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Acknowledgement
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Authorship
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For more information on The Gender and Disaster Pod see www.genderanddisaster.com.au
For more information on the conference proceedings and the web artefacts see: www.wafa.asn.au
Endorsements

‘This WAFA Outcomes Statement is a considered and comprehensive capture of the discussion and conclusions from the 2018 WAFA Conference. I was pleased to be able to attend the Conference and hear firsthand the experiences and challenges facing women in fire services. I have absolutely no doubt, that women in fire services make these vital public institutions more effective, more reflective of the communities they serve and help create a safer work environment for all firefighters. Congratulations to WAFA in seizing the initiative and publishing the outcomes from WAFA 18, so we can all benefit from reading and acting on the considerations made at the time.’

Stuart Ellis, AM
CEO AFAC

‘We cannot ‘hope’ for change; we need to be deliberate in our actions to bring about the much-needed change in equality and equity balance. Hiring and placing leaders who demonstrate this commitment to transform an old oppressive culture into a highly adaptable, high performance culture will need to have transformational Leadership as a core value and belief within each person and within each team. Transformational Leadership which will result in equity for many underrepresented groups will be messy and uncomfortable at first. Let’s just acknowledge from this point forward that we will have to become comfortable with some uncomfortable realities of our past.’

Kelly Martin
Chief of Fire and Aviation Management at Yosemite National Park

‘This document reflects the huge positivity I felt at the 2018 WAFA conference. It gives services across Australasia the opportunity to embrace the dedication and talent that women bring to firefighting. I was completely overwhelmed by the women (& men) who attended the 2018 WAFA conference. This statement is testament to their commitment to supporting services to embrace a diverse and productive workforce to meet the challenges of the future.’

Alex Johnson
Deputy Chief Fire Officer at South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

This Outcome Statement is a deep analysis of the 2018 WAFA Conference, collaboratively developed through a team approach, ably led by Naomi Bailey. The Outcome Statement considers not only what happened in the conference itself and the informal networking around it, but implications for the future. It captures the complexity facing women as they navigate a historically male domain, and the challenges of transforming the sector into one more reflective of our society and our times.

Dr Debra Parkinson
Adjunct Research Fellow, Monash University disaster Resilience Initiative
Manager of Research, Advocacy and Policy.
Women’s Health In the North and Women’s Health Goulburn North East
Aims
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. The WAFA Conference was attended by emergency management career, volunteers, and community members. The conference organisers curated a program of presentations from researchers, knowledge holders and practitioners and a day of hands-on training. Experts crafted presentations, immersive experiences and interactive events that transferred their expertise to the conference audience. The Outcomes Statement, using an informant method to ensure the representation of a broad range of views, was the legacy document. The aim of this report is to collate the relevant documents and present the Outcomes Statement in the context of the method used to create it and the data that this method created.
The Outcomes Statement, September 2018

The sixth Women in Firefighting Australasia Conference was held in Wellington, New Zealand, from the 25th to the 28th of September 2018. It brought together a community of 237 delegates from across Australia and New Zealand, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Papua New Guinea and the Cook Islands. While most delegates were career or volunteer firefighters, there were also representatives from government, academia, community, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and other emergency management services. Over the three days, delegates participated in one day of practical training and a program of sessions featuring 31 presenters and facilitators. The achievements, challenges and future of women in firefighting and emergency services are considered in the Outcomes Statement. It begins by defining key terms, framing the broad strategies identified at the conference and concludes by presenting particular strategies and practical steps for consideration.

The Statement is shaped by a group of informants to ensure an inclusive representation of the conference outcomes. Six informants, three women and three men, with experience in firefighting, research or emergency management attended the conference. Each informant was already sensitised to a particular challenge the conference sought to address. In pre- and post-conference workshops, informant insights were recorded. These were combined with a series of interviews with international and keynote presenters and a conference artefact that recorded real-time responses from delegates into a document with over 400 data points. The data was thematically organised by the author and underpins the Outcome Statement.¹

The Outcomes Statement was funded by Australia’s federal Emergency Management Commission. The Commission has obligations under Australia’s commitment to the United Nations’ Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).² The Framework and CEDAW usefully set out definitions, guiding principles, priorities and stakeholder roles for action, and should be considered as context for this document.³

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¹ Two or more informants attended each conference session and, using a standardised insights document, recorded proceedings. The conference artefact collected delegates’ insights across the two days. The resultant 450+ data points inform this outcomes statement.


³ It is noted that Australia will report on its obligations under the Sendai Framework in 2019.
Definition of Terms

Women across Australasia make a vital contribution in emergency service at front-line, technical support and leadership levels. Women deploy into life-threatening theatres of emergency to save lives and protect communities every day. In addition to the technical knowledge and physical skill, firefighters and emergency personnel are increasingly called on to act in prevention, planning and recovery. While statistics vary from country to country, women are underrepresented in firefighting, and significantly underrepresented in the leadership ranks of our services, pointing to both recruitment and career progression challenges in agencies. The following section defines some key terms that usefully help to frame the challenges identified at the conference and the strategies posed to move forward.

1. Equality, Equity and Privilege

1.1 Equality, as it is used in this outcomes statement, refers to the formal recognition of and action for access to the same opportunities as between different groups in our community. Action for equality often takes the form of legislation, procedures and policies that proscribe discrimination, and provide for the same treatment for all. Equality presumes that difference is unimportant: an equality statement might be: ‘We are all equal, we are all the same’.

1.2 Equity, as it is used in this outcomes statement, refers to substantive access to opportunity. Equity acknowledges that practical realities make access to opportunities unequal. Responding equitably includes recognising difference, the potential strengths and insight that difference brings, and reflecting on how our institutions, values or current frameworks inherently reflect the qualities of privileged groups. An equity statement might be: ‘We are not all the same, and because of this we make unique contributions and require different strategies to ensure access to opportunity’.

1.3 Linking inequality and inequity to privilege unpacks the ways in which current systems reflect our past and the ways in which this past can powerfully shape our present and the intuitional story told about ‘what works’, who is ‘right for the job’ and why. A privilege statement might be: ‘Privilege doesn’t mean you have not worked hard to get where you are, it just means that your skin colour, gender or

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4 It is difficult to get robust data given the following: number of women in volunteer roles; reporting on the number of women in paid roles given that employers report aggregated data that does not identify between front line and other roles; the different data sources across countries and within countries.
sexual identity, (dis)ability or culture have not been the reason you have had to work hard(er)’. Actions taken to address privilege are actions that impact on inequality and inequity.

## 2. Diversity and Representation

### 2.1 Diversity

is often used to describe an institutional push to recruit, retain and promote people from minority groups so that our services better reflect the community that they serve. Addressing diversity often involves removing barriers that are discriminatory, developing recruitment campaigns that are nuanced and directed at minority communities, and developing organisational capacity to ensure non-discriminatory workplaces. Diversity, as it is used in this outcomes statement, covers a broad range of minorities including: cultural and linguistic minorities, people with a disability, sexual or gender identity groups and, in some contexts in Australasia, first nations people. Women firefighters are a diverse group, and this diversity is a strength. Representation at the conference from every minority demonstrates the ways in which services are working toward better representing our communities.

### 2.2 The conference found that recruitment, retention and fostering of women is not an issue of diversity. It is an issue of representation. Women make up 50 per cent of the population, yet their representation in the firefighting and emergency services is low. The number of delegates attending the conference and their roles at all levels of service from new recruits through to Commissioners demonstrated the capacity, enthusiasm and potential of women in firefighting, suggesting under-representation of women reflects something about recruitment, retention and promotion processes.
3. Technical and Transformational Leadership

There is value in recognising those things in our institutions that we value and want to hold on to, and those things that we want to change. The conference recognised that leadership is a quality not a rank and that it was difficult to progress up the ranks if there were no women in leadership roles showing how it could be done. The conference recognises the value of different leadership styles, mentoring and sponsorship.

3.1 Technical leadership, which answers current challenges with existing knowledge and fixes the many problems faced every day, is critical to the success of our services. It is a familiar style of leadership, and one that our services do well. We rely on the power of technical leadership to mobilise our efforts and respond to emergencies in ways that reduce risk and increase survival. The conference recognises the value of thorough, evidence-based, organised decision-making structures.

3.2 Transformational leadership styles address a different type of challenge. The conference recognises that, as we move to address challenges that are complex, multi-factorial and require us to generate new knowledge and information, we need leadership that can be adaptive, that can reflect on the current structures and ask - have we constructed the challenge in the right way, are we using the right tools? The types of challenges we now face require leaders who can change their mind, listen to a broad range of knowledge holders, leaders who are willing to be changed by the work they do, and leaders who can work in the optimum zone of discomfort to progress the change that is already happening in our institutions. Transformational leaders can work on continuous improvement and on problems that do not have a direct fix but rather require sustained, engaged, ongoing change.

3.3 Delegates identified that they already lead from their current positions. That leadership may be formally recognised with a senior role, or informally assumed by setting the tone in a brigade, influencing culture or inspiring other women. Often a woman firefighter carries a double lode when it comes to leadership: she must lead as a professional - demonstrating technical excellence - and lead personally as the first woman of her rank or only woman in her squad. This often involves
addressing discrimination or sexist culture and behaving as an example to other women and girls. While women spoke about the pride in belonging to fire and emergency services, and of the many men who were friends and allies, there was also an acknowledgement that sometimes that extra lode was costly, both personally and professionally.

**General Strategies for the Challenges Facing Women in Firefighting**

4. The WAFA Conference provides a vital theatre for women firefighters and emergency service personnel to come together. Delegates noted how much they valued this opportunity, especially the opportunity to spend time with other women firefighters, to reflect on common experiences, the power of hearing from women leaders and sharing with peers and colleagues. In addition to the personal value women firefighters had for the conference, the following general strategies were identified as valuable for addressing the challenges facing women in firefighting:

4.1 Casting a vision for the future for women in firefighting. The knowledge holders and powerful figures in attendance at the conference reflected the vision and influence of WAFA. The capacity to shape direction in emergency management, to increase capacity to meet future challenges and to influence institutional settings is a powerful strategic role of the conference.

4.2 Data-driven understandings of women in firefighting. The conference reiterates the need, captured in the *Sendai Framework* and CEDAW, to promote the collection, analysis, management and use of relevant disaggregated data and to ensure its dissemination, taking into account the needs of different categories of users of that data.

4.3 Framing the challenge appropriately. Adopting definitions of equality and equity that acknowledge the link between privilege and culture is a powerful first step in correctly identifying the challenge facing fire and emergency services.

4.4 Learning from others with similar challenges. It is important to note that, while the problem of underrepresentation is stark in the services, the representation of women in public life is a problem broader than firefighting and emergency services. Women are underrepresented in public life and at all leadership levels in government, community
initiatives, NGOs, health and social services. The conference notes that much can be learned by adapting and adopting successful progress on gender equity in other fields.

4.5 Recognising existing work. It is noted that many emergency services are currently engaged in formal review processes to increase gender equity and address sexism including sexual harassment and assault in their organisations. These reviews are expected to produce recommendations, policy and procedures. The conference encourages all stakeholders to embrace these processes and engage with the findings.

4.6 Union representation. Firefighters have traditionally had strong union representation, which advocates for the wage protection and conditions to protect workers in the risks they take every day when providing essential emergency services. The union movement across Australasia has been critical in the fight for women’s equality at work. WAFA calls on the unions in Australasia to support their members including women, to ensure equality of protection under the law, and equity of opportunity in service.

4.7 Listening to women in leadership. Women leaders often carry a double lode in leadership, that comes from translating the challenges women face in service for their institutions. While no one woman speaks on behalf of all women, insights from current women leaders reflected in this Outcomes Statement can contribute to the strategic planning for the organisational change that is coming in emergency management.

4.8 Representation for inclusive emergency management. Some services are engaged in processes to recruit more women to ensure representative numbers in their ranks. The underrepresentation of women has particular consequences for the delivery of emergency management including: reinforcing gender stereotypes which have significant implications for women safety and compromising the ability to plan for or respond to the needs of women and their children during emergencies.
Some practical strategies were identified at the conference for addressing particular challenges women in firefighting face

5. Recognition of the Lived Experience

A significant portion of the program addressed what it is like to be a woman in firefighting. Presentations on the lived experience were dominated by a deep pride in service and the personal confidence won through hard work and building technical knowledge. The pride and technical knowledge accompanied an acknowledgement of isolation, navigating a culture dominated by men and masculinity and on occasion, open sexism, sexual harassment and assault. These all had an impact on health and wellbeing, adding to the inherent stresses of the role. Experiencing and addressing discrimination was another way in which women worked harder at the same job, however, overwhelmingly delegates differentiated between the behaviours of colleagues and leaders and the pride they had in their institutions.

Practical Steps

- A clear difference in lived experience emerged between those in volunteer and paid positions. Where volunteers identified as such, they spoke of isolation and a lack of opportunity for training. Practical steps to support women volunteers are needed and might include a virtual women’s network to increase connection, opportunity and access to professional resources.

- As much as women can do things to improve their lived experience, our institutions are also capable of improvement. Institutions are responsible for the authorising environments in which women have a qualitatively different experience of service. The Outcomes Statement should be considered as an integrated document, with practical steps influencing multiple domains. Leadership for gender equity, recruitment, discrimination and harassment will all impact on lived experience.
6. Recruitment of Women into Firefighting

Recruitment of women poses significant challenges to firefighting and emergency services. The following practical steps were identified by conference presenters as useful to improve recruitment of women.

6.1 Existing good practice: The conference highlighted a number of good-practice initiatives both formal and informal. Formal initiatives included: market research to better understand barriers and opportunities for young women considering the service (Fire and Emergency New Zealand); a target of 50/50 recruitment (Fire and Rescue Australian Capital Territory); and School to Skies program (Royal New Zealand Air Force) a distinct intentional program to recruit girls through preparation and intake. Some services are drawing on the work of other male-dominated services like the police forces (Queensland Police) and the defence forces (The Australian Defence Force) to develop strategies. Informal strategies include: women exchanging tips on how to pass the physical testing; women exchanging information about known perpetrators of harassment to reduce risk, including brigade leaders who will not hire women/accept women volunteers; women informally mentoring and encouraging women to apply.

6.2 Broader Institutional Challenges: While increasing recruitment is valuable, it forms only part of the challenge. Retention and progressing through to leadership positions were also noted as areas of concern. Other initiatives that address culture include: human rights reviews of workplace culture (HREOC in Victoria); concerted whole-of-service activity on gender equity that include consideration of recruitment (QLD Fire and Emergency Services); and parliamentary inquiries to address discrimination (Yosemite National Park, USA).

6.3 Communication: There is currently a lack of integrated, thoughtful, well-researched communication tools and strategies that correctly address the problem of recruitment of women and promote the broad range of fire and emergency services roles. A number of elements are missing, these include: communication strategies that accurately frame the problems of disaster risk and recovery; media coverage that includes accurate images and content that is representative of all genders; and the design of tools, online platforms and approaches to ensure the reduction of barriers to information and the increased access to information between jurisdictions. All these elements of a comprehensive communications strategy can either perpetuate privilege and the status quo or support the change coming to our institutions.
Practical Steps for Recruitment

- Better and more detailed research into recruitment of women, including attitudinal research and comparative research, is required.
- Adoption of the National Gender and Emergency Guidelines by emergency management services.
- The activation of any existing national or state government strategies to address gender equity across government employment practices.
- The development of an external and internal communications strategy using a codesign approach for services to recognise and recruit women firefighters. This communications strategy would aim to address the underlying beliefs that are barriers to gender equity. This co-design approach would involve specialist in gender equity work in command and control service, women service members, and representative from identified recruitment groups and might include:
  - A review of language to ensure respect and representation.
  - Key messages for services, partners and media.
  - Developing social media policies and presence to directly recruit women and support them as cadets.
- The inclusion of strategies for gender equity in monitoring evaluation and learning frameworks to measure impact and improve recruitment.
7. Technical Skills Development

Technical training and skills-sharing on the first day of the conference addressed both challenges identified above. The opportunity to transfer technical knowledge was achieved with the broad program of technical skills led by experienced trainers on the first day. The inclusive registration-based participation circumvented more formal structures of nomination (by self or leaders). In addition, the training sessions generated data that could be better captured to understand the solutions that work to increase technical excellence.

7.1 Training at the conference addressed both challenges. The opportunity to transfer technical knowledge was achieved with the broad program of technical skills led by experienced trainers. The inclusive registration-based participation circumvented more formal structures of nomination (by self or leaders). In addition, the training sessions generated data that could be better captured to understand the solutions that work to increase technical excellence.

Practical Steps for Technical Skill Development

• The opportunity to gain skills at the conference, outside the ordinary opportunities for training, was valued in particular by volunteer members.

• A number of delegates suggested that more choice of training on the first day would be valued (e.g. an approach that allowed people to pick their own training path).

• Firefighting is demanding physical work. Barriers identified by many women to achieving excellence included: ill-fitting standard gear and technical equipment that relates to size and shape for women; and informal sharing of technical knowledge between men that is not shared with women in the team.

• Communication of information about the bio-mechanical adjustments to physical task that can improve performance and reduce physical stress on the body. These ‘tweaks’ could be communicated through existing material that brief recruits on physical testing.
8. Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

The discrimination and sexual harassment against women happening in firefighting and emergency services was identified by the conference as an area of great concern. Because of these behaviours, some women leave and others experience great harm in the workplace, because of discrimination harassment and/or assault. When women report, some experience further harassment and isolation. In addition, good men who want to be allies are simply not aware of how often this discrimination and harassment and victimisation is occurring.

8.1 Addressing and preventing discrimination, harassment and gendered violence. Clear accountability, safe complaints processes and a commitment to addressing culture are necessary organisational structures that contribute to responding well, however, they are not enough. Strategies are needed to reduce incidents. The best evidence suggests strategies that tackle strict gender norms, challenge disrespect of women and address gender inequity, reduce rates of harassment and discrimination.5

Practical Steps to End Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

• Good response structures to efficiently address incidents include: a policy for safe reporting (including optional independent third-party reporting mechanisms) and a workplace culture that stands up against harassment and discrimination. Bystander training can be useful in equipping the workplace to call out bad behaviour.

• Responding well is not enough. Best practice to reduce harassment and discrimination aims to stop harassment and discrimination at the start. Prevention strategies include gender equity training - tailored sessions for senior management, middle management, Human Resources to reinforce gender equity in the workplace.

• Even with these strategies in place, women may choose to leave. To gauge the prevalence of incidents, and the impact they are having on women leaving emergency service work, exit interviews might include a question specifically on discrimination and sexual harassment.

• The inclusion of anonymous reporting opportunities in staff satisfaction surveys might provide more details about prevalence and impact of discrimination and sexual harassment.

9. Leadership

Change requires leadership. Leadership can be an individual quality, the quality of a group, an organisation, agency or a community. It can be spontaneous, sustained and/or organised. Contribution to what makes a good leader came from many different voices at the conference - academics, serving leaders, volunteers, community representatives and the private sector.

Leadership in the services, particularly leadership as a quality rather than a rank, was characterised by authenticity. Authenticity included, on the one hand advanced technical skills, and on the other hand advanced cultural skills to engage with the continuous improvement required to foster positive institutional culture.

Research shows that when women are present in leadership positions at the decision-making table, they positively influence productivity, contribute to durable solutions and make critical contributions to high-performing teams. It was also acknowledged at the conference, however, that women are not always allies. ‘Pulling the ladder up’ once a woman reaches senior leadership happens often enough that it has its own idiom. This unhealthy competition is present at every rank. The conference encouraged recognition of this phenomenon and refers to the section on representation to remind us that no one woman speaks for all women.

9.1 Technical Leadership

Technical leadership is necessary to mobilise efforts and respond to emergencies in ways that reduce risk and increase survival. Our leaders must possess this technical skill in order to support their teams, to provide timely advice and to ensure the evidence based, co-ordination of our services in times of emergency. Technical skill is acquired in a number of ways including through nomination by senior leaders for training programs and by putting yourself forward for opportunities. Senior leaders at the conference encouraged delegates to grab every opportunity, and delegates spoke about mentoring and sponsorship as formal relationships that assist with navigating the system.

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9.2 Mentorship and Sponsorship

Mentorship and sponsorship, while each designed to increase opportunity, differ in their method. Mentorship is a relationship of exchange where the presumption is that the mentor can guide the mentee using their experience, networks and understanding in order to grow the mentee in their role and promote them in their career goals. In contrast, sponsors open doors, and rather than guiding, acknowledge the sponsee has the requisite knowledge and simply needs opportunity. The conference found both techniques useful for cultivating women in leadership. While some women really appreciated having a woman as a mentor or sponsor, others found men equally good and recognised that men sometimes hold the requisite positions of power to be effective brokers of power.

9.3 Transformational Leadership

At the conference, leadership for change was characterised as leadership that cultivates, attracts and retains the best and brightest. These leaders had technical excellence and were also willing to listen, to engage with research, to acknowledge culture, and to hold staff accountable to respect each other. The following qualities emerged as critical for managing the change that our services are facing and were often referred to as ‘authentic leadership’:

- the **courage** to stand up, call out and hold accountable individuals behaving in a sexist manner,
- the ethics to ask **value-based** questions of existing practices to ensure that contemporary culture holds on to the strong value of our organisations that continue to serve us,
• the capacity to listen to others and translate this into thoughtful engagement with existing culture and norms to ensure improvement,
• the humility to acknowledge past mistakes, recognise their impact and change practice,
• the discipline to continue to frame the challenge over the time it takes to effect institutional change: this isn’t a quick fix but rather continuous improvement,
• the organisational support to act to address institutional discrimination including sexism,
• strength and vulnerability. It is no longer sufficient only to be strong. Our organisations must be able to be vulnerable and acknowledge the impacts we experience when exposed to the trauma, grief and loss inherent in emergency work.

It was also acknowledged that all women leaders risk a ‘leadership tax’ that manifests as the personal cost of confronting power and being the first or only woman leading at that level in their organisation. This cost includes: isolation; the cost to family time including childrearing and personal relationships; being targeted as ‘the problem’ rather than the person identifying the problem; ‘burn out’ including burn out due to being constantly asked to speak for or on behalf of all women in their organisation; demotion, firing and/or workplace bullying; vicarious trauma and or post-traumatic stress injury/disorder.

**Practical Steps for Leadership**

• The collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data (man, woman and other) to ensure robust evidence for policy and planning in the services.

• Adoption of strategy, policy and practice to reach gender equity in leadership in emergency management services.

• Mentorship is the right model for growing some women into leaders in our organisations. For others, sponsorship is what is needed. The quality required in a mentor and sponsor is that they have institutional power. Men and women can both be excellent at mentoring and sponsoring women.

• The inclusion of diverse leadership models in leadership training to ensure we have capacity to address the challenge of contemporary and future emergency management.

• Leadership programs can come at a personal cost. It is therefore important to have appropriate support mechanisms in place for leaders working as women leading change.
• Adoption of the business case for gender equity into strategic planning.

10. Health and Wellbeing

Firefighting is a physical job, it is also emotional. Health and wellbeing of serving members involves both physical and emotional wellbeing. Physical health includes training in order to be fit and strong and rest in order to ensure healthy body function. Emotional wellbeing includes acknowledging the impacts of the role on personal life and acknowledging the impact of the role on feelings in the moment, the short term and over longer periods of time. What is clear is that firefighting as a career carries particular risks, including increase exposure to trauma, increased exposure to significant physical stress, and increased exposure to physical danger. Much is done in emergency services to mitigate exposure to physical danger. More could be done to respond to exposure to trauma and stress.

10.1 Courageous Institutions: When women firefighters already managing the ‘normalised’ physical and emotional stresses of the work are faced with harassment and discrimination at work, it has a complex impact. When this harassment and discrimination is acknowledged and dealt with well, with perpetrators being held accountable, a belief in justice, fairness and equitable institutions is bolstered. When it is ignored, minimised or dealt with poorly in the workplace it can be felt as institutional betrayal. This betrayal reinforces privilege, compounds secondary trauma and blames the victim. Courageous institutions have been shown to protect health and wellbeing.

Practical Steps for Health and Wellbeing

• Support existing research into health and wellbeing, like the UFBA’s research into cadets.
• Recognise post-traumatic stress, and post-traumatic growth, as unexceptional risks in the work.
• Protective factors are complex. More research is needed in order to understand how things like ‘family connection’, an acknowledged protective factor for firefighters, are gendered - that is play a different role for men and women firefighters.
• Recognise the profound impact harassment and discrimination have when they come on top of the normalised emotional load.
• Recognise the role of institutional courage in confronting discrimination and harassment and its power to transform our organisations.

• Addressing the gendered health and wellbeing of the job requires thoughtful consideration for the whole team. This might include a working group within each service that considers an action plan for the following gendered physical realities: maternity/paternity leave; flexible work for single parents and women returning from pregnancy, miscarriage and child birth; the impacts of pre-menopause and menopause; the impacts of suicide by colleagues; the physical impacts of sexual assault and harassment; domestic and family violence impacts.

“It was also acknowledged that all women leaders risk a ‘leadership tax’ that manifests as the personal cost of confronting power and being the first or only woman leading at that level in their organisation.”
The future of emergency services was a recurrent theme at the conference. Concern for the sustainability of emergency services and the kind of service women would inherit were of foremost concerns. The legacy of women working in firefighting, building on the advances of women firefighters of the past, and leaving clear traces on the landscape that change things for the next generation of women were of real concern. The conversation was divided, on the one hand, changing the culture of the institutions to ensure representation and non-discrimination and on the other changing the policies to ensure they include the lived experience of women in firefighting. The sections on representation, leadership and sexual harassment and discrimination address the former; the sections on lived experience, technical skills and health and wellbeing address the later.

In addition:

- This Outcomes Statement seeks to capture the findings and learning from the conference and set a precedent for the documentation of future conferences.
- Evaluation of the next conference would create data for ongoing monitoring and improvement.
SECTION THREE: CONCLUSION
Conclusion

We are entering an age of unpredictability in emergency management. Climate Change is driving more frequent and fierce disaster, with complex human dimensions and consequence, demanding more of our prevention response and recovery efforts. The outcomes from the 2018 WAFA conference provide valuable information for future planning and this report details how these outcomes were reached.

The definition of equality, equity and privilege as organising concepts connect the challenges experienced in emergency services with broader community efforts to address gender inequity. Practical steps to increase representation and diversity ensure that our services reflect the communities in which they operate. Technical and transformation leadership are identified as contributing to the institutional courage needed to end discrimination and harassment. Action on health and wellbeing was identified as important to the sustainability of careers in firefighting. The Outcomes Statement from the 2018 WAFA conference focuses on making a positive practical and strategic contribution to services as they meet the challenges of the 21st Century emergency management.

This report documents the processes associated with completing the Outcomes Statement, presents the data gathered and its analysis. It gathers the tools and techniques used, explaining their purpose and describing the methods used to arrive at the Outcomes Statement. The resultant practical steps and strategies in the Outcomes Statement are designed as both a useful practical tool, to reduce day-to-day harassment, discrimination and barriers; and a useful thinking tool, that challenges some of the institutional sexism and fosters the transformational leadership required to support the work many emergency management services are doing to increasing equity and representation in their ranks and staffing.

The kind of transparency offered in this report is designed to encourage more of the same, so that limitations and presumptions that underpin similar documents are made clear. It is hoped that this will open a space for debate about how best to represent the strength and challenges of women in firefighting, and when women emergency management have been explicitly or implicitly left out of reporting.
Future work

Future conferences might consider a separate evaluation that would capture data on who attends WAFA conferences, what their motivations are, and how the conference impacts on their understanding of women’s experiences of emergency management. Considering new and emerging actors in this space, communicating clearly with the emergency management sector the purpose scope and capacity of WAFA is of importance.
# APPENDIX 1

## Acronyms

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<tr>
<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
<td>HFA2</td>
<td>HFA2 Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Reduction</td>
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<td>DELWP</td>
<td>Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (Aust)</td>
<td>MFB</td>
<td>Metropolitan Fire Brigade Victoria</td>
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<td>Time and day</td>
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<td>Speaker</td>
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<td>Format of the session (panel, interactive etc)</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is the issue framed?</td>
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<td>What's not working for women in firefighting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the identified opportunities and strengths for women in firefighting? (What is working or might work?)</td>
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<td>What did you like/dislike about what was being said?</td>
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<td>Quotes</td>
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<td>Anything strike you?</td>
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<td>Questions</td>
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<td>Remember: Questions from the audience can demonstrate how things are being understood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of the Session</td>
<td>Take five minutes to summarise the session in 100 - 200 words.</td>
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</table>
Resources

- WAFA Mentoring - https://wafa.asn.au/
Any enquiries or feedback please contact: Naomi Bailey, Common Cause Consulting, commoncauseconsulting@gmail.com 0429 153 942.