



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 on the Loddon River 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 included: Kerang, Charlton, Horsham, Echuca, Rochester, Wangaratta, Mildura, Melbourne and more.

- 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 on record.

- Dozens of evacuations took place, towns ‘split’ in half by flooding, with loss of productive farmland, serious damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure.

- 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 to flood mitigation, warnings and response since, with emphasis on including local communities in key decisions and providing timely and clear flood warnings.

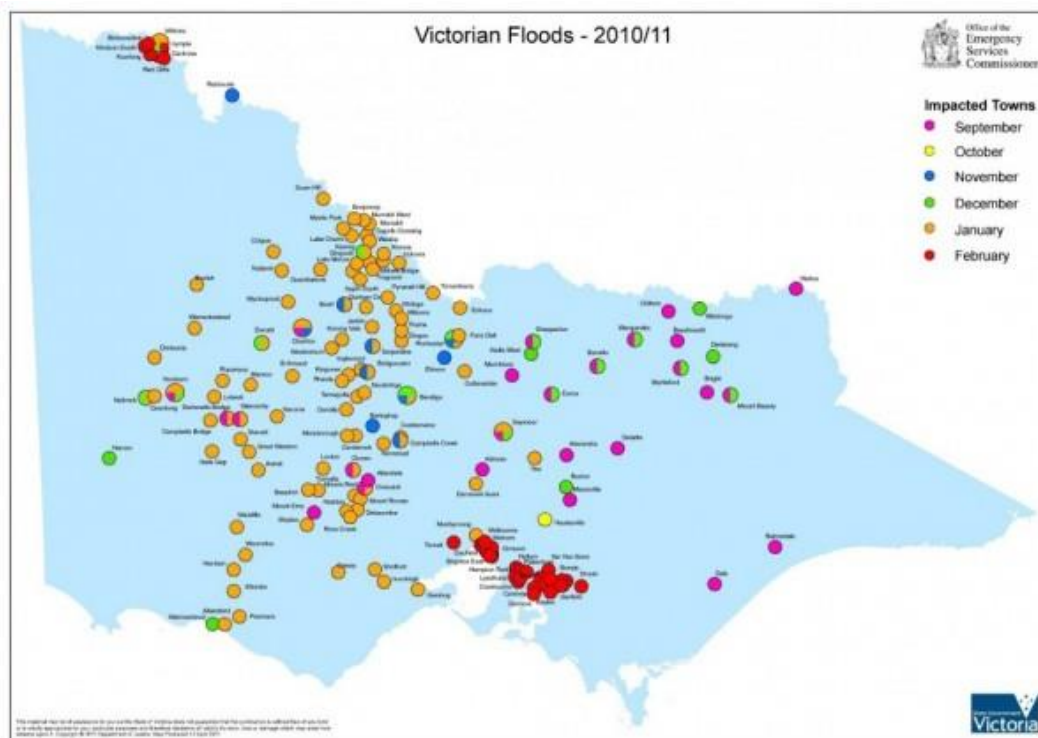
For more information, contact:

VICSES State Media Duty Officer (6am-10pm)

Phone: 1300 783 933

Email: media@ses.vic.gov.au

- 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 (making up 12% of calls from the last 12 months).
- 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 2010/11 incident controller Keith O'Brien and current VICSES north east Regional Manager:

I oversaw much of the 2010/11 flooding. It was a significant challenge at VICSES in terms of capacity, however we had fantastic support from other agencies. All volunteers and staff that took part were incredible, and gave greater than 100% effort.

Communities across the state banded together during what was a devastating time for thousands of locals, farmers, and businesses. In addition to emergency services, it was residents who made an enormous difference – whether it be sandbagging their own properties or neighbour's, assisting with clean-ups, and generally supporting each other through those floods.

For more information, contact:

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



Quotes attributable to 2010/11 incident Controller and current VICSES' mid-west Regional Manager Stephen Warren:

Some towns in the Wimmera, including Horsham, were split down the middle – but thanks to VICSES flood studies it was predictable and manageable. Other areas did not have completed studies so impacts were difficult to manage. Unfortunately, several towns back then were completely flooded with little or no warning.

VICSES has learned so much from the 2010/11 floods. Giving affected communities adequate warnings, and involving them in decisions that will impact their properties, are critical things we apply during serious incidents now. Whilst significant improvements have been made over the last decade, the community still need to be prepared for what may occur know what to do if they are threatened by rising floodwater.

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.

For more information, contact:

VICSES State Media Duty Officer (6am-10pm)

Phone: 1300 783 933

Email: media@ses.vic.gov.au