., 2014; Measham & Barnett, 2008; Volunteering Australia, 2006; Wu et al., 2015) and included activities such as a significant role in organising print and online media through which the CCG communicated with the community. As with George's organisation, responsibility for these activities resides with individuals best qualified to conduct them. Other organisational activities were associated with committee work, given the organisations were identified in the leadership interviews as being incorporated. All the vignettes identified committees as being relatively stable with longevity. While some such as Hamish's group, operated more formally due to the nature of the business enterprise, others such as George's CCG met when required with a social flavour to the meetings. While the social engagement operation of leadership appears to be distributed across the group, the organisational operations are seen in the data to be separated into those activities such as administrative tasks that were seen to be the domain of volunteers within the group, and the more structured organisational tasks which have been seen in the data to be primarily the domain of the leader and his/her committee. Thus, leaders in the vignettes identified core activities such as applying for funding, liaising with partnership organisations, convening and conducting meetings for the group, working across the government organisations and policymakers, and managing the OHS of volunteers in day to day activities. Beyond these functions are other aspects of the groups' operations, for instance, Hamish's group runs a

nursery business which requires greater conformity to business standards, employment and payroll, and forward planning and financing of the nursery.

Finally, significant effort was expended in activities associated with funding and fund-raising, like the activities cited in the literature (Prager, 2010; Tennent & Lockie, 2013). The data shown in Section 5.5.2 identified that funding was a perennial problem, leading to uncertainty, a perceived lack of continuity, and an ongoing perception of threat to the operation of the CCG.

Day to day operations identified in Section 5.4.2 were like those identified in Figure 2-1, which was drawn from the literature. They included managing on-ground activities, as well as engaging with organisations and government bodies. This took the form of advocacy and lobbying, as volunteers sought to influence policy and decision making at community, local, state and federal levels. Involved with this advocacy was data collection to support their case. The importance of providing some tangible acknowledgement of volunteers' efforts and contribution was described earlier in this section. Some volunteer data identified that volunteers were recognised through work at national and global levels in publishing and presenting at conferences on global sustainability. Furthermore, as identified in Section 5.6.2. some individuals received more formal recognition in terms of appointments to advisory committees and councils. On a more local scale, volunteers felt valued when their contribution was acknowledged by their organisations. However, engagement with organisations and government bodies also placed significant stress on leaders as they attempted to have their contribution acknowledged and valued. This is already discussed in Section 8.1. Section 5.6.2 also identified the added pressure on leadership and volunteers where there is poor coordination and even counterproductive outcomes from environmental agencies, leading to burn-out. This burn-out is identified in the literature as becoming an increasing prominent problem (Byron & Curtis, 2001). Lobbying with governments was seen

in the data presented in Section 5.5.2 to be a balancing act; insufficient lobbying was seen to result in labels as a non-effective group which counteracted recruitment, but in contrast, where lobbying was perceived as being too active, the danger was in a threat to funding.

This section has identified the significance and dimension of the ways in which the leadership of CCGs engage with government and supervisory bodies. While not necessarily a feature of general volunteering, such as age care, education and health in which volunteers fit into an organisational structure, it is a critical aspect of CCG volunteering, and is seen to influence every aspect of organisational activity. This aspect influences not only organisational functions, but places pressure on the social engagement of members of the organisation with the community and draws attention from the core role of CCGs as volunteer organisations. It has been shown to be a significant influence on the satisfaction of volunteers and a contributor to burn-out. It is for this reason, that Section 5.6.2 proposed a new function to be added to the functions of the CCG that of External Organisation.

Added to the networking and organisational operations is the importance in the data of coordinating interaction and operations among the CCG groups to enhance the effectiveness of operational functionality. Indeed, this coordinated approach among CCGs was promoted in Section 5.6.2 as potentially a new function to add to the CCG Functions Framework, particularly when understanding the continuity and overlap of each of the areas of focus of each CCG.

Training of volunteers as a leadership strategy, as outlined in Section 6.1, was regarded as a key leadership operation (Ryan et al., 2001), and was provided in a variety of ways. For Peg and Al, training was about accreditation and permits to interact with turtles, thus training was quite a formal operation.

Recruitment and retention are key day to day leadership operations, which were identified as issues across the volunteering literature. The data showed that the recruitment of

young persons was regarded as being difficult. Across most of the groups except for George and Hamish, recruitment and retention of volunteers was problematic. For some groups, such as Peg and Al's, recruitment was externally controlled, but for others such as Hamish's group, it was an informal process as an apprenticeship to a more knowledgeable other. For other organisations, such as George's, training was not formal, and the group drew on existing strengths of volunteers in a variety of ways.

The social benefits of volunteering have already been discussed in terms of the demographics and motivations to engage in Section 8.1. They have also been shown to cross-over into the community aspects of Section 8.3. Overall, social interaction with others was a strong motivation to engage in volunteering, with 55% of survey responses identifying its importance. Nonetheless, when asked to rank the benefits of volunteering, friendships were ranked ninth, with the factors associated with conservation values and the exchange of knowledge all ranked higher which is mirrored in the literature. Thus, from the quantitative data the social aspects are not the primary motivators to engage with CCG volunteering. However, the qualitative data identified the importance to many volunteers of social connections, relationships, networks and partnerships that emerged from engagement. It also identified the importance to many volunteers of forging connections with others in the community and being recognised by the community for their volunteering work. The data also identified the connections of many that extended beyond the community, with volunteer groups elsewhere including global connections. For some, the social aspect of volunteering was of great importance, leading to long-term friendships, belongingness within their community, and was even seen to "make life worthwhile" in Section 5.6.2. Volunteers were generally satisfied with the way in which their CCGs met their need for social interaction, with 72% identifying that it was met. Nonetheless, 28% identified that this function was not always met. This is an aspect that warrants some attention.

The interviews reiterated this data, identifying a love and respect of the environment as a primary motivator for leaders and volunteers in Sections 6.1 and 6.2. Nonetheless, volunteers such as Valerie, although motivated by a love of the coastal environment, also found benefit in the social interaction, fun and friendships that developed. Gomez too, in his role as a community leader, discussed the benefits that could be gained by lonely and isolated people as he talked about the camaraderie created by engaging with like-minded people. The leaders' vignettes, presented in Section 6.1 acknowledged the importance of facilitating social engagement, such as George's meetings which were scheduled at the local bowling club. Gomez also identified in Section 6.2.3 the importance of the social engagement, which enriched the interactions of the group.

The social engagement with others was not always identified in the data as being positive. Within-group dynamics was seen by some as problematic, particularly when individuals and groups jostled for power and ownership of the group. These power imbalances, also shown in the literature (Ryan et al., 2001; Snow, 1992), were seen by some to lead to a sense of judgment and their treatment as subordinates. The power imbalances were perceived to start within the group, but also seen in the data to extend to umbrella organisations as well as the broader community, with data communicating a sense of nightmare corruption, and that all their efforts would not result in much gain.

Social relationships with the surrounding community were seen in the data to be variable. As identified in the literature, (Few, 2000) they are complex. While some groups welcomed diversity and embraced community engagement, such as George's group, others were more combative in their interactions. The data showed that some groups of volunteers can appear judgmental of those in the community who do not volunteer, with criticism of their motivation to not engage in environmental volunteering. Others appeal for reason, calling for different approaches (such as George's group) to engage community members.

This approach resonates with that suggested by Few (2000) who promoted an approach of reconciliation. One family identified themselves in the data, discussing the problem with organisations being sufficiently flexible as to accommodate their other commitments as a family. The data in Section 5.7 shows that these issues are acknowledged by many groups, with suggestions that planned family events attract families, who then tend to stay with the CCG because they feel valued. This was identified in this data set to be associated with greater objectivity and balance as far as attitudes and planning was concerned, making conservation volunteering relevant to the community.

Personal satisfaction has already been linked to a perception of growth of knowledge and skills, and a contribution of knowledge to the community of volunteers. But for many volunteers, the personal benefit extends more deeply to data which not only helps maintain active fit lifestyles, but which gives retirees a sense of purpose in life. Finally, linked to a sense of place were the building of confidence and identity growth identified in the data.

Drawing the data together, and in response to Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, Figure 5.6 shows the organisational and motivational preferences of younger and older volunteers, drawn from the data. At the point of overlap is the potential for negotiation of the functional aspects of the CCG, which can initiate conversations around the compromises and range of approaches necessary to attract and retain volunteers of all ages.

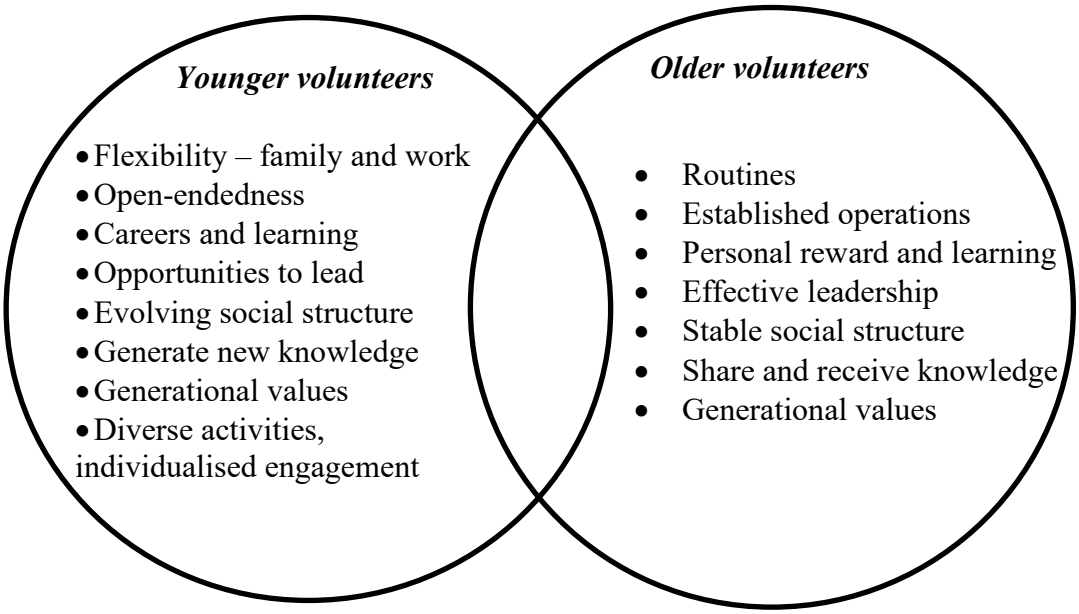

Figure 8-1. Organisational and motivational preferences of younger and older volunteers.

In summary, this section discussed the roles of leaders and volunteers, including the social roles, within the CCG. It identified the importance of leadership that was fit for purpose, and as identified by Snow (1992) and Wronka-Posipiech (2016) the size and the scope of the group was a key determinant of the forms of leadership required. For some groups such as Betty's, the membership and sphere of influence were limited, and leadership was informal. For others, such as Hamish's group, membership and the sphere of influence of the CCG were diverse and this group required greater structure and more considered leadership. George's group stands out as one which is embedded within the community, drawing on the collective leadership strengths of diverse groups of community members. Finally, for Peg and Al's group, operations are centred on individual enterprise on nominated beaches rather than collective action. Leadership has responded to the context of accreditation and permits, with formal processes in these areas. However, the social interaction among members of the group appears to be less structured because of the geographical spread of the spheres of influence. For each group, the form of leadership has

evolved to meet the needs of the group. However, some cautions are offered by the data in the form of seeking a balance between the needs of the leader, and those of the volunteer corps. There appears to be a tension between managing the operations of the group and openness to new practices; the maintenance of a comfortable flow of mutually-accepted practices and the challenge of new ways of doing things; the comfort of a group of closely connected members and openness to new membership; and frustration with the lack of community activity in volunteering and understanding the multiple demands of 21st Century life on others in the community, particularly families. The data acknowledged that leadership generally is the domain of a single, charismatic group leader. However, it also identified that the functions of leadership identified in Figure 2-1 are generally distributed across other people within the group. Therefore, it is important for the leader to be aware of all of the aspects and tensions within the group, to be self-reflective of their own leadership style and actions, and to be proactive in addressing any inconsistencies or changes in the group which might lead to disunity and dissatisfaction. It might be suggested from this data that leadership resides in a single individual, however, management of the operations of the group reside in the collective membership. Nonetheless, the role of leader is critical, as identified by Ryan et al. (2001), in the social aspects of the group, facilitating engagement, maintaining productive relationships, supporting learning, providing job satisfaction, enabling socialising and fun, and supporting the perception that volunteers are valued and valuable to the organisation. In conclusion, the leader primarily facilitates meaningful activities and engagement for all, acknowledging the diverse and evolving needs of all volunteers such that their needs are not regarded as hierarchical, but as important aspects in the social fabric of the CCG (Ryan et al., 2001).

8.3 The unique nature of coastal environmental volunteering—the place we live and play

Coastal environmental volunteering has several unique characteristics that are evident not in the the general volunteering literature. These characteristics are not well-addressed in the literature. They define the flavour of volunteering groups as well as the passion with which volunteers have described their attachment to the coastal and marine environment in the data. This section blends together the functions of Connection to Nature, Environmental Care, Reciprocity, and Sense of Place. The quantitative data identified these dimensions as being of most importance to volunteers; the Connection to Nature averaged 91%, Environmental Care 96%, Reciprocity 93% and Sense of Place 92%. The uniqueness of coastal volunteering is relevant to both Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. The context of CCGs acts not only on the ways in which the organisations function, but also on the motivations of volunteers to engage in coastal conservation volunteering. Primarily, individuals engaged because of their concern about the way in which humans are degrading their coastal marine environments. They used passionate language to identified specific features, such as mutton birds, the Barrier Reef, marine life, turtles as being a focus. This concurs with the case outlined by van Putten et al. (2018) that the marine environment is the domain of marine organisms, flora and ecosystem.

A key element in the data, in alignment with van Putten et al.'s (2018) marine domain of sense of place, was participants' affection and affective engagement with the marine life. They outlined how they enjoyed diving and engaging with turtles or shorebirds, and their "love of the beach". They described a personal connection with the environment with which they felt a spiritual connection. They spoke of a sense of harmony and belongingness in immersing themselves in this beautiful environment. The data communicated far more than the actual functions themselves, and focused on the affective, emotional connection with this

part of the environment. This new and unique aspect led to the identification of new dimensions of the CCG Functions Framework that are aligned with the passionate connection with the "place".

Drawing from van Putten et al.'s (2018) human domain, participants linked their marine experience and connections, through their own recreational activities to their volunteering. Thus, they referred to their own experiences on the beaches, sailing, swimming, diving, and surfing when outlining how important it is to retain this environment for future generations of Australians. For many, the beach provided the foundation for their lifestyles over the duration of their lives. Where volunteers such as Betty, Valerie, Jack and Jill, were relative newcomers to the area, their engagement with volunteering was associated with a love of the area in which they had chosen to live and to which they had relocated later in life, and also the social ties as outlined by Tonge et al. (2013). The same affective connection and motivation was clear across all the volunteers who were interviewed. Peg and Al illustrate this by identifying that not just anyone can take responsibility for "their beach" when they decide to step back from volunteering.

While these motivations and perceived benefits from volunteering appeared to be invested in personal gain in terms of individuals' use of the beach and surrounding areas, this interpretation is far too simplistic an approach considering their emotional connections and sense of place. Esmond and Dunlop (2004) identified the function of Reciprocity which, they reasoned, could be identified as both an ego-centric and a socially embedded motivation to volunteer. The former is described as giving back to the community, the latter as giving to the community as a way of gaining oneself. This, again, appears to be an over-simplification of the data where the environment took on an identity as an entity, and the giving back to the environment, whether ego-centric or socially motivated, was a way of returning the joy they have experienced with a donation of their time and effort. Adding complexity to the data is

the expressed wish of participants to preserve the amenity of the "place where we live", alongside their desire to maintain the aesthetic and financial value of their homes and the local amenity. These desires are potentially contradictory in nature and in practice. Again, identifying that this motivation is for personal gain over-simplifies the issue. Certainly, protecting where one lives is the most significant of the perceived benefits, ranking number one. Ranked third is the reciprocity of giving back to the environment that has given the volunteers so much. These characteristics of coastal volunteering sets the CCGs apart from general volunteering and contributes significantly to retention and succession of the organisations. Thus, responding to Research Question 2, volunteers in the coastal conservation context are somewhat unique in their personal, historical and emotional connection to the coastal environment, a function which is strongly motivational, and which should be added to the set of functions associated with CCG volunteering.

The function of Sense of Place is perceived to be significant and different to coastal environmental conservation groups (van Putten et al., 2018), and this is clearly identified in the data. The function of Sense of Place in the CCG Functions Framework was designed to have an environmental focus (organisms, flora and ecosystem). It is proposed that the function of Sense of Place in the human domain be added to the CCG Functions Framework.

Notwithstanding the strong personal connections, like environmental conservation volunteering in the literature, the CCG members expressed broader concerns about the degradation of the environment, human influences, and the sustainability of the environment as it is. They linked their activities to local, community, national and global sustainability concerns. The data showed that some individuals who volunteered for coastal conservation because they have been volunteers serving other causes for years, even as families. For these individuals, volunteering was seen more as an environmental social duty and responsibility, than a contribution to CCGs. Opportunities exist, considering this data, to recruit families so

that the children in the family can develop the same sense of obligation to volunteer. Many, such as Morris, Gomez and George also work across many volunteer groups concurrently. Others are described in the vignettes as conducting volunteering activities that are connected to the coastal environment but not explicitly, such as the activities of George's group.

While much of the activity is expended in direct conservation activities such as rehabilitation and monitoring, others see their contribution in lobbying politicians, governments and other groups to support causes that vary from local (paths on the foreshore, and car park and housing developments) to community-based (contributing to the environmental management plan of local council) to global (participation in international conferences). These activities will be developed later in this discussion. There is a separation in the data between those volunteers who are involved in conservation at the local level, and those who took a global perspective. As motivations, benefits and determinants of the types of activities volunteers engage in, this difference is seen to be sufficiently important that they be regarded as separate functions. Many of the volunteers cited "the damage we are doing to our global environment" as their motivation to engage. This adds a new dimension to the general function of motivating to contribute to the cause. It extends beyond the local context, and the type and activities of the CCGs were markedly different depending on their local/global focus. Thus, it is proposed that the CCG Functions Framework be modified to include the function Global Sustainability and Conservation. In the second decade of the 21st Century, the threats to the environment are global, for instance global warming and plastics pollution in the oceans. It is reasonable to propose this new global focus as being an important aspect of CCGs in the future.

8.4 A modified CCG Functions Framework

This discussion so far has introduced and drawn together the way that volunteers and leaders engage in their coastal conservation operations based on the functional dimensions of

motivation, benefits and satisfaction. A case has been made in Chapters 5 and 6 supporting several new functions that specifically apply to the coastal conservation context, and through which answers are proposed to Research Questions 1 and 2. It is considered difficult to develop a complete understanding of the volunteers and their engagement in coastal conservation volunteering without considering these proposed new functions, namely Global Sustainability and Conservation, Global Social Networks, and Personal Gain, External Organisations, Cross-Conservation Group Networking, and Local Community. The next section re-examines these proposed functions, integrating them and adding them to the CCG Functions Framework.

The function of Global Sustainability and Conservation may well be increasing in importance in an era of increasing challenges to the global environment as a motivation to engage. Whilst the global perspective was not identified as a motivation by all volunteers, the data sets indicated that this function was important to many and thus it should be included in the CCG Functions Framework. This function will continue to gain importance considering the current global environmental crisis which is facing Australia and the world (Randle & Dolnicar, 2009). More frequently in the qualitative data sets, volunteers and leaders identified the importance of greater cooperation and collaboration amongst the volunteer groups in order to achieve consistency of approaches and outcomes. The proposed functions Global Social Networks and Cross-Conservation Group Networking can, on reflection, be merged to include the notion extended conservation networks. While this function may not necessarily be always aligned with motivation to engage in volunteering, it may be regarded as being important in selecting which group to engage with. Furthermore, it has been seen in the data to be important in supporting satisfaction in the operation of the group and therefore motivation to continue contributing.

Some of the data regarding governing bodies raised new issues, in terms of where to place aspects of support or lack of support, from funding and governing bodies which was raised across all data sets. Whilst support and funding of the CCG may not be a primary motivation to engage, it is a motivation to continue or desist from engaging with the CCG. Hence, it meets the characteristics of a function. However, this aspect, relating as it does to a broader perspective on the sustainable operations of CCGs is subsumed into the function Global Sustainability and Conservation.

Two new functions, namely Community Engagement, and Personal Gain were proposed in the data analysis. These functions emerged from data outlining the way in which the members of the CCG engaged with governing bodies and the local community. These two functions might be seen to be the same where they are local, for instance, engagement with local council and residents' associations can be seen to be associated with local amenity and personal preferences as well as community needs. However, they may be separated, for instance where the governing body is operating out of a capital city or Canberra, the national capital, leading to a reduced influence on the local issues. Thus, these two functions should remain separated.

Community engagement is a local condition that has been shown in the data to support engagement between CCGs and community members, leading to greater motivation, benefits and satisfaction. Thus, this new function of Community Engagement is supported. The final proposed function is that of Personal Gain. There is cross-over between this new function and that of the function Personal Enhancement. However, the new function does not focus on the 'self' but outlines motivations associated with local amenity, property values, and liveability. Furthermore, there is a potential cross-over between the functions Sense of Place and Personal Gain. The new function is seen to be separate from the function Sense of

Place as a sense of place is directed towards the conservation area, which is likely to be public space, while the property associated with personal gain is privately owned.

Therefore, the CCG Functions Framework presented in Table 2-9 has been modified to include these three new functions anis presented in Table 8-1.

Table 8-1. *Revised CCG Functions Framework.*

Function	**Broad Description of Function**
Career	Gaining career related experience and professional skills through volunteering.
Community Engagement	Participation in a CCG such that individuals and groups engage with the local community in positive and proactive ways to support the local environment.
Connection to Nature	The physically and psychologically benefit by being close to nature and reconnecting with nature.
Environmental Care	Enactment of a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, with an enhanced sense of purpose.
Global Sustainability and Conservation	Participation in a CCG such that individuals and groups contribute to global initiatives and projects associated with global conservation.
Personal Enhancement	Psychological and physical growth and development, improved health and personal growth.
Personal Gain	Participation in a CCG such that individuals receive personal gain, for instance property values, social status, or amenity in the local area.
Project Organisation	Participating in a CCG that is well regarded for its preparedness and good project management.
Reciprocity	Helping others and 'doing good' in the belief that their volunteering work will bring good things for the volunteer themselves, thus beneficial to the helper.
Recognition	Recognition of skills and contribution and associated confidence growth.
Sense of Place	Enacting a sense of responsibility for the local area.
Social	Strengthening his or her social relationship with family and friends.
Social Interaction	Strengthening of his or her social relationships through enhanced social engagement with others; Building of social networks and enjoyment of the aspects of social interaction with others.

Function	Broad Description of Function
Understanding	Learning more about the world or exercising skills that are often unused through social learning and growth of content knowledge.
Values	Expressing and acting on important values like humanitarianism and altruism.

The added functions presented in the Table 8.1 add to the insight that a functions approach can generate into volunteering in CCGs in Australia. They also add a more contemporary dimension to what is a model from an era before rapid population growth, the sea-change movement, and the increasing global challenges to environmental sustainability. They provide a contribution to the body of knowledge about coastal conservation volunteering, and they provide answers to Research Question 1 as well as Research Question 2 in terms of outlining more broadly not only why volunteers participate, but also how the organisations themselves modify their operations to support these motivations.

8.5 Coastal conservation groups as communities of practice

The discussion thus far, in Sections 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 has characterised the functions of volunteers and leaders in response to Research Questions 1 and 2. These functions outline the motivations, perceived benefits and level of satisfaction that attract volunteers to coastal conservation groups and support their retention, as well as their influences on CCG leadership. This discussion has identified the complexity of the human face of CCGs, the diversity of functions, backgrounds, knowledge and skills and the ways in which they contribute to the CCG's operations. It also identified the balance that was required between aspects of organising and running the group. This balance includes positioning the CCG on several continua which include strong leadership vs autocratic leadership; strong social cohesion vs cliques; strong norms in terms of social behaviour vs inclusivity; group knowledge that has developed over time and practice vs openness to new ideas; a fixed range

of conservation activities vs open-ended engagement with the community; and lobbying for the environment vs acknowledging the amenity of the local area for residents among many others. Finally, the way that volunteers perceive their role in conservation work as a collective determines the way that the CCGs function and engage in the enterprise.

Sections 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3 have made recommendations based on the research lens of a functions approach. The data that has been reported has not been able to be constrained to this functions approach in that it was not limited to a discussion of the motivations, benefits and satisfaction with engagement of volunteers, but extended into explanations of the way in which these functions determined the operations of the group. This is a significant limitation of the functions approach, which can be addressed by extending this research into the ways in which CCGs can be characterised as communities of practice. The community of practice model of Bozarth (2008) and Storberg-Walker (2008) was reported in Chapter 2 to have emerged as a way of studying and understanding the operations of a community of practice as the practice of the community.

The previous sections in the discussion have demonstrated how the demographic, social and place-based characteristics of CCGs were inseparable from each other. For instance, age and motivation were entwined, as were age and engagement. But the situation is more complex. The vision and scope of the CCG's activities also interacted with the characteristics of the individuals who engaged as volunteers. Indeed, they acted on each other in determining the CCG's operations. The broader the demographic characteristics of volunteers, the more diverse the operations and reach of the CCG appeared to be. This in turn extended the demographic reach of the group. In contrast, as the characteristics of the volunteers contracted to a narrowly-defined group, potentially defined by age and availability of volunteers, the more the group norms narrowed, and volunteers conformed to these norms. This was seen in the data to initiate resistance to change because of the perceived challenge to

the norms, which in turn narrows the pool of volunteers available to engage with the group. These findings resonate with the functions of a community of practice. Wenger's (1998) definition of communities of practice identified this interplay between participation, interpretation, and practices as a property of the community that has evolved over time. In terms of the meaning (Bozarth, 2008; Storberg-Walker, 2008), roles, engagement of the community, and the way the community was shaped by the participants, there was clear alignment between the way the group had evolved in terms of its membership norms, and the way it functioned in environmental care. In alignment with Wenger's (1998) focus on practice, community and the domain, the data showed that the three central characteristics interacted to create CCGs as communities of practice with unique identities. The practical experience over time of the volunteers was seen to determine the way the CCG operated. They communicated how they created a meaning that underpinned their community that was unique to the way that they had given it form and function. Thus, in the characteristics of CCGs that have been outlined in the literature and the data, the making of meaning and alignment of meaning with the characteristics of a community of practice is a strength of the CCGs. Lending greater credence to the alignment of the CCGs with communities of practice is the alignment of the way the groups operated with Smith's (2000) characteristics, despite the management focus of this seminal work. However, the decision to base the research presented here on a framework more closely aligned to Wenger's original framing of the model and developed by Bozarth (2008) and Storberg-Walker (2008) led to an easier categorisation of the interactions of all the elements of community, practice, and domain which led to the characteristics of each CCG.

The alignment with the CCG Community of Practice Framework supported insight into the functioning of the CCGs. While it was seen in the data presented in Chapter 7, both quantitative and qualitative data collected using a functions approach was able to be better

understood within the functional aspects of the model presented in Table 2-8. It was also able to identify areas for potential improvement or development within the CCG to support a stronger community of practice, and hence greater sustainability.

For instance, although most of the characteristics of CCGs were seen to be conducive to a strong community of practice, this was not always the case. An example is belongingness through relationship building, which is an important aspect of community in the community of practice framework (Bozarth, 2008; Storberg-Walker, 2008). The data showed that where belongingness and inclusivity were fostered, and where CCGs were able, through demographic and socio-cultural diversity, to engage with challenge, change and evolution in terms of membership, actions, tools etc., the CCG was seen to be more likely to continue to flourish. However, the data also showed that where the age and characteristics of the volunteer group were narrow, the meaning and some of the community aspects became contradictory in establishing such strong cultural norms that diversity was not supported, and challenges supporting change and evolution were regarded as threats and actively discouraged. Hence, the CCG Community of Practice Framework, through supported auditing of the practice of the CCG, was able to identify areas of excellent practice, alongside practices and community structure that could be interrogated to support new approaches and greater sustainability of the group.

The way that individual identity and knowledge are shared and developed across the community and its actions is a characteristic of identity in the community of practice model (Bozath, 2008; Storberg-Walker, 2008; Wenger, 1998). While identity was seen to be an important function in terms of volunteers' motivations to engage and perceived benefits of engaging with coastal conservation, the community of practice approach supported greater understanding of how identity influences and is influenced by the operations and structure of the CCG, and reified by renegotiation through participation, fulfilling the intent of identity as

an aspect and property of communities of practice. As a lens through which CCG enterprise can be examined, identity allows insight into how a group of individuals with ranging backgrounds are able to form such cohesive communities with shared interests. The use of this characteristic as a filter through which the operations of the CCG were examined was discussed in Chapter 7. The discussion identified how important a shared identity is to the operations of the group, and through which individuals developed their individual identity as conservation volunteers. Through this filter, the discussion characterised the way that individuals and groups shared and distributed accountability, knowledge and skills within the CCG. This was associated with the aspect of learning within the CCG Community of Practice Framework. The data analysis was able to raise concerns when the community knowledge and skills were not recognised by the organisation or by groups beyond the organisation, leading to a sense of disengagement. The range of definitions of common enterprise were also discussed within this characteristic, along with the importance of identifying the range of activities and individual actions that can contribute to the concept of a shared enterprise. The nature of joint enterprise, a property of the community aspect, was raised as differences emerged among the groups in terms of narrow enterprises such as only weeding and replanting, to broader enterprises such as Hamish and George's groups which engaged in a broad range of activities all encapsulated in the shared enterprise of conservation. Problems were raised in the discussion in Section 7.7 in which the nature of the group's leadership was seen to influence the level of accountability able to be held by individuals within the group. This was particularly influential when the individuals who were not seen to be accountable for certain tasks felt that their own knowledge and skills to complete the task were greater than those to whom the task was allocated. This lack of accountability was also identified where the knowledge and skills were seen to be non-negotiable despite advances in the broader conservation field and new ways of doing things.

Using the CCG Community of Practice Framework in this way supports engagement with the operational details of the CCG, identifying what is important, and proposing ways to address problems if they emerged during this examination.

The learning aspect of the CCG Community of Practice Framework was examined in Sections 7.12 to 7.14, and addressed questions about what works, how things are done, who does what, what is the enterprise about, how do we achieve our goals? These visible markers, as properties of the CCG Community of Practice Framework were drawn from Wenger (1998) and the organisation of Wenger's conceptual overview of communities of practice that was provided by Storberg-Walker (2008) and Bozarth (2008). This is a critical characteristic in terms of understanding the organisation, and the knowledge entailments of working in the environment in a period of rapid change in conservation priorities. As with other functions, the function Understanding was identified, in the data presented in Chapters 5 and 6, as motivation to engage, continue to engage, and as a benefit linked to satisfaction of volunteering. The learning aspect of the CCG Community of Practice Framework extends this discussion by identifying the way that the function Understanding, as knowledge and skills, was developed across the community of volunteers, over time, drawn from their engagement in conservation and which led to a repertoire that was characterised by the group. The breakdown of the learning aspect enabled by Storberg-Walker (2008) and Bozarth (2008) supported the framing of questions specifically associated with conservation volunteering, which supported this sense-making of the functions data. By asking these questions, tensions can be identified. For instance, the way in which knowledge and practice developed over time was under constant negotiation with that which was introduced by new members or new approaches to conservation. Questioning the social community and who is responsible for what, allowed the group to identify strengths and weakness, and talents among the group such that their capacity was maximised. They can be used to identify where the CCG has been

slow to adapt to change, to evolve, to adopt new ways of doing things, and seeking new directions in which to grow their enterprise.

The meaning aspect of the community of practice is defined as emerging through the processes of participation and reification, and the interplay of practical and theoretical insight during conservation practice. The detailed characteristics and markers of the meaning aspect presented in Table 2-9, drawn from Wenger (1998), Storberg-Walker (2008) and Bozarth (2008) provided scaffolding and explicit questions to use when seeking to understand this aspect within the CCG. It recognises that without volunteers, the volunteer group does not exist. Furthermore, without acknowledging the nature of members, membership and their roles, the CCG is unable to operate with any degree of cohesiveness. Recognition was seen within this characteristic to be critical in the data, not only internal recognition from other volunteers and leadership of the organisation, but recognition from outside the group. The meaning aspect also supported interrogation of the way the community operates, how participation shaped the way tasks were completed, and the mutual interaction between participation and meaning-making such that members themselves determined the nature of the final product of conservation.

In summary, it is the duality of the CCG Functions Framework, and the CCG Community of Practice Framework that extends the richness of the way in which this research sought to understand the way that CCGs operate through their volunteer membership to achieve the outcomes that they do, which are significant. Without first understanding the functions of membership, any discussion of the community of practice would have lacked currency, contextual clarity, and justification, as well as insight into the nature of the members themselves. But without the CCG Community of Practice Framework, any discussion based only on functions could only discuss the characteristics of volunteers in relative isolation of each other. The duality of the characteristics of the volunteers

themselves, and the ways in which they can productively interact in their conservation groups was successfully supported by using both frameworks to understand the groups.

While the two frameworks, the CCG Functions Framework and the CCG Community of Practice Framework, were developed for coastal conservation groups, the principles that underpin them are likely to be transferrable to any research that seeks to understand the way that volunteer groups operate. This approach is improvement focused, in which an audit using the two frameworks can identify the motivations and experience of the individuals within the group, as well as the community of practice through which they engage in their conservation work. Thus, it is suggested that this model is suitable for many other conservation volunteer groups with adjustments based on contextual variables.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Chapter 8 discussed the findings presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 in the context of the three research questions. The chapter also used the CCG Functions Framework and CCG Communities of Practice Framework, developed specifically for this research, to analyse the personal attributes of volunteers and to evaluate the alignment of CCGs to communities of practice.

This chapter begins with an appraisal of the effectiveness of this research in addressing the three research questions:

- Research Question 1: How do CCGs operate and manage volunteers?
- Research Question 2: What are the perspectives of CCG leaders and volunteers regarding their participation?
- Research Question 3: To what extent can a CCG be examined and explained as a community of practice?

Following this the findings and the conceptual frameworks, expressly designed for this research, are evaluated in terms of their contribution to the scholastic knowledge.
The suitability of the research methodology used in this study is also assessed. The chapter concludes with a declaration regarding the limitations of this study and some recommendations for future research enquiry and suggestions for interim CCG practices.

9.1 The characteristics of Australian CCGs—a concluding summary

This research principally sought to explore the characteristics and operations of CCGs in response to concerns in the literature regarding their present-day viability and future conservation efficacy. Hence the purpose of this study was to seek a thorough understanding into the way in which present-day CCGs operate as entities. It was necessary to firstly investigate the characteristics of the volunteers themselves, including their motivations to

engage, their level of satisfaction with their experience, and the perceived benefits they obtained from volunteering This was enabled using the CCG Functions Framework, presented in Table 2-8. Secondly, it was necessary to find out how the characteristics of the volunteers shaped the operations of the CCG and the way in which they approached the tasks allotted to them. This investigation was further enabled with the CCG Community of Practice Framework presented in Table 2-10. The research's purpose shaped and framed the three research questions.

Research Question 1 was designed to investigate the operational aspects of CCGs. Research Question 2 was designed to acquire broad information about the attributes as functions (motivations, satisfaction and benefits) and the experience of present-day volunteers. The data collection instruments, with their respective components, identified both volunteers and leaders' thoughts about their own motivations to engage and remain engaged, as well as their experience of the operation of CCGs. The closed questions were framed using the CCG Functions Framework, which limited engagement in alternative functions associated with volunteering. However, the open-ended questions provided the opportunity to identify new motivations, satisfactions and perceived benefits that supported the addition of three new functions to the framework, which responded to Research Question 2. The data collection instruments gave respondents and participants alike opportunities to freely respond to questions in their own words, and to provide additional information about their voluntary involvement in CCGs. The qualitative data sets identified not only the functions of volunteering, but also the patterns of engagement as a community, the interaction of members within the CCG, leadership, and social behaviours. Thus, they supported both research questions. This data extended beyond the restrictions of the CCG Functions Framework but supported alignment with the CCG Communities of Practice Framework that was identified in the review of literature. This was a critical element in this research. Volunteers wanted to

tell not only of their motivations, sources of satisfaction and perceived benefits but also the story of the day to day operations of the CCG amidst its socio-cultural milieu of activity. In so doing, they provided valuable insights into the key enabling features of the CCGs, as well as operations, events and issues that acted as barriers to satisfaction and engagement. It is from this data that the research was able to uncover ways in which the operations of the CCGs could be defined, described, identified, as well as supporting improvement in these aspects of operations.

As with the research presented in Chapter 2 on volunteering functions, there was a wide range of motivations, sources of satisfaction and perceived benefits reported in the data. This presented a complex picture of multiple combinations of requirements and needs of volunteers in terms of the ways in which the CCGs operated, as well as their conservation focus. The interview data identified how most of volunteers worked around personal and socio-cultural differences to come together for the good of the environmental cause. However, closer examination of the diversity and recognition in the way the CCGs operated was a recommended strategy to improve the engagement of volunteers. This was one of the findings in the data that was reinforced through examination using the CCG Community of Practice Framework, to be discussed later.

The data identified the organisational tensions within the CCGs as they attempted to balance their operations and membership to suit all members. The tensions emerged when the functions of importance to some volunteers were not seen by other volunteers within the same organisation to be of importance. When these tensions were examined, the benefit of a community of practice approach to defining the aspects of the social and functional organisation and operations of the CCGs was highlighted. Whilst the data collection and analysis were defined by the CCG Functions Framework, the nature of the data itself was in clear alignment with the CCG Community of Practice Framework. The most significant

outcome of this alignment was the way the description of the markers of the aspects of the CCG Community of Practice Framework supported considerations of the dynamic nature of the organisation. Using the markers and the implications of each allows CCGs to negotiate a balance between approaches that suited the dominant retiree part of the group with those that suited younger people and families. This balance can be characterised using the aspects and markers of the CCG Community of Practice Framework to identify the interaction between established ways of doing things with new and emergent ideas about conservation; the tension between social groups and cliques that was seen as problematic by those on the outside, but socially inclusive to those on the inside; the acknowledgement of the knowledge residing with the CCG and how to balance that with the knowledge of the scientific community. Finally, it can support the negotiation and balancing of the physical acts of restoration and monitoring with broader conservation roles in education and policy.

The CCG Community of Practice Framework was able to shed light on other areas of tension and how they could be defined using the aspects and markers to better meet the expectations of their members. One of these additional areas of tension was the relationship between the conservation groups and the community which differed significantly from group to group. Some described the relationship in confrontational 'them and us' terms, whilst others were more moderate in their approaches, supporting relationships with the community that acknowledged and valued their perspectives as well as those of the conservation group. Groups that extended their activities inclusively with the broader community as collaborative enterprises, for instance social functions and festival were used to develop better relationships and understanding among the community. The CCG Community of Practice Framework can support the identification of these issues, for instance the mutual accountability and indigenous enterprise descriptors of the marker joint enterprise within the aspect of community supports the identification of ways in which the organisation can better work with

the community, as does the marker belonging globally and experiencing locally within the aspect Identity.

The leadership of the groups differed in approach. It was clear however, that those groups with more diverse activities and closer links to the broader community supported a more distributed model of leadership than those with narrow operational activities. Those groups with distributed leadership still demonstrated a cohesive leadership structure. The greater diversity of activities also supported greater numbers of volunteers. While leadership was distributed in many groups, the data identified the potential of groups to engage volunteers with strengths in key administrative areas, such as publicity, publishing, preparation of materials, and managing budgets, which could alleviate the stress of leaders and improve their well-being and enjoyment of engaging in their CCGs.

The age distribution of volunteers was also identified as influencing both the characteristics of volunteers and operations of the groups. The membership of the CCGs in this research consisted of a significant number of retirees with very few younger members. Strategies were suggested in the discussion such as recognition of prior learning and contribution to VET competencies, university assessments, and resume building for younger persons who were career focused. Other strategies included the diversification of activities so that individuals with multiple talents could use their strengths to contribute to the enterprise. Bringing the previous paragraph into this argument identifying how new volunteers with administrative talents could support leaders in their operations, it is apparent that there is the capacity to draw in not only individuals with a commitment to the environment, but also those interested in general social volunteering, who may be able to contribute to these administrative functions. Overall, however, it was concluded that every group is defined by the scope of their role in the environment, which determined optional membership numbers, and therefore the ways in which the groups functioned.

Another key issue that emerged was the importance of relationships with governing bodies as well as the enormous potential of cross-CCG collaboration to establish a broader range of practices that extended across all groups. It was generally agreed that CCGs acted too much in isolation and could benefit from engaging not only in their home patch but extending their relationships to connect with other groups. Insularity was regarded by Cox (2005) as being one of the threats to the well-being of communities of practice.

The findings of this research showed that leaders are busy in fulfilling an extensive range of roles and responsibilities using a range of individual leadership approaches. The results showed that an ideal CCG leader, apart from being social and energetic, should have the expertise to manage internal group dynamics, interact with their local communities, 'think outside the square', build relationships, plan and organise, administer, source funding, be inclusive, be adaptable and open to change. It is fair to say that all the leaders in this research had good intent with many having admirable leadership qualities and abilities. However, the data indicated that some leaders lacked expertise and exhibited unhelpful behaviours that in turn were counterproductive to group cohesion and output. Leadership training workshops, assisted by coastal facilitators and or leaders who were recognised as role models, could be a away to address these issues. The issues identified in this research could be used as topics for discussion such as the pros and cons of autocratic and democratic leadership, social interaction for volunteers, social networking skills, grant application writing skills, knowing your volunteers, inclusivity versus exclusivity, the value of volunteer support and training volunteers.

Research Question 3 set out to establish whether there was alignment with the concept of communities of practice and the structure and operation of a CCG, and how the communities of practice model could be used to better understand CCGs. To support the alignment of the characteristics of both, a CCG Communities of Practice Framework was

developed in which the aspects and characteristics of communities of practice were couched in terms that explained the function of CCGs. This framework was presented in Table 2-10. Markers were explicitly designed to provide recognisable features and activities of CCGs which aligned in context with the aspects of a community of practice. This framework was then used to provide secondary analysis of all the data.

The data aligned effortlessly with the characteristics and aspects of a community of practice. In identifying this alignment, I was supported in asking new questions of the CCG operations that clarified areas potentially requiring improvement, or which could be acknowledged as being high-functioning aspects of a community of practice. Each of the aspects of a community of practice, namely community, learning, identity, and meaning were seen to be integral to the operation of the CCGs. The model raised awareness of many of the challenges proposed by Cox (2005), all of which were raised in the data. These included the impact of the inflow and outflow of members, appropriate management and task ownership, a lack of collaboration, fragmented work and activities that were potentially heavily mediated by governing bodies. Also emerging as important in the CCG community of practice data are the principles that Couros (2003) drew from Wenger et al. (2002). It can be seen across the earlier part of this section that the principles of maintaining an evolution of knowledge and practice; ongoing dialogue between inside and outside perspectives; different levels of participation (inclusivity); interaction in private and public spaces; value in terms of return for effort; balancing the familiar with the exciting; and establishing a rhythm of engagement all feature strongly in the discussion emerging in response to Research Questions 1 and 2.

9.2 Contribution to knowledge: Two conceptual frameworks

The point of difference in this research was the dual focus on the functions of CCG volunteering, and the group as a community of practice. It was proposed that neither approach alone could give the holistic understanding of CCGs and the way that they function.

The first focuses on the membership and its characteristics, the second focused on the ways in which the group engages based on these characteristics as socio-cultural influences. In contrast, previous volunteer research identified in the literature review revealed that scholars had used more limited approaches to separately investigate topics such as motives, satisfaction and benefits which are regarded as having an interdependent relationship. Many of these studies used the functional approach to explore the characteristics of volunteers. Central to many of these studies was Clary et al.'s (1998) VFI.

The first step in framing this research was to establish the commonality of the functions of Clary et al. (1998) by aligning their focus on motivation to volunteer with the literature on satisfaction and benefits. It was found that there was a straightforward conceptual relationship between each of these elements and facilitated the construction of an integrated set of functions which could be used to identify each of the dimensions: motivation, satisfaction and benefits. This conceptual framework was then modified and specifically linked to CCGs using the results of the review of the conservation volunteering literature. This framework was used to inform the design of the research instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

Analysis of the data revealed six potential new functions, namely the functions Global Sustainability and Conservation, Global Social Networks, Personal Gain, External Organisations, Cross-Conservation Group Networking, and Local Community. These potential functions were reduced to three new functions, namely the functions Personal Gain, Community Engagement, and Global Sustainability and Conservation. The data shows that understanding these three functions as motivations, sources of satisfaction and perceived benefits adds to any research insight into the characteristics of coastal conservation volunteers. The reviewed CCG functions are shown in Table 8-1. This new conceptual

framework contributes to the academic knowledge by enabling a closer mapping of potential volunteers within a community as well as seeking to understand how these needs can be met through the volunteering experience. The new unique functions can support greater understanding of how to engage new volunteers in CCGs.

This research also contributes to knowledge by adding to the body of research on the functions and operations of Australian CCGs, which was identified as being relatively scarce in the literature.

The research also contributes to the knowledge of how to utilise a framework framed on Wenger's (1998) community of practice model designed specifically for the CCG context. An integrated approach to community of practice in the coastal conservation context was difficult to find in the literature, with much of the focus being on isolated elements of the model. The holistic approach is more ecological as it uses the characteristics of the volunteers, as inhabitants, and their interactions to typify the operations of the CCG. In general, the CCGs demonstrated a strong alignment with the CCG Community of Practice Framework which is a very positive step in maintaining their operations and sustainability. But the model also supports interrogation of the CCG and its characteristics with a view to removing barriers and improving their operations. This audit can be completed internally because the framework is presented in layman's terms by its design.

This ecological approach is of value to the research community as well as to the leadership and members of CCGs. Understanding the characteristics of volunteers from a functional perspective is advantageous and effective if the volunteers themselves are to be understood and catered for. However, this singular focus is limited by a lack of responsiveness to the socio-cultural aspects, community and practices of the group. On the other hand, understanding only the latter is not effective because it fails to support understanding of the attributes and characteristics of volunteers as functions which determine

and underpin their actions, motivations, and purpose in establishing patterns of engagement in conservation work that includes the types of activities, social climate, and depth and breadth of engagement in conservation of their group. It is in the overlap and integration of both frameworks that one can begin to understand ways in which to maintain the health and well-being of both volunteers and leaders, and CCGs.

9.3 Significance of research methodology

Chapter 3 explained the researcher's ontology, epistemology, paradigmatic world-view and the selection of a qualitative mixed methods approach to investigate this topic. I contend that that the combination of the data collection instruments used in this research resulted in findings that are important to both voluntary and non-voluntary organisations. Many of the research studies cited in Chapter 2 used a functional approach, which led predominantly to a quantitative research approach.

The primary intent of this research was understanding, rather than measuring, and to fully investigate the characteristics and operations of present-day CCGs and their volunteers to get an accurate understanding of the research problem. This contextual approach was used to capture the multiple perspectives of the leaders and volunteers in their own words. The qualitative aspects of this research, the open-ended survey questions and interviews, allowed me to interpret respondents and participants' meanings and understandings through inductive reasoning (Yilmaz, 2013). I was able to appreciate the volunteers and leaders' world, their moods, opinions and views which in turn provided a wealth of information about CCGs and the volunteer experience (Yilmaz, 2013).

The richness of the data was illustrated by the way that it lent itself to the secondary analysis of communities of practice, through the way in which the elaborations of the volunteers addressed not only the characteristics and needs of the volunteers themselves, but the detail and insight into the operations and community of the CCG as a social group.

The ease of alignment between the data and the aspects of the communities of practice framework supports a conclusion that they present an accurate account of the operations and of the experiences of active volunteers in the participating CCGs. As with most research this study did have some limitations. These limitations are presented in Section 9. 4.

9.4 Limitations

This section identifies several limitations to this research. These limitations are associated with the methodology, the nature of qualitative research, and the sampling.

Broadly, qualitative research is not identified as supporting broad transferability of its findings. The instruments and frameworks were narrowed and redefined to explicitly address volunteering in the context of coastal conservation groups. Nonetheless, a reconfiguration and refocussing of these frameworks would support broader generalisability of their purpose in supporting understanding of volunteer groups and individual volunteers.

The qualitative research paradigm was found to be useful in uncovering the depth and breadth of the issues drawn from the lived experience of volunteers and leaders within CCGs. There are limitations emerging from this approach which could be addressed through a quantitative approach to new research such that the linkage of factors would be enabled, supporting greater insight into the contextual, generational, and demographic differences across the membership of the groups.

Despite the piloting of the survey and interview questions, some issues emerged related to the instruments themselves. Item 3 reported in Section 5.2, was identified as having contradictory data. This was interpreted as respondents having a lack of clarity in answering the question. The volunteering history that was reported was open to misinterpretation by respondent. Therefore, the data responding to this question can only be used to identify a trend towards lower volunteering numbers but is unable to quantify this shift.

The sampling strategy resulted in responses from participants in a broad range of coastal volunteering contexts along the coastline of Australia. The time limitations of this research project led to a pragmatic decision to close the data collection and to commence data analysis. This has resulted in a caution regarding the potential for bias in the data. Future research in this area would benefit from a more focused approach to recruiting survey respondents. The sampling approach to the interviews was also purposive and used a convenience approach. Whilst these sampling methods are acceptable in qualitative research (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Etikan et al., 2016; Teddlie & Yu, 2007) a broader approach to sampling will help to support the data and arguments presented here as well as potentially supplement the data with new findings.

Chapter 3 explained and justified the methods used to recruit the samples for the survey, the leader and volunteer interviews. The survey used 'snowballing', a purposive sampling technique, to recruit participants as the CCG volunteer population was difficult to reach. Participants were recruited for the interviews using self-nomination and then were selected to represent the broad field of CCG volunteering, which is also a purposive sampling technique as it was an expedient option. Both sampling techniques have a degree of bias and therefore the results should only be generalised with caution to larger populations (Sills & Song, 2002). The research only collected data from members of functioning CCGs, which means potentially that it has lost the perspectives of volunteers who have left their CCG for a variety of reasons, or from CCGs that have folded. A limitation is the potential exclusion of school-age children due to the sampling method with debatable likelihood that the dissemination model would intentionally include children. However, the low numbers of volunteers in their twenties was indicative that there were nonetheless issues with volunteering in the younger age group. However, the research findings are perceived to have

included a enough balance of both positive and negative messages about the operations of CCGs as to fulfil its purpose in this context.

However, it is argued that both the research approach and the results can be applied or compared to similar voluntary Australian 'grass roots', 'local community' and 'bottom up' volunteer organisations. This claim is based on the high quality of the content in the responses and the multiple instances of representativeness and comparability across the volunteers and leaders that was identified in the survey and interviews, a research requirement that has been identified in the methodological literature (Sills & Song, 2002; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Furthermore, these findings are believed to be credible (valid) and dependable (reliable) (Yilmaz, 2013).

9.5 Implications for future practice and research

The findings from this research prompt several future research opportunities and suggest improvements for present-day CCG practice.

The first opportunity for future research is to use this study's methodology, including this study's conceptual frameworks, totest them further in new groups of volunteers and CCGs. A study such as this would provide an opportunity to make comparisons to this research and to evaluate the trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirm ability) of both the methodology and frameworks (Guba, 1981).

This research found that the membership of CCGs was skewed towards older people, many being of the baby boomer generation, with very few volunteers in their late teens and early twenties. The data and the research literature demonstrate incongruities and contradictions in the motivations of younger volunteers, particularly around the functions of Career, Social, Environmental Care, and Global Sustainability and Conservation. Whilst the sampling precluded the perspectives of young volunteers, the literature has identified how different their motivations are to older volunteers. Cho et al. (2018) found that younger

people are motivated primarily by the functions Values, Career, Learning, and Self-Esteem with none of the giving back, social motivation or environmental concern that were seen in the data as characteristic of older volunteers. To remain sustainable, CCGs must invest in understanding and satisfying the needs of younger volunteers, and to do this, they need greater insight and understanding. This is an important potential research focus. For instance, understanding the link between volunteering, career and study progression, CV and transferrable skills, and employment is important. These limitations in what has been a qualitative study should be addressed in future research by conducting broadly focused quantitative research with a more refined methodology and method of participant recruitment. The latter should use quantitative methods to investigate more closely the links between demographic characteristics (particularly age) and functions that are important to them in terms of motivation and perceived benefits drawn from volunteering. There is undoubtedly a generational shift in priorities that must align with the way that volunteering organisations recruit and engage volunteers. A longitudinal study is an important approach to also understand the dynamics of volunteering functions and how they evolve over time. This is particularly relevant given the data that indicated that most of the volunteers had volunteered in the past, and across multiple contexts.

Aligned with this research is important work to be done in the area of CCG activities, particularly those within the community, which raise awareness, attract new members, and distribute the workload and leadership among group members which supports greater sustainability. It is also important to understand how to design and engage in activities that are seen by the community to be more enjoyable than weeding and picking up litter, which were identified as some of the more common activities of volunteers in the CCGs surveyed. There was evidence in the data that family-friendly strategies were particularly effective, and that this is an area worthy of further investigation. As we enter a new age of environmental

awareness and activism, the relevance of environmental volunteering groups has never been of greater importance. The activities of the groups must reflect the growing and evolving community focus on environment, conservation, and more recently climate change.

This research investigated a broad range of active CCGs and volunteers and therefore only attained information in the context of present-day group operation and volunteering. It would be useful to initiate longitudinal studies of CCGs from inception to full-operation and beyond to identify the stages of development of the community of practice. Wenger (1998) proposed models that can underpin this research. Studies such as this would supplement this research and provide further insight into how to achieve success and to avoid failure on topics such as the recruitment and retention of volunteers, community interaction, novel projects, inter-generational engagement, and suggested best operational practices.

Any organisation that needs to think about individual volunteers, their motivations to engage, their reasons for staying as well as the way the organisation is structured and functions to meet these motivations will find the combined frameworks of use. The CCG Community of Practice Framework aligned closely with the functions of CCG volunteering, validating the integration and complementary nature of the two. Whilst these frameworks are geared specifically towards coastal environmental volunteering, the functions and markers can be customised to suit any volunteering context with similar characteristics. The CCG Functions Framework supports the auditing and understanding of what the volunteers consider to be important and helps to identify their needs. The addition of the CCG Communities of Practice Framework then allows the organisation to understand how their practice can be modified to meet the functional needs of volunteers. The links between the functions of volunteering and the aspects of communities of practice and their markers have been identified and outlined in Chapters 7 and 8. As outlined above, these two frameworks are complementary and, in this way, allow volunteer organisations to be more responsive to

the needs of individual volunteers. Go Volunteer Australia identifies more than 10,000 volunteering organisations in Australia. The leadership of these groups is often drawn from the communities within which they operate. It is likely that many of these organisations experience the same issues as identified in the CCGs studied in this research, being able to find the balance between the meaning, community, identity and learning aspects of their operations. These organisations could benefit from the two frameworks, used as structuring and auditing tools to maximise engagement of volunteers as well as the community and practice of the organisation. Examples might be rural fire-fighting, State Emergency Services, surf lifesaving, tourism volunteering, animal welfare, community health support, philanthropic and humanitarian volunteering, creative arts, social welfare, support groups, amongst many others. Whilst it is unlikely that many of these leaders will be supported by leadership training, the CCG Functions and Community of Practice Frameworks can be beneficial in supporting the welfare and continued well-being of these organisations.

The identity of volunteers was a critical element, both in the functions and as an aspect of the community of practice. Research documenting the longitudinal changes in the identity of young volunteers would contribute to our knowledge not only of how to engage younger volunteers, but to use these aspects of identity to promote positive environmental messages to the wider community.

More research into the knowledge held by CCGs is critical. The volunteers felt that they held reservoirs of untapped knowledge that could be beneficial to the scientific community, but that this knowledge was not acknowledged. This is a point of difference between CCGs as ground-up organisations and citizen-science which is incorporated into academic approaches to the environment. Is there the potential for a more structured two-way flow of knowledge?

Leadership is another aspect of volunteering in CCGs that requires greater understanding. How can leaders be better trained and informed to maximise the engagement of their volunteers and to avoid burn-out themselves? What are the characteristics, actions, formal and informal qualifications of leaders? Is it possible to recruit younger people with these skills and support them as they grow into leadership? Further research would be beneficial in understanding the role that the CCG Functions and Community of Practice Frameworks can play in supporting the planning, actions and role of leaders within these community groups. Australia's Strategy for Nature (Draft) 2018-2030 forefronts the importance of shared ownership of conservation that includes leadership by groups other than government. At the centre of their model, presented in Figure 2. (p. 8) of Australia's Strategy for Nature (Draft) 2018-2030 are "people caring for nature". However, the goals and actions are relatively high level and make several assumptions about the people and the way in which they engage with each other in their domain. Goal 1 discusses connecting all Australians with nature although there is significant focus on affective recreational engagement rather than positive action for conservation. Where volunteers are acknowledged, in Objective 2 (p. 11), there is little acknowledgement of the ways in which this contribution can be tangibly supported and thus this objective remains hypothetical at best. There is significant scope to use the research approaches suggested earlier to link to Objective 2 to establish guidelines, professional development, community learning, and personal and community links to conservation groups to enable the anticipated engagement with nature.

This section has highlighted areas of interest for future research and areas of concern for present days CCG practice. It also identifies the transferrable nature of the two frameworks, CCG Functions and CCG Community of Practice as they work together to define the motivations, needs, and requirements of the volunteers themselves together with

the organisational structure, activities and functioning that can work with these individual functions to maximise the engagement of volunteers, and their satisfaction in volunteering.

9.6 Concluding comments

This study, using three research questions, set out to explore the present-day operation of CCGs and the experience of active volunteers. It is argued that this study has been successful in addressing the research questions, as well as raising further questions worthy of investigation. The findings of this research support various aspects of previous research, new functions have been identified and several issues that are impeding efforts to conserve coastal marine biodiversity have been highlighted.

Furthermore, the two conceptual frameworks specifically designed and used in this study will be useful in subsequent research and practice. The frameworks can be used to functionally evaluate volunteers' personal attributes and to evaluate and align like voluntary group operation to communities of practice.

This research has provided an account of local level coastal conservation volunteering in Australia today. The study has revealed that to meet coastal marine biodiversity conservation goals, it is advisable that governments consider the importance of volunteer conservation groups and seek to understand and fund them to maximise their potential to contribute. In conclusion, this research has uncovered a treasury of human resources in the form of knowledgeable, passionate, committed, empathetic, enthusiastic, and hard-working volunteers whose contribution cannot be under-valued. They are the community, and there is clearly a reservoir of similar individuals waiting in the wings for proactive strategies through which they can be engaged in volunteering. It is easy to be gloomy about the state of the environment. However, the existence of individuals such as those who participated in this research are grounds for celebration and optimism.

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Appendix A Ethics Committee Approval

Office of Research

CQUniversity AUSTRALIA

Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee
Ph: 07 4923 2603
Fax: 07 4923 2600
Email: ethics@cqu.edu.au

Prof John Dekkers and
Mr Julian Reid
Noosa Campus

15 January 2014

Dear Prof Dekkers and Mr Reid

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE ETHICAL APPROVAL PROJECT: H13/12-197 ***AN EXPLORATION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS, STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS OF AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTARY COASTAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS***

The Human Research Ethics Committee is an approved institutional ethics committee constituted in accord with guidelines formulated by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and governed by policies and procedures consistent with principles as contained in publications such as the joint Universities Australia and NHMRC *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.* This is available at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/r39.pdf.

On 15 January 2014, the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee considered your application under the Low Risk Review Process. This letter confirms that your project has been granted approval under this process, pending ratification by the full committee at its February 2014 meeting.

The period of ethics approval will be from 15 January 2014 to 30 March 2015. The approval number is H13/12-197; please quote this number in all dealings with the Committee. HREC wishes you well with the undertaking of the project and looks forward to receiving the final report.

The standard conditions of approval for this research project are that:

(a) you conduct the research project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments required to be made to the proposal by the Human Research Ethics Committee;

(b) you advise the Human Research Ethics Committee (email ethics@cqu.edu.au) immediately if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, or any other issue in relation to the project which may warrant review of ethics approval of the project. *(A written report detailing the adverse occurrence or unforeseen event must be submitted to the Committee Chair within one working day after the event.)*

(c) you make submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee for approval of any proposed variations or modifications to the approved project before making any such changes;

Appendix B Information Sheet

BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE.

CQUniversity AUSTRALIA

Information Sheet

RESEARCH TOPIC

An exploration of the characteristics, structures and functions of Australian voluntary coastal conservation groups

Project overview

The primary aim of the research is to investigate the workings of coastal conservation groups and aspects of volunteer management. It is envisioned that this research will make a valuable contribution to the continued protection and conservation of coastal marine area ecosystems.

How is the research being done?

I will be collecting information for this research using an online survey and interviews from coastal conservation group leaders and volunteers. A survey is to be used to collect information only from volunteers. Individual interviews are to be held with both leaders and volunteers. Participation in the project is voluntary and you can withdraw your participation at any time.

Interview

I will be interviewing leaders and volunteers separately. Interviews can be face to face, by phone or by Skype. Interviews will be arranged at a mutually agreeable date, time and place. It is anticipated that the interview will last no longer than one hour.

Confidentiality

The information collected from the survey and interviews is subject to the university's Code of Conduct (http://www.cqu.edu.au/research/governance-and-policies).

All data relating to the research project will be retained for a period of five years and will be stored in a secure location in compliance with CQUniversity's policies relating to ethical research.

All comments and responses provided through the survey and interviews will be treated confidentially and will not be shared with any other persons or organisations. It is anticipated that interviews will be digitally recorded, transcribed and coded as part of the data analysis. Recordings will be kept securely for the duration of the project and for up to five years afterwards. The information provided in the survey and interviews will be used as part of the research for a Doctor of Philosophy. The results may be published in

Appendix C Interview Consent Form

BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE.

CQUniversity AUSTRALIA

Interview Consent Form

RESEARCH TOPIC

An exploration of the characteristics, structures and functions of Australian voluntary coastal conservation groups

I agree to participate in an interview.

1. An Information Sheet has been made available to me.

2. I have read and understood the Information Sheet.

3. Any questions that I have had, regarding the project, have been answered to my satisfaction by the Information Sheet or by verbal explanation.

4. I understand that my participation or non-participation in the research project will not affect my voluntary participation.

5. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty.

6. I understand that the research findings will be included in the researcher's publication(s) on the project and this may include conferences and articles written for journals and other methods of dissemination stated in the Information Sheet.

7. Responses to the interview are to be anonymous. My identity will remain confidential to the researcher.

8. I am aware that a Plain English statement of results will be available from the researcher whose address is in the Information Sheet. Please insert a street or email address where you would like the statement sent to here.

9. I agree that I am providing informed consent to participate in this project by participating in an interview with the researcher.

CQU HREC clearance number: H13/12-197

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Concerns / Complaints

Appendix D Survey Facilitator Checklist

Survey Facilitator Checklist
Pilot Test Preparation
• Arrange and confirm time and place with participants • Print copies of paper survey, survey, facilitator checklist, survey pilot test questionnaire, consent and information forms • Obtain a quantity of self-addressed envelopes (in case survey is not/ cannot be completed) • Acquire a quantity of pens to complete the survey
Before Pilot Testing
Welcome volunteers to interview and thank you for participating
Explain purpose of study
Inform participants that ethical clearance has been given
Tell participant of their participation rights: voluntary, can withdraw at any time , their identity is confidential and anonymous
Hand out information form to read
Hand out consent form to read and sign
Inform participants about the possible length of survey
Ask participants if they have any questions
Commence interview: Record start and finish times
Closing remarks: Thank volunteers

Appendix E Survey Pilot Test Questionnaire

Survey Pilot Test Questionnaire			
Specific Issues	**Yes**	**No**	**Comments**
Were the instructions about how to complete the survey clear?			
Could you provide answers to all the questions?			
Was the survey easy to complete?			
Was the layout of the survey clear?			
Was the survey too long?			
Was the language easy to follow?			
Were there any questions you feel uncomfortable to complete?			
Were there any questions that were not asked that should have been?			
Were there any typographical expression or presentation errors?			

Appendix F Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. The primary aim of my research is to investigate the workings of Australian coastal environmental organisations and aspects of volunteer involvement. It is envisioned that this research can make a valuable contribution in supporting the continued protection and conservation of our coastal area ecosystems.

Understanding why people choose to become a Australian coastal environmental volunteer is important for both you and for your organisation as it may assist the recruiting and retaining of volunteers in the future. As you are an Australian coastal environmental volunteer your input is valuable to this research.

Confidentiality

The information collected from the survey and interviews is subject to the University's Code of Conduct. http://www.cqu.edu.au/research/governance-and-policies

All data relating to the research project will be retained for a period of five years and will be stored in a secure location in compliance with CQUniversity's policies relating to ethical research.

All comments and responses provided through the survey will be treated confidentially and will not be shared with any other persons or organisations.

The information provided in the survey and interviews will be used as part of the research for a Doctor of Philosophy. The results may be published in research articles and conference papers as findings from the research. Your identity will be protected at all times.

Your name and organisation identity will remain confidential. Individual identities will not be identifiable in the research results, final thesis and associated research articles and papers.

Page 1

Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

Concerns / complaints regarding the conduct of the project

CQUniversity is committed to researcher integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the Ethics and Compliance Officer. (07 4923 2603, Email:ethics@cqu.edu.au; Mailing address; Building 361, CQUniversity, Rockhampton QLD 4702) The Researcher Ethics Officer is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner. CQU HERC clearance Number; H13/12-197

Julian Reid
PhD Candidate
CQUniversity
PO Box 1128
Noosaville BC QLD 4566
j.reid2@cqu.edu.au

Things to note while completing this survey:

- **Your participation is completely voluntary.** ***(You can choose to withdraw from the research at any time and have the right to refrain from answering any questions if you elect to do so)***

- **Please do not include your name or any other identifying information on this questionnaire unless you are nominating yourself for an interview later on.** ***(Your answers will remain anonymous and your identity will remain confidential)***

- **Please try to answer all the questions.** ***(Unless otherwise indicated please answer the questions in relation to the coastal environmental organisation that you are currently volunteering for)***

- **There are no right or wrong answers for any of the questions.** ***(Please select the appropriate response which best reflects how you feel when answering the questions)***

At the end of the survey you will be asked, if willing, to be interviewed at a later stage in the research. I will only use your contact details to invite you to participate in an interview.

*1. My personal consent to participate in this research

◯ **By ticking this field you hereby give consent to participate in this research.** *(In order to continue completing this survey, you must give consent. Otherwise please withdraw and disregard this survey by exiting the page.)*

Page 2

Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

2. Why I chose to become a coastal environmental volunteer? This question asks you two things:

a) What were your important reasons for choosing to become a coastal environmental volunteer?
b) What is your level of satisfaction with the organisation in respect of meeting your expectations?

(Please indicate the reasons that are important to you for choosing to become a coastal volunteer then rate your level of satisfaction with the organisation in respect of meeting your expectations)

	Not Important	Important To Me	Always Met	Mostly Met	Sometimes Met	Not Met At All
I want to act on my personal beliefs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel obligated to help conserve the coastal environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel good when I am working with and for nature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to act on my concerns for the coastal environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to have fun	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to join an organisation that is highly regarded for what it achieves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to improve this place as it is for everyone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to be recognised for my contribution by this organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to participate in volunteering that is valued by my family and friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to gain new skills and work experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to share my expertise, skills and abilities with other volunteers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am seeking enjoyment from working with other people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to feel better about who I am	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to make a	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

meaningful contribution to society						
I want to "give something back" to the coastal environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel good when I am out in nature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to fulfill my commitment to the environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to improve my overall health	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to the be in a well resourced group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to be involved in volunteering as it is a family tradition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am attached to the place where I volunteer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to make a recognisable contribution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to add my volunteer experience to my resume for employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to gain knowledge, skills and abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to build my social networks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to increase my sense of self worth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to contribute to my local community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to doing something worthwhile for the coastal environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to work in the outdoors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The environment is important to me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to work in a well organised team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to enjoy what I am doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to contribute by volunteering as my work colleagues think it is a good thing to do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to preserve my local area	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to improve my chances of getting employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

I want to learn more about the coastal environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want to make new friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I want feel good about being a volunteer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like to be acknowledged by others for being a volunteer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other - Please list other reasons that are important to you for choosing to become a coastal volunteer then rate your level of satisfaction with the organisation in respect of meeting your expectations.

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Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

3. My level of participation in volunteering in the last five years, last twelve months and in the future.

(Please indicate what organisations categories you have volunteered for in the last five years, twelve months or intend to in the future. Please leave blank if you have not volunteered for other organisations in these time periods)

	Last 5 Years	Last 12 Months	In The Future
Aged care	○	○	○
Animal care	○	○	○
Arts/Heritage	○	○	○
Community/Welfare	○	○	○
Disability care	○	○	○
Education and training	○	○	○
Environment	○	○	○
Government	○	○	○
Health	○	○	○
Law/Justice	○	○	○
Religious	○	○	○
Sport & physical recreation	○	○	○
Youth	○	○	○

Other - Please list any other environmental organisations you are currently involved with now.

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Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

4. What drives me to want to be a coastal environmental volunteer?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
The coast is part of our national culture	○	○	○	○	○
I like mixing with people who are like-minded about the coastal environment	○	○	○	○	○
Our well-being requires healthy and productive oceans and seas	○	○	○	○	○
I want to conserve coastal environments	○	○	○	○	○
I have an opportunity to contribute to solutions to the problems that we are causing to coastal environments	○	○	○	○	○
I am spiritually attached to the place where the land meets the sea	○	○	○	○	○
I want to protect coastal environments	○	○	○	○	○
I have an attraction to the coastal environment	○	○	○	○	○
I get pleasure from being near or in the sea	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy interacting with others who share my passion about the coastal environment	○	○	○	○	○

Other – Please list other reasons you may have for being a coastal volunteer.

5. The things I do as a coastal volunteer.

(Please indicate the main activities you do with this organisation)

	Yes
Advocacy e.g. public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy	○
Education e.g. schools, locals, tourists	○
Monitoring e.g. plants and animals	○
Restoration e.g. weeding, pollution collection activity, nursery	○
Sustainable living e.g. A focus on reducing ways of reducing ecological footprints be reducing energy use and household waste	○

Other - Please list any other activities you do with this organisation.

6. From the fields below please nominate what you believe to be the top three benefits you have received from working as coastal environmental volunteer?

(Only use numbers, ie. 1, 2, 3 when making your selection in the response fields).

I have made new friends	
To protect where I live	
I have learnt more about the coastal environment	
It is just good being a volunteer	
I am personally satisfied about my efforts for the coastal environment	
I have given back to the coastal environment what it has given me	
My expertise, skills and experience are recognized by the organisation	
I feel good about my contribution to the coastal environment	
My family and friends are happy that I am volunteering for the coastal environment	
Volunteering is helping me to get paid work	
Being outside working with nature is enjoyable and fulfilling	

Coastal Environmental Volunteer Survey

7. Have you gained other benefits from volunteering?

8. About You

I have been a volunteer with this organisation for:

- ◯ Less than a year
- ◯ Over a year but less than 5 years
- ◯ Over 5 years

9. Your age

- ◯ 15 -19
- ◯ 20 - 29
- ◯ 30 - 39
- ◯ 40 - 49
- ◯ 50 - 59
- ◯ 60 - 69
- ◯ 70 - 79
- ◯ 80 +

10. Your Employment

- ◯ Unemployed
- ◯ Full time Student
- ◯ Part time – less than 35 hours a week
- ◯ Full time – a minimum of 35 hours a week
- ◯ Retired

11. Your gender

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

12. Are you a fulltime resident in the area in which you volunteer?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. How long have you lived in this area full time?

- ◯ Less than one year
- ◯ More than one year but less than five years
- ◯ More than five years

14. If you do not live in the area full-time, do you

- ◯ Have a holiday home that you use regularly e.g. weekends/ holidays
- ◯ Have a holiday home that you use infrequently e.g. as you can
- ◯ Rent/camp in area on a seasonal basis e.g. every Easter

Other (please specify)

15. How did you hear about this organisation you currently volunteer for? (Multiple responses allowed)

- ☐ Friends, Family, Co-Workers
- ☐ Local / Social Media
- ☐ Organizations office or store front
- ☐ Website
- ☐ School or University

Other - Please list any other ways you heard about this organisation.

16. As mentioned at the beginning of the survey I am looking to conduct interviews for those who wish to participate and elaborate on any of the areas covered by this survey. If you feel as though you would like to be involved, please fill out the form below with your contact details.

Kind Regards,

Julian Reid
PhD Candidate
CQUniversity

Name:	
Organization:	
Address:	
City/Town:	
State/Province:	
ZIP/Postal Code:	
Email Address:	
Phone Number:	

17.

Before we finish, do you have any final comments, opinions or ideas about the subject of coastal environmental volunteering?

18.

Thank You! You have successfully completed this survey!

**** You may now exit this page ****

If you would like to enter into the draw to win one of two books, " Coasts of Australia" or "101 Best Australian Beaches" please leave your name and contact phone number below.

Name:

Phone Number:

Appendix G Regions that promoted the Survey

Natural Resource Management Regions that promoted the Online Survey

NSW

Hawkesbury Nepean
Hunter Central Rivers
Northern Rivers
Southern Rivers
Sydney Metro

Queensland

Border Rivers Maranoa–Balonne Queensland Murray Darling Committee
Burdekin NQ Dry Tropics
Burnett Mary Burnett Mary Regional Group
Cape York Cape York Natural Resource Management
Fitzroy Basin Association
Mackay Whitsunday Reef Catchments
Northern Gulf Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd
South East Queensland Catchments
Torres Strait Torres Strait Regional Authority
Wet Tropics Terrain NRM

South Australia

Eyre Peninsula Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board
Kangaroo Island Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management Board
Murray Darling Basin
Mount Lofty and Greater Adelaide
South East

Tasmania

Cradle Coast NRM
North NRM North
South NRM South

Victoria

Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
Glenelg- Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

Western Australia

Northern Agricultural Region
South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc
South West Catchments Council
Swan Region NRM

Other Organisations that promoted the Online Survey

The Australian Marine Conservation Society, Birdlife Australia Clean Ocean, Reef Watch, Surfrider Foundation, Take 3, Tangaroa Blue, Volunteering Australia, Volunteering Queensland

Appendix H Leader Interview Schedule

Introduction	Welcome participant and explain research
Consent	Explain CQUniversity Ethics approval and ask participant to sign consent form
'Ice breaker'	Q. How long have you been a volunteer? • How did you get involved? • What is your background Q. How long have you been an Office Bearer with this group? • How are Officer Bearers chosen? • How do you plan for succession? Q. What conservation outcomes has the group achieved? • What are the activities of this group? • How are things funded?
CCG operation	Q. What is the organisational structure of …? • Who does what? Q. What are the roles and responsibilities of …? Q. What are the some of the operational functions of …? • What sort of things does your group do? • How do you support your activities? • How do you train volunteers? • Is there still more that you would like to do?
Management of volunteers	Q. How do you recruit volunteers? • What recruiting strategies have you tried? • How do you engage with the local community? Q. How do you retain volunteers? • What do volunteers like and dislike? • How do you manage volunteers
Operational issues	Q. What issues limit CCG effectiveness?
The future	Q. What are your thoughts concerning future coastal marine conservation?
Close	Invite further comments and offer a thank you

Appendix I Volunteer Interview Schedule

Introduction	Welcome participant and explain research
Ethical approval	Explain CQUniversity Ethics approval and ask participant to sign consent form
'Ice breaker'	Q. How long have you been a volunteer? • How did you get involved? • What is your background
Recruitment	Q. How did you get involved? • How do others get involved? • Why don't people volunteer?
Satisfaction	Q. Have your expectations for volunteering been met? • What do you like about volunteering? • What do you dislike about volunteering?
Activities	Q. What sort of things does your group do?
Benefits	Q. What have you attained from volunteering? • Has volunteering improved your life? • What have you learnt about?
Close	Invite further comments and offer thank you