



WHY GENDERED FIRE PLANNING?

THE  
FACTS

# 'Why gendered fire planning?'

- ◆ On Ash Wednesday in 1983, "Most people **died during late evacuations** and the majority of those were **women and children**, whereas most of the **men killed had been defending property**".<sup>[1]</sup>
- ◆ "There is evidence of disagreements as the fire approached. In virtually all cases this was between **women who wanted to leave** and take the men with them, and **men** who either **wanted to stay and defend** or who felt they had to support others in that role."<sup>[2]</sup>
- ◆ Expectations of **heroic masculinity set men up for failure**: Bushfire CRC researchers write: "Societal pressure sees **men attempt to perform protective roles** when the fire threatens that many have neither the knowledge nor ability to fulfil safely".<sup>[3]</sup>
- ◆ "The kids where the **parents fought about leaving**, there was **trauma afterwards**."<sup>[4]</sup>
- ◆ **Women escaped alone or with children**, often in terrifying circumstances, or had limited autonomy.<sup>[5]</sup>
- ◆ I have first-hand knowledge that there are **women, wives**, on Black Saturday who **wanted to leave town** and their **husband said, 'No, we're staying to fight this'**. And they stayed to fight and they both died.<sup>[6]</sup>
- ◆ "**We never had a fire plan**. You thought he'd be here. My fire plan was him."<sup>[7]</sup>
- ◆ Only **five per cent** of people have a written fire plan.<sup>[8]</sup>

See Postcard 1: 'Questions'

1. Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission [VBRC] (2010). The lessons learnt Volume 1: The Fires and the Fire-Related Deaths, p. 336.

2. Handmer, J., O'Neil, S., & Killalea, D. (2010). Bushfires Final Report: Review of fatalities in the February 7, 2009, p.22.

3. Whittaker, J., Eriksen, C. & Haynes, K. (2016). Gendered responses to the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, Australia, p.205.

4. Long-term Disaster Resilience. (2018). [www.genderanddisaster.com.au](http://www.genderanddisaster.com.au), p.79.

5. What's so hard about writing a fire plan? (2018). [www.genderanddisaster.com.au](http://www.genderanddisaster.com.au)

6. Men on Black Saturday, (2013) p.37. [genderanddisaster.com.au](http://genderanddisaster.com.au)

7. The Way He Tells It, (2011) p. 104. [genderanddisaster.com.au](http://genderanddisaster.com.au)

8. McLennan, J. (2015) Capturing Community Readiness. *Hazard Note 4*. Melbourne: BNHCRC.

