Transforming through diversity and inclusion capability - the pathway to achieving diversity benefits

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State Emergency Service, New South Wales
South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service
State Emergency Service, South Australian
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Rural Fire Services, New South Wales
Fire and Rescue, New South Wales
Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Western Australia
Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne
Tasmanian Fire Service
The work behind this
Where we started

Diversity and inclusion is part of a transformative process needed within EMS organisations.

- Inclusion is the key
- It requires a whole of organisation approach
- People can’t become what their organisations can’t envisage
- D&I needs to be connected to tasks and the benefits valued
- Future capabilities and skills
What we did

We undertook the following activities:

- Focus groups with brigades and units
- An economic case study of FRNSW, Indigenous Fire and Rescue Pathways Employment Strategy (IFARES) program
- A workshop in December 2018 to explore attributes, skills and capabilities for the future
This poses a real risk

overwhelmed
frustrated
anger
horrified
apathy
overwhelming
short-sighted
seen that before
opportunity
missed opportunity
What we found

Consequences of D&I shocks included:

- Increase in conflict
- Loss of trust
- Reduction in ability to respond effectively to natural hazard events
- Failure of programs
- Decrease in community safety and increase of risk
What we found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk category</th>
<th>Impact type</th>
<th>Primary capital at risk</th>
<th>Risk example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OHS</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Decreased wellbeing of workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputational</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Poor public perception of organisation, loss of social licence with community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational (service delivery)</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Reduced service and response capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory and legal</td>
<td>Direct and indirect</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Legal action for discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Reputational damage and disengagement due to perverse outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic risk (D&amp;I program implementation)</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Inability to fulfil future community needs due resistance to programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Inability to transform and secure organisational sustainability due to lack of strategic vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Direct and indirect</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Disruption of D&amp;I programs and strategies due to changing political agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (community livelihoods)</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Reduction in community safety and increased vulnerability in diverse cohorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Unforeseen liabilities from D&amp;I failure (e.g., increased costs of insurance premiums due to discrimination claims)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Breakage of trust, cultural values at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Increase in community risk due to loss and degraded natural environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Pre-existing risks associated with D&I, and those exacerbated by the poor implementation of D&I programs and strategies, are not included.

D&I-related risk categories (direct or indirect), the major capitals at risk and risk examples (Young & Jones 2019)
What we found

“Everything is bullying now, no one knows what it means anymore, it is everything and nothing.”
— Workshop participant

Different behaviours related to impact and environment (Young & Jones 2019)
Skills, attributes and capabilities

‘We are in a difficult time and people need leaders they can trust. People won’t listen or follow someone, they don’t feel safe with – why would they?’ Workshop participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most allocated (&gt;2)</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Capabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Agility and adaptiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inquisitive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inuitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most allocated and most prioritised attributes, skills and capabilities from the workshop (Young & Jones 2019)
Benefits

A preliminary economic assessment of FRNSW IFARES program found an estimated $8 million economic benefit to the community, with a benefit cost ratio of 20 to 1 and a range of invaluable intangible benefits.

(Maharaj and Rasmussen 2019, forthcoming)
Poor management of D&I or lack of inclusion of diversity can cause substantial risk.

**However….**

Implementing effective diversity and inclusion can reduce this risk, enhance service delivery and result in substantial benefits.
The framework for diversity and inclusion management and measurement

Three areas link strategy and task with innovation and change

- Strategic
  Process of change
- Organic Growth
  Bottom up engagement
- Programmatic
  Continuous improvement
The Strategic process

(Diversity and inclusion transformation process, The Long Road, Young & Jones 2018)
The programmatic process

Value
- Evaluate against strategic objectives. Identify learnings.

Create
- Identify who needs to be involved and establish relationships
- Development of activities

Manage
- Implement activity/activities
- Establish monitoring and evaluation

Leverage
- Engage, negotiate, communicate, reflect and adjust
- Develop implementation plans
# The organic growth tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key actions</th>
<th>Supporting tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Connect and understand            | • Observe, listen  
• Seek out ideas                                                                 |
| Developing relationships          | • Welcome difference  
• Enable ideas, trust  
• Build common language, purpose  
• Establish boundaries  
• Build on existing values, strengths  
• Be reflective, flexible          |
| Collaborate and empower action    | • Enable leadership, ownership of actions  
• Leverage capabilities, skills  
• Create pathways for two-way dialogue/feedback  
• Acknowledge, respect contributions  
• Watch, listen, learn, reflect, adjust |
| Celebrate and share               | • Evaluate, celebrate, share achievements/learnings  
• Acknowledge, reward achievements/contributions |
## Joining the dots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk category</th>
<th>OHS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Exclusion or discrimination due to difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Low morale, disengagement, WorkCover/liability claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Develop inclusive culture program, education, measurement of wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Decrease in insurance premiums, increase in trust, wellbeing and community safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key tasks</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation, engagement/communication, program development, project and risk management, innovation, education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>Cultural and emotional intelligence, sensitivity, trustworthy, empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Engagement, communication, educational, strategic, innovation, project and risk management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Risk management, self-care, cultural and emotional capability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abridged example of linking D&I risk to day-to-day tasks across organisations (Young & Jones 2019)
Final thoughts

‘If only senior managers dealt with these issues in the same way they do the emergency incident – by giving it their full attention.’

Ex-firefighter, Dr Dave Baigent
Thank you

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Research reports can be found at