

Diversity and Inclusion Awards

Inclusivity Initiative Award Winner

Family Violence Contact Officer Program (FRV)

In 2017, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (now Fire Rescue Victoria) pioneered the Family Violence Contact Officer (FVCO) program. This sector-leading initiative established a network of specially trained peer-level officers to voluntarily serve as a confidential first point of contact for employees impacted by domestic and family violence.

Distinct from traditional EAP services, the FVCO model leverages the trust inherent in peer relationships. Employees are trained to support victim-survivors, bystanders, and perpetrators, providing a nuanced approach to safety planning and resource navigation. The program facilitates a safe, judgment-free environment for disclosure, offering immediate guidance on external specialist services, legal frameworks, and organizational support.

Now in its seventh year, the initiative has matured into a robust support pillar, encompassing organisational frameworks, systems as well as the support network that the FVCO provide- a program underpinned by expertise and collaboration between our Diversity and Inclusion and Psychological Services teams.

In December 2025, the program welcomed an additional 13 FVCO. Now, all FVCO must also be Peer Support Officers. It includes mandatory biennial skill refreshers to ensure FVCOs remain proficient in addressing modern complexities, such as technology-facilitated abuse and evolving legislative requirements. By embedding this expertise within the workforce, the agency is successfully de-stigmatizing the pursuit of help, transforming a private crisis into a managed workplace safety priority.

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Family Violence Contact Officer Program (FRV)



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Inclusivity Initiative Encouragement Award

Mobile Shower Blocks (FFMVic)

FFMVic established the Next Generation Base Camp Program to address critical limitations in Victoria's mobile base camp model, including ageing infrastructure, exclusionary facilities, limited scalability and reliance on reactive funding. Approved in February 2022, the program was designed to build a robust evidence base and inform long-term government investment in base camp capability.

The initiative followed a phased delivery approach:

Phase 1 undertook a comprehensive needs assessment, drawing on extensive stakeholder consultation, deployment history, climate modelling and international research with comparable agencies across Australia, Canada and the United States. This analysis identified key gaps in safety, accessibility, fatigue management, asset governance and operational agility.

Phases 2 and 3 translated these findings into practical solutions, including targeted asset renewal. A key outcome was the design and construction of next-generation mobile shower containers, replacing outdated facilities with units that are safe, durable, inclusive and fit for contemporary firefighting operations. The design was informed directly by operational staff, women in firefighting, safety specialists and logistics experts.

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Inclusivity Initiative Encouragement Award Mobile Shower Blocks (FFMVic)



Diversity and Inclusion Awards

Women's Equality Initiative Award Winner **Gender Deployment Tracker (FFMVic)**

The Deployment Tracker is a data-driven tool that provides transparency and ensures women have equitable access to operational deployments across FFMVic. Built using data from existing systems and new reporting mechanisms, the Tracker provides near real-time visibility of deployment demographics, including gender, location, role type, and leadership level.

The initiative consolidates disparate data sources into one clear reporting framework. It enables operational leaders to see who is and is not being deployed, and where inequities may be emerging. The Tracker is updated regularly during the fire season, allowing leaders to adjust to patterns proactively rather than retrospectively.

Importantly, the Tracker is not simply a reporting tool – it is a mechanism for accountability. It forms the evidence base for FFMVic's gender-equity commitments, including ensuring women comprise at least 30% of deployments. Regions use the Tracker to make informed decisions, identify capability gaps, monitor diversity within rosters, and ensure opportunities are shared fairly.

The Deployment Tracker has enabled FFMVic to move from assumptions to evidence, from reactive to deliberate. It has become a foundational tool for ensuring women are not unintentionally excluded from the operational experiences that shape future leadership readiness.

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Women's Equality Initiative Award Winner
Gender Deployment Tracker (FFMVic)



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Women's Equality Initiative Encouragement Award **Inclusive Uniform Initiative (CFA)**

The Werribee Fire Brigade Competition team, both juniors and seniors raised concern about the white uniform pants and their suitability for female members wishing to participate. They voiced that the traditional white pants were challenging for female members as the white pants can be seen through/become transparent when wet or dirty, making members feel self-conscious and uncomfortable competing.

Members from the Werribee Brigade formed the "Inclusive Uniform Team" who undertook a consultative process within the Brigade to evolve the uniform from white to blue. From the inception of the initiative, the team kept stakeholders informed and worked together with the rest of the Brigade over many months to rally support and progress the uniform.

This included challenging some longstanding traditions. The CFA/VFVB Championships and competitions are one of CFAs proudest and longest running events, stemming from a time when female members were not represented at all in the competitions. However, the competition and female involvement in CFA and emergency services have certainly evolved from these times and the current standard uniform of white pants is also something that needs to catch up with current times.

Conversations around menstrual bleeding and female health were also had around the station. This also being a strong preference by the female membership to change to a darker more discrete colour pant. This evolved into female hygiene products becoming standard inventory on Brigade appliances and kept in stock at the station.

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Women's Equality Initiative Encouragement Award
Inclusive Uniform Initiative (CFA)



Diversity and Inclusion Awards

Diversity and Inclusion Champion

Angela Cook (CFA)

Angela Cook has exemplified the qualities of a champion for diversity and inclusion throughout her 20 years at CFA. She has an unwavering commitment to equity in emergency management, particularly in engaging diverse communities and supporting people at higher risk with emergency preparedness.

Her leadership is evident in her role as CFA's representative on the Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership, where she advocates for inclusive strategies that reflect the needs of culturally diverse communities.

Angela's dedication to person-centred emergency planning, especially for people with disability, highlights her belief that individuals are the experts in their own lives. She has advanced initiatives such as the Preparing Vulnerable People project, embedding research-based approaches that empower people to actively participate in emergency decision-making.

Persistence defines her career, as shown by her leadership in developing CFA's first Koori Inclusion Action Plan and guiding its evolution into the Aboriginal Engagement Guidelines (2018) and now the First Nations Engagement Guidelines. Angela's work demonstrates capability, compassion, and a relentless drive to embed fairness and equity at the heart of emergency management.

Diversity and Inclusion Awards

Diversity and Inclusion Champion
Angela Cook (CFA)

