



# Media Release

Victoria State Emergency Service

14 January 2021

## VICSES recognises ten-year anniversary of devastating La Nina floods



*A powerful La Nina system caused serious floods in Echuca in 2011 (VICSES)*

Ten years after La Nina generated flooding caused \$1.3 billion damage, the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) reflects on the devastating impacts, and powerful stories from those that responded.

- One third of Victoria experienced flooding or storm damage between Sep 2010 and Feb 2011 (70 local government areas) – see map below. VICSES responded to **34,000** requests for assistance in that time.
- Impacted townships in the **north west** included: Echuca, Carisbrook, Kerang, Charlton, Rochester, Echuca, Swan Hill, Mildura as well as significant parts of the Wimmera.
- Rainfall totals included 100-300mm for large areas of the state between 9 and 15 Jan, 2011 as part of the wettest January in Victoria ever recorded.
- It resulted in hundreds of evacuations, towns like Rochester 'split in half', damage to homes, businesses, farmland and critical water and waste infrastructure, including sewerage.
- VICSES was the first agency to implement recommendations from Black Saturday Royal Commission, including multi-agency Regional Controllers and Deputy Incident Controllers.
- Significant improvements have been made since to flood mitigation, warnings and response, with emphasis on including local communities in key decisions and providing timely and clear flood warnings.

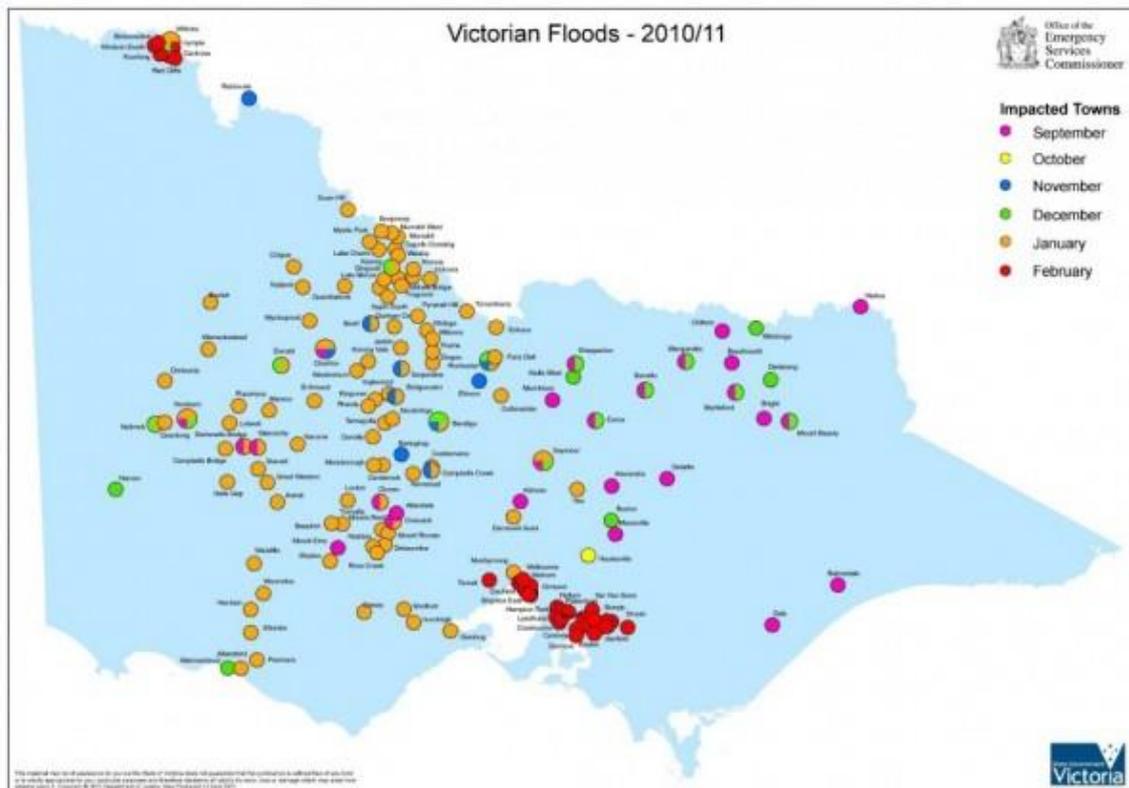
### For more information, contact:

VICSES State Media Duty Officer (6am-10pm)  
Phone: 1300 783 933  
Email: [media@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:media@ses.vic.gov.au)

- Victoria is now experiencing its first La Nina weather system since this event, with heavy falls earlier in January 2021 leading to flash flooding in Warrnambool and the Otway Ranges. VICSES has responded to 4,200+ callouts since the start of December 2020.

- VICSES Local Flood Guides are now available in over **140** at-risk townships

- The web-based intelligence platform FloodZoom is now the key source of data and intelligence for emergency services when responding to and monitoring floods. The platform has greatly improved agencies' capacity to predict potential consequences of serious flood incidents.



**Quotes attributable to Rochester unit controller Judith Gledhill:**

*I was new to VICSES a decade ago, and the experience of the 2010 and 2011 floods will stay with me forever. I remember the phones ringing off the hook, the town of Rochester split in half by floodwater, and nobody having the use of their showers or toilets in that time.*

*Our unit was supported by numerous SES volunteers from other areas, as well as CFA. We all learned some important lessons around keeping the community informed, and providing positive, pro-active messages – not just what we want people NOT to do.*

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*The devastating floods in the north west also helped inform VICSES' sandbagging policies – and our 'Bag it, Block it, Lift It and Leave' campaign. We encourage the public have sandbags prepared, put them in toilets, showers, and doorways during a serious flood event, put their valuables up high, and to leave safely.*

**Quotes attributable to Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp:**

*In the decade since the 2011 record floods in central Victoria, we've learnt a lot and made significant improvements to our emergency flood response to ensure the safety of at-risk communities."*

*The emergency management sector is committed to continuous enhancements in ensuring Victoria has the best emergency preparedness and response to keep the community safe.*

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