

MEDIA RELEASE

ARE WE ATTRACTING MORE WOMEN TO THE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES?

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While fire and emergency services protect their communities, they don't always reflect them. To mark International Women's Day (8 March), sector leaders across Australia and New Zealand have released a snapshot report on advancing gender equality.

The *Male Champions of Change (MCC) Fire and Emergency Impact Report 2019* provides detailed data on gender representation including for frontline service delivery roles, which often lead to more senior positions.

Across Australia and New Zealand, the group achieved gender balance or an increase in women's representation across 77.6% of employment categories over the period. In addition, they report:

- 24.2% women's representation overall across the group, compared to 22.0% in 2018 when the first report was released
- 40.1% of overall hires across the group were women
- 79.3% of members now have flexible working policies in place
- 92.9% of members have flexible parental leave policies in place
- 79.3% of members have a formal policy or strategy in place for preventing and addressing sexual harassment, including details of complaints/grievance processes.

Members of the MCC group include chief executives, commissioners, chief fire officers and fire managers responsible for fire, emergency and land management for 29 agencies working across metropolitan, regional and rural areas. They lead some 288,000 staff and volunteers throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The group was established with the support of AFAC, the National Council for Fire and Emergency Services. AFAC CEO Stuart Ellis said increasing demands on the fire and emergency sector requires diverse and inclusive workforces.

"All Australians have again witnessed the incredible role of the fire and emergency services this summer. These circumstances highlight the range and complexity of their work and the increasing resource demands on the sector.

"As a group, we firmly believe that attracting more women and tapping into new and different skills will be fundamental to meeting Australia's fire and emergency prevention, preparedness, incident response and recovery needs into the future," Mr Ellis said.

MCC Fire and Emergency's Chair, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner Kristen Hilton welcomed progress amongst member organisations.

"This year's results, particularly in the area of recruitment, show that real progress is being made to ensure our emergency services are more representative of the communities they serve. We have also seen an increasing awareness of the importance of having clear policies in place around flexible work, parental leave and dealing

with sexual harassment. The real work now is ensuring that all employees and managers are trained in these policies and that they become a critical part of the way the organisation operates.” Ms Hilton said.

The report tracks and discloses year-on-year progress on gender equality in line with the MCC Fire and Emergency group’s public commitment to do so. Data in this report was signed off by members at their meeting in October 2019.

Read the report

[Male Champions of Change Fire and Emergency Impact Report 2019](#)

For more information or to arrange an interview with:

- Stuart Ellis AM, AFAC CEO
- Kristen Hilton, MCC Fire and Emergency Services Chair and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner

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About Male Champions of Change

The Male Champions of Change is a coalition of CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders. Male Champions of Change believe gender equality is one of the most significant business, economic, societal and human rights issues.