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OUR MISSION

To collaborate with individuals, communities and emergency services, to build confidence and empower women to achieve their full potential and be supported as women, in their roles within our sector.

OUR VISION

Promoting equity across our sector to empower all women to embrace their strengths.

OUR HISTORY

Women and Firefighting Australasia Inc. was established as Women in Fire Fighting (Australia) in 2005. In May that year, the inaugural Women in Fire Fighting (WIFF) Forum was held to celebrate a century of Australian female fire-fighting and to broach issues often considered but seldom publicly discussed: Fire Service diversity and inclusion. The convenor of that event was Dr Merilyn Childs.

One the features of WIFF 2005 was the keynote presentations by the then Assistant Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service, Mark Crosweller AFSM and Pru Goward, in her capacity as Sex Discrimination Commissioner at that time. Pru’s rally cry, ‘Firing Up Women’ pulled no punches as she made the case for the need for ‘diversity and inclusion’ in the emergency management sector and made it clear that if you can get gender inclusion right, then the rest would follow.

Galvanised by the combination of historical sentiment, good will and opportunity to network and share stories with colleagues who, although coming from a myriad of settings, share a passion for fire-fighting, Women in Firefighting (now Women and Firefighting Australasia Inc.) was born.
ABOUT US

Over the course of the last decade WAFA has morphed into a significant point of contact for emergency services organisations that want to strengthen their recruitment and diversity strategies.

The journey between 2006 and 2016 was by no means smooth, but the spirit of the mission of the collective has definitely remained consistent. WAFA (WIFF) is about celebrating the many facets that women bring to the Firefighting sector, in all of their diverse forms. WAFA’s focus has never been an industrial one. The focus is on leadership, healthy fellowship, operational and non-operational decision-making, ethics, human rights, personal and crew accountability, and family. This is regardless of rank or role, employment status and organisational affiliation. Members are volunteer and career, operational and corporate, strategists, researchers, and land management, forestry, and air services personnel. They come from our capital cities and our remote and rural country towns. WAFA members are from every State and Territory in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa, and as far as the UK and USA. WAFA membership is not gender exclusive and is truly diverse.
## OUR PEOPLE

### Executive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kate Hill</td>
<td>Fire and Emergency New Zealand</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ange Pestell</td>
<td>South Australian Department for Environment and Water (former)</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayley Dun</td>
<td>Fire and Rescue New South Wales</td>
<td>Treasurer and Public Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve O’Malley</td>
<td>Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Victoria</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
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### Board Members

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Pappas</td>
<td>Queensland Fire and Emergency Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quinn Cramer</td>
<td>Queensland Fire and Emergency Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nadia Rhodes</td>
<td>ACT Parks and Conservation Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Pickles</td>
<td>Fire and Rescue New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erika Lind</td>
<td>Forest Fire Management Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephanie Looi</td>
<td>New South Wales Rural Fire Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Jolly</td>
<td>Tasmania Fire Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Stephan</td>
<td>Northern Territory Policy, Fire and Emergency Services</td>
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</tbody>
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The Board of Women and Firefighting Australasia Inc.

Kate Hill
President

Ange Pestell
Vice President

Nadia Rhodes

John Pappas

Catherine Jolly

Quinn Cramer

Hayley Dun

Anne Pickles

Erika Lind

Stephanie Looi

Steve O’Malley

Anna Stephan

Loriana Bethune
Executive Officer
(ex officio)

Kelsey Tarabini
Youth Ambassador
(ex officio)
OUR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

ACT Fire and Rescue
Tasmania Fire Service
Airservices Australia

Country Fire Authority
Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Western Australia
Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Fire and Rescue NSW
HVP Plantations
Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Victoria

NSW Rural Fire Service
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Women and Firefighting Australasia Inc is a not-for-profit Incorporated Association registered with Fair Trading New South Wales. It is governed by a volunteer board consisting of people from AFAC member agencies across Australasia. These board members include women and men from career, volunteer and retained staff of urban, rural, and land management agencies. They are a like-minded group of people who are focused on making sustainable, positive change in our fire and emergency services.

Our governance structure is designed, through the use of sub-committees, which leverages particular skills of both board members and members of WAFA who are not board members. Each member of the executive convenes a sub-committee and a general Board Member is also provided an opportunity to convene a sub-committee as a personal and professional development opportunity and to contribute to succession planning within the Board. Recognising that our members have a great diversity of skills to contribute, the Board invites members to sit on sub-committees as a means to participate in Board processes without having to commit to the same level of time required as a Board member. The WAFA Board views these opportunities as useful pathways for interested members into a future board position. As our membership grows, the Board will review the Sub-committee to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the Association.
PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Presidents Annual Report
2019

It is with a heavy heart that I step down as President from the board of Women and Firefighting Australasia as I have come to the end of my tenure. Having been introduced to WAFA in 2014 it has been instrumental in my life and career since the first conference I attended in Canberra. It has been an honour to serve on the board as President and previously vice president over the past couple of years, following in the footsteps of some influential past presidents.

I look forward to the day that organisations like WAFA are no longer needed – that having equity and inclusion is the norm – that all people are treated with the respect deserved no matter their background, colour, gender, or sexual orientation. In the 18 years I have been in the Fire Service in New Zealand I have seen a big shift regarding improvement of conditions in diversity and inclusion sector wide with agencies taking a proactive stance. People are speaking out at unwanted behaviours, conditions, uniform and terminology are changing but there is still a long way to go - and WAFA will be there leading the charge for Australasia.

Fire and Emergency NZ published an independent review into its workplace policies, practices and procedures to address bullying and harassment and the Equal Opportunity Commission Report that was commissioned by South Australia Metropolitan Fire service (MFS) to gain a current organisational snapshot and identify initiatives to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion are a couple agency initiatives to mention.

Past WAFA President Donna Wheatley presented the WAFA Outcomes Statement at the AFAC conference in Melbourne in August this year. The aim of the Outcomes Statement project was to create a legacy document for the Women and Firefighting Australasia (WAFA) Conference 2018 that provides insights about current best practice, future directions, actions and opportunities for women in firefighting. This Outcomes Statement documents the common challenges faced by women in service and compiles a useful compendium of evidence-based strategies and practical action for change.

The WAFA QFES workshop evaluation report was released and was co-authored by Celeste Young (Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC), Janine Taylor (QFES) and Quinn Cramer (WAFA) and included a summary of responses from the online survey undertaken by participants who attended the conference. Also included was a synthesis of outputs from the QFES "Diversity more than the eye can see: Challenging how we look at diversity" workshop curated and facilitated by Janine Taylor, Quinn Cramer and Michelle Young.
In February WAFA held a successful planning meeting hosted by Mike Morgan and the Metropolitan Fire Service in Adelaide. We discussed the plans for the year and the 2020 WAFA conference where we confirmed that we will be collocating with AFAC in Adelaide next year. We decided on a conference theme - “2020 Vision – Developing the picture” - This builds on last year’s theme of “Looking forward, looking back - shaping the new norm” to “are we seeing clearly?” We have also gone out to our members to have a logo developed for the conference.

Additional WAFA activities during the past 12 months in areas including the successful monthly newsletters, continuing to run PAT tests at NSW, sponsoring the Girls on Fire Camp that debuted in NSW this year, partnering at the 2nd Emergency Management Leaders forum in Melbourne where Steve O’Malley, Donna Wheatley and Erika Lind presented as well as many board members presenting on behalf of WAFA at many conferences.

Policies have been updated and created, creation of private WAFA members only Facebook accounts, a new and improved WAFA shop, and the creation of two new roles – the executive officer and the youth liaison are a few of the many improvements made to assist our members.

The WAFA mentor programme is growing, with many offering their skills as mentors. We have just started to move into the social media space to help pair mentor and mentees – more to come next year.

Past board member Michelle Englesman published her research - Firefighter Exposure Risks and Subsequent Reproductive Effects - a study working directly with Australian Fire Organisations and Firefighters to capture much needed survey and biomonitoring information surrounding exposure risks and reproductive history.

WAFA board members attended the AFAC conference this year having a stand at the trade show. Our presence there exposed us to new memberships and partnerships as well as assisting with connections between people which proved a success with many people pointed out that our stand was one of the busiest at the trade show.

We received commitment from AFAC CEO Stuart Ellis with an improved collaboration between to two organisations, including a combined scholarship – more to follow in the coming months.

WAFA has a great team on the board who all work very hard for our members, but all those on the board, past and present, volunteer their time to WAFA. Mix that with family and work commitments as well being in an industry where we can never predict when we are needed to respond to incidents that could last a couple of hours to a couple of months takes a lot of commitment.

WAFA needs need significant investment in resources, funding and support to meet our full potential. We have a great brand that we are proud of and are often the go-to organisation for diversity and inclusion within the sector for assistance and support. Our conferences make a difference to people – they change people for the better, they open eyes. We need to build on this for our members and agencies so we can full fill out mission “In collaboration with individuals, communities and emergency services, we build confidence and empower women to achieve their full potential and be supported, as women, in their roles within our sector.”

I just want to finish by quoting New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern following the terror in Christchurch NZ in March
"Our challenge now is to make the very best of us a daily reality because we are not immune to the viruses of hate or fear of other - we never have been. But we can be the Nation that discovers the cure."

While NZ came together in strength following this tragedy, seeing the barriers of religion and race break down, if just for a short while, we all must remember to continue with the unity. This was a hideous event that brought communities closer, people wanted to understand more about their neighbours. While the world moves on from the event in Christchurch on the 15th March this year we must not slip back into our old ways, we must continue to call out unexpected behaviour, to stand up for those who are seen as different to some. The world needs different, the world needs colour, intrigue, happiness.

Lets celebrate difference, lets continue to pave the way for those coming behind us and beside us to create true inclusiveness.

Thank you
Kia Kaha

Kate Hill
President Women and Firefighting Australasia Inc.
OUR OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives of WAFA are:

To facilitate and support women in taking an active role in defining and shaping the role of women in the firefighting and emergency services industries by promoting the expectations of and contribution by women to the sector.

To provide a vehicle for women, in conjunction with their colleagues in the industry, to:

- Foster and promote increased understanding and awareness of the contribution and capabilities that women bring to the firefighting and emergency management sector;
- Create opportunities for frank exchange and discussion of the challenges, issues and opportunities for women in the sector;
- Facilitate change through solutions and actions cooperatively developed with our colleagues in the sector; and
- Generate opportunities for the development of knowledge and practical experience in roles of leadership and management.

This year WAFA has worked toward achieving these objectives through the participation in a variety of activities promoting and supporting women in our emergency services. We have also developed, initiated and supported activities and dialogue aimed at improving recruitment and retention of women into emergency services.

Key activities include the following:

Working with agencies to support their efforts to recruit and retain women. These activities included:

Supporting Fire and Rescue New South Wales’ women-only Physical Aptitude Test sessions.

Supporting female firefighters to be more visible through their services and in the community. These activities included:

In collaboration with the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service, launching the #WAFAWednesday initiative, which has been a wonderful addition to our social media engagements.

Sponsoring the first all-female team of SA MFS firefighters in Adelaide’s annual Life. Be in it Corporate Cup Challenge.
Conference 2018

WAFA’s biennial conference is the international platform to showcase leading edge thinking and innovation in attracting people from diverse backgrounds and sectors with the intent to learn from each other, strengthen relationships and work together to improve diversity and cultural inclusion across Firefighting and Emergency service organisations in Australasia.

The 2018 Conference brought together over 220 delegates from across Australasia and further afield, many female fire-fighters, women in broader emergency work and supportive male colleagues. The aim of this year’s conference was to support women through access to hands-on workshops, expert presentations, mentoring and career advice, and, importantly, to further develop relationships and networks within and across fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand.

2018 saw New Zealand host the WAFA Conference, the first time that NZ has been given hosting rights and the first time hosted outside of Australia.

This year’s theme was:

“Looking forward, looking back: shaping the new norm”

2018 Conference Report

WAFA — QFES Workshop Evaluation Report

Outcomes Statement
2020 WAFA Conference will be held in Adelaide co-located with AFAC

Would you like to see your designs up in lights? Want recognition for your amazing creativity? This is the competition for you!

The WAFA Conference Committee is excited to announce that the design of the 2020 Conference Logo is open for entries from all WAFA members! This is your chance to showcase your creativity to delegates and sponsors at WAFA’s conference in Adelaide, where we will be co-located with AFAC, the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, AIDR and IFE Australia. The winner will receive a complimentary full delegate package.

The design brief is simple: create a logo to fit the theme 2020 Vision | Developing the Picture. This theme invites discussion on how we can build on the success of WAFA’s first 10 years and what we as a sector want the future to look like together. Original entries that artistically showcase the history of WAFA from the first Women in Firefighting Forum in 2005 to today into the design will be considered.

Designs for a banner logo, a thumbnail logo and a commemorative WAFA 2020 Conference t-shirt logo are all open as part of the competition.

Newsletters, Podcasts and Videos

The WAFA Newsletter is one of our most effective and often accessed medium of communication. They contain regular Podcasts and videos available for members to keep up to date with International and domestic women in firefighting news, events and initiatives.

Feature include;
- the BBC Women's hour hosted by London Fire Brigade Commissioner Dany Cotton. In her first interview since announcing her retirement Dany talks mental health, cheese and therapy dogs.
- Ted Talk from former WAFA President Bronnie Mackintosh AFSM.
- Jo Reynold’s, the UK’s first female firefighter, took some time out to record a podcast with WAFA Board Member Steve O’Malley.
- WAFA Conference Outcomes Statement at 2019 AFAC Conference Presentation by Donna Wheatley
WAFA Members only Facebook Forum

Following on from feedback around the WAFA Website ‘members only forum’ a new Facebook forum has been established to offer members better connectivity through mobile platforms.

The forum is open to all current financial members.

We've also added a mentorship program to Women & Fire Fighting Australasia Members Only Forum so you can build skills and share knowledge with another member of our community. I am excited to see all of us build stronger relationships with each other and hope you'll join.
TREASURER’S REPORT

(Pending)

AUDITOR’S REPORT

(Pending)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

(Pending)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We do not work in a vacuum. We’d like to acknowledge everyone who has supported us this year. This includes our members, member agencies, corporate and community partners. In addition to this, we’d like to acknowledge the tremendous work of our volunteers who give their time to support our activities, as well as the staff of our member agencies who do tremendous work in supporting our cause.

Without the support of all of you, it would be impossible for WAFA to achieve the gains we have made this year.

CONTACT US

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