

Media release: 12 August 2019

Diversity and inclusion changing Australia's emergency management sector for the better

AFAC19 to shine a spotlight on progressive inclusion at the largest and most diverse AFAC conference to date.

This year's AFAC19 powered by INTERSCHUTZ Conference theme *A shift to the new norm: riding the wave of change*, brings together a host of speakers and experts from across emergency management disciplines, to address how the sector can better embrace change and create a more robust sector, that better represents the wider community.

The conference and exhibition held in Melbourne in August, will explore how inclusion and diversity can lead to innovative approaches towards disaster prevention, response processes, and connecting with all communities to build resilience and aid in recovery.

More than 120 speakers in six immersive streams will delve deep into the changing landscape of fire safety, emergency management and research across the wider AFAC19 program and share with attendees how to prepare for the future, based on lessons learned from the past.

There will be a strong focus on cultural fire management and the knowledge and history to be shared by all Australian communities. A highlight of the Professional Development program on Friday August 30, includes an offsite excursion designed to educate participants on ancient indigenous land management practices. The field trip offers a new way of looking at the responsibilities and connection to the environment and how it can be incorporated into fire prevention, planning and community recovery.

Stuart Ellis, CEO, AFAC commented on the importance of having more diversity and inclusion in the emergency response sector.

"This year we're looking at some big issues impacting the community including population growth, climate change and technological advancements. But we're also challenging the sector to examine ourselves, including 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 management sector, to discuss all issues that have become the new normal in emergency management," said Mr Ellis.

To cover the big issue and topics, AFAC19 will bring leading international and national keynote speakers to the conference, including

- **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

- **Jamie Bertram** Environment Officer/ Aboriginal Liaison Officer, NSW Rural Fire Service
Rekindle country: Jubullum combined Hotspots and Community Protection Plan project
- **Donna Wheatley** Commander, Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) Melbourne
Inclusion in the Fire Service – Storming to Norming

AFAC19 powered by INTERSHUTZ is co-produced by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC), Deutsche Messe and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC and will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) from 27-30 August 2019. The Institution of Fire Engineers Australia National Conference and the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference will be held alongside AFAC19.

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

-ends-

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)
- 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

Elizabeth Williams, Group Account Director | elizabeth@zadroagency.com.au
+61 2 9212 7867 | +61 411 201 354

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

Hi-res images of speakers available on request.



Josephine Reynolds



Eliane Miles



Jamie Bertram



Donna Wheatley

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.

Institution of Fire Engineers

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

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

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

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/UCu18lYmKgFcL27XBKFI7Klw>

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