DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: BUILDING STRENGTH AND CAPABILITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Annual Project Report 2017/2018

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project, Diversity and Inclusion: Building strength and capability, relies on the generosity and willingness of our end-users to open up their organisations and give their time to explore a difficult, and sometimes potentially contentious issue. Research on diversity and inclusion (D&I) requires the same environment that implementing D&I needs: mutual trust and safe spaces where open and honest conversations can be had, and a willingness to be candid about the history of the issue in each organisation.

We especially thank the working group and each of the three agencies that have been the subject of our case studies: Fire and Rescue New South Wales (FRNSW), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), and the South Australian State Emergency Services (SASES). Inviting researchers into your 'house' can be a daunting task. Without a full 360-degree view, it is difficult to fully understand the complex context associated with D&I, so the research team is very grateful for the access we have been given. We are also extremely grateful to the D&I practitioners within and beyond these organisations who have generously shared their experience and knowledge with us throughout the process, which was invaluable to this study.

We would like to thank the following people for their contributions:

The members of our working group: Janine Taylor, Sonja Braidner, Steve O'Malley and Lisa Jones, and special advisors Mal Connellan, Joe Buffone and John Beard for their encouragement, contributions to, and guidance of, this study. Andrew Short, Dermot Barry, Callum Sweeney, Diana MacMullin, Faisal Atcha and David Carmen for their contributions to the research process during the first phase of this project. The members of our stakeholder group and the BNHCRC for their support and encouragement.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Commonwealth of Australia through the Cooperative Research Centre program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diversity and inclusion: Building Strength and Capability is a three year project that has been commissioned by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC which commenced in July 2017. As a new project it has been important due to the sensitivity associated with this area to develop supporting governance and a working relationship with our case study organisations to enable the research. We have established a working group, a broader stakeholder group and also external advisors to the project. We have also developed specific knowledge sharing arrangements and protocols for this project.

In our first year, we completed a large body of work to understand the Emergency Management Sector (EMS) context in which diversity and inclusion is occurring in both organisations and the community. Diversity and inclusion has been examined through three lenses, organisational, economic and the community. Key research undertaken during this phase was:

- A literature review of organisational, economic and community diversity and inclusion literature
- Case study analysis of three communities using semi-structured interviews.
- 585 spatial maps of diversity in Australia using 2011 -2016 census data.
- A survey of 539 community members, relating to their values and perceptions of the community and analysis of this.
- Case study analysis of three EMS Organisations using semi-structured interviews and publicly available documents.
- Analysis of changing capabilities of the three case study organisations using publicly available documents.

This work has provided the basis for the next phase of work; the development of a framework that will support better management and measurement in the EMS organisations of diversity and inclusion.

The project has encountered some challenges in its first year and has had to adjust its research plan to accommodate both the needs of our stakeholders and the dynamic EMS environment. This has resulted in a need to renegotiate milestone deliverables in the middle of the first year and the review of the first phase. We have also brought forward the delivery of the draft framework as it became clear that this was needed to support and focus the second phase of the research.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, this has been limited across the broader stakeholder group due to the focus on the case study organisations and also the need to complete and have approval of key aspects of the work before communicating it more broadly. As the focus for the research will change next year, engagement with the broader stakeholder group will become more expansive.

It has been a busy year for the project but at the conclusion of its first phase, it is tracking ahead of its schedule and well positioned for the next phase of the research.

END-USER STATEMENT

Heather Stuart, Cluster Lead End User, Manager, Knowledge and Lessons | Knowledge and Lessons Management, *NSW State Emergency Service - State Headquarters*

As the Cluster Lead End User I am pleased with the progress of the Diversity and Inclusion Project in its first year. The project is addressing an area that presents significant challenges for the emergency management sector.
The project faced some challenges this year with initial data collection and analysis needing to be undertaken before wider, in-depth stakeholder engagement could be undertaken.

With the release of the first of the findings from the project I believe that the contributions this project will make to the sector will soon become evident.

Dermot Barry, Deputy Chief Officer, *South Australia State Emergency Services, South Australia*

I have found the project to be both challenging and enlightening. Whilst it has confirmed some of the good things about the SASES in relation to the existing diversity of the agency, it has also highlighted many areas where we have room for significant improvement. The challenge for all of us moving forward is to drive greater diversity in a resource constrained environment. I am confident that the research completed to date and the ongoing work of the team will help inform our strategies and support our success.

Sonja Braidner, Lead Diversity and inclusion, Fire and Rescue, *Fire and Rescue New South Wales*

The Bushfire Natural Hazards CRC "Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability" research project is a ground breaking opportunity for Australian emergency services industries. The project brings together practitioners and academics with deep expertise to construct an informed narrative of what inclusion really looks like and means to our organisations.

The project has already begin to explore some incredibly nuanced territories which defy previous assumptions and unpack the real mechanics behind staff engagement. In addition, it is discovering a wider sphere of benefits brought about by increased diversity within our services, than initially understood. The research is beginning to unearth the wicked questions about Emergency Service cultures and through its trusted partnership with stakeholders, I believe this project will be a watershed for our agencies.

This is complex adaptive work and as such, I am proud to be involved with this project. FRNSW is already beginning to benefit from some incredibly potent data to date which, will help better target our inclusion, equity and diversity energies to bring about successful and authentic organisational change; enabling our service to flourish with innovation, ready to meet the challenges of the coming decades.

INTRODUCTION

The EMS is a diverse and complex sector whose key purpose is the protection of life and property by implementing 'a range of measures to manage risks to communities and environments' (Emergency Management Australia, 1998, p39). Their scope of activities spans the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) spectrum and requires a range of activities that contribute to the wellbeing of communities.

The context in which many of these organisations operate is changing due to:

- The increasing intensity and frequency of events due to climate change, and the increasing costs associated with these events.
- Changing demographics, (particularly in relation to the increasingly diverse community to be served).
- New technologies (particularly digital technology).
- Resource constraints and decreasing volunteer numbers.
- The need to build resilience in both organisations and their communities to reduce future costs and impacts of future events.

As these dr1ivers are dynamic and systemic they are changing the focus of EMS activities from shorter-term tactical approaches across the PPRR spectrum, to longer-term strategic approaches that focus on future outcomes. These drivers are also driving the need to innovate across the EMS and develop new services that aim to increase resilience of both the organisations themselves and the community. This fundamentally changing the nature of the relationship EMS has with the community from delivering a service **to** them to working **with** them. (Young et al. 2018). There is also a recognition that emergency services need to better reflect the communities they work to serve (National Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2011, NEMC 2011) to achieve this outcome. Effective diversity and inclusion are central to this agenda.

Currently there are 'unacceptably low levels of diversity' in the EMS (AFAC 2016). There is however, a growing awareness that there are a number of benefits that can result from increasing diversity in organisations. However, effective implementation is complex due to:

- The need for significant cultural change in the face of entrenched cultural attitudes at organisational and community levels about what emergency services are, how they should operate, and who should be developing, implementing and managing these processes.
- Lack of clarity as to what diversity is and means, the value of the benefits diversity offers, and how to best place and integrate diverse people into current operational activities.
- There is a current lack of understanding what is effective and how to measure this.

If EMS are to capitalise on the emerging opportunities and fufil their future potential in this area, they will need to develop new ways of thinking and working. Diversity is not new to EMS organisations and there are existing strengths and knowledge that can be built upon. Understanding what is effective and why and how this agenda can be progressed is critical to achieving future outcomes.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project *Diversity and inclusion: Building strength and capability*, aims to assist understanding and practice of diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the Emergency Management Sector (EMS) through the identification of current measurement, strengths, barriers, needs and opportunities in emergency management organisations and the community.

The key need identified in the scoping phase of this project was to understand what effective diversity and inclusion is, and what this means for EMS organisation in terms of practice and measurement. This has become the project's primary focus. We have developed a definition of effective diversity to guide the project, which is:

> "The result of interactions between organisations and individuals that leverage, value and build upon characteristics and attributes within and beyond their organisations to increase diversity and inclusion, resulting in benefits that support joint personal and organisational objectives and goals, over a sustained period of time." (Young et al., 2018, p19)

The project is examining diversity and inclusion systemically through a values, narratives and decision-making context across organisational, community and economic themes, using case studies. Aspects of diversity being examined are: culture and ethnicity, gender, demographic status (age and education) and disability (physical). These will be considered through the key drivers outlined in the following section on context, which are currently shaping current and future EMS organisations and communities.

We are using a case study approach and the participating organisations are Queensland Fire and Rescue (QFES), Fire and Rescue New South Wales (FRNSW) and South Australian State Emergency Services (SASES). These represent different types of organisations in the EMS. They range from small to large, across paid and volunteer workforces and are at different phases of implementing diversity. The community case studies selected are Border Town in South Australia, Bendigo in Victoria and South-western Sydney in New South Wales, representing rural, regional and urban communities.

It has three project phases:
- Understanding the context in which diversity and inclusion exists in EMS organisations and the community.
- Development of a diversity and inclusion framework suitable for the EMS.
- Testing and utilisation of the framework.

The aim of this research is to develop a practical framework tailored to the emergency management organisational context that builds upon and leverages current strengths and expertise within the EMS. This will be developed collaboratively with our end-user group as part of our research process. Its purpose is to support better management and measurement of diversity and inclusion by providing a basis for more effective evidence-based decision making. The framework can be built upon in the future by EMS organisations as practice progresses.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Our team at Victoria University specialises in end user based research using systemic analysis that integrates research into decision making, as part of the research process. This process co-designs and develops both the research and its outputs with the end users to ensure that research products are fit for purpose. Key phases of this process areas shown below (Figure 1).
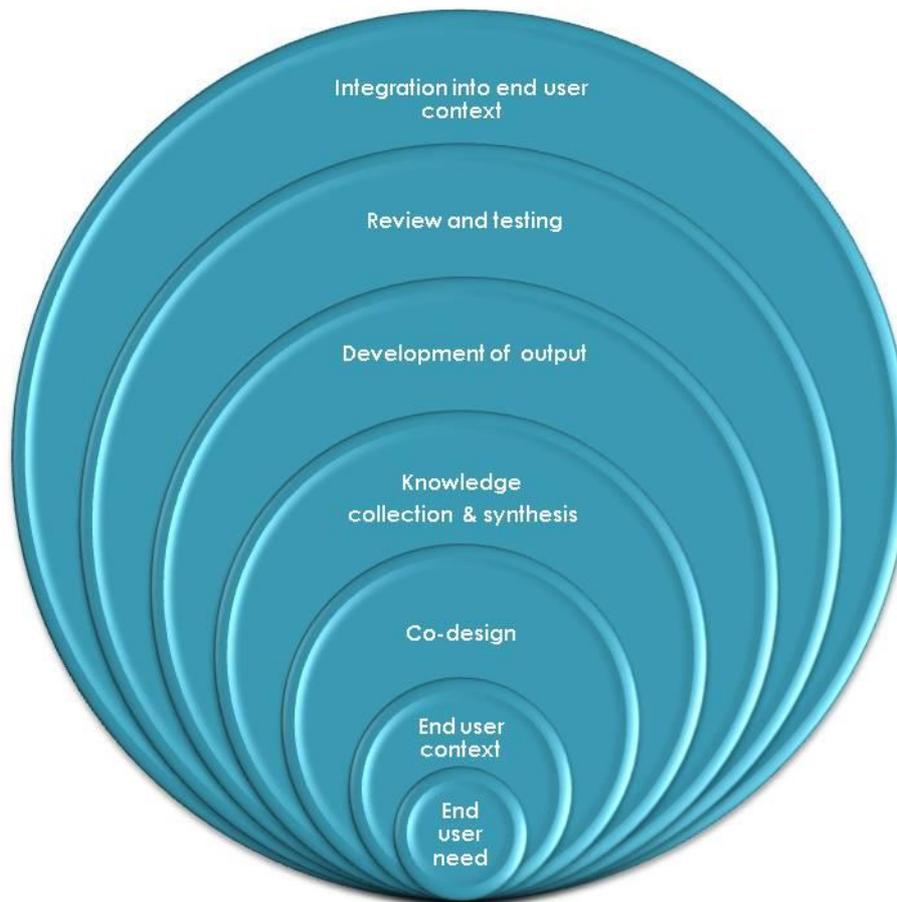
FIGURE 1 IMPLEMENTATION PHASES OF END USER BASED RESEARCH, YOUNG C 2016

The project is uses a transdisciplinary approach which combines different academic methodologies with end user knowledge. Outputs are tailored towards the decision making context of our end users and the collation and integration of end user knowledge is a key part of our research.

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MILESTONES AND KEY ACTIVTIES

KEY MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

Milestone	Deliverable	Status
1..1.1	Complete values and attitudes survey development	Completed
1.1.2	Poster for BNHCRC Conference	Completed
1.1.3	Quarterly reporting	Completed
1.2.1	Complete diversity maps (community)	Completed
1.2.2	Complete values and attitudes surveys	Completed
1.2.4	Quarterly reporting	Completed
1.3.1	Complete initial economic, organisational and community assessment	Completed
1.3.2	Deliver draft reports organisational, economic and community assessments	Completed
1.3.3	Quarterly reporting	Completed
1.4.1	Deliver final report organisational, economic, community assessments	Completed
1.4.2	Complete review of phase 1	Adjusted
1.4.3	Quarterly reporting	Completed

TABLE 1 MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES PHASE 1

All milestones and deliverables (Table 1) have been achieved with the exception of the review of phase one which has been adjusted to enable stakeholders time to review the research to date. We have brought forward milestone 2.4.1 the delivery of the draft framework, as it was necessary to provide focus and direction for Phase 2 of the research. The different areas of research were delivered as separate reports rather than one large report to make the research more accessible for end users.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Key activities undertaken by the project during Phase 1 are summarised below.

1. **Literature review**
   Activities: Review of organisational, community and economic diversity and inclusion literature.

   Output: Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability literature review

2. **Values and attitudes survey**
Activities: Development of survey with working group and survey undertaken across 539 community members in NSW, VIC, SA and QLD.

Outputs: 10 minute online survey, Study of Community Values across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia report and summary of findings in powerpoint format.

3. **Diversity maps of community**
Activities: Spatial maps developed using 2011 and 2016 census data.

Outputs: 586 spatial maps and brief overview of the maps.

4. **Case study analysis of three communities**
Activities: 22 semi-structured interviews in Bendigo Vic, Boarder Town SA and South West Sydney NSW.

Outputs: Building Capability in Emergency Services: Diversity and Inclusion in the Community Report

5. **Case study analysis of EMS organisations**
Activities:
- 35 semi-structured interviews and publicly available documents, QFES, SASES, FRNSW and also interviews with Gloustercestire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Delivery of draft research in progress materials to each case study organisation.
- Delivery of finalized research in progress materials to each organisation for internal use.
- Delivery of Draft Summary of key findings, EMS organisational case studies and draft diversity and inclusion framework to case study organisations and selected members of the working group and GFFS.

Outputs: Research in progress reports for internal use for participating organisations of their specific organisational data (internal use only) and report presenting a synthesis of EMS Organisational Case Studies and the literature review (EMS organisational section) and Draft Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

6. **Analysis of changing capabilities of the three case study organisations**
Activities: review of case study organisations using publicly available documents from the last 10 years.

Outputs: Changing capabilities of Emergency Services summary case study report.

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder activities undertaken during this first stage of research to engage with both the project stakeholders and the broader EMS communities are listed below.

General engagement
- Update emails to keep the broader stakeholder group informing them of the research as it progressed and sharing knowledge.
- Four meetings with end user group to discuss progress of research.
- Meeting on an as needs basis with workgroup and individual members of the working group.
- Meetings with external participants associated with the project.
- Meeting with Joe Buffone our project mentor for discussion in relation to the first stage of the work undertaken.

Presentations
- Young. C. Invited representation, *Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability*, 'Unpacking Complexity' workshop: The Social Science of Emergencies, Disasters and Resilience.' Jointly QuakeCORE, the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Australia, and Fire and Emergency New Zealand, 25 May 2018
- Young. C. Presentation and workshop, *Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability,* Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Research Advisory Forum. Sydney, 12-13 April 2018
- Young. C. Presentation and workshop, *Diversity: building strength and capability,* Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Research Advisory Forum. Perth 5 April 2017
- Young. C. Invited lightening presentation, *Diversity: building strength and capability,* Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Showcase, Adelaide, 4-5 July 2017

Posters
- Young.C and Rasmussen. B. Poster, Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Showcase, Adelaide, 4-5th July 2017 and AFAC 2017 Annual Conference Sydney, 4-7 September 2017

ULITISATION

As this project is in its first phase of research, there has not been development of research products, as they are not due for development until the later part of Phase two. However there have been early indications of uptake of research and concepts and ideas in case study organisations, who have been closely involved in the process. There has also been use of the literature review reported anecdotally by other EMS organisations and expressions of interest in exploring the use of the 10 minute values and attitudes survey by two project stakeholders in their organisations.

PUBLICATIONS LIST

1 Cormack, C. (2018) Survey of Community Values. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC. Melbourne, Australia
2 Pyke, J. (2018). Building Capability in Emergency Services: Diversity and Inclusion in the Community.   Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC. Melbourne, Australia
3 Rasmussen, B., Maharaj, N. (2018) Changing Capabilities of Emergency Service Organisations. Case Study Summary. Melbourne: VISES, Victoria University.
4 Young, C., Pyke, J., Maharaj. N., Rasmussen, B., and Jones, R. (2018). Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability literature review. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC. Melbourne
5 Young, C., Jones, R.N., and Kumnick. M., (2018) The Long Road: Building Effective Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management Organisations. Case Study Synthesis and Draft Framework. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC. Melbourne, Australia

TEAM MEMBERS

THE RESEARCH TEAM

- Professor Bruce Rasmussen, Victoria University
- Celeste Young, Victoria University
- Dr Joanne Pyke, Victoria University
- Professor Roger, Jones Victoria University
- Dr Craig Cormick, Thinkoutsideofthe

WORKING GROUP

- Janine Taylor, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
- Sonja Braidmer, Fire and Rescue, New South Wales
- Steve OMalley, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne
- Lisa Jones, Emergency Management Victoria

EXTERNAL PARTICIPANTS

- John Beard, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, UK
- Joe Buffone, Emergency Management Australia

PARTICIPATING END USER ORGANISATIONS

- Australian Capital Territory Emergency Services Agency
- Country Fire Authority, Victoria
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Western Australia
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victoria
- Inspector- General for Emergency Management, Victoria
- Fire and Rescue, New South Wales
- Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
- Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne
- South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service
- State Emergency Service, New South Wales
- State Emergency Service, South Australia
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
- Rural Fire Services, New South Wales
- Emergency Management Victoria
- Tasmanian Fire Service

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1. AFAC. (October, 2016). Diversity and inclusion within AFAC. Discussion Paper, Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, Melbourne. Davidson, M. J. and Fielden, S. L. (2004). Individual diversity and psychology in organizations. John Wiley.

2. National Emergency Management Committee (NEMC). (2011). National Strategy for Disaster Resilience. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, at: https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/2153/nationalstrategyfordisasterresilience.pdf

3. Young, C., Pyke, J., Maharaj, N., Rasmussen, B., and Jones, R. (2018). Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability literature review. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC. Melbourne