

# Mary Farrow – Emerald Community House

**THE FUTURE IS NOW  
FOR THE INCLUSION OF  
WOMEN IN EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT  
PLANNING.**



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



# An Equal Opportunity

1978

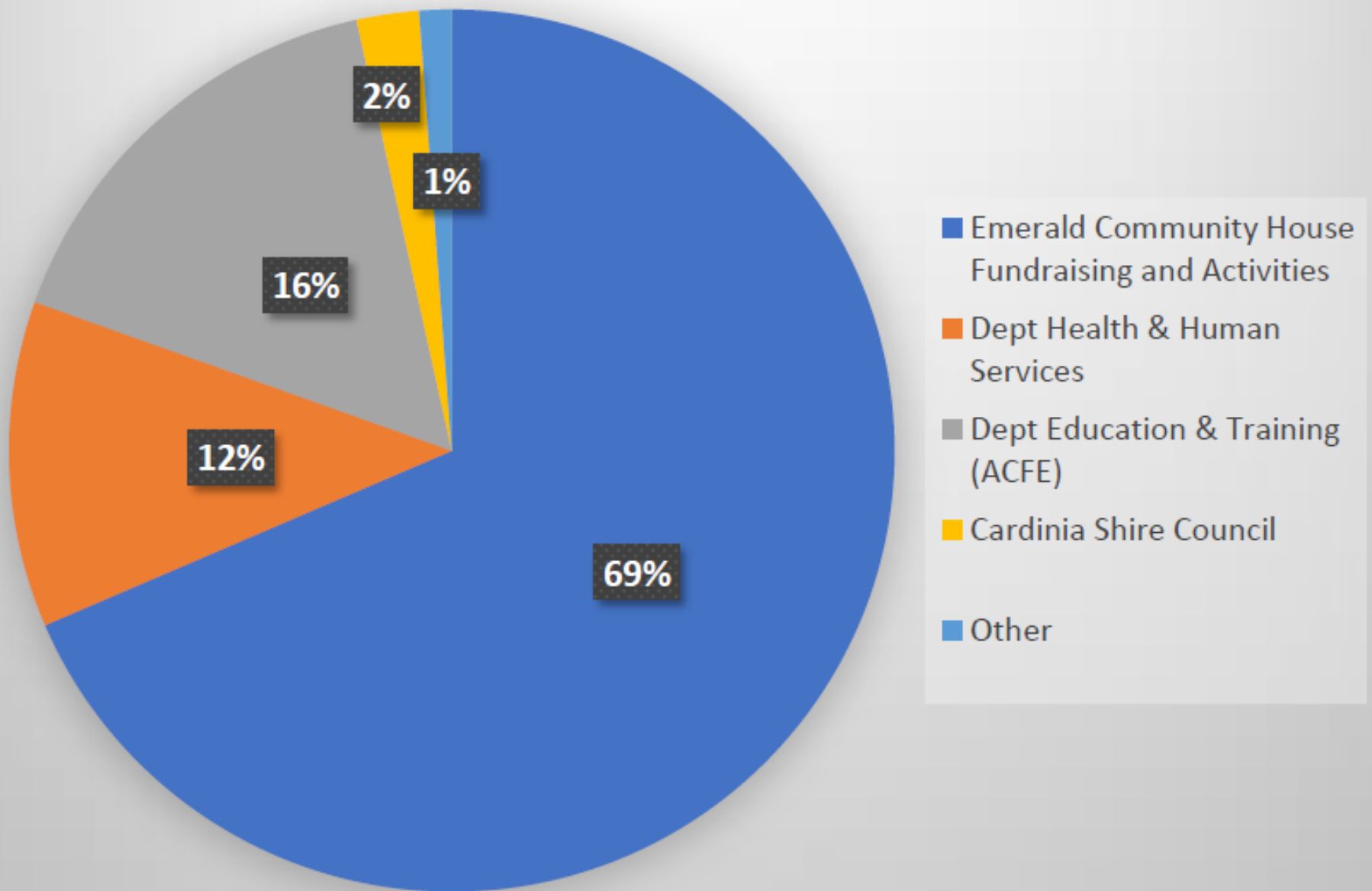
- "Bellwomen"



Landmark  
AT&T Gender  
Discrimination  
Case



# Major Income Sources including Grants



# The Neighbourhood House Community Development Model

- **Involve** the community and encouraging participation
- **Identify** community needs and aspirations
- **Determine** appropriate actions in response to needs
- **Partner** with others organisations
- **Deliver** quality programs, activities and services
- **Evaluate** the effectiveness

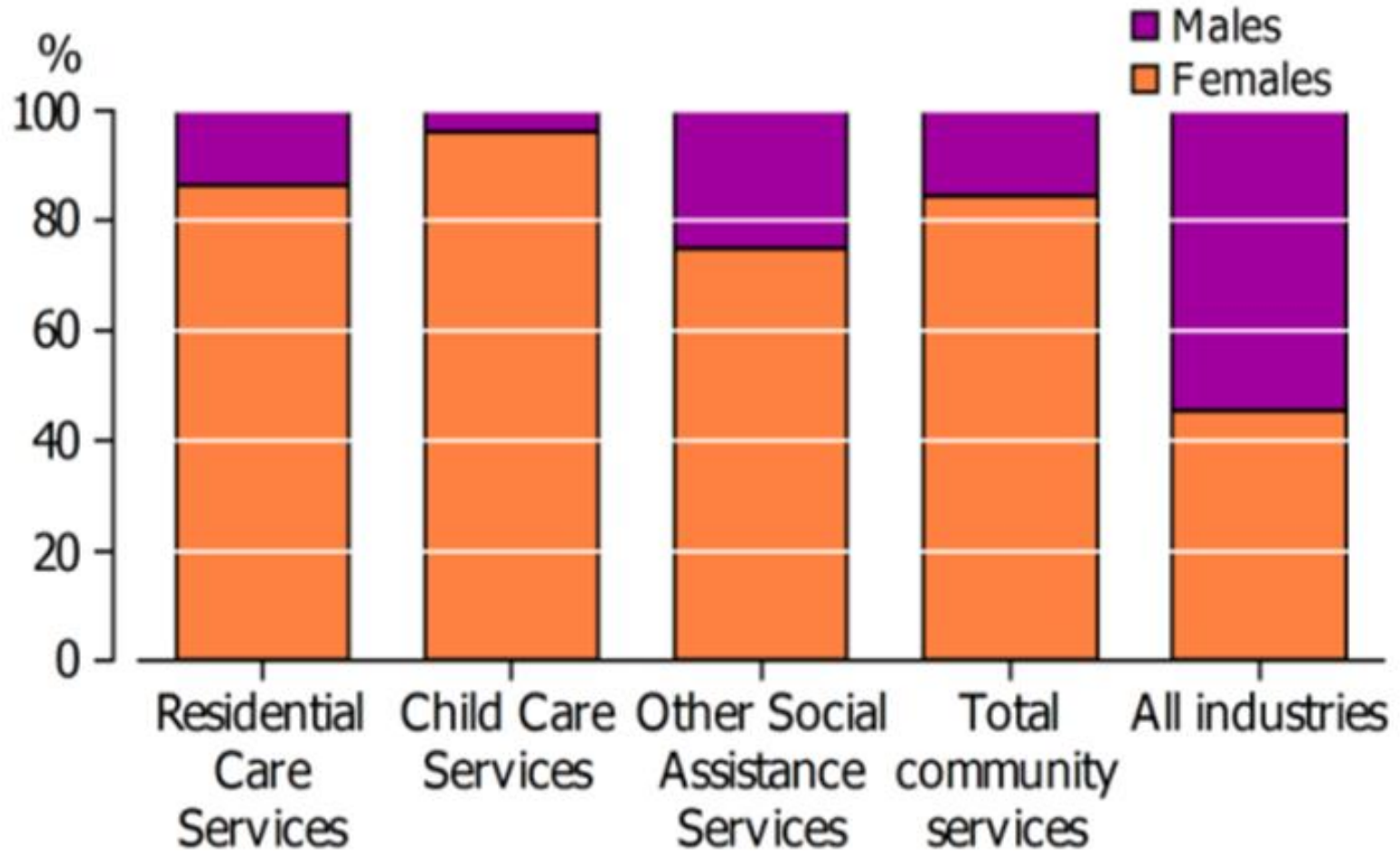
# Neighbourhood House Connection

2016 Victorian Neighbourhood Houses Annual Survey

**Table 1: Neighbourhood house participants - gender by age**

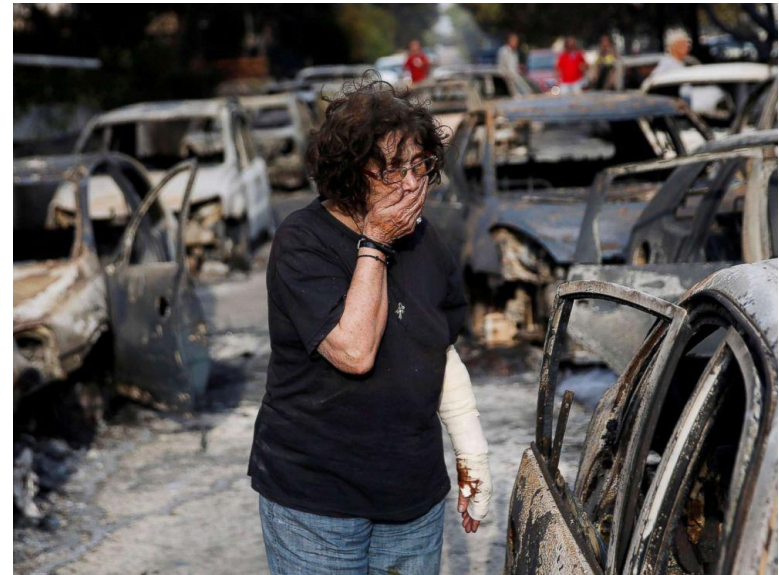
Age range	Female	Male
0-9	56%	43%
10-19	56%	42%
20-29	71%	27%
30-44	80%	20%
45-54	73%	26%
55-64	76%	23%
65-79	74%	25%
80-89	70%	29%
90-99	68%	29%
100+	25%	33%

# ABS Employment Data



# Disaster threats for women and those in their care

- Compounded negative outcomes from disasters
- Risk of physical, mental and emotional violence
- Financial disadvantage
- Lack of representation
- Displacement
- Loss of empowerment
- Exclusion
- Death



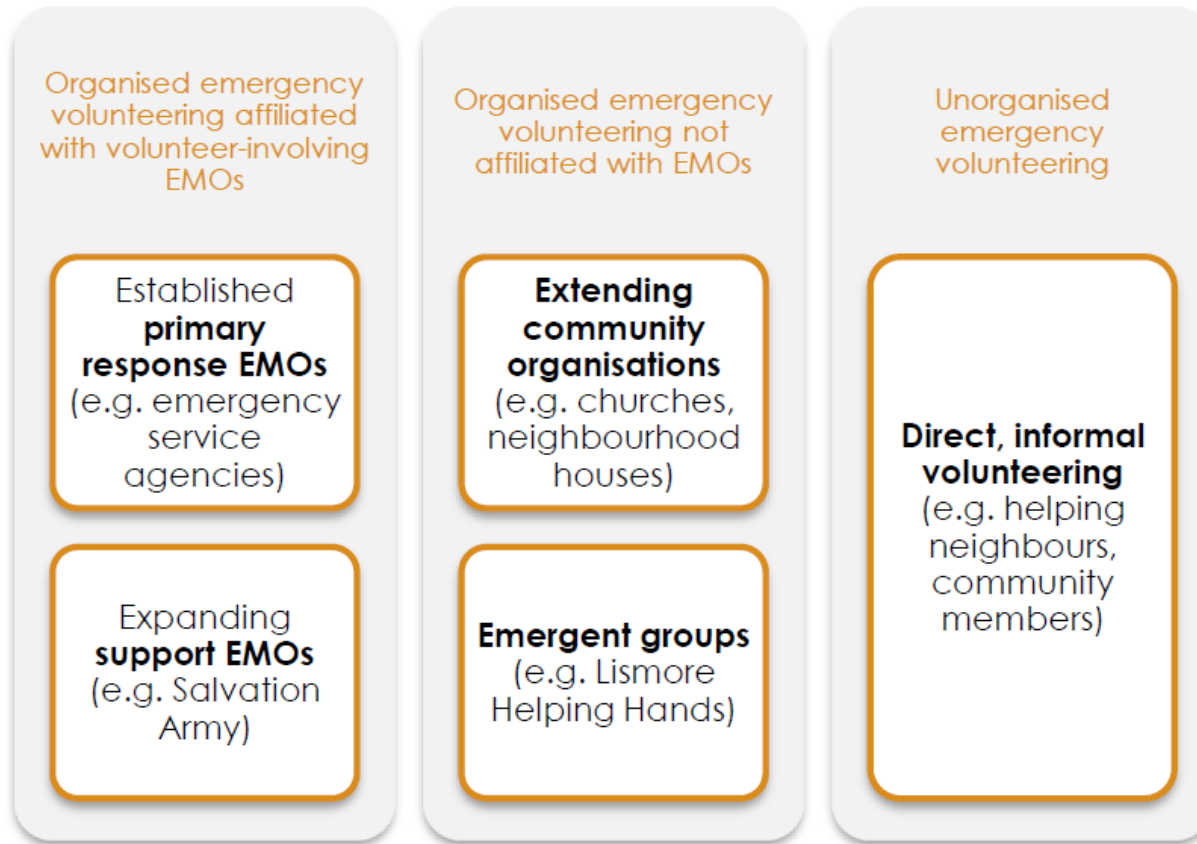


# Obstacles for Women



- Traditional roles and responsibilities
- Diversity averse emergency management culture
- Abuse and violence
- Exclusion from decision-making
- Skills development
- Access to resources

# Emergency volunteering 2030: Views from the community sector



RMIT University  
& Bushfire and  
Natural Hazards  
CRC  
August 2019  
Kruger, T.,  
McLennan, B.

**FIGURE 1: FIVE ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXTS FOR EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERING**  
(BASED ON DYNES 1970, FIGURE 6-1, P. 138 [SEE 33]).

# Stereotypes, Expectations and Rights

- Stereotypical portrayals of men and women in disasters need to be reduced
- Women are often expected to make sacrifices to look after traumatised partners, children and elderly parents.
- Women's rights to autonomy, employment and freedom from violence – even after disasters - must be unconditional

# Community Development Conflict of Interest

Government employees who are working in a community development role can also have a conflict of interest when they are employed by the council or state government. They can find it difficult to represent the community's interests.

**Flirting with danger: practice dilemmas for community development in disaster recovery, Community Development**, Lynda Shevellar, Peter Westoby & Meredith Connor (2015)

# Gender Equity Targets

- Ensure equal access and representation of women in disaster planning, response, recovery and resilience activities
- Enforce existing laws against abuse, harassment, bullying
- Establish gender equity policies
- Provide training opportunities in the trades for women

# Gender Equity



- Inclusion in planning, relief, response, recovery stages
- Resilient practices valued
- Increased leadership roles
- Balanced representation
- Reduction of harm
- Improved outcomes for all



# Prevention of Violence Against Women in Emergencies ACTION PLAN

## Project goal:

To prevent violence against women by building local community, cultures and organisations that are gender equitable and support respectful and equal relationships and non-violent norms between men and women.

- *In general, emergency management services and Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees (MEMPC) are very male-dominated, both in numbers and within their culture.*
- *It is largely men who decide how a community mitigates, responds to and recovers from disaster. Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships is one of the gendered drivers of violence against women*



# Legislation

- Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)  
Section 24
- The Local Government Act 1989 (3c) (3d)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Vic Charter of Human Rights and  
Responsibilities Act 2006



# Emergency Management Reform Victoria

- New legislation allows the Minister to issue guidelines in relation to the REMPCs' and MEMPCs' business and meetings.
- Ensure that there is direct community representation on the MEMPCs.
- Each MEMPC must consult the community when preparing the emergency management plan for its municipality

# UN Sustainable Development Goals



5 GENDER EQUALITY

The icon for Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality, is a white female symbol (a circle with a vertical line and a horizontal line) with an equals sign inside the circle. It is set against a red background.



# ECH Initiative: #SDG5

- Ministerial guidelines for MEMPCs and REMPCs to ensure that at least 50% of these committees (and sub committees) be composed of women members, especially from the community sector
- If the community is at the centre of emergency management goals, then community women need to be at the planning and decision making table.

# Inclusion of Women



- Women are a key interface in community wellbeing
- Community development practitioners help to strengthen communities
- Community caring/services sectors mostly staffed by women
- Inclusion and input improves survival outcomes
- Equal representation in decision making ensures equity

# Women in Trades Building the Future Equalizing the Past



# Lessons Learned

When we invest  
in women,

*everyone benefits!*



# Further reading

<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/6031/diversity-in-disaster-monograph.pdf>

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