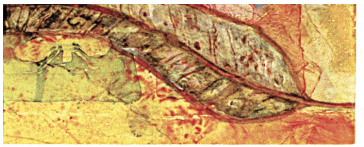

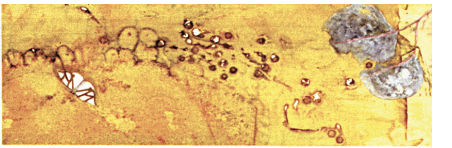

THE FACTS

WHY GENDERED FIRE PLANNING?

‘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”. [1]

♦ A report into fatalities on Black Saturday found, “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.” [2]

♦ 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”. [3]

♦ “The kids where the parents fought about leaving, there was trauma afterwards.” [4]

♦ Women escaped alone or with children, often in terrifying circumstances, or had limited autonomy. [5]

♦ 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. [6]

♦ We never had a fire plan. You thought he’d be here. My fire plan was him. [7]

♦ Only five per cent of people have a written fire plan. [8]

See Postcard 1: ‘Questions’

1. Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission [VBRC]. (2010). The lessons learnt Volume 1: The Fires and the Fire-Related Deaths
2. Handmer, J., O’Neil, S., & Killalea, D. (2010). Bushfires Final Report: Review of fatalities in the February 7, 2009.
3. Whittaker, J., Eriksen, C. & Haynes, K. (2016). Gendered responses to the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, Australia.
4. Long-term Disaster Resilience. (2018). www.genderanddisaster.com.au
5. What’s so hard about writing a fire plan? (2018). www.genderanddisaster.com.au
6. Men on Black Saturday, p.37. genderanddisaster.com.au
7. The Way He Tells It, p. 104. genderanddisaster.com.au
8. McLennan, J. (2015) Capturing Community Readiness. *Hazard Note* 4. Melbourne: BNHCRC.

Front Image: ‘Bringer of the Dawn’ by Ona Henderson (03) 9712 0393
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