

SPRING 2023

Community Matters

VICSES

EDITION 24

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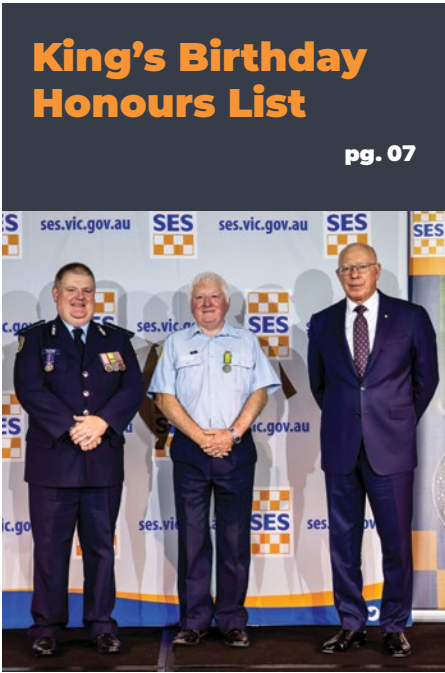


*Introducing
the new VICSES
Strategic Plan*

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Front Cover:

Members from the VICSES South Barwon and Bannockburn Units representing Victoria in the 2023 Australasian Rescue Challenge in Adelaide.



Interested in contributing?

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

It's a pleasure to welcome you to the third edition of *Community Matters* for 2023.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the remarkable VICSES volunteers from South Barwon and Bannockburn Units who participated in the 2023 Australasian Rescue Challenge in Adelaide. Taking home the award for 'Best Performed SES Team' is a wonderful accomplishment, and one that recognises the time and energy committed from each and every member involved.

Since the last edition of *Community Matters*, the 2023-2024 Victorian Budget was delivered, providing continued investment into VICSES. This included more than \$15 million towards 35 new Heavy Rescue Trucks, and more than \$26 million towards rebuilding the flood affected Rochester and Heathcote CFA and VICSES Units. Bannockburn and Kilmore will see new VICSES facilities, and additional works will be undertaken for the Frankston VICSES satellite facility in Skye as part of the Government's \$34.2 million commitment to redevelop local emergency services facilities,

which also included \$500,000 to progress planning for a future Footscray VICSES facility. As always, we are proud to support our volunteers with better facilities and equipment to help keep Victoria safe during major weather events and other emergencies.

Over the past several months, I was pleased to hear that a number of VICSES units completed visits to the Emergency Services Telecommunication Authority facility at Williams Landing. It is these behind the scenes experiences that equip and strengthen our emergency services sector, demonstrating our #WeWorkAsOne approach to emergencies.

As we enter the second half of 2023, the warmer weather will bring increased risk for our emergency services. From Murrayville to Mallacoota, I sincerely thank all VICSES volunteers for always being there when the community needs you most.



Jaclyn Symes
Minister for
Emergency Services



Welcome

Hello everyone, and welcome to the Spring edition of *Community Matters*.

In July we officially launched our VICSES Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Developed in consultation with our volunteers, staff, and key stakeholders, this four-year plan sets ambitious goals for our capability, systems, culture, and our leadership within the emergency management sector, ensuring that we remain positioned to meet the ongoing needs of our communities and rise to the opportunities presented. Thank you to everyone involved in the development of this plan, that leads a clear pathway for the future of VICSES. You can read more on page 6.

Congratulations to former VICSES Bright Unit Controller and current Hume Regional Unit member Roy Kennedy, who was honoured with the prestigious Emergency Services Medal on 11 June. Roy has dedicated over 12 years to supporting VICSES and his wider community, exemplifying leadership, direction, and providing emotional guidance and support to other members. Read more about Roy's dedicated service on page 7.

In other exciting news, another well-deserved congratulations is in order for our VICSES South Barwon and Bannockburn Unit members, who competed in this year's 2023 Australasian Rescue Challenge and took home the coveted 'Directors

Shield for Best Performing SES Team', demonstrating their incredible skills across a number of challenging scenarios. See our members in action and read more on pages 4-5.

On 15 July the official opening of the new VICSES Fawkner Unit – formerly known as VICSES Broadmeadows Unit – was held. It was a wonderful and well-deserved celebration for unit members, and I was pleased to attend the official opening alongside many others. Learn more about this fantastic new facility on page 9.

Last but not least, this will be my final *Community Matters* message before departing on long service leave and stepping down as Chief Executive Officer. It has been an honour and a great privilege to lead the organisation over the past 10 years and to work alongside such an exceptionally dedicated group of members, both volunteers and staff. I am grateful for the support of the Board, our members, and the sector during my time as CEO, and look forward to seeing VICSES continue to grow and serve our communities into the future.

Kind regards,

Stephen Griffin
CEO Victoria State
Emergency Service

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The Victoria State Emergency Service respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Authorised and published by Victoria State Emergency Service, 168 Sturt Street, Southbank, Victoria.
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FEATURE

VICSES crew win ‘Best Performed SES Team’ at the Australasian Rescue Challenge

By Krystal Buckle, Corporate Communications Advisor, VHO

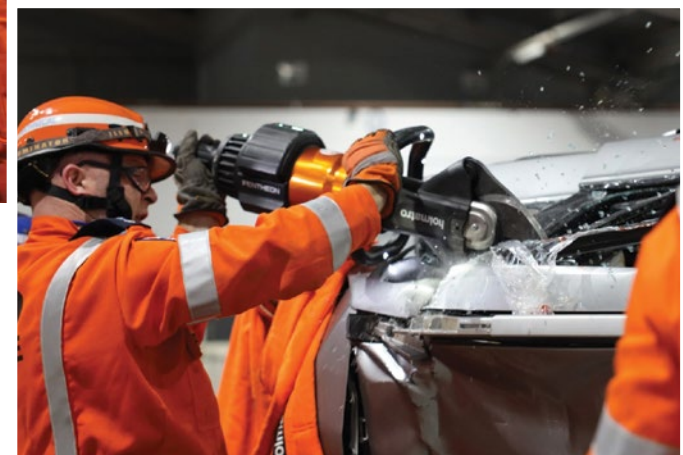
And the Australasian Rescue Challenge (ARC) Directors’ Shield for Best Performed SES Team goes to... our very own **VICSES South Barwon** and **Bannockburn Units**!

A big congratulations to Team Leader Caroline Taylor, Josh Hutton, Lisa Keys, Adrian Van Doren, Blake Shawcross and Andrew Kuppen – who have done their communities and the service proud.

From 29 June to 2 July, their skills were put to the test in Adelaide alongside 300 personnel from

23 teams across Australia, England, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

Based on real emergency incident scenarios, ARC 2023 enabled the dedicated personnel to demonstrate their skills, techniques, and knowledge through a range of road crash



rescue challenges. Participants also attended several functions where they learnt from subject matter experts and experienced rescue instructors from around the world.

“Our VICSES team completed three simulated road crash rescue scenarios – controlled, time-critical, and entrapped. With each evolution the team increased in

confidence, which was evident with each patient being extricated from the vehicles. VICSES was one of only a few teams that managed to remove all patients from the vehicles in the allotted timeframe of thirty minutes,” said Operations Officer – Capability Improvement, Gerry Sheridan, who also attended the event.

Team medic and South Barwon Deputy Controller, Lisa Keys said the event was “really well organised and a lot of fun. You meet heaps of different like-minded people, make friends that return year-after-year, and get to bounce ideas off each other. It’s beneficial to see what’s up and



coming in the industry and get a chance to put it into practice.”

“It’s given me a good opportunity to become a more effective and efficient operator, increasing my confidence in my abilities so when I do go out on the road, I know what I can achieve. I’m always proud to put the orange on and represent our service whether it’s in a competition or out on a job,” continued Lisa.

The challenge is hosted annually by the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation, and engagement

from teams across Australasia is intended to promote shared knowledge, a consistent approach, and to build ongoing relationships between emergency management agencies.

Once again, well done to our incredibly skilled VICSES team. ■



The VICSES team (members from Bannockburn and South Barwon Units) with Operations Officer - Capability Improvement Gerry Sheridan at the ARC dinner.



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GENERAL NEWS

Launch of the VICSES Strategic Plan 2023-2027

By Krystal Buckle, Corporate Communications Advisor, VHO

Following extensive consultation with volunteers, staff, and other key stakeholders, VICSES was pleased to launch its 2023-2027 Strategic Plan in July.

Building on the achievements of the previous 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, as well as the implementation of the VICSES Operating Model Review, this four-year strategy sets ambitious goals for our capability, culture, and leadership role within the emergency management sector.

With varying systemic forces shaping the operating environment over the next four years, VICSES faces a period of marked challenge and opportunity. This plan ensures that our organisation will remain positioned to meet the ongoing needs of our Victorian communities, and rise to the opportunities presented over the next four years and beyond.

Our People are at the heart of our organisation, and are at the core of everything that we do. This plan reflects the importance of working together to strengthen our service delivery, partnerships, and workplace procedures and systems.

To help support the implementation of this Strategic Plan, VICSES has established a strategic planning and implementation framework to link aspirations to capabilities, using a set of defined concepts, processes, and tools.

VICSES is grateful to everyone involved in the development of this plan that leads a clear pathway forward for our organisation. ■



Download

You can download a poster version for your unit or office on our website via the QR code.



Farewell from Andrew Crisp, former Emergency Management Commissioner Victoria



After five years in the role, on 28 April 2023 Andrew Crisp announced his resignation as Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC). Embarking on another chapter, Andrew sends a special message of thanks to our VICSES volunteers during his time as EMC.

It's been great seeing many of you in different parts of the state over the last couple of months – from the very north, to the far south west, north east and East Gippsland. It's been a real privilege to see your skills put to the test during training in Emerald, and participating at the opening of the new VICSES Unit in Fawkner.

These visits have been particularly special and important to me, given they coincide with my last few months as Emergency Management Commissioner before I retire from the role

at the beginning of August. I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to meet so many of you and say thank you for the work you've done and continue to do to keep your community safe.

Victoria has managed some significant emergencies in the last five years and indeed beyond our borders. A few that come to mind – the 2018 West Footscray fire, the 2018-19 and 2019-20 bushfires, the pandemic, the 2021 June extreme weather event and most recently the 2022 Victorian Floods. VICSES volunteers have

been critical to the preparedness, response, and recovery for all these events. I've always been proud of the way you lead, support and work with communities and other agencies in everything you do, in often difficult and challenging circumstances. You have also provided significant support to our colleagues and communities in other states and territories.

I've said it before, but I'll say it again – you truly are the Swiss army knife of the emergency services.

While I am finishing in the role as Emergency Management Commissioner, I am confident you will continue to do what you have always done, in working with your community to keep them safe. Many thanks also to your families and employers for supporting the work you do.

The Minister for Emergency Services has announced that

Rick Nugent will be the new Emergency Management Commissioner. Rick has had a distinguished career with Victoria Police with a strong focus on community safety and working with communities. I know you will welcome and support him in the way that you have made me feel part of your organisation and units.

I am looking forward to taking some time off and spending it with family and friends. Please continue to have a focus on your own health and wellbeing and take a break if you can.

Thank you again to each and every one of you for the amazing work you've done and continue to do to keep Victorians safe. And if we all do our jobs to the best of our ability, I know we'll get through anything.

Take care, Andrew ■

Roy Kennedy honoured in King's Birthday List

By David Murphy, Media Advisor, VHO

Congratulations to our latest Emergency Services Medal (ESM) recipient, former VICSES Bright Unit Controller and current Hume Regional Unit member, Roy Kennedy!

Roy has tirelessly supported and contributed to VICSES and the wider community for over 12 years. From locating missing bushwalkers in the Mount Buffalo area, to the rescue of a

16-year-old in fast flowing water, and being part of a working group to lead and implement best practices for paragliders in need of rescue, Mr Kennedy has been an invaluable team member and leader. He has exemplified



emotional guidance, leadership, and support to others, and assisted in operational support to the Bright community and beyond.

Mr Kennedy's dedication and commitment towards his chosen field of assisting the community

shows the passion that is well respected among his peers and regional staff. His continued sacrifice of personal time, over an extended period, is over and above what is expected of a volunteer. ■

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CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

VICSES women Ready 2 Lead

By Krystal Buckle, Corporate Communications Advisor, VHO

Did you know that extreme weather and natural disasters disproportionately impact women?

According to data collected by the United Nations¹, women are societally, culturally, and economically most at risk during extreme weather and natural disasters. Understanding the different needs and experiences of women of all ages is critical, as is actively seeking their input and leadership moving forward.

VICSES members recently took part in Lifesaving Victoria's 'Ready 2 Lead' program, which included a cohort of 47 women from across our emergency management sector. Over April-June, structured sessions both in-person and online provided an opportunity

for participants to hear from senior leaders in our sector on a broad range of topics, including building resilience to personal setbacks, and focusing on finding networks of support.

VICSES Chief Executive Officer Stephen Griffin and Chief Officer Operations Tim Wiebusch also attended to listen and learn from the participants, which offered an important opportunity to reflect on, and champion equality across the organisation.

VICSES San Remo Unit Controller, Mandy Chancellor, said there were so many aspects of the program "they got right".



The course was run by a group of amazing women who guided, supported, advised, and mentored each one of us at a level which made us feel valued and inspired. The structure and delivery of this course surpasses any other leadership program I have been involved in" said Mandy.

VICSES Rosedale Unit Deputy Controller, Samantha Nott was especially moved by the panel's open and honest discussion of the challenges to good mental health that are presented by managing a large team or organisation.

"I think the biggest takeaway I had was about work life balance. I always thought I was bad at achieving this, but the panel said that there is no balance, you learn to blend. I learned that this was normal, not to set expectations against yourself, but to work with what you could reasonably be expected to achieve," said Samantha.

For Mandy, "the course may have finished, but the friends I made and the relationships established grow stronger. The wisdom I gained from the inspiring women involved in the program has made me confident, equipped, and excited for the next part of my leadership journey."

"This is a course that should be mandatory for women in leadership in any industry, not just emergency services. I look forward to continuing my relationship with Ready 2 Lead and thank them for their commitment to women in leadership," continued Mandy. ■

¹ Women in the shadow of climate change: www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/women-in-shadow-climate-change

Fawkner Unit officially opens!

By Goldie Pergl, VICSES Fawkner Unit Deputy Controller, Western Region

VICSES Fawkner Unit members, family, and friends came together to celebrate the official opening of the new Fawkner Unit on Saturday, 15 July 2023.

Chief Executive Officer Stephen Griffin and Chief Officer Operations Tim Wiebusch joined Kathleen Matthews-Ward, MP (representing the Emergency Services Minister), Lizzie Blandthorn MP and Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp for the opening of the new facility.

The new unit is located on Sydney Road, Hadfield, and has replaced the unit's previous location in Campbellfield - which was built in 1998 and no longer served the needs of its members.

The new state-of-the-art facility boasts a range of highly functional spaces across operations, training, and response coordination along with a five-bay drive-through motor room.



Fawkner Unit Controller Connie Lapworth said that the new unit "better equips our existing volunteers to perform their role, but also provides additional space for training, and helps support the retention of current volunteers and recruitment of new ones."

"It will help us to better respond to incidents within Hume and

Merri-bek Local Government Authorities, so this brings huge benefit to the wider community" she said.

The unit currently has approximately 50 members, from Merri-bek and Hume municipalities, and attended just under 500 requests for assistance last financial year. ■



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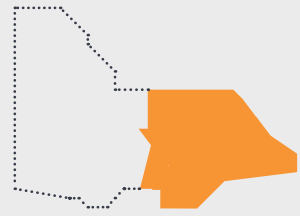
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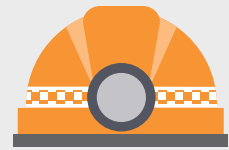
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1 April – 30 June 2023

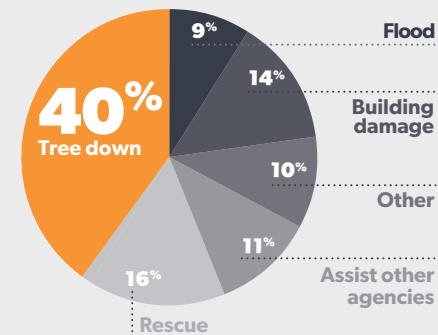


2,454

Volunteers

2,476

Requests for assistance



Never fear, Yarrawonga's here!

By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator, Eastern Region

From standing up the world's fastest Incident Control Points, to teaching new Community Resilience Coordinators how the VICSES Children and Youth Kit is used at kindergarten visits, Gerald Nunn's commitment to his community through VICSES service has been exceptional.

Joining VICSES Yarrawonga Unit in 1990, Gerald stepped up into a Deputy Controller position almost immediately, a role he performed diligently for 16 years.

It's not just the Yarrawonga community Gerald has given so much to, but many others as well. Always the first to put his hand up for deployments to support other units and services when the big jobs come up, and always the one that Yarrawonga Unit Controller Jason Forber can count on to pick up the thankless jobs, too.

Not one to jump in front of a camera or go looking for credit, it's surprisingly hard to find photos of Gerald in action - but many members around the state have heard the relieving sound of Gerald's joyful arrival "Never fear, Yarrawonga's here!" ■



North East Metro Technical Rescue Group conduct skills maintenance exercise

By Natasha Bradley, VICSES Whittlesea Unit Deputy Controller, Eastern Region



The North East Metro Technical Rescue Group comprising of VICSES Whittlesea and Nillumbik Unit members and Plenty Country Fire Authority, meet twice a month to conduct regular skills maintenance exercises.

Being trained in steep angle rescue is not a once-off thing - it requires many hours of practice to ensure your skills and abilities are they best they can be - lives depend on it. There are multiple layers to steep angle rescue, with each member required to

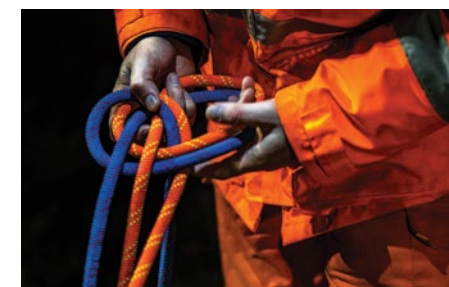
be competent and confident in each. These can include rescue commander, safety officer, rescue line, belay line, edge attendant and stretcher attendants.

We are lucky enough to have Plenty Gorge right on our doorstep, offering us a multitude of different locations to conduct training.

During a recent scenario, members were put through their paces rescuing the poor mannequin who unfortunately keeps ending up in tricky situations. It took a tumble and fell about 15 metres down a

steep embankment. Luckily, the team were well prepared and were able to safely retrieve the mannequin.

During this scenario, we were able to expose some of our members who are looking to join the team, but not yet trained. Allowing members to come to these training sessions exposes them to the multitude of skills required to conduct this type of rescue, and overall give them that extra knowledge to utilise when they do get on a course. ■



Loch Sport Unit's important milestone

By Merryn Henderson,
Community Resilience
Coordinator, Eastern Region

On Wednesday 26 July, current VICSES Loch Sport Unit Controller Chris Wood presented retired Unit Controller Terry Ford with the National Emergency Service Medal.

The award honours Terry's contributions to VICSES, including during the 2019-20 Bushfires in East Gippsland. He was also awarded a recognition of service plaque for his tenure as Unit Controller from 11 December 2014 to 8 April 2019.

Congratulations Terry, and thank you for your incredible service. ■



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Joint training with Ambulance Victoria

By Damien Collins, VICSES Whitehorse Unit Deputy Controller – Operations, Eastern Region

In July, following a number of Priority 1 calls to assist Ambulance Victoria with extrication of patients, VICSES Whitehorse Unit hosted a joint training night with Ambulance Victoria’s Nunawading branch.



The aim was to share information and learn from each other, so when we are out in the field we have a better understanding of capabilities and can operate in the safest way possible.

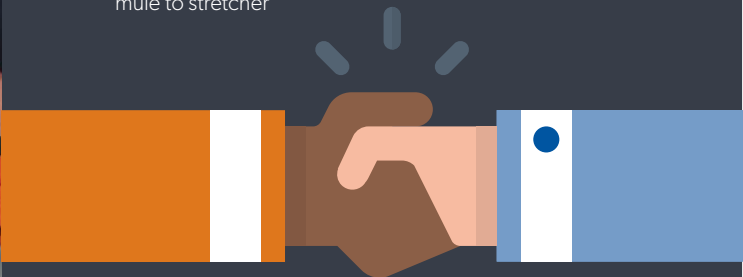
We covered off the following topics through an open forum discussion and practical sessions:

- SES Standard Operating Procedure 015 Assistance to Ambulance
- Type of VICSES jobs we would assist with, and what Ambulance Victoria would require from us
- Relevant courses available on the Training Portal
- Extrication demonstration
- Transfer of patient from mule to stretcher

- Ambulance vehicle familiarisation
- Mass casualty scene
- Ambulance Victoria Health Commander role

Both agencies thoroughly enjoyed the evening learning much about each other’s capabilities, procedures, and how we can work better together. We would like to thank Glen, Stephanie, Perri, and Cassie from Ambulance Victoria for their attendance.

We would strongly suggest all VICSES units contact their local Ambulance Victoria branch to conduct similar sessions and consider undertaking them on a regular basis. It definitely promotes the ‘we work as one’ philosophy! ■



Volunteers save Banksia for future generations

By David Murphy, Media Advisor, VHO

A Banksia found toppled over by VICSES Chelsea Unit in July was given a new lease on life.

Arriving on scene to discover the massive tree had landed beside a block of units, Chelsea Unit members were able to trim the branches and preserve its trunk. Crew leader Ian McAlavey said, “from our point of view, it had a perfect landing, given that the building had not been hit.”

The tree was found to be a remnant of an ancient woodland, meaning that it is a native tree which remained after the removal of most native vegetation in its immediate vicinity. The landmark tree had been known to Edithvale residents for over a century.



Carrum Indigenous Nursery volunteers Lesley and Jason Smart jumped at the rare opportunity, collecting and identifying 100 viable seeds from within the Banksia, ensuring its story will continue for many centuries to come.

“We were so thrilled that the volunteers took the time to call us and give us the opportunity to collect the seed pods,” said Lesley.

“Even if we only had one seedling to take, that would still guarantee this beautiful old tree’s history lives on.”



Chelsea Unit members also worked to distribute the green Banksia flowers to local kindergartens and primary schools to use as brushes for painting, as they have been used by Indigenous Australian artists for many thousands of years. ■

Scouts visit Leongatha Unit

By Ola Salako, Community Resilience Coordinator, Eastern Region



On 15 June, the Korumburra Scouts took part in a tour of the VICSES Leongatha Unit. The purpose of the visit was to learn about volunteer work and gain an insight into the critical efforts of emergency service personnel. The experience

was educational and eye-opening for the young scouts and helped them understand the importance of community safety.

Accompanied by their parents and guide, the Scouts were warmly welcomed by the unit volunteers. They were given an overview



of VICSES responsibilities before and during emergencies, and then split into small groups to explore the facility and learn about rescue trucks and other equipment. Refreshments were available, and the Scouts were given community engagement resources.

The night ended with a car rescue scenario, which fascinated the Scouts. The Leongatha Unit did an excellent job organising this informative event, and the Scouts left with a newfound appreciation for the crucial work done by our emergency service personnel. ■

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Teaming up to search for Mr Manny Quinn

By Raman Sanjayan, VICSES Monash Unit member and social media coordinator, Eastern Region



It's not common that our training nights are conducted in darkness on a frosty night...

Actually, who are we kidding - that's most of our winter training sessions! On this particularly cold and wet night however, we teamed up with the Eastern Metropolitan Region Unit to observe how the field operations vehicle fits into our larger-scale search operations.

It was also a fantastic opportunity to throw some new crew leaders into

the deep end, as well as help our recruits complete casualty handling and line searching as a part of their Crew Member Level 1 checklist.

The arduous trek from one side of the footy oval to the other didn't yield any results unfortunately, but with almost 40 members on-site, it didn't take long before Mr Manny Quinn and his son were found among the bushes, and safely



extricated using our fashionable stokes and people-power.

While the members here at Monash are well-versed in the dynamic and challenging conditions in many missing person

searches, collaborating with other units on nights like this helps us understand how the various pieces of the puzzle fit together to create a successful operation. We look forward to many more inter-unit training sessions in the future! ■

Cann River Cross Agency Training

By Merryn Henderson, Community Resilience Coordinator, Eastern Region

On Saturday 15 July, VICSES Cann River Unit Controller Andrew Filmer, and Mallacoota paramedic Michael Jacobs organised a combined VICSES and Ambulance Victoria road crash rescue exercise.



Flood recovery in the Goulburn Valley

By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator, Eastern Region

More than nine months after the floodwater receded, people residing in communities along the Goulburn River still live with the devastating impacts of flooding - some spending winter living in caravans in their driveways while their homes remain uninhabitable from flood damage and unsettled insurance claims.

Local governments and recovery agencies continue to work with community members in various stages of recovery - some still experiencing trauma, and some rapidly recovering, improving preparedness for future emergencies.

Disaster recovery is not a fast process, and while we reset, refresh, and get ready for the next emergency, VICSES community engagement teams work alongside community members in the grey areas between recovery and preparedness.

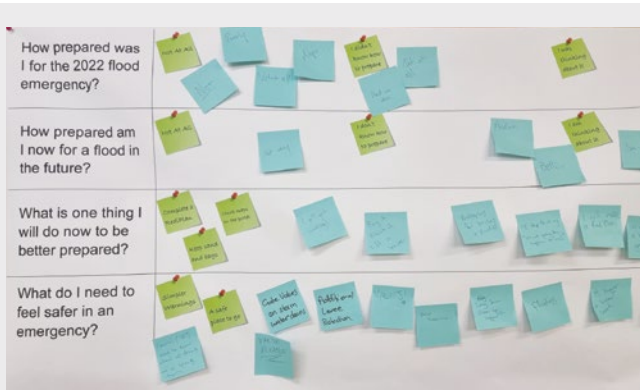
From big flashy expos bringing family fun back into flood affected communities, emotional community meetings about the difficult recovery process, and updating Local Flood Guides, to intensive cultural work teaching refugees about their local flood risk and when to call Triple Zero 000, 132 500, or the VicEmergency Hotline for warnings in other languages on 1800 226 226.

At least six Goulburn Valley communities are creating Community Emergency Planning Committees, to develop formal community plans for coordinated community readiness and response to emergencies without 100% reliance on emergency services - particularly in locations that are isolated or unreachable where resilience is paramount.

We will continue to work with communities in the Goulburn Valley to reduce the impacts of further flood events, well into the future. ■



Guy Tierney from the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority talks about flood behaviour and mitigation with local residents at a recovery meeting.



Community intelligence gathered at a Community Recovery meeting showing flood-affected residents felt very unprepared for the 2022 flood event. The community have taken steps to better prepare themselves since, but want local government to install stormwater valves to prevent backflow into residential areas during floods in future.

The aim was to enhance skills and knowledge, while improving the working relationship between local agencies.

The scenario used training dummies in a high-speed single vehicle road accident, with injured patients being a driver, passenger, infant, an ejected passenger, and a pedestrian trapped under the vehicle.

The crews were challenged by complex and varying degrees of injuries and entrapment. This allowed the VICSES members

to utilize and develop their knowledge and skills in using airbag and glass management tools, practice the use of sheers, spreaders, and combination tools, and use vehicle stabilisation equipment.

Cann River and Mallacoota Ambulance Offices participated along with VICSES Cann River members.

All participants enjoyed the relaxed learning environment, and the exercise has generated more interest in collaborative training approaches for the next year. ■



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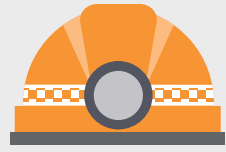
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WESTERN REGION

1 April – 30 June 2023

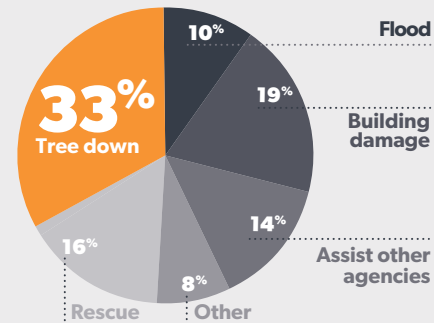


2,411

Volunteers

1,815

Requests for assistance



Let's D.R.I.V.E!

By Tracey White, Community Resilience Coordinator, Western Region

Over the recent King's Birthday long weekend, members from VICSES Marong Unit gave up their time once again to activate a Driver Reviver site. The unit have participated in the Driver Reviver program for many years, providing thousands of cups of coffee to travellers passing through town.

This time however, the unit members were not alone – their brothers and sisters from the North West Metro Region's Sunbury Unit joined them in the pilot of the 'D.R.I.V.E' (Driver Reviver Inter-unit Volunteer Exchange) program. The concept was borne from Sunbury Unit member Angela Lane, who admitted that one of the primary reasons she joined VICSES over eight years ago was so that she could help out at a Driver Reviver site, only to learn that her unit didn't actually participate in the program.

When I reached out to the Sunbury Unit as the closest metro unit to Marong to ask if their members would be willing to help their friends, Angela of course jumped at the opportunity.

She said that "getting to know the Marong

members was a definite highlight, finding out that we knew similar people, sharing ideas, and hearing how more regional units function."

"These units that give up time, every time, to run Driver Reviver sites shouldn't have to do it alone - all the while keeping their emergency response capability."

Bob 'Diesel' Haigh, VICSES Marong Unit member and Driver Reviver volunteer for over 30 years, also added "I would encourage other

VICSES units that have never been to a Driver Reviver site to give it a go. The Sunbury members fitted in well and formed great friendships with the Marong members - we would definitely invite them back again! This was a chance to gain insight into what they do and what we do as members of VICSES."

A film crew from Melbourne were onsite on the day, filming for Driver Reviver Australia. Keep an eye out for the release on the Driver Reviver Australia app, website, and Facebook page. ■



Junior CFA Crew drop by Hamilton Unit for Jenga

By Lisa McDonald, Community Resilience Coordinator, Western Region

It was all fun and games at Hamilton Unit last month when the local Hamilton Country Fire Authority (CFA) Brigade junior members dropped by for a visit.

"We have a great relationship with our local CFA," said Deputy Controller Sarah Cross. "We're often on call-outs together and we really do work as one, so we enjoy playing host to the junior crew when they have a chance to stop by."

While this isn't the first junior CFA crew that the unit have hosted,

it was the first time for this particular crew to step in and get an inside view of their local VICSES unit.

Following a quick presentation and tour, the opportunity to get hands on with an oversized game of cribbing block Jenga gave the crew a taste of some of the hydraulic equipment used in road crash rescue incidents.



Making good use of the spreaders to manoeuvre heavy blocks without toppling others brought about much laughter, while also demonstrating how these tools can be used to achieve a more serious aim. The junior crew were supported to hold the heavy spreaders with the help of more experienced VICSES members.

Another exercise involved moving an egg from one traffic cone to another, using the combi tool and pedal cutter. "If you've never tried this yourself, it's much harder than it looks," said Sarah.



As usual, the junior members were great guests, we enjoyed having them and we hope they had a good night." ■

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Changing of the guard

By Lisa McDonald, Community Resilience
Coordinator, Western Region

Heywood Unit Controller Rebecca Fleming knows she has the full support of the Heywood team, Unit Support Team (UST), and members at neighbouring Dartmoor and Portland Units, who have all rallied around the new Controller.

“Our unit, like many volunteer organisations, has been challenged in recent times, but we are resilient. We’re here to get the job done,” said Rebecca.

“We had to adapt through the pandemic and changes to vehicles, plus the new model to absorb. It’s been a big four years.”

To their credit, members remain optimistic. With Deputy Controller – Operations, Rebecca Leske (Bec L) at her right hand, Rebecca has built a strong female-led management team that leverages the experience of other members and mentors.

Previous Unit Controller Adrian Hodgens is generously providing informal guidance to Rebecca despite juggling many other important commitments. Adrian, Rebecca, and Bec L joined Heywood four years ago, reinforcing long-term members with over 100 years of combined experience.

Old friend, former Unit Controller and Emergency Service Medal recipient, Charlie DeBono has been an amazing mentor and supporter of both Adrian and Rebecca.

From further afield, offers of assistance have been plentiful. Previous Geelong Unit Controller Jake Wilson has offered mentoring support to Rebecca and will provide advice on the complexities of running a VICSES unit from the perspective of an experienced Controller.

“The support offered has been overwhelming. Knowing we are part of an incredible community at VICSES, I intend to take all the help I can get,” said Rebecca.

“Our members have been working well together for the past few years, so my role at VICSES is an easy one. I’m just here to support my teammates. They do the hard work.”

With a background in finance, Rebecca joined in an associate

role capacity as Finance Officer. Through a non-operational lens, she has a unique perspective on the needs of the unit. Rebecca lists new membership and a continuation of the unit’s plans for a new building amongst her key priorities.

“We are exploring options for a joint site with our local emergency service partners, building on the brainstorming of our dual responders. It would make our unit more accessible during emergencies and more visible in the community,” said Rebecca.



With recruitment high on the agenda, Rebecca is hoping to capitalise on diversity to increase membership.

“We are keen to get some fresh faces into Heywood and surrounding units,” said Rebecca.

“This is an incredible community with lots of diversity. We would like more associate members with skills in social media or administration, as well as operational members. We aim for the structure in the unit to be supportive, so that people stay once they have joined.”

“A few new members each year helps us stay strong and fresh. We need to offer something that benefits members and in turn allows us to harness the diverse skills of people across age groups, abilities, backgrounds, and experience,” continued Rebecca.

“Many hands, lighter workload.” ■

Welcome Lisa! Can you tell us a bit about your background?

I’ve had an incredibly varied background. My very first job was as a tour guide for the National Trust at the Old Melbourne Gaol. From there I’ve worked across all kinds of industries, and federal and local government. I’ve worked on a European Union funded research project looking at community development in high density London neighbourhoods, worked in event management in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, spent time in Canberra as a Media, Political and Parliamentary Adviser, and managed a local library here in Warrnambool running community programs.

What inspired you to join VICSES?

The prospect of being able to bring my skills to a volunteer focused organisation, and to support volunteers. Having worked with volunteers in so many of my previous roles, I thought this would be a great way to give back. The deciding factor was the staff who interviewed me

Profile: Lisa McDonald

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE COORDINATOR,
WESTERN REGION (WARRNAMBOOL OFFICE)

for my initial Volunteer Support Officer role; I really wanted to be part of this incredible team.

What are you most looking forward to as a Community Resilience Coordinator?

Building resilience in the units through increasing volunteer numbers, encouraging more volunteers to get involved in community engagement, and strengthening the ties between VICSES and community partners. I’m passionate about mental health and am hoping to make a positive difference through community-led, collective-impact initiatives such as those I’m currently planning with a local neighborhood house.

What would your perfect weekend look like?

The sun is shining, and my dogs and I are traipsing around an unexplored country cemetery, photographing and recording headstone details as part of an international volunteer project to record this information for perpetuity. If the weekend is perfect, then I don’t lose the smallest dog down another rabbit hole! ■



VICSES positive role modelling has no boundaries

By Jane Patton, Community Resilience
Coordinator, Western Region

In June, the Deaf Hub Bendigo was asked by Guthrie Street Primary School Deaf Facility in Shepparton to provide a presentation to their students.

VICSES Gisborne member Shanleigh Meldrum spoke to students at the school about being a VICSES volunteer and what that involves. Shanleigh shared her own experience of being a deaf volunteer within the

emergency services sector, and engaged with the students on how to prepare for emergencies by presenting key VICSES safety messages in Auslan.

The response from the Guthrie Street Primary School Deaf Facility staff and students was very positive, and fingers crossed there will be more presentations with other emergency service agencies in future! ■

VICSES Murrayville Unit Awards

By Jamie Macri, Community Resilience
Coordinator, Western Region



THANK
YOU

Congratulations to the VICSES Long Service Award and National Medal recipients at the VICSES Murrayville Unit Awards Presentation on 5 June!

Pictured, from left to right:

- **Jason Conrad**, Volunteer Support Officer, Mallee UST, Western Region,
- **Kevin Willersdorf**, VICSES Murrayville Unit Controller,
- **Neil Kinnersley**, 20 year Service Award,
- **John Heintze**, 30 year Service Award,
- **Christine Heintze**, 20 year Service Award, and
- **Ken Smith**, Acting Operations Manager, Mallee UST, Western Region. ■

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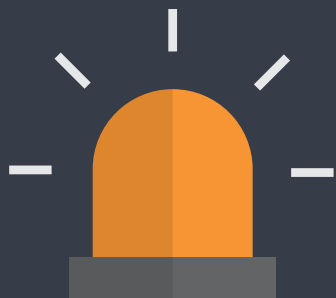
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New Unit Controller Alert



VICSES Torquay Unit

Welcoming Mark Heaysman as the new Torquay Unit Controller, taking over from John Symington who has completed two separate stints during his time as Unit Controller.

Mark gives his thanks to John who “looked after the unit and helped it to grow during COVID-19, which was a massive achievement.”

“I see my role now as an opportunity to further grow the unit in numbers and in capability. We recognise that the area of Torquay and the surf coast is changing significantly, and our capabilities, skills, and equipment will need to change. I’m genuinely excited and looking forward to that challenge with our unit management team” he said.

“I’m also very focused on Torquay contributing to other VICSES unit activities and engaging with other emergency services in our area – that’s a big priority for me.”



VICSES Lorne Unit

Congratulations to the new VICSES Lorne Unit Controller, Chris Jones!

A volunteer with the local surf club and a VICSES Hobsons Bay dual-member, Chris has been with the Lorne Unit for a year, “so it has been a meteoric rise to fame!” he said.

“My focus is first of all engaging our community. Lorne’s a small, isolated country town that becomes very popular in summer. Having lived there part-time for 26 years, I had never seen a VICSES truck until I joined. Engaging, raising awareness of who we are and what we do is a priority for me.”

“We recently attended a tree down job and the 90-year-old lady was quite worried and distressed. We sat down and had a lovely cup of tea together. For us it’s not just about the job, but also about the person.”

“They’re a great bunch of people and we work hard – that’s the Lorne Unit.”

VICSES Gisborne Unit grows: “Train them and retain them”

By David Murphy, Media Advisor, VHO



In early July, VICSES Gisborne Unit welcomed their new Unit Controller Ross Evans.

Ross succeeds Mike Bagnall who led the unit for nearly six years, during which time membership doubled from 35 to 70 volunteers. The now former Unit Controller’s approach to recruitment and retention, including a social media presence to showcase the training and skills it could provide to potential new members, has proved very successful.

VICSES Chief Officer Operations, Tim Wiebusch passed on his thanks to Mike for “almost six years of dedicated commitment to leading your unit, and your support to other units, including during major emergencies across the state. Mike is a fine example of how

well our volunteers embody the role, and lead by the values of our organisation.”

He also added his congratulations to Ross Evans for “stepping up into the role. It’s great to see succession in action, and I know you have a strong team behind you to continue to take the unit forward.”

Ross is taking a long-term view of the needs of the area, and of the volunteers. This includes planning, fundraising, and lobbying for a new building to accommodate a larger and growing workforce. In the short-term, Ross plans to add a fifth vehicle to the unit’s fleet, building on the unit’s capability to respond to large-scale emergencies



throughout the Macedon Ranges. He also plans to set up a ‘unit within a unit’ for its youth membership to nurture future leaders at the unit and beyond. ■



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OPERATIONAL UPDATES

VICSES members visit the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority

By Sean Curtin, Operations Officer –
Operational Communications, VHO

In July, the Operational Communications Team facilitated visits for over 220 volunteers from 24 VICSES units to the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA).



Each session gave an overview of ESTA operations at Williams Landing and its sites across the state. Members were informed of the Triple Zero (000) and VICSES (132 500) telephony networks, including how calls are received into ESTA and then turned into events using structured call talking and ProQA dispatch software. Sessions demonstrated the different event types and questioning techniques used by operators to extract relevant information and enable an appropriate response.

Displays of their computer aided dispatch (CAD) system explained how calls are processed and paged out to units for response, detailing the different steps involved in processing events

and how multi-agency events are handled in Victoria compared to interstate. A walk-through of the facilities at Williams Landing showed the control room floor and the 'Taj Mahal' of call centre operations in Victoria!

The VICSES Operational Communications Team also gave an overview to units on what our role is, and how we liaise with ESTA. This included information on what equipment is available to be deployed by the team to better assist units out in the field.

If you would like to visit ESTA, we will be organising sessions on 21 and 22 October to capture units that are unable to attend mid-week. Tours will be conducted every hour, with a maximum of 15 members on each tour. To register, scan the QR code on the right.

Our team would like to thank all units that have attended these sessions so far. ■

More information

If you have any questions, please contact
OpsCommsTeam@ses.vic.gov.au
or **sean.curtin@ses.vic.gov.au**.

To register for an ESTA visit in October 2023, scan the QR code below (VICSES members only):



Boating Capability Review

By Ben Geurts, Critical Assets
Lead, State Fleet Centre

Sixteen volunteers from across the state gathered at the VICSES State Fleet Centre on Saturday 15 July for the Boating Capability Review. With help from Assistant Chief Officers Mark Cattell and Jackson Bell, external consultant James Nolan from Maritime Survey

Australia, and multiple staff members from the Fleet and Critical Assets teams, the group worked amazingly to come up with ideas to help shape the future of VICSES' vessel fleet. With well over 200 years of boating experience under one roof, the group was able to identify VICSES' main response tasks, minimum and maximum personal requirements, operating environments, as well as control measures to operational and environmental

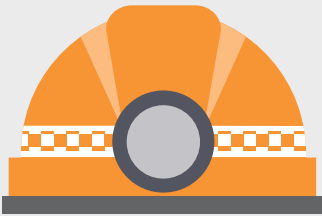
risks. The group also discussed future equipment requirements, vessel types, their operational fit for purpose roles, as well as discussions on the fleet's readiness during the most recent floods and subsequent deployments. With our current vessel builder contracts coming to an end, these workshops will assist the Fleet team to compile a list of vessel requirements for each task and operation, which will be used to create detailed specifications to

put out to tender. This will result in the procurement of fit-for-purpose vessels that will keep our volunteers safe, and will also help to protect our communities. Working groups like these greatly assist the regions to review current fleet types, asset locations, help with new builds, and redeploy existing assets where required. We look forward to sharing the findings back to all those involved, as well as the broader VICSES community, and we hope to host many more of these workshops in the near future. ■

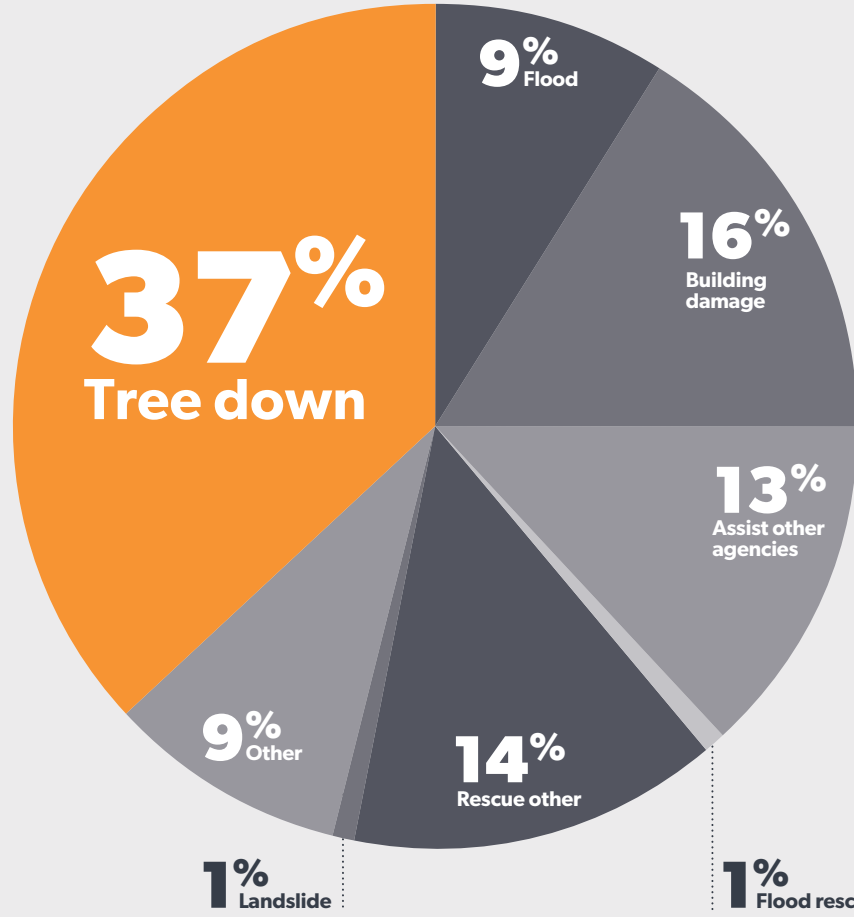
REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

1 April – 30 June 2023

Total
4,292



Breakdown



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PROJECTS –
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HRT Return to Service

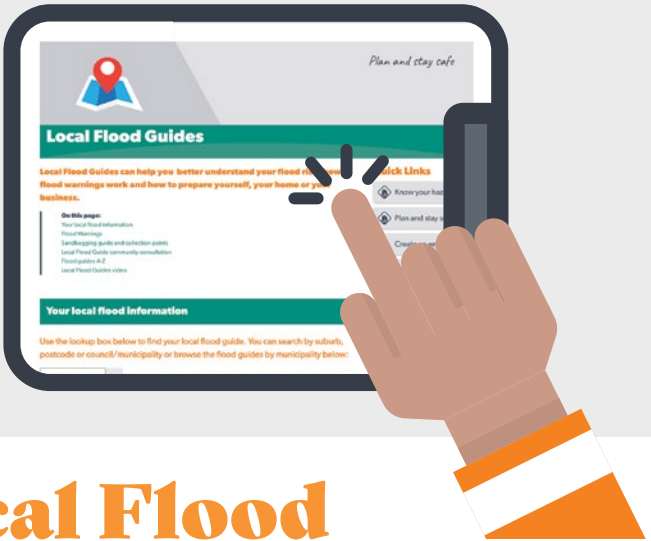
By Shaun Caulfield, VICSES Lilydale Unit Controller, Eastern Region

As a busy unit (Lilydale), it was a welcome sight to have our Heavy Rescue Truck (HRT) back and part of our fleet.

The HRT is the workhorse of many VICSES units, particularly the Road Crash Rescue units. Our return to service HRT was initially delayed as we allowed our allocated truck to go to a unit who was in greater need than ourselves. Selina and the Fleet team kept us informed along the way. Once the final date was agreed, it was delivered on a unit training night so we could ensure as many members as possible were able to get familiarised.

All up, 32 members were in attendance. As a member of the Fleet Working Group there were no surprises for me, but many of our other members were pleasantly surprised by the equipment uplift, particularly in terms of portable lighting. Moving to the Milwaukee light stands and NOVA lights is an improvement over the older Goliath units. The team had an installer with them to fit any brackets and adjust to some of the

‘unit specific’ equipment we needed fitted on the night. The return to service HRTs have had a lot of thought put into them, and should serve us well until the next generation HRTs come online. ■



Local Flood Guide Enhancement Project

By Amy Miles, Project Officer – Local Flood Guide Enhancement Project, VHO

In response to significant flood events in 2010 and 2011, Local Flood Guides (LFGs) were developed for at-risk communities.

With over 140 LFGs currently in circulation and 30 more in development, these guides are essential tools for engaging communities and raising awareness about flood risks. They also provide crucial guidance for effective preparation and response during flood emergencies.

To improve the accessibility and understanding of the LFGs, a comprehensive review has been considered necessary. The project has received support through grant funding secured from the Risk and Resilience Grants Program, and is due to be completed by February 2024, with all existing LFGs being updated to a new template.

Central to the initiative is extensive community consultation, ensuring that the LFGs cater to diverse audiences. The

process will also integrate current best practices for effective communication.

To assist in making informed recommendations and promoting wide acceptance of the proposed changes, a working group has been formed comprising staff and volunteers with diverse expertise, perspectives, and skills in the use of LFGs. The group is instrumental in the project’s success. ■

More information

For more information about the Local Flood Guide Enhancement Project, please reach out to Amy Miles at amy.miles@ses.vic.gov.au.

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WELLBEING,
HEALTH & SAFETY

Safety Drives
Our Decisions
Roadmap
2023-2028

The Safety Drives Our Decisions Roadmap 2023-2028 has been developed to build on and enhance VICSES’ strong history of safety.

Developed by the Health and Safety team alongside HSE Global, the process involved visits to units and offices, one-on-one interviews, engagement workshops and volunteer input.

Many VICSES members work in hazardous environments and achieving sustained safety performance in the face of workplace hazards requires focus, energy, and commitment at all levels of our organisation. Our safety expectations, standards and commitments must also reach deep into our volunteer units, staff, processes, and systems.

We look forward to rolling out the initiatives as part of the Safety Drives Our Decisions Roadmap over the next five years to improve the safety and wellbeing of our members. ■



Safety drives
our decisions

Four strategic priorities have been identified to guide VICSES in achieving a culture where Safety Drives Our Decisions:

1 Develop
safety
culture

We will further develop a safe, inclusive, progressive culture that represents the diversity of our communities.

2 Develop
safety
leadership
capability

We will embed practices to attract and develop the right people in the right roles.

3 Control
critical
safety risk

We will maintain and strengthen a work environment that ensures the health, safety, and wellbeing of our people.

4 Improve
safety
systems

We will focus on improving our systems to enhance our peoples’ experience.

You said,

We did...

‘You said, we did’ is a new initiative from the Health and Safety team to share safety issues that have been raised by our members and the actions we have taken, highlighting our key value – Safety Drives Our Decisions.

YOU SAID:

When filling the Britton boat fuel system, the fuel overflows out the fuel inlet due to inadequate ventilation.



WE DID:

Assets challenged the safe design of the filling system with the manufacturer and referred the concerns to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). They agreed the design needed to change, and all Britton boat fuel systems have been upgraded with improved ventilation, fuel surge protectors and a fuel whistle.



The Working Mind
First Responder
Program

By Belinda Rawson, Wellbeing Services
Business Support Coordinator, VHO

The Working Mind First Responder (TWMFR) Program focuses on providing essential mental health skills to first responders, equipping them with the tools they need to navigate the challenges they may face.

To ensure accessibility for all our members, we are pleased to announce that both Primary and Leadership workshops are now available on demand for VICSES members. More information is available on the Hub under **My State > Health and Wellbeing > Mind-fit > TWMFR**.

See our upcoming workshops for members at the following locations below:

TWMFR PRIMARY TRAINING:

- Ballarat Office: 14 October, 10:00am – 2:00pm
- Wangaratta Unit: 25 November, 10:00am – 2:00pm
- Knox Unit: 2 December, 10:00am – 2:00pm

TWMFR LEADER TRAINING:

- Ballarat Office: 23 September, 9:00am – 5:00pm
- Wangaratta Unit: 21 October, 9:00am – 5:00pm



Register

Register your interest via the QR link to Training Portal.



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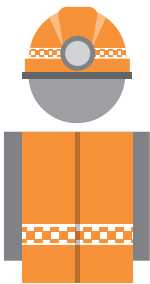
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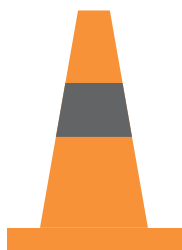
Workplace inspections

July 2021 –
June 2022

333

July 2022 –
June 2023

213



Hazards &
near miss reports

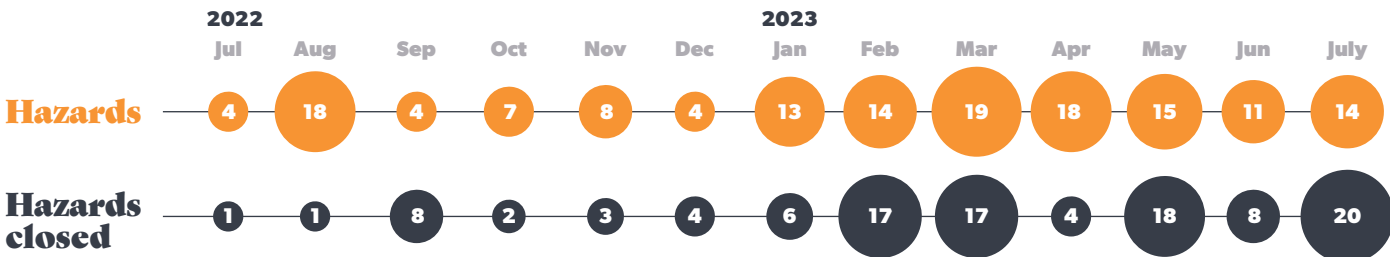
July 2021 –
June 2022

341

July 2022 –
June 2023

329

YEAR AT A GLANCE





COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

VICSES visits
primary school
for disaster
awareness term

By Jasmine Lewkowicz, Senior Advisor Community
Programs and Engagement, VHO



Grade 5 students at Gardenvale Primary School were treated to a presentation on emergency preparedness by myself, and David Tuček, Operations Manager Capability, as part of their disaster awareness term.

Through a suite of engaging videos and real-life photos, the interactive session gave students an insight into how to prepare and respond to floods, storms, and earthquakes, and was the perfect ending to a curriculum dedicated to learning about natural disasters.

Key take-aways from the presentation included students learning about what is in floodwater, how floods and storms develop, and the dangers of driving through floodwater. ■



Download

The PowerPoint presentation can be found in the **Community Engagement Resources** page under the **Children and Youth Activities** section on the Hub or via the QR code below.



Yarrowonga's
CEF Corner!

By Laura Nish, VICSES Yarrowonga Unit Deputy Controller -
Community Engagement, Eastern Region

In support of our unit's Community Engagement Facilitators (CEFs), our Unit Controller Jason built us a fantastic CEF Corner for all of our resources - what a legend!

We found that as we have grown our team and our activities for kids, we had more and more community engagement material that we were carting up and down the stairs. With a few shelves from Bunnings in an awkward little unused corner of

the shed, Jason created the CEF Corner and even made us a sign! Now we can just grab what we need, and everything is labelled so we don't load up a heap of unnecessary stuff – it fits our banners, kids games, brochures, magnets, and more. A great idea for our other units, too! ■



VICSES Greater Dandenong members
out and about in the community



Greater Dandenong unit members were busy in July, with multiple crews out in the community spreading the VICSES word.

Members attended the Keysborough Market and Snowfest, on the hunt for their next batch of new recruits. ■



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MEDIA

1 April – 30 June 2023


Campaigns and events:


- Driver Reviver
- Women in Rescue
- National Volunteer Week
- Wear Orange Wednesday

Media releases:

- 15 April - SES 'Women in Rescue' event to be largest ever
- 15 May - Thanking SES volunteers this WOW Day
- 11 June - Roy Kennedy honoured in King's Birthday List
- 26 June - Female leaders meet the next generation at VICSES

Social media post highlights (state accounts):


 **FACEBOOK**




Impressions:
489,291

Engagement:
85,635

29/05/23: A magnitude 3.8 earthquake was recorded with an epicentre near Sunbury.

 **TWITTER**



Impressions:
258,105

Engagement:
38,421

28/05/23: Sunbury earthquake.

 **LINKEDIN**



Impressions:
3,544

Engagement:
1,075

18/05/23: Thanks to everyone involved in celebrating WOW Day.

 **INSTAGRAM**



Impressions:
3,468

Engagement:
232

08/05/23: Winter came early for VICSES Bright Unit.

Unit social media posts in the spotlight: VICSES Emerald Unit

Congratulations to Maree and Maz for completing the 'crash course' (no pun intended!) to achieve your Road Rescue certification! Five long fully packed days over two weeks. And a big thanks to Jackson for imparting your considerable knowledge to those who attended! Thank you for all your hard work! ■

Reach:

17,174

Engagement:

243

Total reach for June:

26,709

Disney Debut!

By Jen & Mel, VICSES Manningham Unit, Eastern Region



Disney Plus' latest TV series 'The Clearing' was recently released, featuring a number of VICSES volunteers, including ourselves! The series, which stars Teresa Palmer, Miranda Otto and Guy Pearce is based on JP Pomare's book 'The Clearing.'

The call for extras came off the back of SES involvement as subject matter experts in the 'Force of Nature' movie coming out soon. We were required to dress and bring all uniforms that we would normally wear on a search, and included a half day of filming in Yellow Gum Park/Plenty Area conducting a line search.

There was one more day of filming in September – a background scene towards the end of the series where the SES and vehicle were in the background as police investigators were interviewed after finding the child (spoilers!). If you have Disney Plus, check it out! ■

INFORMATION SYSTEMS (IS) UPDATE




Phishing emails

By Toby Köberle, Manager Information Security and Governance, VHO

Online criminals use phishing emails to deceive you. Pretending to be Microsoft or similar, they're scamming you for your personal and banking details.

The VICSES Information Services and Governance team don't want your family and friends to fall victim to cyber-crims. To help you recognise a phishing email, we've created a two-minute video that we encourage you to watch. ■

 **Watch now**

Scan the QR code to view the video. Please reach out to ictservicedesk@ses.vic.gov.au if you have any questions.



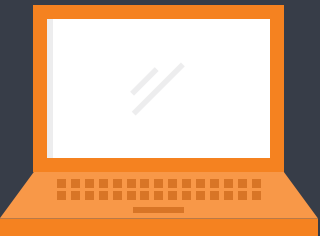
Volunteer unit contact and site visits on the increase

By Naveen Subbiah, Manager Information Technology, VHO

In order to bolster awareness of our After-Hours Service Desk, the Information Systems team called all Unit Controllers directly to ensure they were aware of this service in June and July.

As a result, there has been a number of on-site visits to resolve issues, perform health checks, and general advice about unit IT needs. Some team members attended unit training nights and got a firsthand view of the different equipment they use and the operational challenges they face.

Feedback is always welcome as we continue to look to improve our service. The IS team is committed to continuous improvement in understanding our volunteers needs and to make sure we are on the right track with our various initiatives to support volunteers. ■



Volunteer Service Desk Hours

Need support?
Volunteers can email the IS service desk at ictservicedesk@ses.vic.gov.au and we will take it from there.

Volunteers have extended IS service support until **9:00pm**, Monday to Thursday, and Saturdays **10:00am – 3:00pm**, excluding public holidays.

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Media

Information Systems (IS) update





VICSES at a glance



Who we are

Control agency for:



Flood



Storm



Earthquake



Tsunami



Landslide



150

Units

15

Permanently
staffed offices

104

Road rescue
providers

Our people in 2022-23



4,869
Volunteers*

34.5% Female
66.3% Male
0.2% Other

Volunteer leadership (Unit Controllers and Deputy Controllers)

27% Female 73% Male

*active & non-active

222
Staff

42.8% Female
56.3% Male
0.9% Other

Staff leadership (Executive team)

60% Female 40% Male



Our agency in 2022-23



287,373

Volunteer hours



Flood
8,362 incidents
(99,483 hrs)



Storm
16,927 incidents
(80,284 hrs)



Road Crash Rescue
1,511 incidents
(12,379 hrs)



32,985
Incidents



Assisting agency

35,004 hrs across 3,146 incidents



Tsunami, landslide or earthquake

227 incidents across 1,525 hours



Rescue (other/RAIR)

1,578 incidents across 13,401 hours

**Flood incidents for 2022-2023 have
increased by over 130%, compared to the
last financial year.**



Safer Communities – Together