

SUMMER 2018

Community Matters

# VICSES

EDITION 5



Introducing our  
**New  
VICSES  
Values**



**AAMI  
Handover**



**BRIAN  
RICKARD**

*Interview with a VICSES pioneer*

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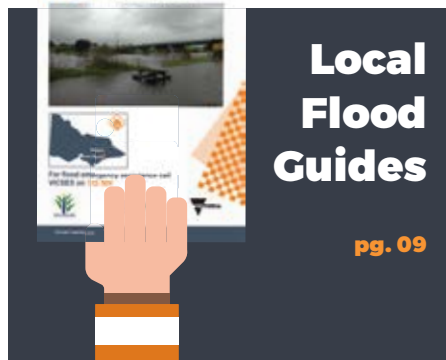


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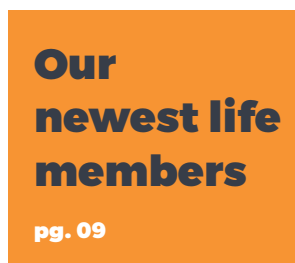
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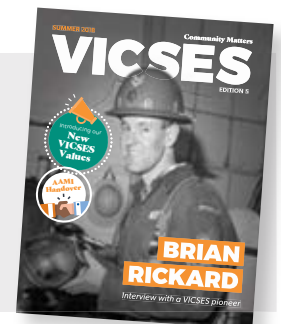
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### Interested in contributing?

Submit your article here:  
[publications@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:publications@ses.vic.gov.au)



VICSES would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land throughout Victoria and acknowledge their ancestors and elders, both past and present.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMISSIONER ANDREW CRISP

I am pleased to have the opportunity to connect with you through Community Matters and share my thoughts.

It has been a number of months since I started as Emergency Management Commissioner and I have been warmly welcomed by people from across the sector. I have enjoyed travelling around Victoria, and meeting many of the great people in our sector as possible.

I had an opportunity to join the Craigieburn Unit for an awards night and the Maryborough Unit for a 40th anniversary dinner. At each of these celebrations I have found that pride and passion is clear. I look forward to any further opportunities to visit VICSES units over the coming weeks and months.

We have a well and truly established foundation in Victoria and there is no doubt across the sector there is a strong commitment to community. I am confident in what the future looks like and I am committed to driving change to ensure our sector is as strong as it can be.

Summer in Victoria is not just about fire, it is also about flooding, storms, water safety and other

emergencies. This year is no different. We are well resourced and well prepared for what we may face.

A key focus for me is the health and safety of our emergency management personnel so that they are able to continue to protect and respond to the community in emergencies. Looking after people is so important to me.

Recently I have been talking with our sector and the community about what we can all do to be prepared for the summer season.

We know summer in Victoria means warm and hot days and nights, strong winds and thunderstorms, and with that, comes the potential for fires, thunderstorm asthma and significant damage from storms.

We've already had a taste of it, but as we come into the summer season, we must all ensure we are well prepared and have a plan in place. Our sector is ready, our systems are ready, but most importantly, our people are ready and I thank you all for your commitment.

I'm looking forward to continuing to listen to you, learn from you and work with you all to ensure the best outcome for Victorian communities.

Take care,

**Andrew Crisp**  
Emergency Management  
Commissioner, Victoria



## Welcome

Hello everyone, and welcome to the final edition of Community Matters for 2018.

In October of this year we officially launched the renewed VICSES Values and Volunteer Code of Conduct. These have been developed by volunteer and staff working groups, and set the standard for how we work together at VICSES. A big thanks to everyone involved in rolling this out. You can find out more about our Values on pages 4-5.

We have once again been the grateful recipient of more than 2,000 pieces of equipment thanks to the annual AAMI Handover Program. I would like to thank AAMI for its continued support of VICSES throughout the last 16 years as our Principal Community Partner, ensuring that we can continue to deliver a world-class emergency response. Read more about our partnership on page 6.

In other news, lease negotiations for our units are still very much underway. Throughout the last month, our Director Corporate Services John Casey has been travelling across Victoria to meet with local councils and sign new leases. Progress has continued to move along nicely, and I am happy to say that by this time next year, all leases will be in place.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank all volunteers and staff for their continued dedication and support in delivering emergency services to the Victorian community throughout 2018. Your commitment ensures the community continues to hold VICSES in the highest esteem.

As always, I hope you enjoy this edition of Community Matters and enjoy the holiday season!

Kind regards,

**Stephen Griffin**  
CEO Victoria State Emergency Service



# Introducing our new VICSES Values

By Stephen Griffin, Chief Executive Officer, VHO

In October I was very pleased to formally roll-out the new VICSES Values, as chosen by you.

**A**s many of you know, in late 2017, VICSES initiated a project to define an evolved set of values that better reflect VICSES today, and support the behaviours and characteristics we pride ourselves on as an organisation.

A consultation process, including working groups and focus groups, was carried out with VICSES volunteers and staff to review our current values and discuss changes.

The outcome of this consultation was a set of five new values, each with a set of commitments that outline the behaviour and attitudes associated with each.

The Values were unveiled to the organisation with the launch of the Strategic Plan 2018-22 in March 2018. Since then, initiatives to embed the values – also

devised via voluntary volunteer and staff working group sessions – have been under development to ensure a lasting impact on our culture and behaviour.

The launch of the Values also coincides with our new Volunteer Code of Conduct. You can read more about this on **Page 7**.

Over the coming months the Senior Management Group will be visiting the regions to discuss the Values and the Volunteer Code of Conduct in detail with volunteers and staff. You'll also start to see the Values integrated at your units, in Community Matters, videos, and Staff Development and Performance Plans.

***I'd like to thank the vast number of volunteers and staff that were involved in the development of the new values and associated commitments. The enthusiasm for this project demonstrates the passion within this organisation, and that's something we should all be very proud of.***

## Our Values



### We pride ourselves on our credibility

- We pride ourselves on delivering on our promises and commitments, and in doing the right thing consistent with our values.
- We are responsive, trustworthy, skilled and respectful in our actions.



## We are part of our community

- We take a proactive, supportive and empathetic approach to achieve community outcomes.
- We collaborate with our communities and partners, sharing knowledge and expertise.
- We ensure we are integrated, connected and engaged with our community.



## Focused and adaptable

- We are disciplined in achieving our objectives; adaptable in our approach.
- We recognise and respect the diversity of our capability.
- We channel our resources to achieve results.



## Safety drives our decisions

- We empower our people to work within their capability to ensure we don't compromise the safety of our people and the community.
- We promote open and honest conversations about the health and wellbeing of our people.



## Together we are VICSES

- We share a common purpose working together without fear, favour or prejudice.
- We acknowledge that all of our people contribute to, and enhance our ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.



# GENERAL NEWS



## 2018 AAMI Equipment Handover

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

VICSES has received a generous donation of more than 2,000 pieces of equipment from insurer AAMI this year, as part of the AAMI equipment handover program.



**V**ICSES has been the grateful recipient of support from AAMI as our Principal Community Partner since 2002. During this time, AAMI has contributed more than \$7m toward VICSES community engagement, education and resilience programs and essential equipment to VICSES units across the state.

Some items purchased through the AAMI equipment handover program this year include

power tools, generators, chainsaws and remote area lighting.

The handover was officially launched in Bendigo with a media event to publically acknowledge AAMI's significant contribution. The launch featured a live road crash rescue demonstration by Bendigo Unit volunteers, highlighting the importance of up-to-date and specialised equipment. ■



***"We're thrilled to have AAMI as our Principal Community Partner," said VICSES CEO, Stephen Griffin.***

***"Their support of nearly eight million dollars over the past 16 years is crucial to ensuring VICSES continues to provide world-class emergency response."***



# New Volunteer Code of Conduct



By Katrina Bahen, Director People and Organisation Development, VHO

Volunteers have been working for the past four months to develop a new Volunteer Code of Conduct that fits alongside our renewed VICSES Values.

**V**olunteers from just about every region contributed to the development of the new Code, reviewing drafts and suggesting changes.

The Volunteer Code of Conduct represents a commitment to each other and to the people of Victoria about how we will conduct ourselves, and provides clear guidelines on the behaviour we expect of each other.

Katrina Bahen, Director People and Organisation Development said, "VICSES is committed to maintaining high standards of integrity, professionalism and accountability. The Volunteer Code of Conduct outlines those standards, not only within our organisation, but also to the people in the communities we serve. If you are in any doubt regarding any aspect of a colleague's conduct, you must consult the appropriate senior volunteer or staff member."

The new Volunteer Code of Conduct and VICSES Values will be rolled out to units starting early 2019. VICSES managers will be visiting all units/clusters to facilitate these sessions. In the meantime you can find a copy of the new Volunteer Code of Conduct at: [Hub > My State > People > Volunteers](#). ■



***Within the confines of regulation and the Act, the new Code is much more user friendly and much less prescriptive. We were also given the opportunity to improve the flow, grouping things together that make more sense. Of course there were differences of opinion, but I think we were all pretty pleased with the final product.***

Christopher Paton, VICSESVA



***I was really pleased to be involved as I think it's very important to get feedback from the people who will be most impacted. One of the big changes from the old version is that we have approached this from a positive angle, that is, focussing on what behaviours we want – not a long list of what we DON'T want.***

Roy Kennedy,  
Unit Controller Bright Unit

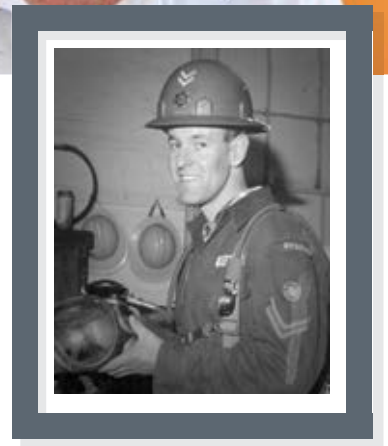
# Brian Rickard PSM MAIES

## A pioneer of VICSES

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO



Brian became involved with VICSES in the early 1960's when it was known as the Civil Defence Organisation. Established during the cold war era, Civil Defence was designed to be quickly activated in the event of war, and followed British air raid precautions that existed during the blitz of London in World War Two.



“It was a bit of a ‘Dad’s Army,’” Brian recalls. “It was difficult to get people involved.”

A proud Queens Scout, Brian also spent his time volunteering with the local CFA and ambulance service. He soon became concerned that both services were responding to rescues that they weren't properly equipped for, particularly around searches in the Grampians and with road crash rescue. Determined to change this, Brian wrote to the Civil Defence.

“They sent me 15 rescue manuals in the post, and said that if council nominated me, I could go to the Civil Defence School and complete a Rescue Instructors course,” says Brian.

By 1966, Brian had completed the course and established

Victoria's first 'Rescue Squad' in Ararat. The team was quick to gain support from the community and the council, receiving high commendations for their work.

In 1975 the Civil Defence Organisation was renamed SES. Brian was appointed as a Regional Officer of the Ballarat Region, now known as Mid West. Having already established four Civil Defence units and an extensive background in rescue and emergency services, Brian hit the ground running and formed a further nine SES units.

Brian also held a passion for collecting old Civil Defence and SES memorabilia. The idea of a SES museum was thrown around, but nothing came to fruition. That was until Craigieburn Unit came to the rescue, offering a space at

their headquarters. 12 months later, Brian's dream had become a reality.

“I got a hell of a shock when I went to the unveiling and saw it was called ‘Brian Rickard SES Museum’,” says Brian. “The whole display was magnificent!”

Since his retirement in 2003, Brian has continued to enjoy life to the fullest; fishing, woodworking, bush walking, and spending time with

his grandkids. Admittedly, SES is still a huge part of Brian's life.

“I still spend my time scrounging around at markets and fairs, searching for Civil Defence and SES memorabilia for my museum collection. Recently I found a publication on domestic falloutshelters, published by the Commonwealth Directorate of Civil Defence in 1970. It still excites me!”



**Visit the Brian Rickard SES Museum**

**Craigieburn Local Headquarters  
151A Craigieburn Road,  
Craigieburn**





## Celebrating our newest Life Members

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

The VICSES Life Membership is awarded to individuals who have shown an outstanding commitment to VICSES and the greater community over an extended period of time.

This year, we were proud to present this award to 17 members, who have shown exceptional dedication throughout their time with VICSES. Congratulations to the following members on receiving a Life Membership in 2018, and their outstanding contributions:



|                 |               |                    |                |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Reginald Ellis  | Chris Patton  | Robert Timms       | Grant Bradshaw |
| Roger Neal      | David Edwards | Gordon Hicks       | Stephen Green  |
| Robert Barns    | Kevin Rizzoli | Gary Hickson       | Sandra Faoro   |
| Colin Pickering | Hugh Mitchell | Christopher Bluett | Jesse Wright   |
| David Rowlands  |               |                    |                |

## Local Flood Guides

By Alison Travill, Emergency Management Planning and Risk Officer, VHO



Local Flood Guides provide the community with local flood risk information, helping community members to make more informed decisions before and during flood events.

Over 100 Local Flood Guides have been developed in Victoria since 2012, and are available to community members on the VICSES website under [Get Ready > At Home > Your Local Flood Information](#).

The VICSES Local Flood Guide template was updated through feedback from Community Resilience Coordinators and trials in a number of different townships.

### The most significant changes to new Local Flood Guides are:

- A greater focus on images with less text and more concise information.
- The first four pages are locally focused for the identified community.
- Optional back four pages with generic

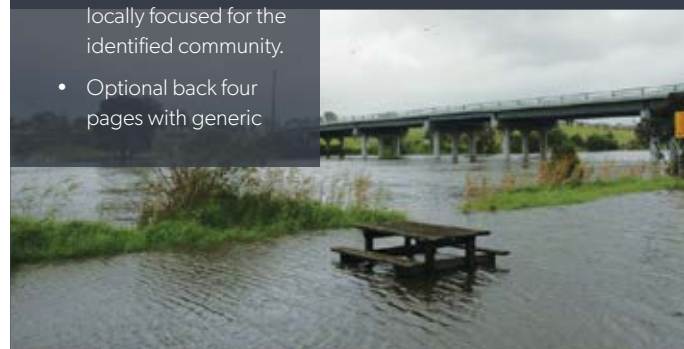
flood warnings and emergency preparedness information.

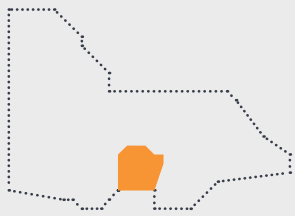
- Alignment with the new VICSES Style Guide.

Additional priority townships have been identified as locations that could most benefit from a Local Flood Guide as part of Regional Floodplain Management Strategies.

Bruthen to Swan Reach is the first community to utilise the new template, which you can find on the VICSES website under [Get Ready > At Home > Your Local Flood Information > Bruthen to Swan Hill Reach \(East Gippsland\)](#)

Final guides are also uploaded onto FloodZoom where they can be used by incident management teams to assist with local flood operations in conjunction with Municipal Flood Emergency Plans and other tools. ■





# CENTRAL

1 July – 30 September

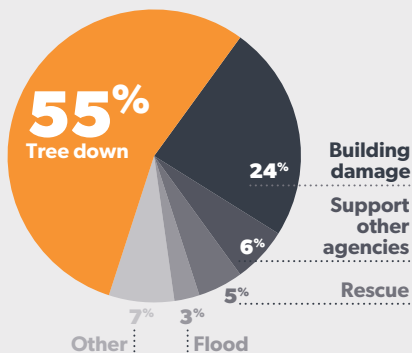


# 1,780

Volunteers

# 3,292

Requests for assistance



# Retirement of Stephen Green, Life Member and Unit Controller

By Priscilla Grimme, Volunteer Support Officer, Central Region



**O**n Saturday 27 October, Upper Yarra Unit members held a celebratory dinner at Warburton Hotel to recognise the long term service of Stephen Green. After being a member for over 30 years and Unit Controller for 12, Stephen finally decided to hang up his VICSES uniform and relocate to the sunny state of Queensland, where he intends on spending quality time with his family.

Stephen, or Steve as he is affectionately known, first joined Upper Yarra Unit in August 1988, and in April 2006 became the Unit's Controller. Always an active and energetic member, his passion and valuable contribution in all aspects of Road Crash Rescue played a significant part in what inspired him.

Steve has directly influenced unit members in more ways than one. His mentoring, recognition and retention focus has greatly benefited the unit, and has assisted in retaining high volunteer numbers where others have struggled. He has always had the best interests of his unit members in mind, and continually developed and mentored members at every opportunity to ensure everyone had the essential training and equipment.

Steve's guidance and leadership has been a crutch for all during the tough times too, especially when the unit lost two of its own in tragic circumstances. Steve supported others while still working through his own grief, displaying a true grit and steely resolve in putting the feelings of fellow members before his.

In addition to his VICSES career, Steve was also one of the founding volunteer members of the 'Yarra Valley TRIP Program,' a driver awareness program about road trauma aimed at educating high school students in the Yarra Valley.

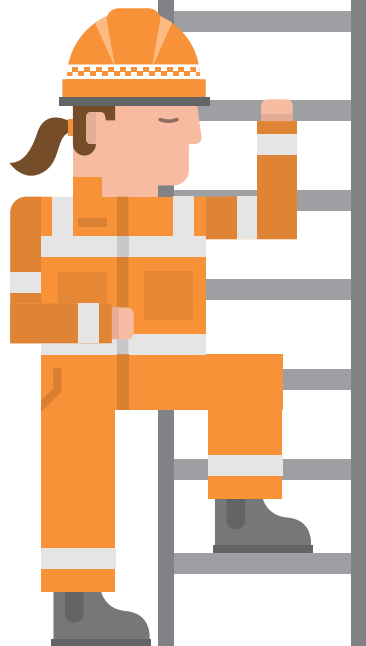
Steve has now handed the reigns over to Michael Young as the new Upper Yarra Unit Controller. Steve is, and always will be, a well-respected senior volunteer member and a wonderful Unit Controller. We'd like to convey our sincere thanks to Steve for his outstanding commitment and service to his community and Victoria. ■





# Operation Emergency Ready

By Gavin Quinn, Community  
Resilience Coordinator,  
Central Region



On Saturday 13 October, Mornington Peninsula Shire, Frankston City Council, City of Kingston and City of Greater Dandenong hosted a family fun day to launch its Emergency Ready booklet, preparedness videos and website:

[www.emergencyprepare.com.au](http://www.emergencyprepare.com.au)

“Operation Emergency Ready” was designed to educate the community and ensure they are prepared for emergencies. Visitors were able to participate in a range of interactive activities and watch demonstrations on water safety and fire behaviour. They were also able to meet with emergency services representatives and learn more about the work they do.

VICSES Sorrento, Frankston and Greater Dandenong Units proudly supported the event, which was held in the City of Greater Dandenong’s Harmony Square.

“Given that 26% of people living within these four council areas only

arrived in Australia in the past 10 years, education and awareness are paramount,” said Greater Dandenong Mayor and Councillor, Youhorn Chea.

“This event is not only an opportunity to learn more about what these services do, but also a chance to learn more about the role everyone can play in being emergency ready.”

Overall, the event encompassed the ‘Safer Communities Together’ vision, which showed great initiative from the four municipalities in group collaboration. ■



# EAST

1 July – 30 September

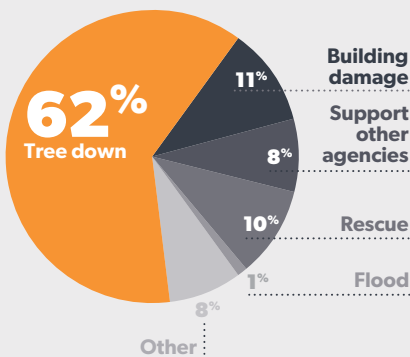


# 694

Volunteers

# 671

Requests for assistance



# Noojee all emergencies, all communities open day

By Jane Fontana, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

On Sunday 4th November, Warragul Unit participated in an emergency services open day for the community of Noojee. The event was held over the Melbourne Cup long weekend to engage with local residents, as well as those who visit the area.

The focus of the day was to achieve as many emergency agencies as possible in the one location, so the Noojee community would have a one-stop-shop opportunity to engage with emergency services regarding emergency preparation, local risks, and how to receive assistance.

Noojee CFA and Baw Baw Shire Council hosted the event at the Noojee Historical Society Site, which incorporated displays from VICSES, Parks Victoria, Red Cross, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police and VicForests. There was also kid's entertainment including Paddy Platypus and

Captain Koala, live music, food vans, and coffee.

Warragul Unit engaged with many members of the public and may have even picked up a couple of new recruits! Overall, the day was deemed a great success, and is most likely to be held bi-annually in the same location. ■







## Monash medical students visit Bairnsdale Unit

By Merryn Henderson, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

Bairnsdale Unit recently welcomed 20 second-year Monash medical students to its local headquarters to give its students an insight into the work of VICSES volunteers. The students were on a two week placement in Bairnsdale from their Clayton (Melbourne) university base.

Unit Controller Karina Osgood welcomed the students, giving them a tour around the headquarters and the opportunity to examine specialised equipment and tools. The students were then taken through various emergency scenarios by Deputy Unit Controller Frank Carter and Ambulance Victoria Wilderness Paramedics Andy Oates and Kerry Wratt, including motor vehicle accidents, remote bush search and rescue situations. The scenarios helped give the medical students an understanding of the trauma patients have already experienced prior to arriving at the hospital's Accident and Emergency Department.

Over the past three years, Bairnsdale Unit, Ambulance Victoria and Monash University have taken four cohorts of medical students through

the half-day programme, proving how invaluable the learning is for all involved.



***One of the aims of the Bairnsdale placement is to give students an appreciation of rural health and life in rural communities, in particular for them to understand differences that exist between metropolitan and rural communities," said local Monash University Senior Lecturer Dr Angelo D'Amore, who accompanied the students to the unit.***

"The students leave with a new found respect and understanding of the importance of VICSES in achieving best health outcomes in emergency situations across East Gippsland." ■

## Skilled Cowrie Bay rescue

By Brendan Pfanner, Curriculum Coordinator, Snowy River Campus & Cassy Cunningham, Snowy River Mail. Published by the Snowy River Mail on 28 October.

Orbost Unit and Ambulance Victoria were called to assist on the morning of Tuesday 16 October, when a 15-year-old female student in residence at the Snowy River Campus suffered a dislocated knee while on a bushwalk with 11 other students and two staff at Cape Conran.

The rescue was in a difficult and inaccessible location on the beach, and required stretchers and carrying. Ambulance Victoria officers stabilised the student and made her comfortable before she was carried by VICSES to the ambulance.

In a letter to the Orbost Unit members, Acting Principle of Snowy River Campus Brendan Pfanner expressed the school's thanks and gratitude for their hard work and support.

"We are appreciative to be in receipt of such a wonderful team of people who responded quickly and provided a professional level of care and technical skill on scene, to coordinate and execute the rescue and stretcher out our student," Mr Pfanner said.

"VICSES members are dedicated and selfless volunteers prepared for any emergency, who interrupt their lives to continually help others to deliver care and support anywhere, anytime and often under difficult circumstances."

The student is from a school in the west of the state and is hoped to make a full recovery. ■



Link to article: [www.snowyrivermail.com.au/news/local-news/73-skilled-cowrie-bay-rescue](http://www.snowyrivermail.com.au/news/local-news/73-skilled-cowrie-bay-rescue)



**MID**

**WEST**

**1 July – 30 September**

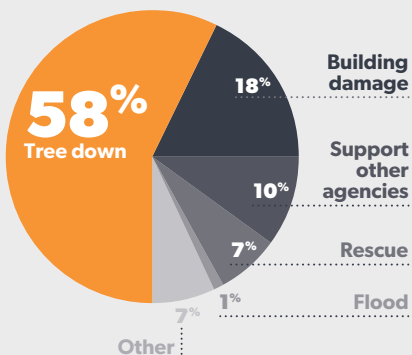


**476**

**Volunteers**

**436**

**Requests for assistance**



## Volunteer Spotlight

# Bill Robson

**By Chris Berry, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region**

**S**o Bill, how long have you been with the VICSES?

Almost 16 years. I joined the Bacchus Marsh Unit as a junior member, and have held the positions of Team Leader, Section Leader Community Safety, Section Leader Equipment and Vehicles, Deputy Controller Operations and Unit Controller.

**Why did you join?**

I'd seen VICSES out and about, and thought it looked exciting. I was also at the age where I would be finishing school

soon, and was unsure about a career. I joined with a friend from school, as we were both contemplating careers with Victoria Police and thought VICSES might give us a better insight.

**How has volunteering influenced you?**

Volunteer work has been a significant part of my life, all starting with VICSES. I have since become a CFA volunteer, and was involved with the Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) for 8 years. RYLA is a week-long residential leadership and personal development program for 18 - 25 year olds, aimed at challenging young people

with regards to their personal values, future goals and community involvement. My final two years with the program was as one of two program Co-Directors planning and overseeing the week long program.

**What has kept you volunteering with VICSES?**

Close friendships, learning new skills from fellow volunteers, and helping others. Operationally, I am passionate about Road Rescue and being able to deliver the highest level of service to the community. ■

## Ballarat Unit acquires new vehicle

**By Chris Berry, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region**



**B**allarat Unit, one of the busiest in the region, has just received a new vehicle thanks to 2017/2018 Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) grant.

The Ford Transit, which will be used primarily for responding to storm damage, comes with a general rescue pod, which includes a tree down kit, storm kit and a built in lighting tower. In the past the unit's support vehicle for storm damage relied on a 4x4 and storm trailer, with a capacity for four people only. The new vehicle provides greater efficiency with





# Stawell Unit attends aircraft rescue

By Gavin Kelly, Regional Officer  
Emergency Management,  
Mid West Region

the capacity for a crew of seven plus equipment.

The truck also provides a greater opportunity to attend more diverse RFAs and community engagement activities, and has already been out and about on several jobs. Ballarat Unit members are delighted with the new vehicle, noting the additional space and improved storage. Although, for some the vehicles new height will take a bit to get used to when reversing into the shed!

And the most exciting news? The vehicle can be driven with a car licence, so anyone can drive it! Well maybe not everyone... hands up who can drive a manual car?! ■

Stawell Unit was called to an aircraft rescue on 5 October, when a single engine aircraft with two people on board suffered flight difficulties, lost control, and spiralled to the ground, 5km from Stawell. Arriving at the scene, members found the aircraft on the ground, with one casualty already out and the other trapped due to the canopy and injuries.

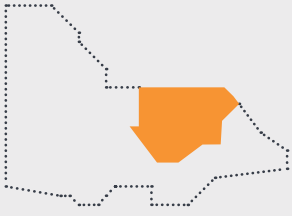
**A**s a Level 1 Incident, command and control was an important aspect of managing the scene, allowing for a seamless, cohesive working environment from all of the agencies present. The VICSES Incident Agency Commander, James Treloar, in working with the Incident Management Team (IMT) was impressed with the high level of support

and professionalism from all agencies involved. It made dealing with a difficult situation easier, including the Incident Emergency Management team (IEMT) meeting, which allowed for agencies to work through the immediate rescue needs and overall scene protection required for investigation.

The unit members assisted ambulance crews with stabilising the two casualties

who were subsequently transported to Melbourne hospitals by air ambulances.

Overall a successful outcome to a potentially difficult event, made easier by the new OCEP radio network, the Operations Management Manual (V4) and the ALLIMS structure that all agencies worked to. ■



**NORTH**

**EAST**

1 July – 30 September

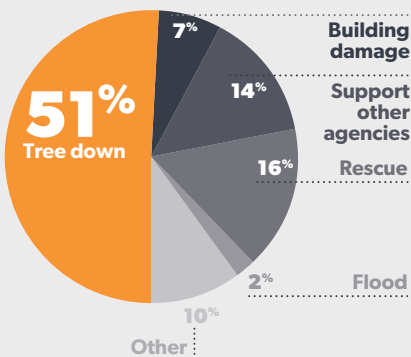


**714**

**Volunteers**

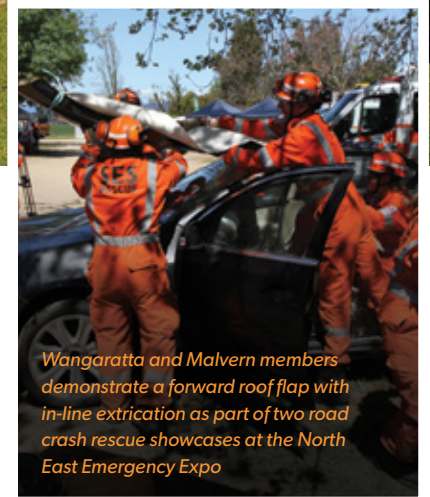
**446**

**Requests for assistance**



# North East CEFs go BIG!

By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator, North East Region



Wangaratta and Malvern members demonstrate a forward roof flap with in-line extrication as part of two road crash rescue showcases at the North East Emergency Expo

Two North East Community Engagement Facilitators have taken their community activities to the next level in the past few months, each hosting larger-than-life exhibition-style events.

**W**odonga Unit member Carina Heppell's North East Emergency Services Expo brought CEO Stephen Griffin, along with VIPs from Victoria Police and the CFA to the lovely rural setting at Moyhu. More than 20 emergency services, agencies, and 350 community members gathered to see rope rescues, road crash rescue demonstrations, fire table demonstrations, rescue pods, police horses and more.

Much further north, VICSES Corryong Unit Controller Sharyn Nankervis' Schools Emergency Active Learning

Day brought six agencies together to give Corryong School students an opportunity to learn from the local VICSES, Victoria Police, CFA, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Australian Red Cross and Forrest Fire Management

Victoria agencies. Throughout the day, students prepared emergency pet carriers, measured out a safe campfire zone, practiced first aid, put together pillowcase emergency kits and climbed all over the local police vehicle!

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to both Carina and Sharyn on their phenomenal events, which brought priceless engagement to some of our smaller, more remote communities. ■



Wodonga Unit's Carina Heppell leads Corryong Primary School children to construct improvised pet carriers during emergencies





## Volunteer Spotlight



# Tom Thoburne

By Sara-Jane Bowering, Rob Johnstone, & Carolan Miller, North East Region

**Name:** Tom Thoburne

**Unit:** Mansfield

**Rank:** Unit Controller

**Length of Service:** 7 years

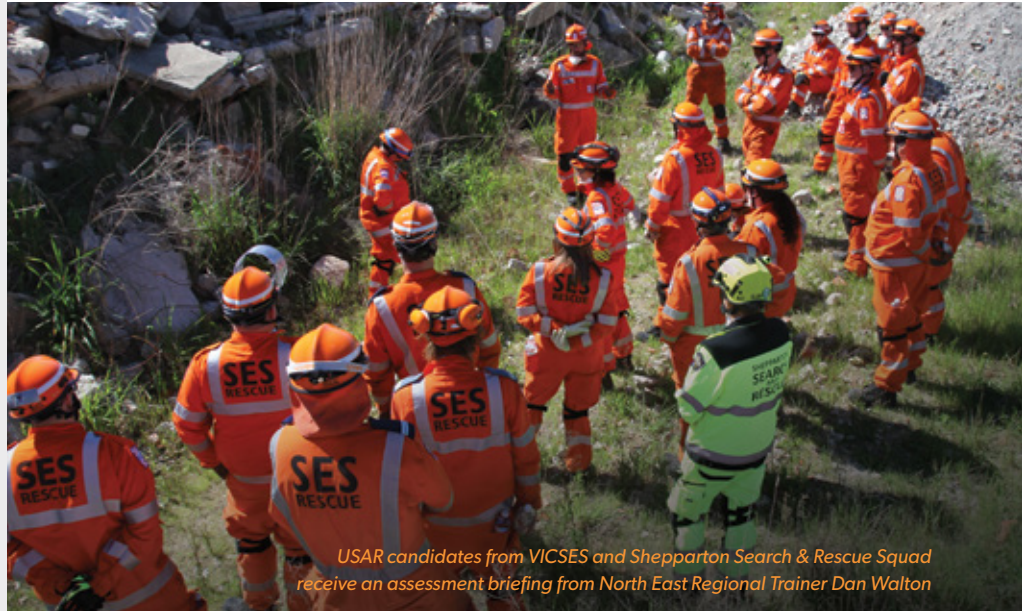
**Most memorable moment:** When I was selected to take on the position as the Unit Controller.

**T**om is always looking out for his community and those around him, which extends to the volunteer members at Mansfield Unit. Tom sets a great example in more ways than one, demonstrating extreme dedication to his personal fitness regime, be it on a 20km hike with his partner Judy, or VICSES activities that include maintaining an Alpine Search and Survival competency.

Tom's fitness activities have seen him participate in the Eureka Stair Climb, master the challenging terrain of Mount Buller on his mountain bike, and coach junior member Brittney Allen in a charity run event to support her sister and the Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital.

Having invested heavily in the development of Mansfield Unit members, Tom also tries his hand at the coordination of multi-agency emergency exercises. Overall, Operations Officer Rob Johnstone sums Tom up perfectly, stating that Tom "is a role model for others, and is a fine leader in his community." ■

# New members raise the roof at Urban Search and Rescue training



*USAR candidates from VICSES and Shepparton Search & Rescue Squad receive an assessment briefing from North East Regional Trainer Dan Walton*



By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator, North East Region

**H**eld in Wodonga at a new venue, a recent Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) course was the talk of the region as 24 newly trained members returned to their units raving.

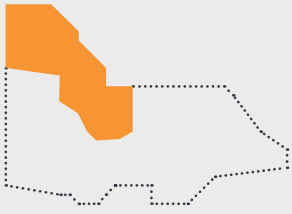
Regional Officer Training, Robbie Johnstone, reported that all 24 volunteer candidates eagerly completed the USAR program. A number of fabulous photos were taken on the day by Bright Unit member and volunteer trainer Graham Gales. ■

## North East region releases regional response plans

By Keith O'Brien, Assistant Chief Officer, North East Region

**M**id October saw the North East (Hume) Regional Response Plans authorised and socialised with Unit Controllers at the North East Unit Controllers Conference.

These response plans provide a high level overview of regional hazard risks, including flood, storm, earthquake and landslide. The plans also outline how the region may manage emergencies arising from these hazards, and are available on the VICSES website under **EM Sector > VICSES Emergency Plans** ■



**NORTH**

**WEST**

1 July – 30 September

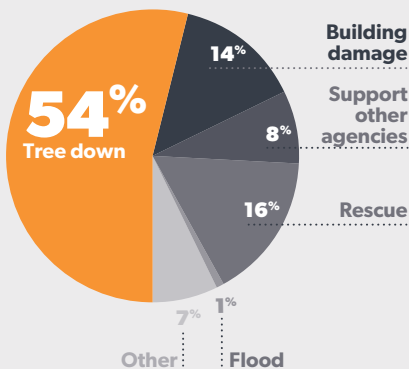


**678**

Volunteers

**463**

Requests for assistance



# Celebrating Maryborough Unit's 40 years



## Memories from Unit Controller Jesse Wright

By Jesse Wright, Maryborough Unit Controller, North West Region



I remember first signing up with VICSES alongside Cedric Appleby, Ron Kennedy and Neville Leech, who would all become long-term VICSES volunteers. Initially we were given blue overalls, and then white, before orange became the staple colour.

I don't remember what funding we had, but I remember holding fundraisers for equipment, including our first hydraulic rescue equipment. We fundraised for new vehicles too – Harry Moyle had a great deal to do with those decisions during his time at Maryborough Unit.



## Birchiping with Happiness Meet Darlene Emblem, Birchip's new Unit Controller

By Ben Cash, Community Resilience Coordinator, North West Region

**W**hat brought you and your family to Birchip?

A simple tree change. My husband and I travelled through NSW, QLD and Victoria in search of a kind and welcoming rural area. Birchip had such a nice feel, and next thing you know we were signing on the dotted line on a property in Curyo (20 minutes from Birchip).





## Swan Hill Show a Paddy success

By Ben Cash, Community Resilience  
Coordinator, North West Region



My first major involvement was the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires. Don Wiseman and I went to Macedon and did an overnight stint at a quick-fill pump, making sure the lighting kept going. The next was when we drove out to evacuate Talbot in 1985, only to be trapped as the fires surrounded us. Thankfully we survived.

I remember the unit heading to assist the Sydney hail storms with 1999, with members chanting "Are we there yet dad?!" the entire way. The boys had to share a bed when they arrived, but it was a good laugh to stir Steve Moyle and the others. He could take a stir as well as give it.

We also assisted major flooding in Carisbrook, with 2011 being the largest. Our members were on duty from Tuesday until Saturday, aiding the community and even driving the Premier around. A few members were directly affected, as well as family. It was a tough time, but we got through it. We always did. ■

**P**addy was out and about at the Swan Hill Show in October as the team from the Swan Hill Unit worked to entertain and engage the community.

Teaming up with our counterparts from the CFA and Roadsafes Central Murray, we created a community safety hub with information for the community on a number of risks including storm, flood, fire, and driving while distracted.

Paddy was more than happy to walk around the show, stopping for pictures and getting in on the fun! Thank you to the hard working volunteers that assisted before, during and after the show to make it such a success. ■



### Tell us about an experience you had while volunteering that made you realise you were making a difference.

Well... that is a difficult question! I suppose when our unit successfully completed our Road Rescue Capability Assessment. Most of us had been with VICSES less than a year, and worked so hard as a team to ensure we met the standards. The exercise most definitely made me proud to be a member of an amazing driven group of people who continually support each other.

### What motivates you to stay involved?

The team and the services we provide to the community.

### Does anyone in your life play a role in supporting your involvement?

My husband and two adult daughters have also joined. The passion we share has most certainly enhanced our family time together.

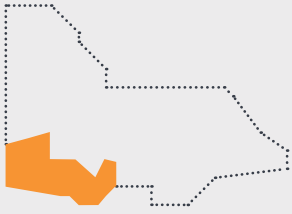
### What do you do when you are not volunteering?

Spend time enjoying my family and looking after my menagerie of pets. Many of them are special needs

and rescues. I'm beginning to be known locally as Old McDonald's Farm!

### Where would you like to see the Unit in 5 years' time?

With a membership of diverse people who bring a variety of skills and a unique perspective to what we can do for the community. To have a professional committed connection with other emergency services, to ensure community needs are always met by services that are autonomous but are also capable of working together as one when required. ■



# SOUTH WEST

1 July – 30 September

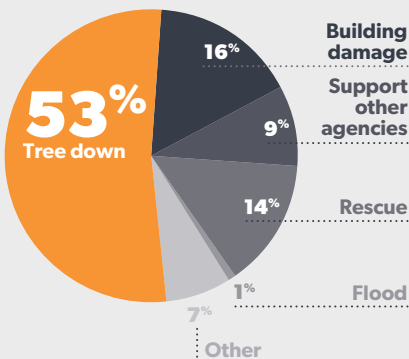


# 666

Volunteers

# 570

Requests for assistance



## Colac goes pink for Breast Cancer

By Jake Johnson, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

Each year, October marks international Breast Cancer Awareness Month. To help raise awareness and funds, the McGrath Foundation ran a Pink Up Your Town campaign across Australia.

Colac Unit was more than happy to jump on board, adding a splash of pink across the unit to support the cause. The funds raised will help to provide men and women

across Australia who have been diagnosed with breast cancer free access to a nurse, no matter where they live.

Those living in or passing through Colac would have noticed unit members wearing pink epilates on their overalls, truck wheel hubcaps sprayed in pink, and vehicle bull bars wrapped in pink

“Breast cancer affects so many people across Australia, whether it is the person directly affected or those forming the support network. Colac Unit was more than happy to play a small part

in raising awareness of the cause,” said Unit Controller Steve Tevelein.

“This is something we hope to build on in years to come and get other units as well as State and Regions involved.”

For anyone looking for more information or to be involved next year, you can visit the website at: [www.pinkupyourtown.com.au/business/](http://www.pinkupyourtown.com.au/business/)



## South West Controllers Conference

By Jake Johnson, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

The South West Controllers Conference is a chance for Unit Management Teams from across the region to get together with region and state representatives to network and share information with counterparts from other units.

The intent for the day was to look back at the year gone by,

address any challenges faced, and set priorities for the region looking forward.

“We want to make these events as beneficial as possible for the units, which is why they set the agenda. I take agenda item requests from units all year round to ensure we are meeting their ever changing needs,” said Regional Manager Alistair Drayton.

Building on last year, this year’s conference included a welcome and emergency

management sector overview from Chief Operations Officer Tim Wiebusch, and breakout sessions addressing readiness and training, Spotfire, unit sustainability, work health and safety, OCEP and Buy Online.

The South West Region would like to thank all members who made themselves available and helped to make the event a success. A big thank you to Susan for baking the delicious biscuits – how good do they look! ■





# We work as one!

**By Bruce Humphries, Community Resilience Coordinator,  
South West Region**

The concept of VICSES, CFA and other emergency services working together is nothing new to Dunkeld Unit Controller Doug McArthur.

**A**n active member of both VICSES and CFA for over 30 years, Doug had a good understanding of the capability of each organisation, but recognised there were opportunities to improve service to our community through better understanding of the role and requirements of each agency, particularly during road rescue response.

In conjunction with CFA Group Officers, Doug organised a joint training activity between VICSES Dunkeld Unit and the Westmere Fire Brigades Group. The objective was for each member to gain a better understanding of the role, function and capability of the other agency. This shared understanding would enable volunteers to work better

together on scene, and to improve outcomes for victims of road accidents and other emergencies.

Some key areas covered in the joint exercise were scene approach and access, inner and outer circles, stabilisation, rescue equipment and techniques, casualty management and handling, and an overview of the Road Rescue Arrangements Victoria.

The initiative and training session was well received by CFA volunteers, and both agencies gained a better understanding of each other's role, function and capability. The session was so successful that a second joint exercise was conducted with the Mount Rouse CFA Group. ■



## Road Rescue Skills Workshop

**By Bruce Humphries, Community Resilience Coordinator,  
South West Region**

**I**n October around 25 volunteers from 11 units attended a Rescue Training Skills Workshop, taking part in presentations from VICSES Trainers and Ambulance Victoria to enhance their road rescue skills.

Local contractor, L.K. Earthmoving, provided a 40T Excavator to enable trainers to achieve simulated crash damage to the modern vehicles used on the day.

South West Operations Manager Andrew Murton facilitated the training and said presentations conducted helped VICSES Rescue operators learn different rescue techniques, including the best options to use on modern vehicles.

"As the largest road rescue provider in Victoria, it is important to maintain and improve our skills. The key skills learned on the day included the different ways someone can be trapped after

a serious vehicle accident, and the ways in which they should be extricated."

Ambulance Victoria personnel provided valuable insights into injuries sustained in significant motor vehicle accidents, and the importance of working together in those situations.

"We looked at how the latest equipment and extrication techniques can assist with removing an injured person from a vehicle in a safe and timely fashion," said Murton. "Attendees became familiar with new rescue equipment, advanced techniques, and feedback from volunteers on the day was sensational".

Members who attended were able to take the knowledge gained from the workshop back to their units and share with other rescue operators. ■



*Doug McArthur and son Will representing Dunkeld CFA and SES*

# OPERATIONAL UPDATES

## Operational capability enhanced through new equipment trials

By David Tucek, Manager Operational Capability, VHO

A key strategic theme of the Operational Capability Strategy (OCS) 2017-2022, is that local solutions for local problems require “equipment which is safe for use, fit for purpose and best value, balancing local needs against state consistency.”

To this end, a number of equipment items have been put forward by volunteer members in the field for evaluation over the past months, and the following items have been successfully trialled and will soon be available in the equipment catalogue for purchase by units.

**MANY THANKS**

**Many thanks to the participating units and staff who have assisted in enhancing VICSES' operational capability in remote area response, storm and Road Crash Rescue operations!**

### Battery Powered Chainsaws

Many thanks to the Units involved in trialling these variants, and thanks also to State and Regional staff for their support to volunteers and review of risk assessment for these chainsaws.



**Stihl MSA200C 36V 14" Bar Battery Powered Chainsaw** including separate AL500 Charger & AP300 Battery trialled by Manningham Unit.

### AEG 58V Brushless Battery Powered 16" Bar Chainsaw Kit

complete with battery and charger) trialled by Otway Unit.



These chainsaws are not expected to replace petrol variants, but rather to provide an alternative. They do provide some key advantages, which include:

- Low noise level, enhancing operator situational awareness and assisting casualty comfort where tree debris needs to be removed prior to casualty extrication.
- No filters to clean.

### 4WD Off Road Pod Trailer

Bright Unit obtained funding to trial a 4WD Off Road Pod Trailer (current supplier Stockman P/L – ‘All Roada’ model). This trailer has several advantages over other types of currently approved trailers when considered with the remote and alpine environments. These include:

- Support of rapid deployment to remote and wilderness locations.
- Light weight construction and single axle allow for the trailer to be unhitched and manoeuvred by hand, where narrow tracks preclude turning around with a trailer attached.
- Low profile allows for better driver vision to the rear of the towing vehicle.
- Gear such as Alpine Search and Rescue (ASAR) equipment can be carried in the trailer, freeing up space within the towing vehicle and adding to the occupants comfort.

There are still a few items to finalise before approving this trailer, including configuring and venting the front tool box to carry chainsaws and fuels, and fitting a standard 50mm hitch to allow for lateral movement for off road. These finalisations will be included in a technical specification, to ensure competitive pricing may be obtained prior to further deployment within VICSES. ■

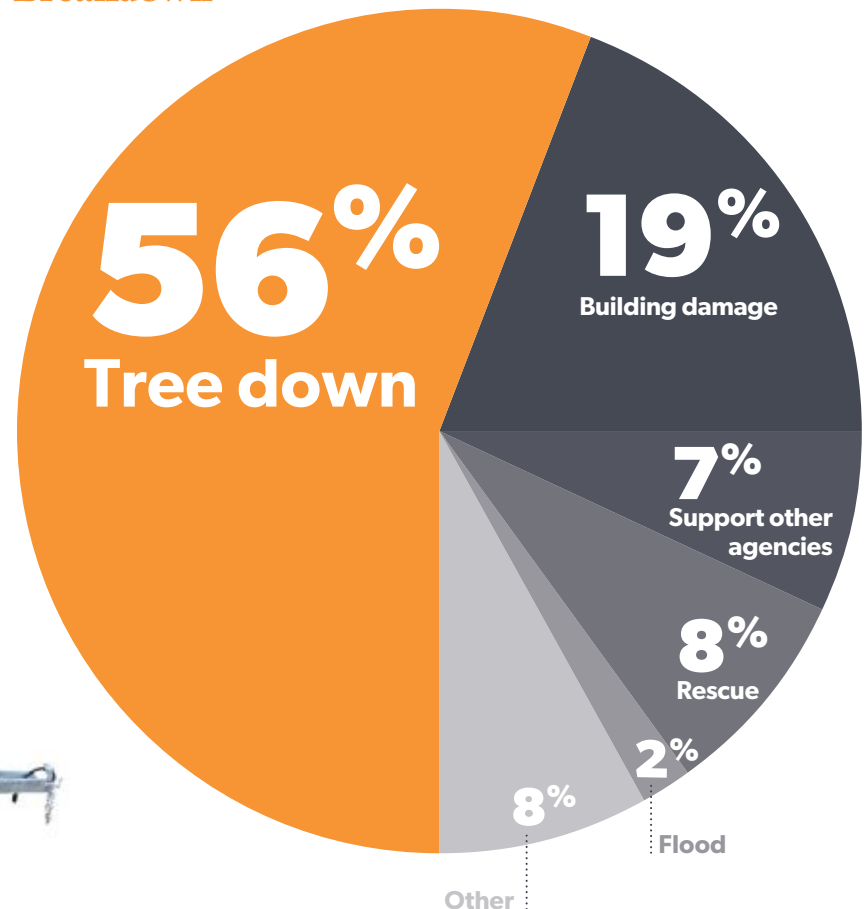


# Requests for Assistance 1 July – 30 September

**Total**

# 5,890

**Breakdown**



# PROJECTS – WHAT'S NEW

## Crew Member training package

By Steve Kirkbright, Training Program Developer Project Officer, VHO

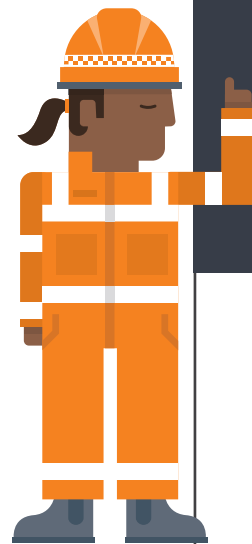
VICSES is redeveloping the General Rescue (GR) training package. Under a new name – Crew Member training package. This much anticipated review and redevelopment is well underway with a Pilot Phase to be launched in May followed by the first release in July next year.

### The Crew Member training package will respond to our member needs through:

- Understanding response within the systems approach (before, during and after).
- Understanding the role, responsibilities and tasks of a Crew Member.
- Understanding service delivery within our control and support agency functions.
- Gaining of practical skills and knowledge to be an effective Crew Member, including updating of the equipment and techniques needed for our control and support agency functions.
- Staged and integrated training ensuring members become more active – sooner.

### The training package will respond to our organisational needs including:

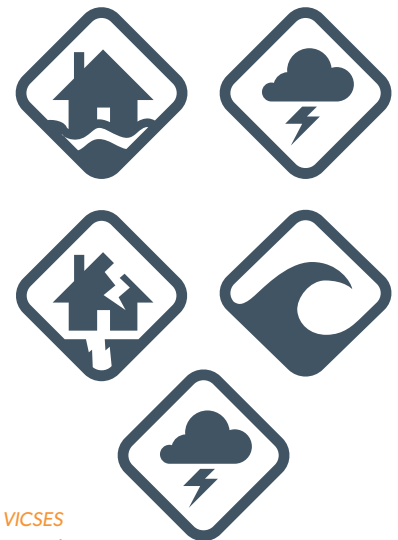
- A focus on the systems approach for emergency operations.
- Better alignment to performance of roles.
- Utilisation of the Training Portal delivery platform.
- A capability focus where members become more active, sooner.
- Inclusion of landslide control responsibility.
- Continued practical assessment of the skills needed by crew members responding to a range of VICSES incidents. ■



### Crew Member training package



Systems approach



VICSES control areas



### For more information

Visit the Hub: [Hub > Training > Training Programs Under Review](#)

Contact Steve Kirkbright – Training Program Developer Project Officer





# Volunteer Hub Project - Phase One Update

By Jane Harris, Senior Communication Officer Projects, VHO

## PHASE ONE

Phase one of the Volunteer Hub Project kicked off in July 2018 and concluded in December 2018. This phase focused on consultation with our valued volunteers, to find out from you, what information is relevant, and then how to structure this

information so it is easier for you to find on the Hub.

We did this in collaboration with a volunteer working group of 20 members from across the State.

Key achievements of the group have included changes to log in and

options for a new-look Hub home page, together with the development of a revised site map to improve visibility of key content. In addition, the consultation drove the need to provide clear, simple and effective communication that better supports all members.

Working within the constraints of the existing Hub platform has meant that some necessary changes that were detected will be addressed when making a decision about a new platform in the future.

## PHASE TWO

The next phase will look to implement the proposed changes from your feedback in phase one to the Hub within the existing platform.

***A special thank you to each member of the volunteer working group that dedicated their time, expertise and experience to help us achieve the milestones reached to date.***

The project team also informed all units and regional offices of the changes that were being recommended to broaden the feedback. Thank you to all that responded. ■

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Your views are welcome and essential to help create a platform that you want, one that is easy to use, relevant and easy to access.

**For further information about the Volunteer Hub Project, visit:**

**Hub > My State > Projects > Current Projects**

## New Quick Reference Guide available

The Project Team has developed a new Hub content Quick Reference Guide in response to volunteer feedback that the Hub must be up-to-date and relevant.

The aim of the Quick Reference Guide is to support Hub writers and publishers to develop content that is relevant and easy to digest, along with tips to help keep it current.

**To view the guide go to:**  
**Hub > Systems > Quick Reference Guides**

# WELLBEING, HEALTH & SAFETY

## From Step it Up to half marathon

**Harminder Singh,  
Craigieburn Unit**



**By Alison Wright, Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, VHO**

**H**ow do you get from Step it Up to completing a half marathon? Harminder started by taking part in Step It Up in 2017, wanting to get fit and lose weight. Soon after he joined a local Highlands Park Run to increase his step count and make new friends, who encouraged him to run.

From there it was only up, winning a gold medal at the Emergency Games in the 5km cross country, and completing the 10km Run Melbourne event

in under 52 minutes. Now, Harminder was ready for his next challenge.

With support from his Park Run buddies, Harminder started training for the half marathon. True to his determination, Harminder completed the 21.09km half marathon in under two hours – an impressive achievement, especially considering the hot and windy conditions.

“I am healthier and have improved my stamina, energy and weight control,” said Harminder on his journey from starting Step It Up in 2017.



***My new active lifestyle has enhanced my confidence and stress levels. It has also helped me to connect with other community members with a similar interest... my wife and daughter have now also joined Park Run.”***

So what’s next on the cards for Harminder?

“I would like to do three more half marathons. The next big challenge for 2019 is to compete in the full Melbourne Marathon in under 4.5 hours. I can, and I will.”

Fantastic goals Harminder, and we wish you all the best! ■



**Workplace inspections**

July 2016 – September 2017

**18**

July 2017 – September 2018

**27**



**Injuries**

July 2016 – September 2017

**14**

July 2017 – September 2018

**21**



**Wellbeing initiatives  
(Total participants)**

July – October 2017

**775**

July – October 2018

**873**



# Light Rescue Vehicle design review

By Anthony Dodd, Wellbeing Health and Safety Advisor, VHO

In October our Wellbeing Health and Safety (WHS) team was out and about consulting with members at the Light Rescue Vehicle (LRV) Design Review at Mount Macedon, and the South West Unit Controllers Conference in Terang.

**W**HS Advisor Anthony Dodd was asked to participate in a focus group on safety at the design stage of the LRV, and demonstrate the Pocket Audit App – used to simplify the unit workplace inspection process – with the South West Unit Controllers.

These activities demonstrate the intricate role that WHS plays within VICSES, touching on many parts of the organisation. Identifying hazards early by considering safety implications at the design stage of vehicles, buildings, and equipment can save problems down the track, while regular biannual

workplace inspections help to control risk and prevent injuries to our members.

**For more information, please contact:**  
[health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au) ■

## Peer Support: Help is just a phone call away

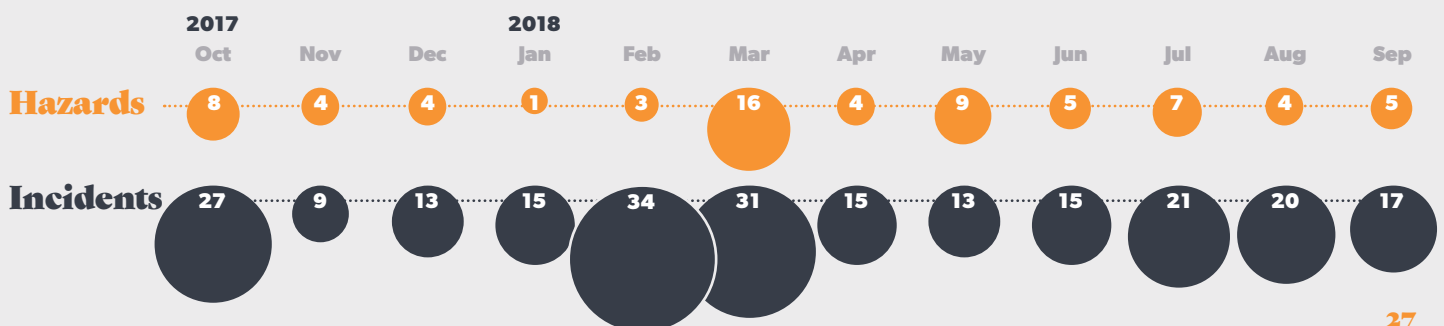
By Joy Etwell, Peer Support Coordinator, VHO

February 2019 will mark 10 years since the devastating 2009 Victorian Bushfires.

**T**his event, along with other bushfires in Victoria, has had a lasting impact on so many of our members. We are aware that increased media coverage around the anniversary of these fires may cause unnecessary distress to those that were involved.

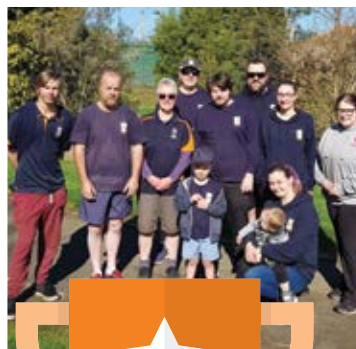
If you find yourself struggling during this period, remember that you are not alone, and our peer support team is available to provide assistance at any time. Call **1800 899 927**, and our team will be there with the support you need. ■

### YEAR AT A GLANCE





# CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS



## Step it Up 2018

A big thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Step it Up the best yet, with more teams, more steps and more participants than ever before.

By Alison Wright, Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, VHO

Our 46 teams clocked up over 143 million steps – equivalent to walking around the Earth nearly three times!

Our creative steppers thought up numerous ways to increase their step totals. We had Zumba,

cycling, spin biking, trail walking, walking in circles, walking in truck laybys, walking with goats, walking out the SES letters on a GPS, tap dancing, park runs and so much more. Congratulations to everyone who took part, we can't wait until next year. ■



### Prizes Awarded – Step It Up 2018

**Most active unit – Step it Up Champions 2018**  
Ballarat Unit

**Most Active Individual**  
Jumbish Jain, Greater Dandenong Unit

**Most Creative Stepper**  
Michael Sorbara, Swan Hill Unit

**Most Valuable Player**  
Athalie Redway, Gisborne Unit

**Week 1 Prize Draw Winner**  
Barry Williams, Morwell Unit

**Week 2 Prize Draw Winner**  
Curtis Stevens, Moe Unit

**Week 3 Prize Draw winner**  
Grant Whiteside, Manningham Unit

**Week 4 Prize Draw Winner**  
Daniel Fitton, Brimbank Unit

### 12 Days of Christmas

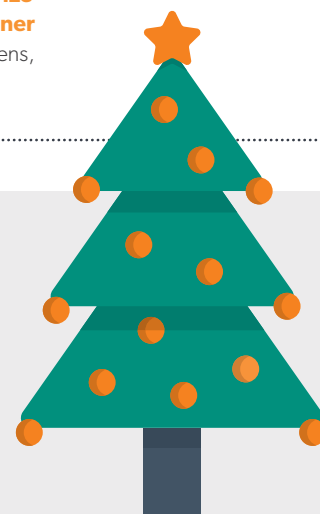
Christmas is on its way, and so is our annual 12 Days of Christmas social media campaign.

We'll be revealing an item from our emergency kit each day from mid-December across all VICSES social media accounts.

To get involved, share the posts from the state account,

or download and post the pics yourself from the Hub, at:

**Hub > My State > Media and Communications > Digital Toolkits**



## Save the Date!

### 2019 State Controllers Seminars

**East:** Saturday 1 June 2019,  
Vibe Hotel, Maryville

**West:** Saturday 15 June 2019,  
RACV Resort Goldfields Resort, Creswick

## South Australia SES visit VHO

On 18 and 19 October, Community Connections hosted guests from South Australia's SES Community Resilience directorate at VHO.

This opportunity was the result of a commitment made in South Australia's Community Engagement Strategic Direction to formalise an agreement with VICSES to collaborate with us regarding best practice for community engagement.

The meeting provided both organisations a chance to discuss the current and future state of community resilience within our organisations and the sector. It was also a great opportunity to learn from each other. While SASES were in Melbourne we visited Red Cross to discuss our collaboration in Victoria, and to assist with facilitating a similar arrangement in South Australia. This is a great example of the way we are increasing collaborations with other organisations in line with the strategic objectives in the VICSES Community Resilience Strategy. ■



## CFA and VICSES Community Engagement State Forum

By Amy Hanson, Project Support Officer, VHO

On 11 and 12 August 2018, 40 VICSES Community Education Facilitators (CEFs) from across the state attended the CFA and VICSES Community Engagement State Forum. Now in its eighth year, the forum brings together community engagement-focused volunteers from CFA and VICSES to enhance skills, build knowledge and celebrate achievements. The two-day event was targeted at volunteers seeking to further their skills and knowledge

with 'The Next Step' to better engage with their community, and included a training and development opportunity, an engagement exhibition and informative speakers.

Social Researcher, Mark McCrindle delivered a key presentation which included the fascinating fact that 88% of Australians now own a smartphone. The challenge for

community engagers is how we utilise this information to help us to connect with our communities.

"The forum is the ideal opportunity to share and learn from one another's lessons and experiences," said Chief Officer Operations Tim Wiebusch.

"It helps us to continuously improve the way we engage together in building capacity, increasing collaboration and fostering connections in our local areas and regions; ultimately building safer and more resilient communities – before, during and after emergencies." ■



## Did you know?

Community engagement items and promotional items are now available to order through the Equipment Catalogue.

### Items include:

- Pull-up and teardrop banners
- Pens
- Stickers
- Magnets
- Umbrellas
- USB sticks
- Paddy soft toys (available from January 2019)

Go to the Hub to view the complete catalogue:

[Hub > My State > Equipment Catalogue](#)





# MEDIA



## Image Library Now Live!



By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

An Image Library is now available on the Hub, full of approved images for use in presentations, social media, local publications, posters and more.

**M**ore than 600 people have already accessed the library to download an image since it launched in September.

The library is divided into categories, making it easy to find what you're looking for, and each image in the library has been approved for use by the State Operations team. ■

To find and download an image, simply follow these three easy steps:

**1**

Navigate to a topic of interest

**2**

Click on a desired thumbnail

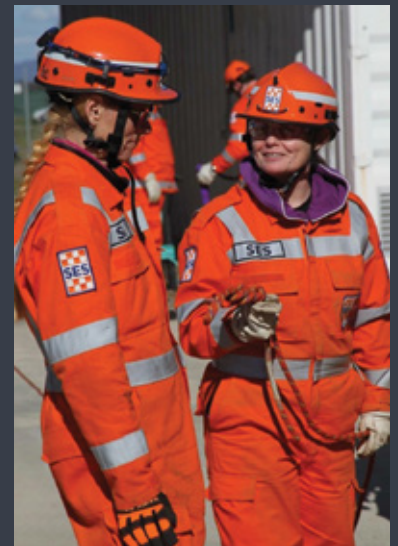
**3**

Save the image to your PC

Visit the library on the Hub, under **My State > Media and Communications > Image Library**



**Do you have a photo worth sharing?** Submit it for approval by emailing [publications@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:publications@ses.vic.gov.au)



## Media Liaison Officer Course

**F**ollowing volunteer consolation, the program has undergone an extensive review and been rebuilt with a focus on practical experience.

The one day course is now run by the Media and Communications team, which allows for a tailored program, that will continually develop based on volunteer feedback.

It is designed to provide VICSES members with the knowledge and skills to promote their unit using

local news outlets and to develop techniques to liaise with media at an incident.

A closed MLO Facebook group has also been set up, where members can share ideas and keep in touch with the VHO media team. If you're an MLO and haven't joined the group, contact us on **1300 783 933**, or email [media@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:media@ses.vic.gov.au).

The first MLO course was run in the East Region, which received fantastic feedback.

We also welcomed nearly 20 new MLOs to the ranks!

The course will be rolled out across Victoria, with additional MLO courses to be announced soon on the Hub at: **My State > Media and Communications > Media Training**



**If you'd like to learn more about the course, or the role, email:**  
[media@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:media@ses.vic.gov.au)

By Matthew Gallant, Manager Media and Communications

New life has been breathed into the VICSES Media Liaison Officer (MLO) course.



# IT UPDATE

# Message from our Chief Information Officer



I am still learning and listening a lot four months into my time here at VICSES, and will continue to do so – although hopefully the pace will slow down a little over the next few months. It has been a very rapid journey so far, and very invigorating!

**H**owever, the time has now come to re-pay you for all the knowledge. There will be a lot of changes coming out from the Information Services team in the coming months. I'll focus on two key changes in this edition of Community Matters.

### Information Services Team Communication

Our team is committed to providing the best service possible. I have received quite a lot of information from my team and from across the state about what is working, and where there are opportunities to improve. Over time you will start to see changes, particularly in the way we communicate. No matter the type of communication, you will start to see a difference.

Sure, we will be looking at our service desk offering and enhance its reporting, tracking and feedback loops. There is always room for improvement, however that's not enough – we also want to change how you communicate with us, what you communicate, and when.

We intend on having more proactive and inclusive conversations, and to get involved much earlier in your activities where there is either a change to technology (new or existing), or to information management. We will be asking a lot more non-technical questions, to help ensure that the impacts to people, systems, and work practises have been identified and are part of the change.

We will be identifying activities or requests that require extended

consultation beyond the team or person making the request, and contribute to the process earlier than at the point of implementation or procurement.

Most importantly, we will be working towards enhanced schedules and prioritisation of the work we are asked to do. We will make sure that we prioritise the activities you have listed on the business plans – the items that have been endorsed and require our full support.

### Information Services Strategy

Starting with our executive and the IS team, we will be commencing a journey to inform, share, and receive feedback on a new Information Services Strategy. This will be a huge collaborative effort, and I ask everyone to get involved through forums and workshops

that I will be in attendance at before the strategy is finalised in March next year. Watch out for when these will be happening – there won't be an all staff survey on this one – we want to hear first-hand from you or via your management.

We won't be able to do this without you all helping us as we adjust and fine-tune our service approach over the next months and year, so thank you for your assistance and patience in advance.

Kind regards

**Silvia Silverii**  
**Chief Information Officer,**  
**Victoria State Emergency**  
**Service**



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