

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN ACTION

DRIVING BUSHFIRE RECOVERY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

CASE STUDY | GENDER AND DISASTER AUSTRALIA



Title: *'Gender Justice in Disaster: Inspiring Action'* Conference 2021

The Gender Justice in Disaster Conference 2021 aimed to bring a gender lens to critical issues of contemporary emergency. It sought to inspire action at the many intersections of gender. Sustainable Aboriginal land management, climate change activism, discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people, the representation of women in leadership and violence against women all featured on the agenda.

Building on the successful National Conference 'Diversity in Disaster', this conference presented both Australian and international experts. It offered unique insights for emergency management to benefit women, men, and LGBTIQ+ people at an international level and at a local level.

The conference:

- Asked compelling questions of decision-makers and people affected by emergencies.
- Placed gender justice at the centre of emergency

responses to pressing environmental and social challenges.

- Provoked, challenged and stimulated individuals, communities, and organisations to change, and incorporate gender justice in emergency planning and response.
- Gave voice to the lived experience of disasters.
- Connected with others in Australia & overseas.
- Promoted key resources as tools to progress gender justice in emergency management.

This virtual event allowed speakers and delegates from across the globe to share perspectives from the UK, New Zealand, the Pacific, Southeast and South Asia, Iceland, the US and more. The learnings were two-way, as Australia – a country known as the 'climate change canary' – has much to share with other parts of the world.

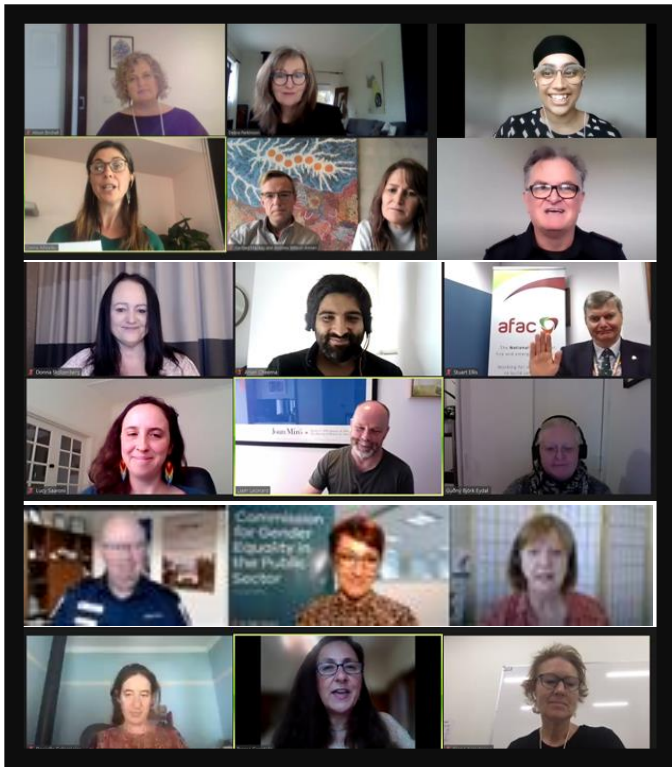
This case study series demonstrates the central role of community organisations as champions of place-based community led bushfire recovery.

"Principles of gender justice and feminist leadership offer new possibilities for responding to the climate crisis. This ground breaking meeting helped us to develop meaningful strategies to heal systemic injustices while promoting equity and sustainability." –

Lori Peek, Director of The Natural Hazards Center and Professor Of Sociology, University Of Colorado Boulder

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
- Women and Firefighting Australasia



Links to the sessions can be found below:

1. [Lead-In Sessions](#)
2. [Gender and Disaster Research](#)
3. [Gender Justice in Disaster: Inspiring Action Conference](#)

Look out for our Issues Paper, Outcome Statement and recordings of the Conference in early 2022 on our website.

Left: Engaged participants during one of the conference sessions - the true nature of a global remote conference in 2021!

Key Outcomes and Learnings

“The conference came at a particular moment: a global pandemic insisting we pay close attention to the evidence that existing approaches to addressing the gendered impacts of disaster have not led to increased safety.

The focus on gender justice in this conference clarified the ways systems and structures drive injustice: that they remain largely unchanged if gender equality work is decoupled from work that engages with patriarchal power. Many conference delegates placed patriarchy squarely back into the frame.

Many delegates insisted on also recognising other oppressive systems and structures like colonisation and racism... that these systems were sometimes the primary form of oppression experienced by an individual during disaster...

This Outcomes Statement reflects the core problem identified by the conference: ... During and in response to disaster, those with power are able to mobilise existing systems to minimise change and reinforce the structural inequalities on which their privilege depends.”

Naomi Bailey, Outcomes Statement (forthcoming AJEM 2022)

- Emergencies exacerbate existing inequalities including violence against women, discrimination against LGBTIQ+ communities and exploitation of vulnerable populations.
- Although disasters increase with climate change, most learn of disasters through media coverage. Gender analyses remains rare in disaster reporting as in research and in emergency management.
- This conference challenged the notion of a ‘one size fits all’ emergency response to disasters. While the emergency management sector takes an ‘interoperability’ focus, this conference highlighted that it is only attention to diverse groups and multiple oppressions that will see the sector effectively prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from disasters – in partnership with communities.

“The advancement of inclusion and diversity must continue to be a priority for our sector. Every initiative and program we implement helps to remove barriers to inclusion. Forums like this one will help continue the momentum, conversations and generate ideas for the future.” -

Commissioner Andrew Crisp - Emergency Management Victoria



Gender & Disaster Australia

An initiative of WHGNE, WHIN & MUDRI



Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

