

Media release: 9 July 2019

Diversity, inclusion and change, the new normal in Australia's emergency management sector

The Australian Disaster Resilience Conference and Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) National Conference will be held in conjunction with AFAC19

Local and international emergency services leaders will meet in Melbourne at AFAC19 powered by INTERSCHUTZ over four days in August, for what promises to be the largest and most inclusive AFAC exhibition and conference yet.

First response agencies, government, community, academia, not for profit, heavy industry, building, environment and engineering sectors are expected to drive the surge in attendance, activity and knowledge exchange.

For the first time, the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) National Conference will be held alongside the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference as part of an expanded AFAC19 program. Opening proceedings, the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Research Forum will reveal leading research into natural hazards, whilst also covering human factors such as resilience and recovery.

This year's conference theme *A shift to the new norm: riding the wave of change*, reflects how the sector is transitioning to a new normal in response to factors creating significant change, including frameworks for diversity and inclusion, empowering communities to be more resilient and better prepared for emergencies, and helping societies recover from natural disasters sustainably.

Over 120 speakers in six immersive streams will delve deeper into the subject of progression and share with attendees how to prepare for the future, based on the lessons learned from the past.

Stuart Ellis, CEO, AFAC commented on the transformation in the national emergency response sector.

"This year we're looking at some big issues affecting the community including population growth, climate change and technological advancements, but we're also challenging the sector by examining traditional areas of responsibility, agency capability, and diversity and inclusion initiatives to better reflect the communities we serve.

"AFAC19 is a vital opportunity to bring together the many segments that make up our evolving fire and emergency service sector, to discuss all issues that have become the new normal in emergency management," said Mr Ellis.

With big subjects and big changes to be covered, AFAC19 brings leading international and national keynote speakers to the conference, including:

- **Dr Robert Glasser**, Australian Strategic Policy Institute
Former Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- **Josephine Reynolds** The UK's first full-time female firefighter
Using My Voice

- **Eliane Miles** Social researcher, business strategist, trend analyst, demographer
Australia's changing communities: Now and towards 2030
- **Dr Lance O'Sullivan** Medical Innovator, former New Zealander of the year
Positive disruptive leadership
- **Bronwyn Weir** Lawyer, co-author of the Shergold Weir report, legal advisor to the Victorian Cladding Taskforce
Improving compliance and enforcement in the building sector through cultural change
- **Donna Wheatley** Commander, Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) Melbourne
Inclusion in the Fire Service – Storming to Norming

Co-produced by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and Deutsche Messe, AFAC19 will feature the largest exhibition to date.

In addition to nearly 200 companies showcasing the latest innovative products, services and solutions over 12,000sqm, the exhibition will feature an Expo Stage program with 30 practical presentations. Exciting live demonstrations will include live fire training from Smokeshield Australia, a flight crew extrication from a helicopter by Edge Training & Simulation, and a crash scene extrication from the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation.

AFAC19 powered by INTERSHUTZ is being held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) from 27-30 August 2019.

Further information is available at www.afaconference.com.au

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Notes to Editors:

- All keynote speakers are **available for interview** on request via media contacts below
- Available for interview on request via media contacts below:
 - Stuart Ellis, CEO, Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authority Council (AFAC)
 - Dr Richard Thornton, CEO, Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC)
 - Harvey Stockbridge, Managing Director, Deutsche Messe
- Accredited media are **invited to attend** AFAC19 and will be hosted in the media room. Additional support for live-cross, broadcast and interviews with stakeholders can be arranged. Limited broadcast vans can be accommodated onsite. Please register for your media pass by sending your name, position and publication title to elizabeth@zadroagency.com.au

Media contacts:

Zadro

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Images: All images can be found on the [AFAC Flickr page](#) and can be used royalty free.

1. AFAC18







About AFAC19

27-30 August | Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

A shift to the new norm: riding the wave of change

Returning to Melbourne for four action-packed days, AFAC19 powered by INTERSCHUTZ will attract delegates and visitors from emergency and security services agencies, all levels of government, non-government organisations, the private sector, research and education institutions and community groups from Australia and worldwide.

The AFAC19 program will incorporate the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Research Forum, the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference and The Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) National Conference.

Themed “*A shift to the new norm: riding the wave of change*” AFAC19 explores how the sector is transitioning to a new normal in a rapidly changing world.

AFAC19 powered by INTERSCHUTZ is a joint venture between Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and Deutsche Messe, trading in Australia as Hannover Fairs Pty Ltd.

Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC)

Website: www.afaconference.com.au/

Facebook: [@AFACnews](https://www.facebook.com/AFACnews)

Twitter: [@AFACnews](https://twitter.com/AFACnews)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/australasian-fire-and-emergency-service-authorities-council>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu18YmKgFcL27XBKFI7Klw>

Hashtag: #AFAC19

Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

Facebook: [@bnhcrc](https://www.facebook.com/bnhcrc)

Twitter: [@bnhcrc](https://twitter.com/bnhcrc)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/bushfire-and-natural-hazards-crc-a0919043/>

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/bnhcrc

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Website: www.aidr.org.au/adrc

Facebook: [@AIDRnews](https://www.facebook.com/AIDRnews)

Twitter: [@AIDR_news](https://twitter.com/AIDR_news)

LinkedIn: <https://au.linkedin.com/company/aidr>

Hashtag: #ADRC2019

Institution of Fire Engineers

Website: <http://www.afaconference.com.au/ife/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/InstitutionOfFireEngineersAustraliaBranch/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/institution-of-fire-engineers/>