

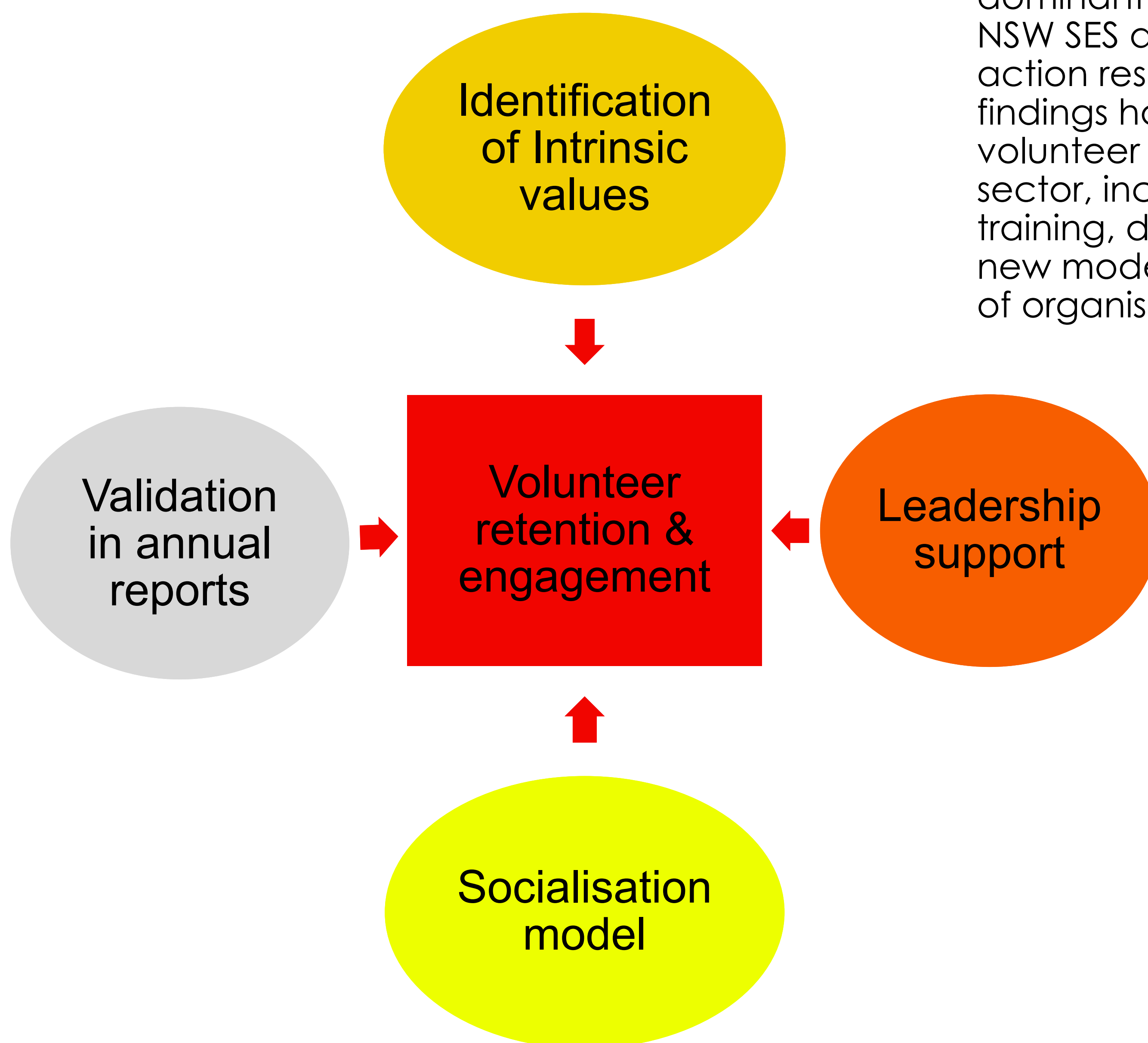
# IMPROVING THE RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE EMERGENCY SERVICE AGENCIES



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## RESEARCH OVERVIEW 2014-2017



## INTRINSIC VALUES OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers were surveyed to identify the dominant and shared values of volunteers in the NSW SES and SA SES followed by participatory action research with units in the NSW SES. The findings have implications for all facets of volunteer engagement in the emergency service sector, including targeted recruitment, tailored training, differentiated management strategies, new models of engagement, and the alignment of organisational and personal values.

## LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Developed a nine-week measured and validated Inspire Retain Engage (IRE) Program, based on Self-Determination Theory that was introduced to the NSW RFS, NSW SES, VIC SES and QFES. The program provided leaders with practical skills to motivate members. Course materials have been made available to all end users.

## SOCIALISATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Retained volunteers in the NSW SES between the ages of 18 to 70 were interviewed in 2011 to gather explicit information about the aspects of the organisational socialisation process. Based on responses, the social cohesion and critical stages during a volunteer's membership of a typical SES unit were modeled. The model has relevance to all emergency service services that operate through local volunteer entities and informs retention strategies.

## VALIDATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Disclosing volunteers as Human Capital in annual reports on the same par as staff was found to be an advanced means for validation of all members in the organisation.

## PUBLICATIONS

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