

**CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE**   
FIRE AND EMERGENCY

2022

PROGRESS REPORT



Innovative action and sustained commitment to gender equality across the group has driven important progress over the past five years. We still have work to do to ensure we are making the most of the enormous talent and experience that women bring to our organisations. Key to this is doing more to make our workplaces free from discrimination and harassment and creating environments that are truly inclusive, not just on paper but also in practice.

**Kristen Hilton**  
Convenor, Champions of Change  
Fire and Emergency

While we know that sustainable change takes time, it is important to reflect on the progress that has been made toward greater gender equality in our sector. We must now use this momentum and generate even more as we strive to enable inclusive, equitable organisations.

**Rob Webb**  
CEO, AFAC



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# About the **Champions of Change Coalition**

The Champions of Change Coalition is a globally recognised, innovative strategy for achieving gender equality, advancing more and diverse women in leadership, and building respectful and inclusive workplaces.

Through the strategy, leaders form a high-profile coalition to drive and be accountable for change on gender equality issues in their organisations and communities – be they local, national or global.

Members cover every major sector of the economy and include representatives from business, government, community, academic and not-for-profit organisations.

We know that women are significantly under-represented in our workforces and leadership positions, that gender pay gaps still exist across the world, and that workplace systems are not geared to enable all women to develop, thrive and advance.

The strategy engages Members as ‘champions’ not because they are perfect, but because they publicly commit to leading practical, constructive and disruptive actions to accelerate change.

Formally engaging leaders, especially those with the power to drive change, is critical to address these systemic and societal issues.

Our Members recognise that gender inequality is a business, economic, social and human rights issue.

The work of the Coalition focuses on shifting the systems of gender inequality in the workplace. It is backed by a proven methodology for increasing the representation of women in organisations and developing the conditions and cultures that enable them to thrive.

Many of the actions developed and implemented as part of the strategy are now globally accepted standards for organisations wishing to become employers of choice for all.

The strategy demonstrates the power of more than 230 organisations with national and international reach acting together to shift the entrenched workplace systems that have served as barriers to women’s advancement.

Our experience together over more than a decade also shows that making work more accessible and inclusive for all women is delivering wider benefits for employees, teams, organisations and communities.

## About the **Champions of Change Fire and Emergency**

Champions of Change Fire and Emergency was established in April 2017 with support from AFAC, as the National Council for fire and emergency services.

The Group is convened by the former Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner, Kristen Hilton. It includes Chief Executives, Commissioners and Chief Fire Officers leading 32 agencies responsible for fire, emergency and land management services across Australia and New Zealand who lead some 126,000 employees and volunteers.

Involvement in the Champions of Change strategy supports and strengthens AFAC’s wider focus on diversity and inclusion.

## About **AFAC**

AFAC as the National Council for fire and emergency services, supports the sector to create safer, more resilient communities. We drive national consistency through collaboration, innovation and partnerships. We deliver enhanced capability by developing doctrine and supporting operations.

## Sharing our **actions and outcomes**

This is the Fire and Emergency Champions of Change Group’s fifth progress report, providing a snapshot update on actions we have taken, and the outcomes achieved over the past 12 months, against our gender equality priorities.

This is the first report that provides a five year review of progress on women’s representation in the sector, including in frontline service delivery roles, documenting the progress that has been made since the Group first reported in 2018.

We welcome your feedback on the progress we are making and opportunities for improvement.

As a Group, we remain strongly committed to our goals of gender equality, advancing more women into leadership and building professional, respectful and inclusive environments for all in our sector.

# The Champions of Change Coalition

260+



CEO or board-level leaders across the world

230+



Organisations covering every major sector of the economy

155



Organisations operating in 155 countries

55



Women who are Members and Convenors

1.4M



Representing more than 1.4 million employees globally

245 / 64



Supported by 245 women and 64 men Implementation Leaders

\*References to 'women' and 'men' on this page do not account for gender identities beyond binary.

## KEY PARTNERS



### Coalition Partners

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Australian Institute of Company Directors | Our Watch                              |
| Australian Human Rights Commission        | 30% Club Australia                     |
| Australians Investing in Women            | UN Global Compact                      |
| Business Council of Australia             | UN Women                               |
| Challenge DV                              | WESNET                                 |
| Chief Executive Women                     | Workplace Gender Equality Agency       |
| Diversity Council of Australia            | Women's Leadership Institute Australia |
| Fullstop Foundation                       |  |
| No to Violence                            |  |
| Office for Women (Australia)              |  |

### Group Partners

- AFAC
- Association of Consulting Architects Australia
- Consult Australia
- Makati Business Club
- Microsoft Australia
- Philippine Business Coalition for Women
- Empowerment Parlour
- Philippine Women's Economic Network
- Property Council of Australia

## Group establishment timeline



# The Champions of Change Strategy

Our approach is based on a set of guiding principles that all Members support.

We listen, learn and lead through action, with a focus on five interconnected themes, which form our Action Pillars. We use measurable objectives, target specific outcomes and continuously monitor and assess the effectiveness of our work.

## What we do



### Guiding principles

**Our Coalition operates with four guiding principles**

- Step up beside women – men take responsibility with women to accelerate improvement
- Prioritise achieving progress on women's representation – set targets that crystallise intent
- Stand behind our numbers, sharing lessons learned – measure and publish results
- Shift the system, not 'fix women' – avoid solutions that put the onus on women to adapt

### Action pillars

**Our action is aligned to five interconnected themes**

- Stepping up as leaders
- Creating accountability
- Disrupting the status quo
- Dismantling barriers for carers
- Gender equality in society

## How we do it



### Approach

**Our approach is to 'Listen, Learn and Lead through Action'.**

- Understanding the facts, relevant research, existing frameworks and what has and hasn't worked
- Engaging with women peers, gender experts and our own employees to gain different perspectives on the issues, new ideas and potential solutions
- Leading through action, most importantly within our own organisations
- Tracking the impact of our actions, and sharing successes, failures and learnings
- Advocating for change more broadly in the community

**We approach our work both collectively and as individuals**

- As Members, we meet regularly in small action-orientated groups where, centred around a collective work plan, we learn from and challenge our peers
- As a Coalition, we work collectively to publicly share what we learn and our progress
- As individuals, we implement change within our organisations and publicly advocate for gender equality

## Our impact



### Intended outcomes

- Gender balance in leadership, recruitment, graduates and promotions
- Pay equity between men and women
- Flexible and inclusive employment experiences
- Leadership, advocacy and impact on gender equality issues

### Measurable objectives

**Our impact is measured by annual progress towards key indicators**

- Gender balance in women's representation in leadership\*
- Gender balance in women's representation overall\*
- Gender balance in recruitment and promotions\*
- Closure of the gender pay gap
- Reported levels of employees' access to the flexibility they need
- Employee engagement measures for women and men that reflect an inclusive employment experience
- Fewer people leaving employment during or at the end of parental leave
- Visible leadership by Coalition Members

\*Gender balance means between 40% and 60% women's representation. The term 'women' includes all cisgender, transgender, non-binary and intersex people who identify as women.

# Fire and Emergency Group



**Dermot Barry ESM**  
Chief Officer  
Tasmania Fire  
Service



**Paul Baxter QSO**  
Commissioner  
Fire and Rescue  
NSW



**Chris Beattie**  
Chief Officer  
South Australia  
State Emergency  
Service



**Ken Block**  
Commissioner  
Fire Rescue Victoria



**Collene Bremner**  
Executive Director  
Bushfires NT



**Andrew Crisp AM  
APM**  
Commissioner  
Emergency  
Management Victoria



**Natalie  
MacDonald**  
CEO  
Country Fire  
Authority Victoria



**Michael Morgan  
AFSM**  
CEO and Chief  
Officer  
SA Metropolitan  
Fire Service



**David Nugent AFSM**  
Director Fires and  
Emergency Services  
Parks Victoria



**Steve Pearce AFSM**  
CEO  
Surf Life Saving  
NSW



**Rob Purcell**  
Chief Fire Officer  
Airservices Australia



**Rob Rogers AFSM**  
Commissioner  
New South Wales  
Rural Fire Service



**Ross Dickson**  
General Manager,  
Governance  
& Assurance  
Forestry Corporation  
of NSW



**Shane Fitzsimmons  
AO AFSM**  
Former Commissioner  
Resilience NSW



**Justin Foley**  
Senior Director,  
Fire Management  
Unit  
ACT Parks and  
Conservation  
Service



**Jason Foster**  
Executive Director  
Regional and Fire  
Management Services,  
Department  
of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and  
Attractions, Parks and  
Wildlife Service in WA



**Fiona Gill**  
Director  
Fire Management,  
Department for  
Environment and  
Water SA



**Kerry Gregory**  
Chief Executive  
Fire and Emergency  
New Zealand



**Mark Spain AFSM**  
Chief Fire Officer  
Northern Territory  
Fire and Emergency  
Service



**Naomi Stephens**  
Executive Director  
NSW National Parks  
and Wildlife Service  
– Park Operations



**Julia Waddington-  
Powell**  
Chief Executive  
SAFECOM



**Rob Webb**  
Chief Executive  
Officer  
AFAC



**Georgeina Whelan  
AM, CSC and Bar**  
Commissioner  
ACT Emergency  
Services Agency



**Carlene York APM**  
Commissioner  
NSW SES



**Stephen Griffin**  
CEO  
Victoria State  
Emergency Service



**Chris Hardman**  
Chief Fire Officer  
Forest Fire  
Management Victoria



**Ben Klaassen**  
Deputy Director-  
General  
Queensland Parks  
and Wildlife Services



**Darren Klemm  
AFSM**  
Commissioner  
Department of Fire  
and Emergency  
Services WA



**Greg Leach AFSM**  
Commissioner  
Queensland Fire and  
Emergency Services



**Brett Loughlin**  
Chief Officer  
South Australian  
Country Fire Service



## Convenor

**Kristen Hilton**  
Former Commissioner  
Victorian Equal  
Opportunity and Human  
Rights Commission

## Our progress over 5 years

Overall there have been significant increases in women's representation across the sector and in leadership roles at all levels:



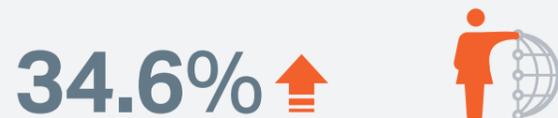
women's representation achieved overall across the Group in 2022, up  from 22.5% in 2018\*



women's representation achieved in Key Management Personnel (CEO-1) roles overall across the Group in 2022, up  from 26.9% in 2018\*



women's representation achieved in General Manager roles overall, up  from 25.6% in 2018\*



women's representation achieved in Senior Manager roles across the Group in 2022, up  from 21.9% in 2018\*

In **frontline service delivery roles**, there has been some progress in women's representation, however there are also areas of decline which will remain areas of focus and priority for the Group:



women's representation achieved across frontline service delivery roles, up  from 20.7% in 2018\*



women's representation achieved in Key Management Personnel (CEO-1) frontline service delivery roles, up  from 9.6% in 2018\*



women's representation in General Manager roles in frontline service delivery, down  from 16.5% in 2018\*



women's representation in Senior Manager roles in frontline service delivery, down  from 18.6% in 2018\*

## Where we are in 2022



of new hires across the Group were women in 2022



Members achieved or moved closer to gender balance across leadership categories in 2022



women's promotions achieved overall across the Group

## Our priority areas

In 2022, the Group worked together on action priorities across the following areas

### Growing the talent pool

through a focus on recruitment and promotion and progression of women, particularly in frontline roles

- Increasing recruitment of women in frontline roles
- Addressing barriers in career progression gateways
- Normalising flexibility and caring

### Building buy-in for gender equality

and fostering safe and inclusive workplace cultures

- Fostering everyday respect
- Empowering everyday champions of change
- Workplace responses to domestic and family violence
- Stepping up on addressing sexual harassment

Throughout this report, we share actions and outcomes against these priority areas.

\*Adjusted totals represent Group membership and reporting that are common in both 2018 and 2022

# Growing the talent pool

Barriers to women entering and progressing their careers in the fire and emergency sector persist, particularly in frontline roles. In our work over the last year, we have continued to identify barriers in our recruitment, promotion and career advancement processes and worked towards removing these barriers. Outlined below are some of the key actions our Members have taken in their organisations.

## Growing the talent pool

### NSW State Emergency Services

#### Strategies to improve gender balance in recruitment

##### Issue identified



NSW SES has an ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion, working with the Fire and Emergency Champions of Change Group since inception, and have been implementing various actions throughout this time. Over time, NSW SES observed lower numbers of women successfully completing recruitment processes, both internally and externally. This trend was also noted in relation to women advancing into leadership positions within the agency. Several factors were identified as potentially contributing to the lower numbers of women, including unconscious bias, language in advertisements, role titles and barriers in recruitment processes such as unbalanced hiring panels.

##### Action taken



In 2022, NSW SES implemented strategies to address bias in recruitment and decision-making, including by ensuring gender balanced recruitment panels and the provision of inclusion training for all members. It is now standard practice that all NSW SES recruitment panels are gender balanced. To further attract women into leadership roles, two advertisements were run simultaneously, replacing key words in role titles, for example "Commander" was replaced by "Manager". Although we did not see a significant increase in female applicants, we have observed that a higher success rate for female candidates. NSW SES also facilitated refreshed Merit Assessment for Hiring Manager workshops during 2022, where a specific focus of the training was on unconscious bias and the impact that recruitment

decisions and selection processes have on the overall agency thus demonstrating a commitment to diversity and inclusion. This training will form part of the standard practice ongoing, including offering future hiring manager training for new managers. Additionally, NSW SES offers all members access to online education to increase diversity and inclusion knowledge and awareness.

##### Impact



In the past year the above actions contributed to an increase of 9.6% in women hires and a 4.1% increase in the total number of women promoted. NSW SES has also seen an increase in women's representation across the organisation, from 35.1% in 2021 to 36.1% in 2022. This is the result of specific initiatives as outlined, and leadership's focus on diversity and inclusion across all areas and levels of the agency. For the first time in SES history there is gender balance in the role of Zone Commander, three out of seven Zone Commander roles are filled by women.

##### Lesson learnt



Key lessons learnt include the importance of identifying and reviewing specific areas where bias and barriers may impact over time, such as recruitment and career progression processes, which negatively impact women. Proactively taking specific actions to address these issues, and providing support, resources, and training to improve outcomes were also key success factors.



Growing the talent pool

## Parks Victoria and Emergency Management Victoria

### Cross-sector sponsorship of diverse talent

#### Issue identified



The emergency management sector is responding to increasingly complex and prolonged emergencies requiring traditional emergency roles to evolve to ensure they are future ready. Investing in growth and development opportunities for existing staff in the sector, particularly those who are typically underrepresented at higher levels in organisations is one approach to meet this challenge. Parks Victoria and Emergency Management Victoria identified the potential to increase the sponsorship of staff by senior leaders through providing access to opportunities and networks.

#### Action taken



Parks Victoria and Emergency Management Victoria have co-led the development and implementation of the cross-sector Sponsorship of Diverse Talent Pilot Program. This initiative pairs high potential women with senior leaders across the sector to gain exposure to networks and opportunities that will support their development. Sponsorship is different from mentoring in that a sponsor will proactively build connections and advocate for their sponsee's advancement rather than providing career guidance and advice. Women are generally over-mentored and under-sponsored, so although they have the ability to reach higher levels, they don't have the access that has previously favoured their male equivalents.

This year-long pilot is supported by a cross-sector working group who are closely monitoring and evaluating the success of the program through surveys and interviews. As well as using feedback to build in real-time program enhancements such as a virtual Speed Networking held in November 2022, the group are integrating suggestions for the next iteration of the program. Several of the current participants have joined the working group to 'give something back' to the program and steer future direction through their experiences.

#### Impact



The immediate impact of the program is captured through online surveys and individual participant interviews. Many sponsees have had opportunities to attend high-level meetings, conferences, and taskforces. Sponsors have also linked up participants with people in their network who have specialist knowledge linked in with longer term career goals. The long-term impact of the program will be evaluated through regular touch points over the next few years.

#### Lesson learnt



In interviews with participants, many noted how discussions with their sponsors often revert to mentoring – which although they have found useful, shows how easily both sides of the relationship can slip back into well-ingrained norms. The working group are currently putting together a proposal for a further iteration of the program building in more structure and greater guidance on providing sponsorship to the next cohort.



We need the best people throughout all our emergency service organisations – and by definition, the best people include a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives that build strong and effective teams.

**Commissioner Carlene York APM**  
NSW State Emergency Service

It is critical that we commit to working with everyone across our emergency management sector to advocate for and champion gender equality and diversity. An emergency management sector that reflects the community we serve will benefit us all.

**Commissioner Andrew Crisp APM**  
Emergency Management Victoria



Growing the talent pool

## NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

### Strategies to increase women's representation in field officer roles

#### Issue identified



In 2018, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) identified a significant gender imbalance in field officer roles across the agency, with low numbers of women in these roles. NPWS identified several key barriers to attracting and retaining women to field officer roles, including the language used in job advertisements, visibility of women in these roles, the work environment (e.g. facilities), workplace culture and support provided to women once they were appointed to field officer roles.

#### Action taken



In 2019, NPWS established the Female Field Officer Network to build support and connections between female field staff. The network is supported by a Coordinator in each branch and links newly employed and existing female field staff with longer serving female staff to provide guidance and support. The Network Coordinators meet regularly as a group, led by the A/Deputy Secretary. The network identified specific actions to increase women's representation in field officer roles. Further support to identify and address women's issues is provided through the Women's Consultative WHS Committee and the NPWS Park Operations Female Senior Leaders Forum.

Actions taken include:

- A review of role descriptions and job advertisements to identify and replace words that might indicate the role was more suitable for men (e.g. strenuous work, heavy lifting required), with more inclusive language. This was supported by a 'women in parks' video that showcased the diverse career options in NPWS for women.
- Support for on-ground initiatives, including field officers participating in 'Girls On Fire' days across NSW and an all-women hazard reduction burn in 2021 with NSW Rural Fire Service.
- Release of Workplace Design Principles, to ensure that new or updated worksites enable and support workplace flexibility, safety, diversity and inclusion.

- Roll-out of the NPWS Culture Priorities Program including modules focused on collaboration, gender, and respectful behaviours.
- Release of a new NPWS uniform including a range of garments that are a women's design and cut.

#### Impact



In September 2019 NPWS female field officers totalled 58 across the organisation. As a result of efforts to target female applicants to roles, and to provide a supportive work environment, the number of women in field officer roles in September 2022 was 131. This represents a 225% increase (in three years) in the number of female field officers employed in NPWS, and means women now make up 17.3% of total field officer roles.

#### Lesson learnt



Specific and targeted strategies are required to attract female staff to roles that have been traditionally male dominated. Further tailored strategies and activities, including policies, procedures, worksites, and culture, are also required to ensure staff feel supported and welcome in their workplace and continue their employment with NPWS.



Growing the talent pool

## Country Fire Authority Victoria

### Increasing women's representation in volunteer leadership roles

#### Issue identified



A review of Country Fire Authority's (CFA) volunteer data in 2021 indicated fewer women volunteers in operational roles and lower numbers of women completing operational training courses when compared with men. As election to volunteer officer positions within brigades requires members to have an operational status and to have completed specified operational training courses, this has historically translated into fewer women in volunteer leadership roles.

#### Action taken



Since 2021, CFA has established several women's advisory groups including the statewide Women's Advisory Committee which is jointly chaired by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Officer, and District-based networks and reference groups supported by regional leaders. These groups drive activities that are increasing access to both operational training and leadership development for women volunteers. This has included:

- Women's Challenge Camps – an experiential learning program that focuses on operational skills development, leadership conversations and the development of peer learning networks with the aim of inspiring more women to take up more operational roles.
- Women's Burn Days – an opportunity for women volunteers to practice hands-on skills and gain confidence in the planning and management of roadside burns in a safe, positive and relaxed environment.
- Women in Leadership Mentoring Program – a development program that aims to create a future pipeline of women volunteer leaders by providing learning, support, and guidance and help build confidence and capability.

#### Impact



These programs and initiatives have contributed to an almost three-fold increase over the last two years in women in volunteer leadership roles from 6% in 2020 to 17.3% in 2022.

Participant feedback from each of these programs has been overwhelmingly positive with women articulating that the programs have helped them to:

- Improve confidence in their ability to apply operational skills.
- Increase their knowledge of CFA operations and their connections within District brigade and group structures.
- Enhance their communication, relationship management and issue resolution skills, enabling them to work through some long-standing challenges within their brigades.

#### Lesson learnt



CFA's approach to women-only initiatives has highlighted the importance of creating opportunities to engage with members who have lived experience of some of the gender challenges that impact their volunteer role. By directly listening to women volunteers, we have been better able to understand the barriers to participation, co-design potential solutions, and identify the specific actions that we can take to improve their experience.



Growing the talent pool

## Forest Fire Management Victoria

Creating safe and inclusive environments through targeted education and training

### Issue identified



Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) is committed to developing an inclusive environment free from all forms of discrimination where staff feel safe and comfortable coming to work as themselves. Despite this, a notable proportion of female respondents in a 2019/2020 FFMVic Gender Equity Survey responded that they had personally experienced gender-based discrimination in the fire and emergency management context.

### Action taken



In response, FFMVic teamed up with Emberin, a global leader in diversity and inclusion training, to conduct the FFMVic Inclusion Safety Training Program for 200 senior leaders. The FFMVic Inclusion Safety Training Program aims to reduce unconscious bias, develop cross-agency partnerships, and develop measurable inclusive actions to be implemented by participants.

Based on the success of the pilot, the FFMVic Inclusion Safety Training Program is currently being delivered to an additional 200 staff targeted for their roles influencing recruitment, training, rostering and deployment.

### Impact



Survey data gathered after the pilot of the FFMVic Inclusion Safety Program, found most participants viewed the training as a very important step towards addressing gender exclusion and unconscious bias. Participants felt more empowered to call out negative behaviours and language not aligning with FFMVic values. This positive shift in culture is considered a key ingredient in attracting and retaining female staff and ensuring all staff benefit from this shift in norms and behaviours.

### Lesson learnt



To build momentum and engagement FFMVic invested heavily in a six-month longitudinal program, involving e-learning modules, webinars, regular cohort check-ins with industry sponsors, and a graduation. Concerns were initially raised about the time commitment of the program (~20 hours across several months), however opinions changed as participants grew in their awareness and appreciation of equity and inclusion across FFMVic. Time to work through the material, and build connections and understanding with other participants, was just as important as the material itself.



Growing the talent pool

## SA Metropolitan Fire Service

Strategies to increase diversity in recruitment

### Issue identified



When the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (SA MFS) recognised that there were barriers for under-represented groups in the Firefighter Recruitment process. This included pre-requisite and eligibility requirements for applications including a MR (Medium Rigid) driver's licence and first aid certification. The organisation also identified that the single point of assessment (physicals) was causing the attrition of under-represented groups from the recruitment process.

### Action taken



SAMFS conducted a review of the recruitment process which identified some key changes that could be made to remove barriers for under-represented groups. These included:

- Allocating time after all merit-based assessments have been completed for Recruit Firefighter applicants to obtain a MR driver's licence and first aid certificate prior to an offer of employment, rather than being a pre-requisite requirement to apply, as the MR driver's licence can cost up to \$2000.
- Implementing 'stage lifecycles' for physical assessments:
  - 12-month reassessment on PAT 1 (Shuttle run)
  - 6-month reassessment on PAT 2 (Functional capacity assessment)

The introduction of physical assessment stage life cycles allows applicants that have been identified as suitable through the initial stages of the recruitment process to return after the expiration of the unsuccessful assessment lifecycle. This enables them to be reassessed and potentially progress further and ultimately attain an offer of employment. Previously, applicants unsuccessful in the physical assessments were excluded from the process and were required to reapply in the next recruitment campaign. The stage lifecycles also serve to better ensure a currency of baseline fitness when successful in physical assessments, applicants are still required to revalidate the assessment after the 6 or 12 month lifecycle period.

### Impact



The impact has been very positive across all areas of diversity:

- Women's representation in initial application pool increased from 4.7% in 2015 to 12% in 2016 on introduction of the changes, which has continued to be consistent in subsequent recruitment campaigns
- CALD applications have increased from 1% in 2015 to 10% in 2016.
- Applications from individuals identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander have increased and are currently reflecting approximate 1.4% of the applicant pool

### Lesson learnt



The removal of the barriers identified has increased and broadened the pool of applicants in terms of both total numbers, as well as overall gender and CALD representation. This has confirmed that barriers, particularly those that require a significant financial outlay, have previously adversely affected the applicant pool, and that removal of these costly pre-requisite requirements has made the idea of gaining employment as a Firefighter with the MFS more achievable, without lowering any physical assessment.

The introduction of the assessment stage lifecycle has not only benefitted the applicants, but also provided the MFS with efficiencies. The opportunity for applicants that have been identified as suitable through the initial cognitive and profiling stages of the recruitment process to recommence at the physical assessment stage in which they have previously been deemed unsuccessful, has eliminated the need to administer and process their application again.



Our communities are changing and so must we. Greater reflection of our community leads to greater understanding enabling us to help build true resilience.

**Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM**  
West Australian Department of Fire and Emergency Services



Growing the talent pool

## NSW Rural Fire Service

Enhancing recruitment processes to support and retain women in the frontline

### Issue identified



In reviewing women's representation data at different levels across the organisation between 2018-2021, NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) observed a lower share of women in supervisory roles, particularly within operations and frontline positions. The organisation identified the importance of recruitment practices and access to professional development in driving more gender balanced representation in leadership.

### Action taken



The RFS undertook improvements to recruitment with the objective of securing the best talent through consistent, fair, and equitable recruitment practices. The RFS introduced a centralised recruitment function to support end-to-end recruitment and help increase applications, hiring and retention of individuals from diverse groups.

A particular focus has been on bulk recruitment programs for frontline operational roles which have traditionally been under-represented by women applicants: Operational Officer and Area Mitigation roles. The RFS redesigned bulk recruitment activities to address barriers to inclusion, and reviewed and modernised the Operational Officer induction program to better ready and retain appointed personnel in their new roles. For example, the RFS introduced flexibility for the induction program to support officers with carer and family responsibilities.

Recognising that most learning in the workplace results from on-the-job experience, the RFS appointed a number of internal women candidates to temporary supervisory positions, thereby giving them the opportunity to gain leadership exposure, while upholding the principles of comparative assessment.

### Impact



For the 2022 Operational Officer (Level 3) program, the share of female applicants who were recommended for appointment ('applicant conversion rate') was 41.7%, compared to nil in the previous year, and was higher than the conversion rate for male applicants (15.7%).

The proportion of female applicants recommended for appointment to Area Mitigation roles in 2022 rose to 28.6%, compared to 21.1% in 2021, and was similar to the conversion rate for male applicants (27.1%). In 2022, the RFS also had a significant rise in the percentage of female applicants satisfactorily completing Physical Aptitude Testing (PAT) requirements (83.0% up from 40.9%), compared to levels seen for male applicants (85.7% from 79.5%).

In 2022, the RFS permanently appointed a record number of women to supervisory roles. Most leadership roles and opportunities within the organisation are positioned within Field Operations. Forty-one percent of women promoted were appointed to supervisor level and above. The overall proportion of women employed at the Service was 23.8% as at August 2022.

### Lesson learnt



The RFS will continue to build on these initiatives to ensure fair, equitable and inclusive recruitment and fit-for-purpose professional development. There is still more work to be done to increase the number of women applicants, particularly in operations, where the greatest number of opportunities exist. This will require a continued focus on building talent from within and creating viable pathways for entry into operational roles. To ensure sustainable outcomes, members must be engaged in solving these types of organisational challenges and leadership support is integral. With this in mind, the RFS has commenced the development of an Inclusion Strategy, in consultation with members, to ensure they continue to develop initiatives and formalised programs that meet the needs of people and build a capable and diverse workforce of the future.



Profile

## Liane Henderson

### Bushfire Safety Officer, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Liane has been part of the fire service for over 23 years, starting out as a volunteer in her local rural fire service. Being both a volunteer and a staff member has provided Liane with many opportunities to give back to the community and build her career.

*"Working within a very supportive team, amongst diverse people, colleagues, volunteers, stakeholders and community members is a very rewarding part of my current role. Having a role in the fire sector is a real passion of mine."*

*"...Ultimately, we are creating a culture where you can feel safe to speak up and respected for your opinion, even when it may be different from others."*

*Ten years ago, I was fortunate to participate in a volunteering leadership program which kick-started my professional career in fire."*

Liane has held many roles over the past ten years at QFES and had various role models and mentors, both men and women. Now Liane is mentoring other women *"I feel very privileged to be supporting our young women. It can be hard being a women firefighter. Some women still experience sexism which makes them feel like they don't belong. I do believe we are coming to a crossroads now with what people find acceptable behaviour. I can see a shift with more younger women calling out inappropriate behaviour. It's good to see them empowered and not just putting up with it."*

From Liane's perspective, a contributing factor to this shift has been the introduction of the Gender Equity Advisory Group (GEAG). *"The GEAG is one of the most significant initiatives I have seen in my ten years. We have had great discussions in the workshops, and you also hear it in the corridors and meetings, how everyone wants to create a safe and inclusive environment. Prior to this there was no safe place to discuss gendered issues. The visible support from the Commissioner has really had an impact."*

An area Liane believes needs attention is the lack of women career firefighters coming through the recruitment process. *"We need to understand what the barriers are, including in the rural areas. I hope the work in the GEAG will evolve our approach, resulting in a greater diversity of people and perspective."*

## Profile

## Wayne Phillips

### Assistant Commissioner, Corporate, ACT Emergency Services Agency



Wayne Phillips has had extensive experience in the fire and emergency sector with 32 years at Fire and Rescue NSW and more recently at ACT Emergency Services Agency. As someone who has worked in operations and now in the corporate side, Wayne has made gender equality in the workplace both a personal and collective goal.

When it comes to workplace equality, Wayne is determined to see more women at all levels. His commitment to challenge and change includes personal initiatives such as "Women Leading @ Fire and Rescue NSW" a six-month leadership program designed to increase women's representation in the pipeline.

*"There is still a lot of work to do. If we want to create inclusive environments, we need to achieve gender diversity. The culture I grew up with was to keep silent, this is changing. There are men who are supportive. It's about encouraging self-reflection on their behaviour, communication, even body language and doing it differently – using more inclusive language, less command and control, acknowledging and respecting your peers."*

Wayne was awarded the WAFA Male Champion award in 2020 recognised for mentoring and coaching women, actively promoting an inclusive work environment for women across the industry. *"Any avenue I get to talk about gender diversity I will. I will always ask about gender representation,*

*advocate for their inclusion and consciously invite women in. I like to support the women in the service. If I see a leadership or learning opportunity I will forward it on, encourage women in their career."*

There are several key areas that Wayne believes need further review including the recruitment process. *"The biggest solution for gender equality is at the start of the conveyor belt. We need to review recruitment practices and the inherent physical requirements for the role. It needs some rethinking because women just simply aren't applying."*

Another concern is the workplace support and opportunities for women due to parental leave. *"We need to provide women with worthwhile work when they are pregnant and return from parental leave. In addition, how we can support those on parental leave to update their skills and knowledge to continue their progression. Their career could be on hold for years and when they return, they are playing catch-up which is even harder if they are wanting to work part-time."*

*"We need to remember that all the simple things add up, such as who is represented in leadership positions, focusing less on years and more on merit for progression, communication matters and focusing on people before process. I am driven to create an environment where women feel more included and safer at work and ultimately part of the team."*



The research is clear and the evidence is compelling. Our transformation into a more diverse and inclusive sector will bring benefits to our communities, our people and the performance of our organisations.

**Commissioner Georgeina Whelan AM**  
CSC and Bar, ACT Emergency Services Agency



## Zakia Patel

### Unit Commander Canberra, NSW State Emergency Services



Zakia Patel was just 21 years of age when she joined the NSW SES and admits she initially didn't know what she was signing up for. Fast forward 14 years, Zakia is grateful that she joined when she was young and for the positive impact it's had for her within the SES and more broadly. As the Unit Commander for Queanbeyan SES, she is regularly reminded by other women the positive impact she has on them and others.

Early on in Zakia's time in the NSW SES she had a great role model through one of her Unit Commanders. *"I saw how she went about her work, how she dealt with challenges and crises."* Now as the Unit Commander Zakia often reflects on this experience. *"I still meet with my former Unit Commander for guidance but also my Zone Commander and Deputy Zone Commander. They have created a safe and inclusive environment for me. I know they have my back. Also, having a Commissioner who is a woman has had a positive impact on me. I have been lucky enough to meet her and share what we are doing as a unit."*



A recent review of Zakia's unit found that while there was equal gender representation across the unit, there were only 25% of women at the leadership level. *"I am one of three women commanders in the almost 60 years of my Unit's existence. Fortunately, the few gendered issues that I have experienced were resolved quickly by our team leader at the time, who made it very clear sexist attitudes or behaviours were not acceptable here."*

Zakia is one of the inaugural Member Advisors on the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee (DISC) which was established in 2021 to lead the development, implementation, and mobilisation of support for diversity and inclusion initiatives, chaired by Deputy Commissioner Corporate Services.

After conversations with the team, Zakia has implemented several initiatives to address the gender gap in leadership. *"Together with the women in my unit, I have started a Women's Network. This is a space for our younger women to come together to build their skills. The more experienced members will mentor our newer members in the unit. I also want to find opportunities for my members who are parents and still want to work in operational roles."* Zakia will work with the Gender Equality Network, a sub-committee of the DISC, on this initiative.

Zakia is also passionate about drawing culturally diverse members to volunteer. *"My nephew joined the SES when he was 18 and still studying. He said he was drawn to it from watching me over many years. I want my nieces and nephews to know what the SES is about and feel like there are no barriers to them participating."*

# Building buy-in for gender equality and fostering safe and inclusive workplace cultures

Ensuring we have a safe and inclusive workplace culture is critical to the retention and wellbeing of our employees. Over the last year we have explored many topics that go to the heart of inclusion and respect at work and have taken concrete action to address the issues that undermine inclusion.

This includes building everyday respect and preventing and responding to sexual harassment. Gender-inclusive facilities and PPE is also fundamental to women's inclusion and sense of belonging in the sector. We have also taken steps to create a broader network of allies for gender equality in our organisations recognising this as key to the long term success and sustainability of change.

## Group-wide action: Engaging Everyday Champions of Change

In 2022, over 100 senior and middle-manager leaders of Member organisations took part in two workshops on being an 'Everyday Champion of Change'. Participants undertook the 'Leadership Shadow' and identified practical actions to amplify impact across the sector. Members who joined the workshops were Paul Baxter (NSW Fire and Rescue), Carlene York (NSW SES), Darren Klemm (WA Fire and Emergency Services) and Wayne Phillips (Assistant Commissioner, ACT Emergency Services).

## Victoria State Emergency Services

### Actions to address sexual harassment

#### Issue identified

In 2020 Victoria SES identified the need to focus on addressing low rates of reporting and confidence in organisational responses as part of its effort to reduce the incidence and impacts of workplace bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

Reporting of negative behaviour in confidential surveys also increased over a period of 6 months. These measures are all seen as evidence of increased trust and safety across the service.

#### Action taken

In 2021 Victoria SES launched the 'Be Heard' program to address bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment across the service. The aim of the program is to support the ongoing development of a safe and inclusive culture for all SES members. Specific actions include two independent reviews into culture; the development of online training modules on preventing bullying, harassment and discrimination and having difficult conversations; and live education workshops on gender inclusivity for all staff and volunteer leaders. The program has also improved access to reporting resources and grievance policy information to staff and volunteers and increased the visibility and awareness of confidential support options for any members considering making a report.

#### Lesson learnt

The program is still running, with a final evaluation still to be completed. However initial learnings focus on two key areas; the need to support leaders to embed actions, and the need to identify and support champions across the service.

Improving the visibility and uptake of reporting resources and supports is reliant on ensuring that leaders and key champions across the service understood the reporting processes and the range of support options themselves. Encouraging leaders to have meaningful discussions with their teams about these resources, above simply emailing out updates, has been vital to ensure that messages are communicated effectively. Similarly, motivating champions at all levels across the service to engage with the development materials available and promote these has helped drive up training completion rates.

Future actions include providing diversity and inclusion resources to all members, paired with a program to upskill volunteer leaders to have meaningful conversations with their teams about inclusion. Broader leadership and trainer programs are also planned, ensuring that leaders across the service are supported to have meaningful and values-based conversations with staff and volunteers around bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment.

#### Impact

A culture and satisfaction survey conducted in late 2021, which targeted both staff and volunteer members, provides insight into the initial impact of the Be Heard program. Results showed that 93% of members know where to find or access support if they experience bullying, harassment or sexual harassment, and 83% of members feel comfortable reporting any safety concerns, no matter how small.

## QLD Parks and Wildlife Services

### Action to prevent and respond to sexual harassment

#### Issue identified



In response to the 2021 Work for Queensland Survey results around experiences and reporting of sexual harassment, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services conducted a listening process in the organisation. These sessions identified new and different approaches to respond to sexual harassment, including the need for confidential/anonymous reporting. The listening process also identified that there is a need to build confidence in leadership and the organisational response, set a clear behavioural expectation for the department, and provide staff the tools, resources and support they need to actively prevent and address sexual harassment and disrespectful behaviours in the workplace.

#### Action taken



To set the tone, Executives signed and issued a 'Statement of Commitment' in April 2021 to support 'Respectful Workplace' strategies which includes the provision of a Mental Health Support Officer Network, relevant projects and department wide training covering themes such as Bystander action, Human Rights Act, Cultural Awareness and Diversity and Inclusion. The Statement of Commitment also outlines what sexual harassment is, the support available and explains the responsibilities and expectations for staff and managers.

The actions taken encompass a holistic approach to the prevention of sexual harassment including:

- A 'Preventing & Responding to Sexual Harassment Guideline' that defines sexual harassment and provides information for bystanders, managers, and those impacted by sexual harassment
- MATE Bystander training to empower staff to respond to disrespectful behaviours
- Resources and training to build a psychologically safe workplace, with a focus on inclusion, acceptance, respect, and physical and mental health

- An Employee Alternative Reporting Service, using a confidential third-party provider Stopline

Executives have committed to:

- Actively support activities that raise awareness of sexual harassment and its impacts.
- Support staff to raise concerns of sexual harassment and commit to addressing them in a timely and appropriate way.
- Demonstrate through their own behaviours every day, their commitment to a safe and gender equitable workplace.

#### Impact



The MATE bystander training has been delivered to 393 of staff since launching the training. This training has been well received by staff with many participants speaking highly of the skills and knowledge provided. The confidential reporting platform for sexual harassment (EARS) was accessed 651 times in its first 5-month period, with 9 reports made (8 of which have since been closed out). The platform provides staff more options for reporting sexual harassment including the option to remain anonymous. This provides an avenue for staff voices to be heard without the need to report through existing channels such as management or Human Resources.

#### Lesson learnt



Several factors contributed to the success of Respectful Workplaces initiative. Firstly, ensuring a human-centred design process to actively consider user experience and reduce barriers to access and use. Secondly, providing staff with access to learning and development tools and resources has been essential to empower them to recognise and understand their role in preventing and responding to sexual harassment. Finally, the visibility of the Executives' commitment is critical to establish and maintain the expected behaviours and culture in the workplace.

## Fire and Emergency New Zealand

### Provision of Emergency Hygiene Packs to foster a safe, healthy and inclusive workplace

#### Issue identified



For long duration fire and emergency incidents or at events in remote areas far from a supermarket or pharmacy, Fire and Emergency New Zealand identified that their people, emergency response partners, and members of the public required personal hygiene items as a matter of health, safety and inclusion in the workplace. This was particularly important for women in the context of menstrual hygiene.

#### Action taken



Fire and Emergency New Zealand successfully piloted and rolled out 1700 unisex emergency personal hygiene packs on all frontline and some support appliances and at fire stations. The packs have items such as women's and men's sanitary products, toilet paper, disposal bags, hand sanitiser and wipes, in a discreet and easily transportable pack.

#### Impact



This initiative has been well-received by both career and volunteer staff in the organisation and has generated broader discussion in the community and on social media on creating inclusive environments in male-dominated organisations.

#### Lesson learnt



In the development of this initiative, several factors contributed to the successful rollout, among them: the executive leadership team sponsorship (including a centralised funding stream), stakeholder consultation, in depth collaboration between the Women's Development and Equipment and Logistics Team and the creation of a targeted communications plan.





Profile

## Natalie Stanway

### Deputy Controller, Victoria State Emergency Services

Bendigo SES Deputy Controller Natalie Stanway began volunteering in 2009 as a response to the Black Saturday fires. Natalie had a desire to assist in “making someone’s day better” so she signed up the following week. She has been Bendigo’s Deputy Controller for the past six years and spent over five years working as a staff member in operational capability.

Natalie’s employment at State Emergency Services, was a positive challenge due to the support from her leaders. Natalie said that *“My leader was someone who could see my passion and skills and created opportunities. He provided me with opportunities to contribute, learn and be intellectually challenged. I was supported to become an accredited level-two operations officer, and I was one of the first volunteers to obtain this level of accreditation.”*

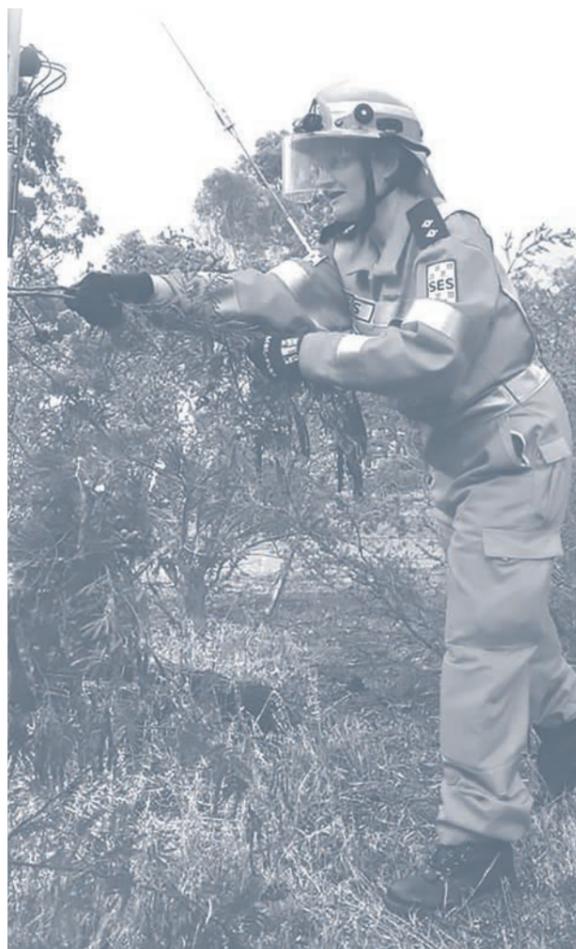
Natalie has found having diverse roles models, including LGBTIQ+ women, makes a big difference.

*“Having women who constantly demonstrate that women can do anything is important because if you can’t see somebody you can’t be somebody.”*

When she recruits new members to the team, Natalie strives to focus beyond individual identity markers and focusses on the whole person: *“What can that person bring to our unit? I want to know their story and how can I find a way they can be part of our story.”*

Reflecting on the culture from when Natalie began in the SES to now, she believes that *“the tide is slowly turning but there is more work to be done as there are still elements of everyday sexism in the sector. I still need to call out individuals who use male pronouns exclusively or point out the lack of acknowledgement of women and gender diverse people or empower those with quieter voices to contribute. But I see more women in leadership positions, and they are doing it and doing it well. I am seeing more inclusion of everyone regardless of their identity or ability.”*

Long term, Natalie is looking forward to when gender equality is not even something we talk about, where we don’t need to be calling out the *“first woman’s achievements”* because women are succeeding and celebrated for what they achieve not who they are.



We have a specific focus on building gender equity and inclusion, but it is also clear that changes in our approach and specifically the behaviours that make up our culture will benefit ALL people in our organisation.

**Commissioner Paul Baxter QSO**  
Fire and Rescue New South Wales





Profile

## Jon Broomhall AFSM Department of Fire & Emergency Services (DFES), Assistant Commissioner WA

Jon Broomhall is the current DFES Assistant Commissioner Metropolitan Operations and is responsible for leading frontline operations across the Perth metropolitan area, encompassing nearly 60 brigades, groups and units and over 750 staff. Jon is a senior leader who is actively sponsoring women into leadership roles and championing gender equality in the sector.

*"To continue to progress inclusion and gender equality it's important we have open and honest conversations and raise the issues. I am still learning as I go but know we can do anything with the right mindset."*

Jon joined the fire service over 28 years ago and has had various role models throughout his career who have made a significant impact on him. Jon is committed to doing the same for others, supporting and sponsoring women and men to progress their careers. *"I want to reassure women that progression is not based on the number of years of service, it's about their skills and capabilities. We need to lift more women through and encourage them to follow different pathways, apply for new roles and create an inclusive environment."*

He reflects that although there is a greater level of inclusion for women now change is not happening fast enough. *"We are getting great women at the right level, but we can't wait for all the women to come through the system – we need the quantum leap, to accelerate change, to do it differently."*

A recent example of this was the diverse recruit firefighter school which delivered an increase in women and non-binary applicants through a targeted recruitment process. This included targeting locations where there might be more women such as sporting clubs and surf lifesaving clubs. *"We are still not reflective of our community, and we need to get more diversity into all areas."* Jon believes the introduction of part time work would be a big enabler of change. *"We should be able to find a way to support staff including frontline to work part-time, whilst maintaining all the safety and competency requirements. There should be a way, learning from other sectors."*



Profile

## Nikki Rouse Project Officer (Women in Fire) WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



Nikki Rouse is a senior leader in fire management and currently on secondment as the Women in Fire Project Officer implementing the Department's "Women in Fire Management Action Plan". Nikki is also the Frankland District Fire Coordinator for WA's Parks and Wildlife Service.

As someone who has been around the fire and emergency sector from a very early age Nikki has never questioned women's abilities. *"The first woman District Fire Coordinator in our Department was appointed in Walpole and I am the second permanently appointed woman in the role, some 20 years on. Our district has always had women in senior leadership roles. It doesn't even come into the discussion."*

Nikki acknowledges that not everyone has had the same experience. *"In my recent secondment as the Women in Fire Project Officer, I have been visiting every region across WA talking to the workforce to gain a better understanding of the barriers and also the progress that is being made. We are much further along than 20 years ago but there are still a range of issues that need to be addressed. Everyday language of "man the trucks" or senior positions referred to as 'he' is commonplace."*

The DBCA's Women in Fire Management Action Plan is a three-year plan committed to increasing gender diversity in the workforce, particularly in Fire Management, an area that has been traditionally low. Nikki has welcomed the extensive support from leadership on the Action Plan.

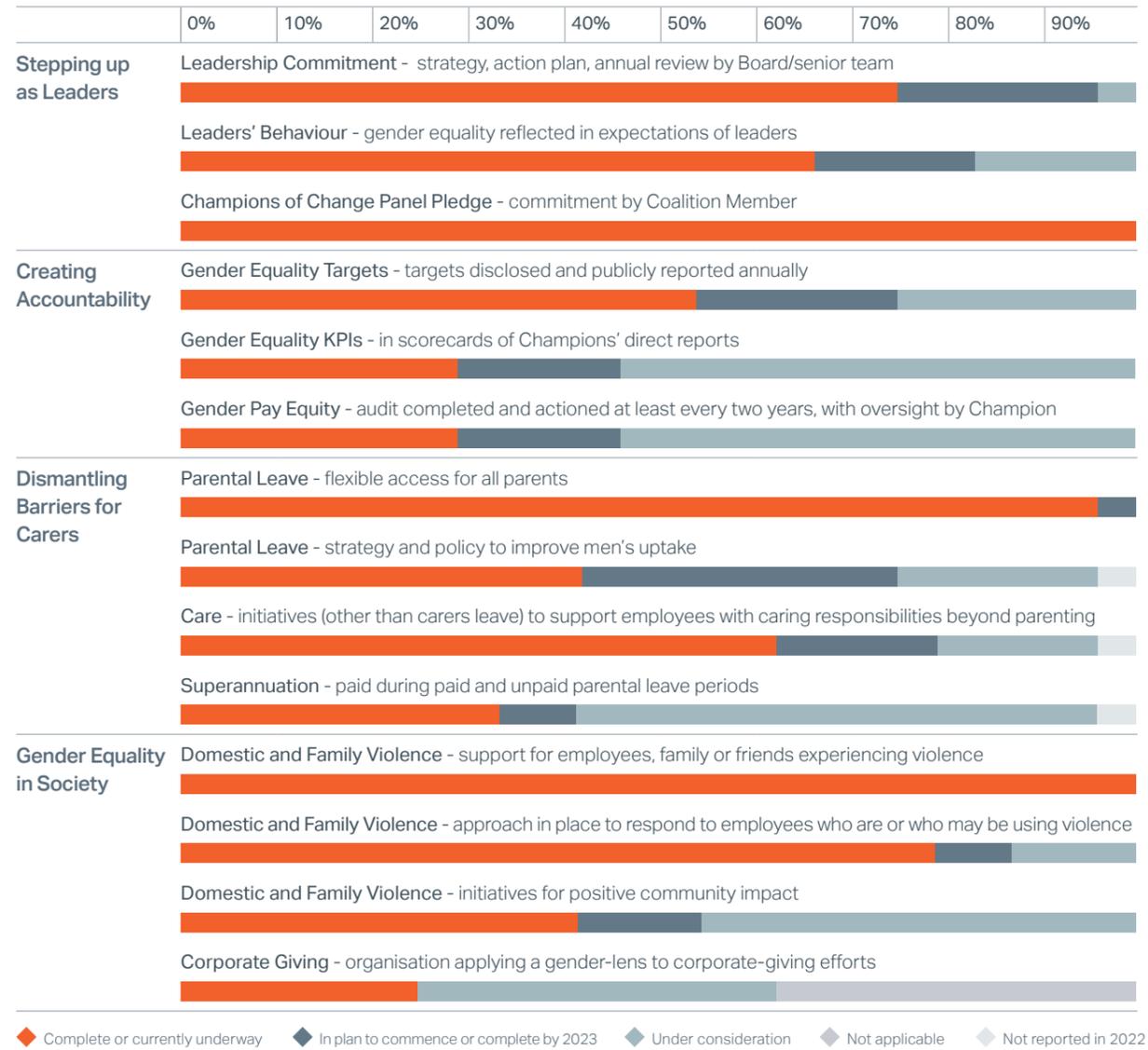
*"Our Executive Director is extremely supportive of the plan and this work. To have someone who has publicly spoken about being a feminist, believing in gender equality and serious about addressing the issues makes this work easier to implement and discuss."* One initiative Nikki is leading is a state-wide workshop for the women who are Conservation Employees. *"Some of these women are the only woman on the trucks in their area which can be difficult. By meeting others like them, they will connect, share stories as well as help inform managers and leaders on what the issues are."*

When Nikki returns to her substantive role as Fire Coordinator she wants to continue to drive change and share the knowledge she has gained over the past year. *"If I can start the conversation, raise awareness, and get people thinking then we can move forward. When I was having children, I was looking around to see how other women had done it. There were very few, if any so I had to navigate it myself. I have been told that I am an example for people coming through, if that is the case then I want to be the best example. It's hard to balance family life and fire life, so when you see your top-level managers prioritising family it makes a difference."*

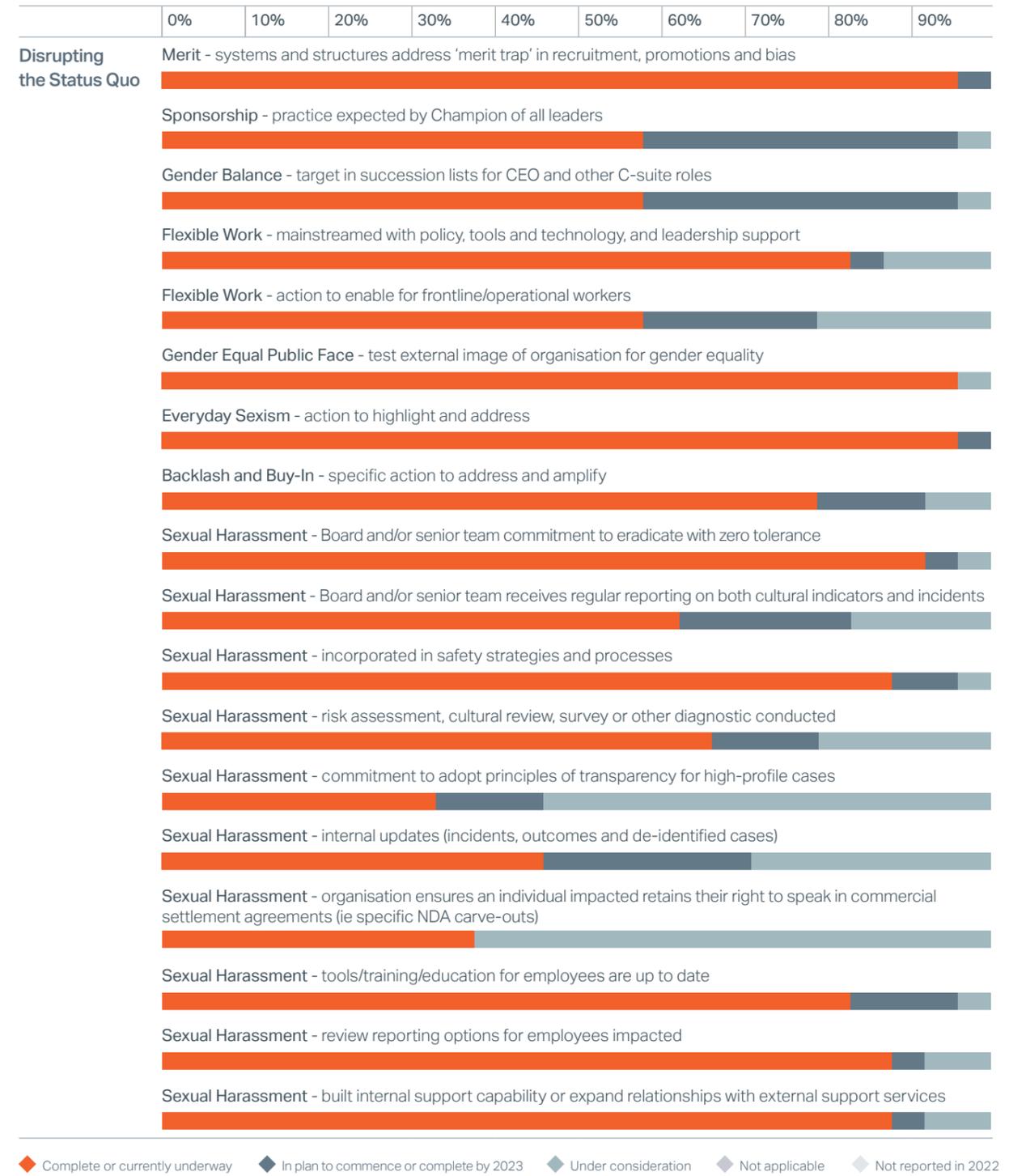
*"...If I can start the conversation, raise awareness, and get people thinking, then we can move forward ... I want to be the best example. It's hard to balance family life and fire life, so when you see your top-level managers prioritising family it makes a difference."*

### Practical actions 2022

**Table 1: Practical actions**



**Table 1: Practical actions (continued)**





## Impact details 2022 (5 year comparison)

### Gender balance in leadership, recruitment, graduates, promotions and exits

**Table 2: Gender balance in leadership (overall) – 2022 data compared with 2018**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Women's Representation (%)						
	Overall Employees	Key Management Personnel	Other Executives / General Managers	Senior Managers	Other Managers	Non-Managers	Board
ACT Emergency Services Agency**	27.9	14.3	-	27.3	16.3	31.0	44.4
AFAC	61.4	66.7	57.1	-	25.0	76.5	37.5
Airservices Australia, Fire and Emergency	3.8	100.0	0.0	0.0	-	3.8	50.0
Country Fire Authority Victoria*	60.6	33.3	50.0	39.3	45.5	65.5	55.6
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service in WA	46.5	50.0	28.6	39.0	30.4	47.7	52.2
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA	24.0	26.7	30.4	27.9	18.6	25.3	-
Emergency Management Victoria*	57.4	-	66.7	50.0	63.9	56.3	-
Environment and Water SA	49.9	50.0	42.1	41.3	37.3	53.5	-
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	19.5	22.2	29.2	22.4	6.1	22.2	71.4
Fire and Rescue NSW#	14.9	25.0	27.9	24.6	9.3	15.1	-
Fire Rescue Victoria	11.4	25.0	7.1	5.2	9.0	12.5	71.4
Forest Fire Management Victoria	49.8	49.1	47.4	47.1	45.1	51.4	44.4
New South Wales Rural Fire Service#^	23.8	25.0	31.3	46.3	6.4	24.4	-
NSW SES**^	36.1	0.0	33.3	54.2	31.1	36.4	-
Park Operations Coastal, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	34.0	50.0	8.3	30.8	18.3	38.1	-
Parks Victoria#	40.1	57.1	44.4	38.6	38.7	40.2	55.6

**Table 2: Gender balance in leadership (overall) – 2022 data compared with 2018 (Continued)**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Women's Representation (%)						
	Overall Employees	Key Management Personnel	Other Executives / General Managers	Senior Managers	Other Managers	Non-Managers	Board
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	20.4	8.7	37.3	29.3	16.7	20.1	20.0
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services#	40.3	30.0	42.9	39.5	52.7	39.1	-
SA Metropolitan Fire Service	6.8	0.0	50.0	8.0	4.7	7.5	-
SAFECOM*	65.1	-	71.4	-	60.0	64.2	80.0
South Australia State Emergency Service#^	30.5	100	100	18.1	30.0	31.1	-
South Australian State Country Fire Service	41.1	66.7	16.7	33.3	-	42.8	-
Tasmania Fire Service	26.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	40.2	14.3
Victoria State Emergency Service	38.9	75.0	-	33.3	21.4	41.1	57.1
<b>Totals (unadjusted)</b>	26.1	33.5	35.2	31.9	17.3	26.7	50.7
<b>Totals (adjusted)</b>	26.5	33.0	37.6	34.6	18.0	26.9	45.7
<b>Adjusted 2018 totals</b>	22.5	26.9	25.6	21.9	12.0	23.8	30.1

**Note:**

Adjusted totals represent Group membership and reporting that are common in both 2018 and 2022

- ◆ Gender balance achieved (40%–60% women's representation)
- ◆ Moving closer to gender balance since 2018
- ◆ Increase in over-representation of women since 2018
- ◆ Increase in under-representation of women since 2018
- ◆ Unchanged since 2018
- ◆ Not reported in 2018
- ◆ Not applicable
- ◆ Role/s at CEO level held by one or more women
- ◆ Data includes volunteers
- ◆ Includes non-binary gender
- ◆ Category contains only one role (0% or 100% women).

**Table 3: Gender balance in leadership (frontline service delivery) – 2022 data compared with 2018**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Women's Representation (%)					
	Overall Employees	Key Management Personnel	Other Executives / General Managers	Senior Managers	Other Managers	Non-Managers
ACT Emergency Services Agency**	28.2	13.3	-	0.0	22.5	29.4
Airservices Australia, Fire and Emergency**	3.8	-	-	-	6.7	3.8
Country Fire Authority Victoria**^	15.0	33.3	-	-	-	15.0
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service in WA**	46.5	50.0	28.6	39.0	30.4	47.7
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA**	7.8	11.1	0.0	1.6	6.2	9.2
Fire and Emergency New Zealand**	15.4	0.0	0.0	7.4	4.2	17.0
Fire and Rescue NSW**	11.4	14.3	1.7	1.5	2.2	13.1
Fire Rescue Victoria**	5.0	16.7	1.4	2.3	3.4	5.7
New South Wales Rural Fire Service**^	23.8	25.0	31.3	27.6	5.5	24.4
NSW SES**^	35.5	50.0	33.3	22.2	31.1	35.8
Park Operations Coastal, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**	26.2	50.0	38.5	20.0	-	26.2
Parks Victoria**	30.5	-	16.7	23.5	30.2	30.8
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services**	12.0	11.8	2.6	12.7	6.1	13.6
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services**	30.7	-	10.0	15.4	35.7	31.3
SA Metropolitan Fire Service**	4.2	-	-	2.9	2.0	4.9
South Australia State Emergency Service**^	29.8	-	-	13.6	29.1	30.7
South Australian State Country Fire Service**	41.8	66.7	33.3	33.3	-	42.8
Tasmania Fire Service**	18.2	50.0	28.6	20.0	0.0	16.7
Victoria State Emergency Service**	32.6	0.0	-	11.1	16.7	36.1
<b>Total (unadjusted)</b>	20.9	22.6	7.3	10.0	8.0	21.7
<b>Total (adjusted)</b>	22.2	21.0	8.4	10.6	8.2	21.8
<b>Adjusted 2018 totals</b>	20.7	9.6	16.5	18.6	7.8	22.1

**Note:**  
Adjusted totals represent Group membership and reporting that are common in both 2018 and 2022

- ◆ Gender balance achieved (40%–60% women's representation)
- ◆ Moving closer to gender balance since 2018
- ◆ Increase in over-representation of women since 2018
- ◆ Increase in under-representation of women since 2018
- ◆ Unchanged since 2018
- ◆ Not reported in 2018
- ◆ Not applicable
- ◆ Role/s at CEO level held by one or more women
- ◆ Data includes volunteers
- ◆ Includes non-binary gender

**Table 4: Gender balance in leadership (frontline service delivery enablement) – 2022 data compared with 2018**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Women's Representation (%)					
	Overall Employees	Key Management Personnel	Other Executives / General Managers	Senior Managers	Other Managers	Non-Managers
ACT Emergency Services Agency**	44.4	12.5	-	48.6	40.0	46.6
AFAC#	62.5	66.7	57.1	-	25.0	76.5
Airservices Australia, Fire and Emergency**	16.2	100.0	0.0	0.0	-	16.1
Country Fire Authority Victoria**^	60.9	-	50.0	-	33.8	70.7
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service in WA**	46.5	50.0	28.6	39.0	30.4	47.7
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA**	58.2	50.0	54.8	46.7	54.2	63.1
Emergency Management Victoria#	56.5	-	-	-	-	53.7
Fire and Emergency New Zealand**	35.0	50.0	33.3	9.1	5.1	35.9
Fire and Rescue NSW**	58.9	40.0	45.5	54.3	55.5	69.5
Fire Rescue Victoria**	45.9	50.0	35.7	46.7	41.4	47.4
Forest Fire Management Victoria#	40.6	50.0	33.3	43.1	37.5	41.4
New South Wales Rural Fire Service**^	56.0	-	-	68.0	45.3	58.2
NSW SES**^	60.4	0.0	33.3	73.3	30.0	63.4
Park Operations Coastal, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**	52.2	-	25.0	38.5	-	55.2
Parks Victoria**	58.3	50.0	66.7	43.4	47.5	62.8
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services**	69.2	0.0	64.0	57.5	72.5	72.9
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services**	62.8	30.0	46.9	50.9	56.4	76.2
SA Metropolitan Fire Service**	22.3	0.0	50.0	17.6	7.7	33.0
South Australia State Emergency Service**^	48.2	0.0	100	66.7	45.5	47.2
Tasmania Fire Service**	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	7.5
Victoria State Emergency Service**	42.6	100	-	57.1	0.0	38.6
<b>Total (unadjusted)</b>	47.9	35.1	49.3	47.7	40.8	49.5
<b>Total (adjusted)</b>	48.2	33.3	49.8	48.5	41.4	50.1
<b>Adjusted 2018 totals</b>	38.0	33.8	43.8	39.1	7.8	39.0

**Note:**  
Adjusted totals represent Group membership and reporting that are common in both 2018 and 2022

- ◆ Gender balance achieved (40%–60% women's representation)
- ◆ Moving closer to gender balance since 2018
- ◆ Increase in over-representation of women since 2021
- ◆ Increase in under-representation of women since 2018
- ◆ Unchanged since 2018
- ◆ Not reported in 2018
- ◆ Not applicable
- ◆ Role/s at CEO level held by one or more women
- ◆ Data includes volunteers
- ◆ Includes non-binary gender



## Impact details 2022 (2021 comparison)

**Table 5: Gender balance in recruitment, retention, promotions and exits year-on-year progress – 2022 data compared with 2021**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Recruitment and Retention				Promotions	
	Women graduates (%)	Women apprentices (%)	Women hires (%)	Women exits (%)	Women promotions (%)	Overall women's representation at end of period (%)
ACT Emergency Services Agency	65.2	-	26.6	34.9	50.0	27.9
AFAC	33.3	-	50.0	42.9	75.0	61.4
Airservices Australia, Fire and Emergency	-	-	0.0	1.4	0.0	3.8
Country Fire Authority Victoria	-	-	61.1	65.2	72.0	60.6
Department for Environment and Water SA	-	-	47.9	43.6	-	49.9
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service in WA	-	27.3	53.8	46.5	41.4	46.5
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA	-	-	45.3	39.4	27.1	24.0
Emergency Management Victoria	0.0	-	56.1	65.5	-	57.4
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	33.0	-	43.2	30.0	19.3	19.5
Fire and Rescue NSW	-	0.0	34.3	14.7	23.6	14.9
Fire Rescue Victoria	-	-	26.4	34.0	5.2	11.4
Forest Fire Management Victoria	58.3	-	46.3	34.9	43.9	49.8
New South Wales Rural Fire Service	-	-	32.0	35.2	23.2	23.8
NSW SES	-	-	59.6	43.2	66.7	36.1
Park Operations Coastal, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	-	-	55.6	-	-	34.0
Parks Victoria	-	-	45.7	39.4	42.4	40.1
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	-	-	36.1	26.0	27.7	20.4
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services	-	-	52.1	39.9	44.0	40.3
SA Metropolitan Fire Service	-	-	16.3	13.4	7.1	6.8
SAFECOM	-	-	0.0	-	33.3	65.1
South Australia State Emergency Service	100	-	32.1	35.5	20.0	30.5
South Australian Country Fire Service	-	-	47.3	60.8	-	41.1
Tasmania Fire Service	-	-	42.2	34.1	24.1	26.9
Victoria State Emergency Service	-	-	40.0	60.9	75.0	38.9
<b>Fire &amp; Emergency Group Averages</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>26.1</b>
<b>Fire &amp; Emergency Group Averages (adjusted)</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>26.0</b>

**Note:**  
Adjusted totals represent Group membership and reporting that are common in 2021 and 2022.

**Key for Table 5: Gender balance in recruitment, retention, promotions and exits year-on-year progress – 2022 data compared with 2021 (p.42)**

<b>Recruitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Gender balance achieved (40%–60% women in graduate and overall recruitment)</li> <li>◆ Women graduates or hires under 40% or over 60%, and overall gender balance in the organisation is improving</li> <li>◆ Women graduates or hires over 60%, and overall gender balance in the organisation has not improved</li> <li>◆ Women graduates or hires under 40%, and overall gender balance in the organisation has not improved</li> <li>◇ Not applicable</li> <li>◆ First year reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Women % of total exits is within gender balance (40%–60% of total exits) and number of total women exits is not more than number of women recruited</li> <li>◆ Women % of total exits is less than 40% or greater than 60% and number of total women exits is not more than number of women recruited</li> <li>◆ Women % of total exits is within gender balance (40%–60% of total exits) but number of total women exits is greater than number of women recruited</li> </ul>
<b>Promotions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Women promotions equal to or more than women's representation overall</li> <li>◆ Women promotions at least 40%, but not equal to or more than women's representation overall</li> <li>◆ Women promotions less than women's representation overall</li> <li>◇ Not applicable</li> </ul>

### Gender pay equity

The following organisation in the Fire and Emergency Group publicly disclose their pay equity gaps:

- Forest Fire Management Victoria – DELWP-wide data in annual report

**Table 6: Gender pay equity**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Gender Pay Gaps (%)			
	"Like-for Like' (base salary)"	Organisation-wide (base salary)	"Like-for Like' (total remuneration)"	"Organisation-wide (total remuneration)"
Country Fire Authority Victoria	-	-	10.3	-
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service in WA	-	1.4	-	-14.0
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA	-	10.7	-	25.9
Emergency Management Victoria	2.2	-	2.2	-
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	-	-	-	-6.8
Forest Fire Management Victoria	-	-6.5	-	-
NSW SES	-	7.9	-0.6	-14.9
SAFECOM	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Australia State Emergency Service	-	12.0	-	18.0
Victoria State Emergency Service	-	12.5	-	14.5

## Flexible and inclusive employment experiences

**Table 7: Access to flexible work and experiencing an inclusive culture year-on-year – 2022 data compared with 2021**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Flexible Work <i>Percentage of employees reporting they have access to the flexibility they need</i>			Inclusive Culture <i>Percentage of employees reporting they have an inclusive employment experience</i>		
	Women	Men	All	Women	Men	All
ACT Emergency Services Agency#	100	100	100	-	-	-
Airservices Australia, Fire and Emergency	94.0	85.0	86.0	71.2	76.8	76.7
Country Fire Authority Victoria	78.0	75.0	76.0	74.0	75.0	72.0
Fire and Emergency New Zealand#	-	-	-	66.0	64.0	64.0
Fire and Rescue NSW	-	-	53.5	-	-	72.0
Fire Rescue Victoria	-	-	-	-	-	-
New South Wales Rural Fire Service	-	-	60.0	-	-	60.0
NSW SES	82.0	82.0	82.0	75.0	76.0	73.0
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services#	72.0	56.0	60.0	69.0	74.0	72.0
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services	-	-	72.0	76.0	76.0	-
SA Metropolitan Fire Service	-	-	63.0	-	-	76.0
South Australia State Emergency Service	-	-	66.0	-	-	84.0
Victoria State Emergency Service	-	-	68.0	-	-	68.0
<b>Fire and Emergency Group Averages</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>80.8</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>73.4</b>	<b>71.7</b>
<b>Fire and Emergency Group Averages (adjusted)</b>	<b>62.0</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>68.9</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>69.0</b>

**Note:**  
Adjusted averages represent Group membership and reporting that are common in 2021 and 2022.

◆ Improved since 2021    ◇ Not improved since 2021    ◇ Not reported in 2021    ◇ Data not available

**Table 8: Sexual harassment – respect and safety at work year-on-year – 2022 data compared with 2021**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Percentage of employees who believe that their organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment			Percentage of employees who believe that at their organisation it is safe to raise issues of sexual harassment without fear of victimisation or negative career implications		
	Women	Men	All	Women	Men	All
Country Fire Authority Victoria	52.0	64.0	55.0	56.0	70.0	59.0
Fire and Emergency New Zealand#	67.0	60.0	62.0	70.0	68.0	69.0
New South Wales Rural Fire Service	-	-	88.0	-	-	-
Parks Victoria#	71.0	75.0	70.0	61.0	65.0	59.0
South Australia State Emergency Service	-	-	72.0	-	-	87.0
<b>Fire and Emergency Group Averages</b>	<b>63.3</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>68.5</b>
<b>Fire and Emergency Group Averages (adjusted)</b>	<b>63.3</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>62.3</b>

**Note:**  
Adjusted averages represent Group membership and reporting that are common in 2021 and 2022.

◆ Improved since 2021    ◇ Not improved since 2021    ◇ Not reported in 2021    ◇ Data not available

**Table 9: Exits during or at the end of parental leave year-on-year – 2022 data compared with 2021**

Fire and Emergency Group Organisations	Percentage of employees (of those who took parental leave) who left their organisation during or at the end of their parental leave in the past year		
	Women	Men	All
ACT Emergency Services Agency	0.0	0.0	0.0
AFAC	33.0	0.0	0.0
Airservices Australia, Fire and Emergency	0.0	0.0	0.0
Country Fire Authority Victoria	0.0	0.0	0.0
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service in WA	4.4	0.0	4.4
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA	6.1	2.7	4.4
Emergency Management Victoria	5.9	0.0	4.2
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	11.1	-	11.1
Fire and Rescue NSW	2.6	1.1	1.6
Fire Rescue Victoria	0.0	0.0	0.0
NSW SES	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parks Victoria	1.3	0.0	0.1
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	2.9	0.8	1.3
SA Metropolitan Fire Service	0.0	0.0	0.0
SAFECOM	-	-	0.0
Victoria State Emergency Service	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Fire and Emergency Group Averages</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Fire and Emergency Group Averages (adjusted)</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>

**Note:**  
Adjusted averages represent Group membership and reporting that are common in 2021 and 2022.

◆ Improved since 2021    ◇ Not improved since 2021    ◆ Not reported in 2021    ◇ Data not available



## Our thanks

The work of the Champions of Change Coalition is continuously informed and inspired by feedback and ideas from our staff, and the hard work of our Implementation Leaders who support and advise each Champion of Change and Convenor with their expertise and drive for gender equality. Our Implementation Leaders for the Fire & Emergency Group are as follows:

Organisations	Implementation Leaders
ACT Emergency Services Agency	Wayne Phillips and Kate Lowes
AFAC	Madeleine Kelly and Stephanie Andrade
Airservices Australia	Sheree Lineham
Bushfires NT	Tony Fuller
Country Fire Authority Victoria	Tasha Weir and Terri Wright
Department for Environment and Water SA	Ian Tanner AFSM
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Parks and Wildlife Service WA	Katie MacWilliams
Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA	Kim Lusk and Shelley Rush
Emergency Management Victoria	Kate Bender and Carlie Newman
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	Brendan Nally
Fire and Rescue NSW	Michelle Smith and Natalia Cruz-Hendricks
Fire Rescue Victoria	Thomas Hoffman and Natasha Pellicano
Forest Fire Management Victoria	Sam Quigley
Forestry Corporation NSW	Ross Dickson
NSW Rural Fire Service	Trina Schmidt
Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services	Karen Elligett
NSW SES	Miranda Gilberg and Nic Steepe
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Christina Bullivant

Organisations	Implementation Leaders
Parks Victoria	Jolene Goulton
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	Stephen Smith
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services	Rosie Amatt
SA Metropolitan Fire Service	Peter Button
SAFECOM	Leigh Pomario
South Australia State Emergency Service	Rachel Rowett
South Australia Country Fire Service	Sindy McCourt and Tammy Moffat
Tasmania Fire Service	Shane Batt and Emma McGrath
Tasmania SES	Mathew Brocklehurst, Lauren Cannell and Tracey Rogers
Victoria State Emergency Service	Erin Hegerty and Kristy Cadusch
Program Directors	Cassie Lindsey, Somali Cerise and Lisa Pusey

### In Memoriam

The Fire and Emergency Champions of Change Group would like to acknowledge the passing of Kim Lusk, Implementation Leader, and District Officer, Office of the Commissioner, at the Department of Fire and Emergency Services WA.

# CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

## FIRE AND EMERGENCY

**For more information about the Champions of Change Fire and Emergency Group visit:**

[championsofchangecoalition.org/groups/champions-of-change-fire-and-emergency/](https://championsofchangecoalition.org/groups/champions-of-change-fire-and-emergency/)  
or contact us at: [contact@championsofchangecoalition.org](mailto:contact@championsofchangecoalition.org)

### **About the Champions of Change Coalition**

The Champions of Change Coalition includes CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal and human rights issue. The Champions of Change Coalition is a globally recognised, innovative strategy for achieving gender equality, advancing more and diverse women in leadership and building respectful and inclusive workplaces. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is to step up beside women to help achieve gender equality and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

[championsofchangecoalition.org](https://championsofchangecoalition.org)