

Foreword



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The *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* has a unique role in the emergency management and disaster resilience landscape both within Australia and beyond our borders. As a premier publication providing thought leadership for emergency managers and those who work to support disaster resilience across a range of sectors, the journal brings into focus issues that are at the forefront of thinking.

This edition of the journal looks at the important issue of gender justice in disasters. As Professor Emerita Raewyn Connell writes, ‘before an event, someone’s gender is likely to shape their vulnerability and exposure’. This has implications for women, men and LGBTIQ+ people.

We know, through a growing body of post-disaster research in Australia and internationally, that responses to disaster are often shaped by hypermasculine images and terminology, with firefighter “heroes” battling the flames. These stereotypes not only exclude a segment of the workforce, they also add to the pressure for men within the sector to live up to an unhelpful and harmful cliché.

In the recovery phase of disasters, where community-led approaches are enshrined as one of the key principles of disaster recovery, those who hold power in communities are likely to make the decisions, and historically, elected officials are more likely to be men. Interrogating these hierarchies and pausing to reflect on who is not represented at the table will help create safer and inclusive preparations for future hazard and emergency events. This is particularly critical in

regard to preventing increased violence against women after disasters – an issue we know is both neglected and preventable.

This edition includes the proceedings of Gender and Disaster Australia’s Gender Justice in Disasters conference held in May 2021, when the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were being experienced across the world. As we head into the third year of the pandemic, and in the context of compounding natural hazards being experienced in Australian communities with heatwaves and bushfires in the west and flooding in northern Australia, considerations of gender and justice are critical as we collectively work to mitigate the impacts of disasters for communities.

Implementing gender impact assessments at the earliest stage to avoid unequal outcomes, using gender checklists in evacuation centres to ensure centres are safe and accessible for everyone, and the work being done by the Champions of Change Coalition Fire and Emergency Group to improve gender balance and create inclusive workplaces, are just some of the examples of actions underway to improve gender justice in disasters.