**Mitigation - Response - Recovery: Getting the balance right.**

Emergency and disaster management has advanced dramatically over the past five years with fire and emergency service agencies worldwide implementing new and innovative ways to mitigate and respond to disasters.

Recent worldwide catastrophic events have identified the need for better recovery capability. This year's conference will take a detailed look into how agencies are "getting the balance right", within new, diverse, inclusive multi agency disaster management services.

**Topics:**

1. Transformational Leadership
2. Predictive Services
3. Capacity for Coordination and Recovery
4. Building Back Better
5. Disaster Resilience
6. Partnerships
7. Integration, Diversity and Inclusion

# 1. Transformational Leadership

The way in which fire and emergency services are delivered is transforming; there are a number of global shifts that present both opportunity and challenges for fire and emergency service agencies, and land management organisations. In order to transform organisations - leaders need to think strategically, innovatively and be focused on the wider world and longer term. Leaders need to be entrepreneurial, creative, inclusive, agile, adaptive and responsive.

Leaders are critical in the success of any change program, they need to share the vision and understand what is expected of them in driving and supporting the transformation process. Leaders need to be focused on engaging, empowering and inspiring the workforce, as well as being positive role models and displaying authentic and ethical leadership traits.

These leadership capabilities are essential to ensuring that fire and emergency service organisations are positioned to support their stakeholders and communities now and into the future.

**We encourage you to thinking big and broad when considering what Transformational Leadership means in your industry, your topic may consider:**

- Leaders and their role in engaging and inspiring the workforce, particularly through change / transformation
- Leadership ethics, building trust and integrity
- Capabilities required of leaders to be effective in the current environment
- The importance of leaders seeking feedback and self-reflecting
- The power of a highly capable leadership team
- Building successful and collaborative leadership teams
- The role of leaders in empowering and coaching individuals and teams to reach their full potential
- The strengths of leaders who can scan the macro environment and bring global thinking into their organisations.

# 2. Predictive services

Our sector relies on many forms of predictions and forecasts as the basis of many aspects of our work. Ranging from:

- Short term, minutes-hours, predictions of fire behaviour or flash flood;
- Medium term, hours-day, weather, fire spread or flood arrival or
- Long term, day-weeks, for cyclone or climate.

All of the predictions operate on a range of spatial scales and are used for community warnings, awareness, resource allocation and planning decisions.

**Predictive services can reflect the needs of the various partners in the sector as well as new and innovative approaches, your topic may consider:**

- Discussions about new data sources, new techniques, new models
- Examples of effective predictive capability, including how predictions and forecasts have been successfully used in operations and community preparedness, as well as informing mitigation and recovery
- Gaps in the ability to effectively predict particular behaviours or hazards
- Effective implementation and capability building in predictive services.

### 3. Capacity for Coordination and Recovery

Modern fire and emergency services organisations must develop methodologies and approaches to provide mitigation, response and recovery solutions that align with and exceed the expectations of government and communities. "To be good at it" does not cut it anymore. Organisations must work together in a coordinated, inclusive manner that makes a real difference to the outcomes for communities affected by disasters of all kinds. Whether it is cyclones, flooding, fire, and epidemic or man-made, the result has to be a stronger more resilient and recovered community than before the event.

To achieve this, organisations should embrace innovation and be encouraged to scan the external environment to see what is happening in the world and in communities, be strategic, visionary and think long term. In preparing for and responding to emergencies many players should have a "shared vision" and develop relationships, policies and procedures that work in times of stress. Coordinated efforts tend to be more cost effective and efficient.

**The greater the capacity for planning, mitigation, coordination, response and recovery the better the outcome, your topic may consider:**

- Multi-organisational planning activities, including coordinated information channels and reporting
- Testing the plan and measuring success
- The transition from disaster management to recovery including social and psychological recovery
- The role of social media
- Training and professional development solutions
- The role of local, state and federal government
- Managing organisational priorities in a coordinated environment
- Effective relationship management.

### 4. Building Back Better

The Productivity Commission's recent inquiry into disaster funding noted the importance of a more effective investment in mitigation rather than relying on more costly recovery following a disaster. It also noted how little 'betterment' has been undertaken during infrastructural and residential rebuild in the past.

Critical to getting the balance right is a culture of building back to levels better than were there originally, in order to meet changing risk profiles. This includes building back in ways that mitigates the effects of future climate change as well as meeting the changes of future mobility and population growth. Governments and local planning groups are now required to proactively mitigate through new design and infrastructure.

**Just rebuilding what was there before is not a route to a resilient future, your topic may consider:**

- Innovative approaches to rebuilding following disaster
- Partnership and collaborations which have resulted in a more resilient community
- Adaptive and dynamic solutions to rebuilding
- Examples of successful rebuilding where disasters have been avoided through rebuilding better
- The importance of Legislation and Standards
- Effective land use planning
- Capitalising on lessons learnt.

## 5. Disaster Resilience

A resilient community is one that possesses the capacities, skills and knowledge that enable it to prepare for, respond to, and recover effectively from disaster and adapt positively to a changing environment. It is a community that works together to understand and manage the risks and vulnerabilities that it confronts, and enhances its capacity to address its vulnerabilities. Disaster risk reduction is seen to be a good investment in response to the impacts of climate change and the increased frequency of extreme weather events.

The National Strategy for Disaster Resilience represents a whole of nation resilience based approach to disaster management that recognises that resilience is a shared responsibility among individuals, households, businesses, governments and communities. Emergency management agencies are not solely responsible for reducing risk or building resilient communities, they are one of the sectors, together with local government and NGO's, who assist in the achievement of these goals through the provision of risk management and mitigation activities.

Similarly, all levels of government need to work closely with other agencies and the broader community to deliver effective land-use planning and management that enables the natural environment to better withstand the impacts of natural disasters.

**Of key importance is using a multiple benefits approach whereby environmental, economic and social elements are integrated to achieve sustainability and resilience across the broader community and the natural ecosystems on which we rely, your topic may consider:**

- Community led approaches to building resilience
- The role of animals and livestock in resilience
- Innovative ways business can contribute to disaster resilience
- Local government initiatives that strengthen community networks and contribute to disaster resilience
- Harnessing volunteer capabilities
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Local community connectedness and knowledge
- Building environmental resilience
- Applying land use planning, development and environmental management in a flexible, adaptive management approach
- Fire and other land management practices that promote natural resilience
- Measuring disaster resilience.

## 7. Partnerships

Partnerships are recognising and developing trust across sectors, services, industries and communities. The modern fire and emergency service organisation needs to identify all possible strategies to build safer communities. Identifying and establishing these partnerships across pre-planning, response and recovery is integral to ensure the effective flow of communication, resources and assistance necessary.

It is recognised that reducing community vulnerability to disasters depends on building relationships on multiple levels through increased engagement between the emergency services, land management services, private industry, and diverse community sectors. We know that trust and respect are vital to developing these relationships. We recognise that fire and emergency services must encourage mutual learning and understanding through industry based initiatives involving emergency management services, non-government organisations and community organisations throughout Australasia.

**Many organisations have implemented projects that build community awareness and resilience through increased participation, respect and solid partnerships, your topic may consider:**

- The role of partnerships in recovery, community engagement strategies and delivering land management services
- Developing effective partnerships to build safer communities
- Working together to share accountability and responsibility
- Interoperability
- Industry sectors assistance capability, including the Australian Defence Force.

## 8. Integration, Diversity and Inclusion

There is an increasing expectation from governments for emergency service organisations to work smarter and seamlessly to meet the expectations of the community. Humans are predominately unconsciously biased and this may stifle the organisations' ability to mature and meet these expectations. Recent studies have indicated that organisations that have a higher gender and ethnic diversity are more likely to outperform organisations with lower levels of diversity.

A shift in thinking needs to occur to ensure that emergency services take full advantage of the professional expertise and knowledge of its people and recognise that further integration into other services, recruitment for diversity and that a culture of inclusion is adopted. To achieve genuine integration, and a diverse organisation that fosters inclusion, we need to, "let it go".

**Increasing integration, diversity and inclusion in our industry will build the foundations for a successful all hazards workforce that reflects the communities in which organisations operate, your topic may consider:**

- Respectfully breaking down the barriers, silos and un-conscious bias at organisation and industry levels
- Enabling organisations through cultural diversity
- Diversity is counting people, inclusion is making people count
- Encouraging and promoting interoperability with a shared vision
- How agencies are managing people to shape the future of the organisation
- The role of equipment, systems and infrastructure in supporting a diverse workforce
- Adopting new paradigms.