

SPRING 2020

Community Matters

VICSES

EDITION 12



C'MON
VICTORIA
WE GOT THIS



COVID-19

Supporting our communities during these times

VICSES
support Victoria's
biggest search
and rescue
operation

John Hennessy ESM:
My journey with VICSES

30
YEARS+

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Essendon Unit supports the COVID-19 'Mask Up Melbourne' campaign



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

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Welcome to the third edition of Community Matters for 2020.

The year has been like no other. Devastating bushfires, severe storms and COVID-19 have challenged us like we didn't think possible, and our VICSES members have shown themselves to be up for the fight day in, day out, and have continued to perform to world-class standards.

VICSES volunteers take control and assist in all manner of incidents and have been crucial to our state's emergency management response arrangements this year. Whether it's road crash rescue, incident management or disaster response, Victoria can always depend on VICSES to get the job done.

Since 1 January, volunteers have responded to over 24,000 requests for assistance. A fantastic testament to their commitment to helping their communities.

Undertaking the state's largest ever search and rescue mission for young William Callaghan and helping Geelong respond and recover from a tornado in May are just two examples

of our volunteers' ongoing dedication to the safety of Victorians.

VICSES volunteers were also front and centre in late August, responding to one of the worst storms the state has experienced, impacting on powerlines, water, homes and tragically resulting in the loss of three lives. I thank them for their incredible work during this incident.

For the first time in several years, the Bureau of Meteorology is officially predicting a return to La Niña conditions across eastern Australia which will present increased risks of rain, flooding and natural disasters to many parts of our state. It is likely that our VICSES volunteers will be called upon once again to help keep our people, properties and communities safe and I know they'll do an excellent job, as always.

The work of our volunteers, along with fellow emergency service workers, is making a huge difference in challenging times.

I want to thank each and every one of our VICSES volunteers for their courage and dedication throughout 2020.

We simply couldn't do it without you.

Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police and
Emergency Services



Welcome

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

Firstly, I want to thank each and every one of our members for your commitment and dedication in continuing to deliver essential services to communities across Victoria. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and is truly inspiring.

It has been a challenging few months seeing the affects of COVID-19 on our communities, with continual changes to how we work as an organisation. Even through these unprecedented times, our members have continued to deliver an outstanding service across our communities. This includes a tremendous response to the Department of Health and Human Services call for assistance to support residents in public housing towers in Flemington, North Melbourne and Kensington. This was a huge effort, and I thank everyone who was involved in this operation.

Our support during COVID-19 hasn't stopped there; our members have been integral in providing support for Victoria Police in setting up road checkpoints during the lockdown across metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire. Additionally, our Unit Management Teams have met regularly to work through and assist management in overcoming the challenges faced by our units. This hard work exemplifies one of our key Values – **we are focused and adaptable**, in everything we do.

Wrapping up the financial year just gone, it has been one of our most challenging years yet, with flood, storms, bushfires, and the current pandemic environment. Our response to supporting the community has been significant, with a total of 33,742 requests for assistance across the state in the 2019-2020 financial year.

Stay healthy, and look after one another.

Kind regards,

Stephen Griffin
CEO Victoria State Emergency Service

FEATURES

Supporting our communities during COVID-19

By Kate White, Chair, VICSES Pandemic Preparedness and Response Team and Chloe Jeffers, Senior Advisor Corporate Communications and Brand, VHO

The challenges faced as we adapt to a new COVID-19 compliant state have been felt across all of Victoria over the past months. As an emergency service, VICSES has been proactive in demonstrating our key Values: 'Safety drives our decisions' and being 'focused and adaptable'.

Our VICSES units and operations teams have remained committed to providing emergency assistance when emergencies occur – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year – no matter the conditions.

Timely information is being shared across a number of platforms, including:

- Regular Unit Management Team WebEx briefings across all regions with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Stephen Griffin and Chief Officer Operations (COO) Tim Wiebusch.
- Coronavirus Updates and video messages from our COO.
- Weekly contact with units to provide support.
- Information sharing for resupply and delivery needs.
- Updates to our enacted COVID-19 Pandemic Plan and COVIDSafe Directions.
- Provision of COVIDSafe plans for all Units and offices.
- Accessible information on the Hub.



The following doctrine hierarchy applies to how VICSES arrangements for COVID-19 are aligned, and implemented:

COVIDSafe Plan

Demonstrates how VICSES is applying COVIDSafe principles practically - to be sighted as required in line with government regulations taking into account the following:

Business Continuity Plan

Our strategic approach to reducing the impact and consequences on VICSES's ability to safely deliver services to the Victorian public by our workforce

Job Cards

Identified business critical activities (BCA) carrying out essential functions and services in order to sustain our accountabilities and operational functions during the pandemic across all four Alert Stages

Pandemic Plan

Our risk and mitigation planning, assumptions and assurance arrangements for each pandemic alert stage - specific to COVID-19

COVIDSafe Directions

How we practically apply the arrangements

COVID support documents

How we communicate the detail

With our members' health and wellbeing our highest priority, our protocols have been adapted to reflect new restrictions. A number of committees comprised of both volunteers and staff drawing on our technical expertise and specialist skills across VICSES, have guided the business in how we respond to the pandemic to underpin all our decisions. We will continue to adopt a flexible approach that can be scaled and varied to be proportionate to the needs experienced at the time.

It is also timely to reflect on the past year that has been extremely busy for VICSES, having recorded our second busiest year on record in 2019/20, as highlighted by our CEO. Over 400 VICSES volunteers supported fire agencies with a range of operational and support roles over the

devastating summer just gone, with volunteers deployed in the North East and Gippsland from over 100 different VICSES units across the State.

There were also a number of severe weather events, with the Glen Iris hailstorm in January 2020 resulting in over 1,000 requests for assistance alone. Other major incidents included the Waurin Ponds tornado (20 May), and our organisations significant involvement in the search for missing child William Callaghan (8-10 June) on Mount Disappointment, which saw our members applying social distancing considerations during the search.

With the Bureau of Meteorology predicting above average rainfall in spring from September through to November, similar conditions to the 2016 floods could arise with widespread riverine flooding. Flood preparedness is currently underway across the state, so that we are well placed to respond utilising a COVIDSafe approach.

Most importantly, through these challenging times it is important that we continue to look out for each other. For volunteers, you can contact Peer Support at any time on 1800 899 927. Staff can seek support via the Employee Assistance Program on 1300 687 327. Additionally, a number of resources are available on the Hub, including specific wellbeing support during the pandemic.

To all of our members, thank you for your continued commitment to VICSES and the community, and the amazing work that you achieve every day of the year. ■



Mask Up Melbourne



By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

In August VICSES joined with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and our fellow emergency service agencies to support Mask Up Melbourne – a campaign to encourage people living in Metropolitan Melbourne to mask up during Stage 4 restrictions due to COVID-19.

The campaign, created by the team at ADF, saw a giant COVID-19 mask make the rounds across emergency vehicles in Melbourne, and encouraged those who spotted the vehicles to share their masked selfies with the vehicles on social media using the hashtag #MaskUpMelbourne. Our very own Essendon Unit was chosen as our VICSES representative to help kick the campaign off, receiving a great reception from the community. ■



VICSES members demonstrating COVIDSafe principles during the search for William Callaghan. Photo: James Ross AAP.

GENERAL NEWS

Photo: Christopher Hopkins, The Age.

VICSES support Victoria's biggest search and rescue operation

By Kathleen Jessop, Media Officer, VHO

The disappearance of non-verbal teenager William Callaghan sparked the biggest search operation in the state's history, and ultimately captured the attention of Australians, and the international community.

The 14 year-old was on a hike with his family at Mount Disappointment in Whittlesea, north of Melbourne, when he wandered ahead and became lost.

While conditions were chilly, they were about to get dangerous if the teenager could not be found as dusk fell.

What came next was a swift, widespread and dedicated response from Victoria Police, VICSES, and various search and rescue teams from other

organisations, as well as individuals from the public.

VICSES had approximately 80 members per day assisting Victoria Police in the successful search for Will Callaghan. This included highly trained volunteers and staff in areas such as search and rescue and media, and providing lighting and staging area support.

The large-scale operation also drew an enormous amount of media attention, with 176 million people viewing the amazing work of our involved members. This

included VICSES representation across social media, print and online publications, and interviews with VICSES staff and volunteers on breakfast shows *Today*, *Sunrise* and on the ABC.

Thankfully, William was found on the third day of the search by a volunteering member of the public. The boy had no socks on, but was fine despite 48+ hours in cold, difficult conditions. Many described the result as a miracle, and delivered some much-needed happy news during a very tough year. ■





Photo: Keith O'Brien

JOHN HENNESSY ESM:

My journey with VICSES

By John Hennessy, Myrtleford Unit Deputy Controller, North East Region

The honour of being the recipient of this year's Emergency Services Medal as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List has given me the opportunity to reflect upon my life and service with VICSES – especially as it coincided with my 80th birthday, which I enjoyed quietly celebrating at home with my wife.

My father was a prisoner of war on the Burma Railway in World War 2. He was adamant that mateship, cooperation and working for the greater good were paramount for their survival. He demonstrated to me that you only get out of life what you contribute.

Volunteers of all ages and diversities are essential in creating interesting and dynamic communities for all to share, and in fact are the glue that binds communities together.

For over 30 years I have been proud to say that I am a VICSES volunteer, as the Values and standards of our organisation determine who I am today in so many ways. It has been a period of development, confidence, and fulfilment working in conjunction with such dedicated and skilful volunteers and staff, whom I

have built many long-lasting friendships with over time.

Since 1990, I have been operational in various roles at significant flood, storm, road crash rescue and bushfire events in the North East Region, excepting the recent Corryong fires, and have been deployed interstate and to every region except the South West.

It has certainly been an emotional and challenging rollercoaster ride at times, sharing these experiences in one way or another with all VICSES volunteers. Some of my fond memories over the years include the pleasure of safely returning missing persons to their families, the delight in saving the Benjeroop Hall from flooding, the excitement of a night search, the pride of representing VICSES at ANZAC Day ceremonies, the camaraderie of a close-

knit unit, and the overall satisfaction of helping others.

Of course, there are tough times too. The horror and trauma of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, a triple fatality road crash rescue on Christmas Day, the disappointment of an unsuccessful search, and the unforgiving terrain of the High Country.

Despite the ups and downs, I remain passionate about VICSES and will continue to wear orange as long as I am of some use, and continue my role in Beechworth as a Justice of the Peace and a Trustee of the Robert O'Hara Burke Memorial Museum.

Most importantly, I make the time to enjoy an active life with friends and family. Whether it be playing with my grandchildren, reading a book, racing my penny farthing, or sharing a glass of wine with good company – enjoying life with loved ones is what it's all about. ■

Stepping back in time...

Former VICSES member Brian Rickard demonstrates rappelling from a BTV-6 helicopter as part of a helicopter familiarisation day in 1984. VICSES volunteers from Ararat, Stawell, Maryborough and Ballarat Units attended the day, which was held to educate members on precautions and procedures during operations using helicopters. This included search and rescue, use of cargo nets and slings, and how to aid an injured person. ■



Share with us

Do you have a photo that you'd like to share as part of our 'Stepping back in time' feature? Email your submission along with a caption to publications@ses.vic.gov.au

CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS



Emergency Services Blood Challenge 2020

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

From 1 June to 30 August, VICSES once again competed in the annual Emergency Services Blood Challenge with Australian Red Cross Lifeblood. The challenge sees members from emergency service agencies from across Victoria compete to donate the most blood and plasma, and most importantly to save lives.

Due to COVID-19, this year's donations were needed more than ever. Donation centres ensured that all donors were well looked after, including a strict screening process, wellness checks upon arrival (non-contact temperature and questions asked on wellbeing, travel and other factors), stringent hygiene throughout the donation, and the implementation of physical distancing across all centres.

Despite the ongoing pandemic environment, our members rolled up their sleeves to donate much needed blood and plasma. Overall, VICSES placed 13th, with 374 donations, saving 1,122 lives. This included donations from 185 VICSES members, 15 of which donated for the very first time. Our overall tally is an increase of 30% from last years total of 287 donations, which is an incredible achievement.

Thank you to all of our members who took part in this year's challenge, and who continue to donate to support those who need it the most. ■



Your Family, Our Family

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

BankVic Emergency Services Champion – Andy Walters

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO



This year Hawthorn Football Club and BankVic partnered together to recognise the contributions of emergency service personnel across Victoria as part of the BankVic Emergency Services Champion campaign. Among those recognised from across the emergency services sector was South Barwon Unit volunteer Andy Walters.

Andy first joined VICSES back in 2003. Since then, he has responded to over 500 incidents – a huge achievement, which was recognised with a unit award plaque in 2019.

One of the most recent large-scale incidents that Andy has responded to was the Waurin Ponds tornado in May earlier this year. Always ready

to step up to the plate and help out his community, Andy played a huge role in triaging numerous requests for assistance, as well as allocating resources.

VICSES Media and Communications Manager Jamie Devenish, who completed Andy's nomination, praised his contributions and dedication as a volunteer.



Andy is an outstanding quiet achiever, who gives so much time to VICSES and his community," he said.

South Barwon Unit Deputy Controller Anne Moreillon also spoke highly on Andy's commitment to VICSES.

"Andy is dedicated to the job at hand, and encourages many newer members of his unit. He is very passionate about his family, VICSES, and the Hawthorn Football Club of course! All of these attributes, along with his significant contribution to VICSES, made him a very worthy recipient of this award."

As part of the campaign, a short video starring Andy was shared on social media by Hawthorn Football Club and BankVic, celebrating Andy's hard work as a VICSES volunteer.

Congratulations Andy, and thank you for your ongoing service. ■

Coming up in October, VICSES will once again be promoting our *Your Family, Our Family* campaign.

First held in 2019, *Your Family, Our Family* is designed to highlight the sacrifices family members and friends make to ensure VICSES volunteers are able to support their community.

Family can mean many things – partners, children, friends, and even pets. Whether it's picking up the kids from school, heating up dinner, or being

there for a hug after a long day or night – their support means the most.

Stay tuned for this upcoming campaign, and how your unit can get involved.

In the meantime, if you would like to nominate yourself or a fellow VICSES volunteer to be highlighted in our campaign, get in touch by emailing media@ses.vic.gov.au. ■





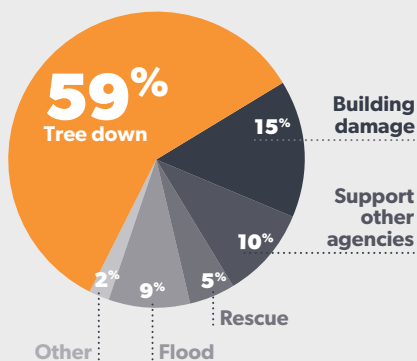
CENTRAL

1 April – 30 June



2,006
Volunteers

3,442
Requests for assistance



Melton welcomes eight new recruits to the family

By Melton Unit Deputy Controller – Training, Michael Britton and Melton Unit Deputy Controller – Community Engagement, Karl Sass, Central Region.

At the start of July, the Melton Unit welcomed the graduation of eight newly qualified General Rescue recruits. In a unit that has had high male representation for a long time, it is great to announce that times are changing. For the first time, Melton had a group successfully complete their General Rescue assessment consisting of all women.

While efforts have been made to increase diversity in the unit, having an all-female General Rescue group was a complete coincidence. The group encompasses a wide range of ages, including a junior member. While it took a lot longer than expected for the eight members to complete their General Rescue due to COVID-19 restrictions, they all persevered to get the job done. All eight members spent months preparing for the assessment under the watchful eye of Deputy Controller - Training Michael Britton, and Section Leader Training Paul Granvillani. In the lead up to the recruits General Rescue

assessment, extra training was held on weeknights to make sure they were ready.

Newly qualified Melton Unit member Cynthia Milones said "I joined VICSES to be of assistance to the community. It's a great feeling to get out of my comfort zone and tackle new challenges. We all work together, and I instantly felt a part of a big family!"

Deputy Controller - Training Michael Britton was thoroughly impressed with the new recruit's efforts.

"We have been impressed with all eight members; the dedication and commitment they have all shown through this process has been outstanding. It is always great

to welcome new members to the unit; everyone has different skill sets and wants to learn about different areas within VICSES," said Michael.

The dedication, leadership and the way they worked together will help the Melton Unit grow and show women are more than capable of doing the job. Thank you to the training team consisting of Michael Britton and Paul Granvillani, assisted by Deputy Controller - Operations Nic Gargalakos, and unit 'mum' and member Yvonne Newton for her leadership throughout the journey.

Well done ladies - Melton Unit is so proud of you all. ■



New recruits Cynthia Milones-Alatriza, Yvonne Newton, Simone Newton, Ashley Newton, Linh Le, Fiona Lien, Nikita Davies, and Alyssa Calladine



Wyndham West Unit welcomed into VICSES family

By Kathleen Jessop, Media Officer, VHO

VICSES has reached a brand new milestone in 2020, with the organisation's 150th unit commencing official operations in Melbourne's West.

Before now, Wyndham West existed only as a VICSES satellite, and not a unit. This has changed with massive population growth in Melbourne's outer west, and a need for additional services in all areas of the community.

Situated on the busy Ballan Road, the new unit has eight inaugural members, with Unit Controller Clifford 'Cliff' Heri at the helm.

Cliff is a small business owner in Truganina, and brings with him experience as a Controller at the Central East Regional Headquarters, and Deputy Controller at the Malvern Unit in Melbourne's inner south-east.

He is passionate about creating a vibrant and dedicated Wyndham West alongside inaugural members Tim Smiley, Brooke Eley, Ken Moss, Brandon Houlihan, Stephen Magann, Peter Walker and David Walker.

"The new Wyndham West Unit offers a great opportunity to develop a strong foundation, culture and future for the volunteers," Cliff said.

"To be able to truly shape a local VICSES unit is a rare and exciting thing. I reckon it's the thing I'm looking forward to the most." ■

Community engagement using digital media: New flood videos

By Malvina Tsecoutanis, Community Resilience Coordinator, Central Region

2020 has been more challenging than we ever could have imagined - plans put on hold, cancelled events, physical distancing, and more. However, one thing that hasn't been held back is the delivery of flood preparedness messaging by our Community Resilience team to residents within high risk communities.

VICSES, in conjunction with Melbourne Water and a number of local councils, identified a series of flood hotspots across metropolitan Melbourne. Originally the Community Resilience team, together with Central Region units, had planned a number of face-to-face community engagement projects, which included community information sessions and door knocks. With COVID-19 restricting these forms of engagement, the Community Resilience team looked at alternative methods of delivery in

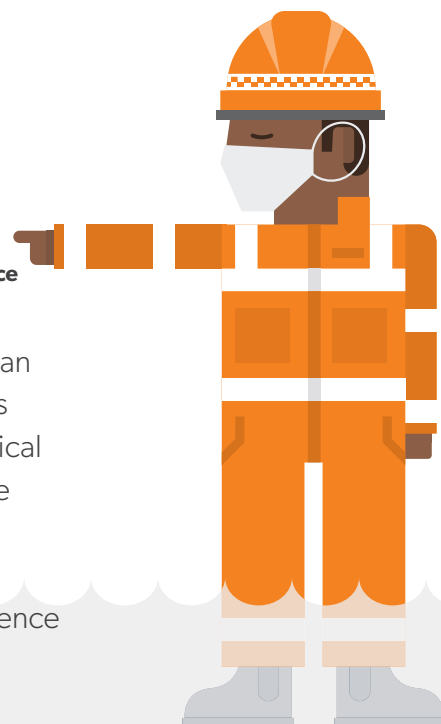
order to continue to inform communities identified within hotspot areas. This included information on the impacts that flood can have on property, lives, and how to prepare for flood events.

After much discussion, it was decided that videos would be developed for six municipalities across metropolitan Melbourne. VICSES unit members from across the region participated in the videos to deliver local knowledge, inform residents on how to access their Local Flood Guide, and provide advice on how to prepare themselves and their

property to minimise the effects of a flood event.

The videos were then uploaded to unit social media pages, the VICSES website and local council websites. Interest from other council areas has raised discussions around producing further videos for flood hotspots, to enable the continuity of engaging with the community without face-to-face interactions during COVID-19.

All videos are available on the VICSES website for public access, and can be viewed under **Get Ready > Flood.** ■





1 April – 30 June

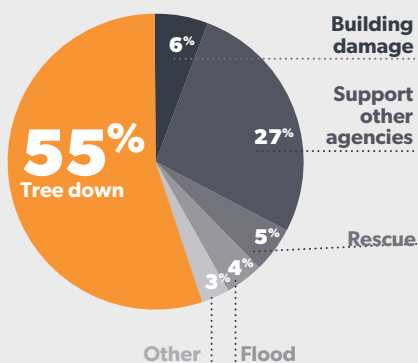


687

Volunteers

930

Requests for assistance



Landslides rock East Gippsland

By Merryn Henderson,
Community Resilience Coordinator,
East Region

At 2:38am on Saturday 25 July, VICSES received a request for assistance (RFA) to respond to a landslide on the Great Alpine Road (GAR), 10kms south of Ensay.

V ICSES, Victoria Police and Regional Roads Victoria were among the first responders attending the GAR landslide. Once on scene, it was evident that the road was completely blocked.

Assessment of the landslide indicated that this landslide was a Category S3 – equivalent to the size of a house, or approximately 24 metres in length. Totalling 2,000 tonnes of rubble, the recovery to restore this major arterial road commenced Saturday and was completed by Sunday evening.

After the recent devastating fire season, there have been a number of subsequent landslides across various East Gippsland road networks. While these additional landslides have not been to the same severity, it is evident that the bushfires are now creating a ripple effect. The impact of the fires has eliminated all debris and vegetation in and around the bushland and exposed bare earth, resulting in the movement of earth after significant rainfalls.



It is a timely reminder to all community members to stay well away from a landslide as the slope may continue to move for hours up to days afterwards,” said Tambo Valley Unit Controller Shane Peach, who responded to the incident.

Great work by everyone involved in this multi-agency response. ■



East Region welcomes new Unit Controllers

By Jane Fontana, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region



Bernie Cashin

Several units across East Region have recently welcomed newly appointed Unit Controllers.

Warragul Unit volunteer Alan Male was appointed Unit Controller in early July, taking over from former Unit Controller Raelyn Ziebe, who led the unit for the past four years.

"My sincere thanks and commendation goes to Raelyn for her leadership and service as Unit Controller at Warragul Unit," said Alan.

"She has done a wonderful job for the unit and its members."

Alan has been a member of VICSES since 2016, originally commencing in north east Victoria at Shepparton. He has over 15 years' experience in emergency operations, including six years with both Marine Rescue Queensland and the Australian Airforce, specialising in safety systems and aircraft rescue.

Over at Foster Unit, Bernie Cashin was officially handed the reins of Unit Controller in early August, taking over from Rachael Nicolson, who has also led the unit for the past four years.

Bernie has been a member of Foster Unit since 2017 and has lived in the Foster area all his life. He very much believes

that running a VICSES unit is a team affair, where everyone in the unit pitches in to help service the community.

"Being Unit Controller is really just a formality", says Bernie of his newly appointed role.



Every member of the Foster Unit is a volunteer, and we all work together to make sure our community is a safe one."

Sale Unit has also welcomed a new Unit Controller, appointing member Damian Skeen to the position. Damian has been with VICSES for seven years, and has held many positions within the organisation including Deputy Controller – Administration, Unit Officer – Finance, Unit

Duty Officer, and Trainer and Assessor.

At the age of 25, Damian is one of the State's youngest members to rise to the ranks of Unit Controller, which is a great achievement.

Down on the coast, Phillip Island Unit has welcome unit member Alan O'Connor to the position of Unit Controller. Alan was appointed the role in July, taking over from former Unit Controller Dianne Duncombe, who led the unit for the past six years.

Alan has been a member of VICSES since 2015, and has attended nearly 330 emergency call outs in this time.

Operations Manager Craig Hooper said it is an honour to officially welcome all the Unit Controllers to their new role.

"As a volunteer myself, I fully appreciate the commitment that our Unit Controllers make and the leadership they provide in times of emergency", said Craig.

Congratulations to our new Unit Controllers, and thank you to our former Unit Controllers for your leadership and dedication. ■



Alan Male



Damian Skeen



Alan O'Connor



MID WEST

1 April – 30 June

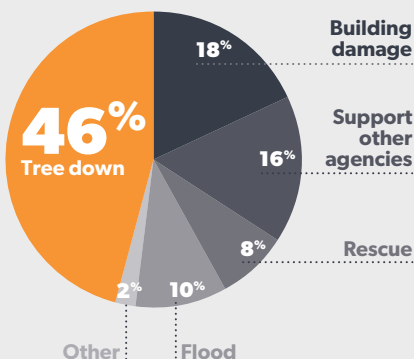


400

Volunteers

259

Requests for assistance



Mid West members keeping in touch

By Jane Patton, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region

The amazing efforts of all Mid West Region members have been evident over the past few months, with units adopting a new approach to staying connected through Webex systems on a regular basis. Members have been utilising this virtual space for weekly unit catch ups for the primary purpose of maintaining operational capacity, engaging around learning, COVID-19 updates, and the emotional and social wellbeing of each other.

Volunteers and staff have also continued to embrace technology to conduct sessions in this virtual space on Wednesday nights for skill maintenance training and member networking opportunities across the Mid West Region. Topics have varied from WorkSafe legislative requirements, vehicle positioning, and operating procedures for lighting towers.

Training from a distance can definitely have its challenges in our current pandemic environment. However, the use of Webex has

been integral to how our members can continue to share their ideas and experiences with each other in a positive and inclusive way. ■



VICSES Ballarat Unit and Ainara friendship

By Chris Bluett and David Wellings, Ballarat Unit, Mid West Region

Earlier this year, the administrator from the Ainara Municipality of Timor Leste (East Timor), Signor Albertino and his Deputy, Aquida Mendonca, visited VICSES Ballarat Unit and the Ballarat Country Fire Authority Brigade. The joint visit was arranged as part of a mission hosted by the representatives from Timor Leste, which sought to gain more knowledge about our emergency services to help them establish their own provincial emergency service organisation back home.

The meeting was arranged to coincide with the VICSES Ballarat Unit meeting night, however they arrived a couple of hours before our normal meeting time. Luckily this proved advantageous, as two requests for assistance were received during this time which allowed our guests to witness first-hand the turning out and return of crews. This generated great interest as to how the volunteer crews could respond independently and spontaneously, as well as how the returning crews would maintain and prepare for any further call outs. They were most interested in the fact that this was all run and carried out by volunteers.

Embracing the great outdoors

By Jane Patton, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region



On a lovely winter day in July, VICSES Bacchus Marsh Unit members Keith Muller, Wayne Barnes and Russel Wells decided to take the opportunity to go for a bush walk together through the Lerderderg State Park. This was a great opportunity to not only stay connected through COVID-19, but to also test some of their skills along the way whilst enjoying the great outdoors.

The well-experienced team of three practiced their map and navigation skills, and familiarised themselves with the Parks Victoria emergency markers along the way. There had been a few recent search operations in the Lerderderg State Park in the weeks prior, so this was a great way to better understand the environment for any future operations in the area.

group for their members to explore local state parks, encouraging a sense of connecting, learnings, and to enhance the wellbeing of all members. ■

The mission was of great interest to all of our members, and made us realise the issues faced in emerging nations in areas that we take for granted. Great questions were asked by members and visiting representative's alike, creating valuable discussion for everyone involved. Our guests also sat in on some training, as well as a brief explanation of the operation of Divisional Command Points.

Strong bonds were formed between VICSES Ballarat Unit and the Ainara Municipality, and through our member Chis Bluett this relationship has continued to flourish. The hope is that one day we may be able to send our own representatives to the province to help in their endeavour to establish an emergency service organisation in their province.

It was great to showcase our unit, and thanks to Chris for making it happen. We look forward to a long association with the people of Ainara and wish them well in their quest. ■

The day was thoroughly enjoyed by Keith, Wayne and Russel, with lots of valuable learnings and skills practiced. As a result, Bacchus Marsh Unit are now considering organising a social hiking





NORTH EAST

1 April – 30 June

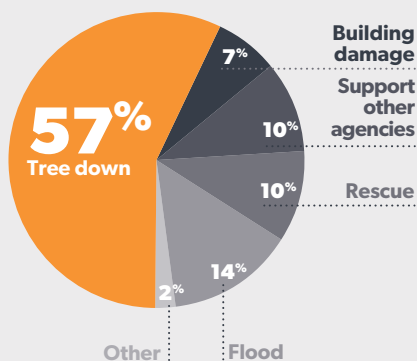


705

Volunteers

519

Requests for assistance



North East Region gets flood ready

By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator,
North East Region

As if 2020 hadn't presented enough of its own challenges already, this spring there is an increased chance of widespread flooding across Victoria due to predicted heavy rainfall and the current La Niña alert.

Alongside efforts being made by members across the state to prepare, including checking sandbag caches, brushing up on flood and storm standard operating procedures, split response rosters, evacuation planning and Incident Control Centre exercises, North East Region is also executing a regional strategy to inform and prepare our communities for potential flooding.

Each week from the beginning of September, a community preparedness resource pack will hit your unit inbox with escalating objectives, starting at a basic "heads up – it's going to be wet" level, progressing through to investigating local flood risks, taking preparedness actions at home like making an emergency plan, knowing how to protect furniture from floodwater, and winding up with maintaining readiness and awareness of how evacuations and relief will work in a COVID-19 environment. These resources can also be localised to your community.

One of the key messages we want the community to understand this season is how to 'Bag it, Block it, Lift it, and Leave' during a flood, which is a new program piece to help people prepare their homes and leave early before the flood water arrives.

Partner agencies like local councils, the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police are keen to collaborate and help us prepare the community for likely flooding, because we know that when people take the time to think about and plan for emergencies, they are more likely to remain calm and make good decisions under pressure to keep themselves, their families and property safe.

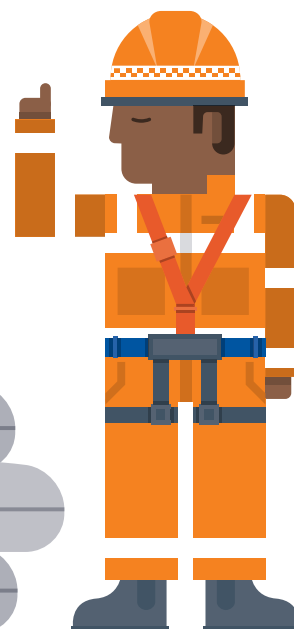
While COVID-19 prevents us from preparing local communities via traditional ways such as face-to-face conversations and at community events, we can still help people get flood ready using digital tools and local

media. Get in touch with myself or Sue Sheldrick via the contact details below if you need assistance with getting flood ready in your area, and watch this space for your weekly resource pack.



More information

If you would like start utilising these weekly resources or for further information, speak to your Unit Management Team or email **Liz Frazer** and **Sue Sheldrick** at necrc@ses.vic.gov.au



Bright Unit to the rescue

By Graham Gales, Regional Trainer, North East Region

In July, Bright Unit received a late night call to assist emergency services in rescuing six people stuck in snow on the top of Mount Bogong.

Although well equipped, the trapped party were caught by bad weather and were unable to make their way down the Staircase Spur. They set up two tents, one of which became damaged, and spent a cold night at the highest point in Victoria.

VICSES Bright Unit, Falls Creek Ski Patrol and Victoria Police Search and Rescue responded to the call, meeting at the Camp Creek car park at the bottom of Mount Bogong. VICSES Falls Creek Unit

also supported the operation with logistical support back at Mount Beauty. As the rescue commenced, the conditions worsened, and chains were fitted to vehicles to combat the icy roads and deep snow.

The next morning the rescue was still ongoing. Three ski patrollers, eight VICSES and four Victoria Police search and rescue members, assisted by a Victoria Police helicopter, were able to finally locate the six trapped persons on

the very top of Mount Bogong.

The morning was clear and sunny, but the clouds came in quickly and the helicopter was unable to pick the trapped party up. Instead, they were escorted down the Eskdale Spur to the Camp Creek car park, and then driven to their vehicles at Mountain Creek.

All up, the long overnight task involved over 100 hours of VICSES assistance and around 40 hours of ski patrol.



A great result by everyone involved in this huge effort. ■

Super-size flood maps: A new training and engagement resource

By Sue Sheldrick, Community Resilience Coordinator, North East Region

Thanks to inspiration from the recent *2020 Digital Floodplain Management Australia National Conference* held in May, North East Region now have 10 super-size flood maps as a training and engagement tool to improve understanding of how riverine floods might impact different communities.

Each fabric map visually displays 10 Local Flood Guide (LFG) maps showing a 1% flood, enlarged to 2 by 2.5 metres size. These maps can be used on the floor ('Safer Together' approach), across a tabletop, or hung vertically to fit a media backdrop frame for interactive workshops, exercises, and community engagement activities.

The maps can be enhanced with the interactive addition of props or other items (check out 'Playful Triggers' by Yoko Akama on the internet) that help to visualise what might happen during a flood, the likely direction of the flooding, where community 'assets' are located such as community asset mapping that might need protection (search 'Benjeroop Hall sandbagging images' as an example), as well as really detailed knowledge sharing such as where

most at risk community members might live.

The super-size maps are a versatile, multipurpose resource for Community Engagement Facilitators to help develop a thorough understanding of local flood conditions and consequences, engaging the community as part of the LFG development or roll-out, and to help understand local flood risks and hot spots. VICSES volunteers

and staff members, multiagency partners, and municipalities also play a role in the increased understanding and sharing of flood knowledge.

As a resilient community member or group, how can these people contribute to being ready for floods, and how can we help to support those who are most vulnerable to safely respond or evacuate? A great question for us all to think about! ■





NORTH WEST

1 April – 30 June

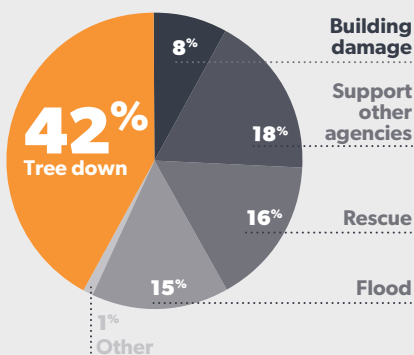


622

Volunteers

368

Requests for assistance



BRAVE NEW WORLD OF ENGAGEMENT -



Gisborne Unit engaging scouts with virtual visits!

By Karen Dunstan, Community Resilience Coordinator, and Shanleigh Meldrum, Gisborne Unit Officer, North West Region.

Scouts Victoria and school visits are the main community education events undertaken by the Gisborne Unit. Unfortunately due to COVID-19, the unit had to cancel visits that they had already booked in. This was particularly disheartening for local scouts groups, who were keen to start fulfilling the requirements for the new SES Scout Badge.

Gisborne Unit members Shanleigh Meldrum and Ross Evans brainstormed ideas to develop innovative ways to deliver community education virtually. This would ensure that they could continue to engage with schools and scout groups. After several weeks of mastering online interactive VICSES training within the Gisborne Unit, they decided to try to replicate a similar virtual session with community groups.

The first community group that the unit got in touch with was the 1st New Gisborne Scout Group. The group was already holding weekly meetings via Zoom, so Shanleigh and Ross reached out to see if they would be interested in

trialling a virtual scout visit with the unit.

The unit ran two sessions in June; one with the Joey Scouts (5-7 year olds) and one with the Cub Scouts (8-10 year olds). Each session went for roughly an hour, and was streamed from the unit's truck bay. Shanleigh and Ross presented the sessions using a laptop and an iPad while walking around the bay, familiarising the scouts with the layout and equipment. Each session comprised of a tailored PowerPoint presentation, so that it met the requirements for the SES Scout Badge for each age group. This included activities such as a quiz, a demonstration on knots, and a virtual tour of the unit's rescue truck and equipment.

The sessions were well received by the scout leaders and the 20 scouts who participated, who are now equipped to complete additional tasks to fulfil the SES Scout Badge requirements. This includes making a home survival kit, researching storm readiness and/or making a poster on what VICSES does.

Shanleigh is currently in the process of designing programs for the older scout groups, as they have additional requirements to satisfy the competencies of the badges.

With schools and community groups back to online learning and meetings, it's likely that these sessions will be more relevant and popular in the future. ■

Bendigo Unit celebrates member milestones

By Natalie Stanway, Bendigo Unit Deputy Controller, North West Region

Despite the restrictions of COVID-19, in July Bendigo Unit was able to safely take some time out to celebrate the milestones of seven of our amazing volunteers.

Long service awards recognise diligent, long and active service by members. Unit members Jarmon Blow, Russell Harley, Darren Masters and Alex Sharp all recently reached 5 years of service, Ricky Nottle achieving 10 years, and Brad Allen a rather impressive 15 years. That's a lot of time supporting our community, and an incredible accomplishment.

We were also very excited to see past Unit Controller Ben Penrose receive the National Medal. This is awarded to members with long and diligent service, who risk their own lives or safety to protect or assist the community in

times of emergency or natural disaster.

Normally this medal is awarded by the Governor General which of course is not currently possible, but this takes nothing away from Ben's dedication to his community and over 15 years of service.

Unfortunately due to Stage 4 lockdown restrictions in Melbourne we were unable to present another member, Ken Hubbard, with a life membership award. Ken was Controller of Bendigo Unit for over 27 years and assisted with in the unit's initial construction, as well as boosting membership. We hope to be able to present

Ken with this award as soon as restrictions allow.

We are incredibly proud of all of our members who give their time, focus and leadership skills in service to others.

To all of our award recipients, thank you for your continued commitment to VICSES and the Bendigo community, and a special thank you to their families and employers who allow them to do what they do. ■



Ben Penrose

North West Region prepares for floods

By Gavin Quinn, Community Resilience Coordinator, North West Region

In a recent Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook for the period of September through to November 2020, it was highlighted that rainfall is likely to be above median for Eastern Australia, with a La Niña alert now in place.

The North West Emergency Management team which consists of the Regional Officer Emergency Management (ROEM's), Community Resilience Coordinators (CRC's) and Manager Regional Officer Emergency Management (MROEM) have been updating the Municipal Flood Emergency Plan (MFEP), and Local Flood Guides (LFG's) contributing to the North West Regional Flood Plan.

If you're assisting with flood response within your region or elsewhere, localised flood information can be found on the VICSES website under **Get Ready >Flood** ■



Brad Allen and North West Regional Officer, Mark Cattell.



SOUTH

WEST

1 April – 30 June

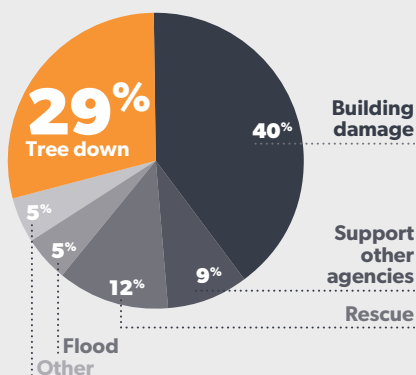


688

Volunteers

555

Requests for assistance



South Barwon tornado event

By Melanie Gill, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

In the early hours of Wednesday 20 May, an intense storm hit the Geelong region, which was later confirmed by the Bureau of Meteorology as a Tornado.

The tornado caused extensive damage, significantly affecting areas of the Geelong suburbs Waurin Ponds and Mount Duneed. Initial reports were of missing roof tiles, collapsed ceilings and garage doors torn off. There were also a number of trees down over roads, as well as damage to cars and property as a result of flying debris and objects such as roof tiles, trampolines and council bins. Surprisingly, there was only one reported serious injury, with a large piece of glass being lodged in a resident's arm. The casualty was treated at hospital, and returned home later that morning.

A large number of requests for assistance (RFA) came in very soon after the initial impact, prompting the South West Regional Duty Officer and Regional Agency Commander to quickly establish an Incident

Control Point (ICP) at VICSES South Barwon Unit.

A request was initially put out to neighbouring VICSES units to assist. However, the requests for assistance continued to roll in, with over 100 recorded in the first few hours. This prompted a further request for crews from other regions knowing that it would be a long day ahead. It was extremely pleasing to see members from all around Victoria accepting the call to assist, including units from metropolitan Melbourne, Bacchus Marsh, Benalla, Leongatha, San Remo, Wonthaggi, Castlemaine, Bendigo, and Gisborne. Members from Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) were also deployed to assist.

"I would like to give a big thank you to all of the VICSES

units that who came to assist, especially our neighbouring units who were able to respond quickly and efficiently with the right crew, the right skill set, the right equipment, and were ready to work," said Lisa Keys, VICSES South Barwon Unit Controller.

When daylight finally broke on 20 May, crews set out to assess the damage, with a number of VICSES and CFA personnel completing rapid impact assessments and feeding information back in to the ICP. CFA also deployed skilled working at heights firefighters, who joined forces with VICSES crews to utilise the 'Safe Working at Heights Systems' to provide temporary repair to damaged roofs.

VICSES volunteers also assisted with patching broken windows, sandbagging properties, and trimming felled trees. The MFB crew



Increased response capability for the South West Region!

By Melanie Gill, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

were tasked with intelligence gathering, deploying their drone and providing important information about the severity of damage to properties.

The Field Operations Vehicle was also deployed, being set up as a 'Community Hub' in the worst affected areas, along with a team of Community Liaison Officers. With the incredible efforts by all, crews were able to clear all RFA's – a total of over 180 by nightfall on Thursday 21 May, with relief and recovery well underway.

A small number of RFA's continued to come through over the next few days, as ongoing weather impacted on the temporary repairs. Members from the South Barwon Unit also continued to provide support to the community and work with local council where possible in the relief efforts over the weeks following the incident.

The event gained significant media attention around Australia – and it also happened to coincide with *Wear Orange Wednesday*, a day to celebrate VICES members.

Congratulations to all involved with this event. It was a terrific example of a number of VICES units and emergency service agencies working together to quickly come to the aid of a community in need, and ultimately achieve a great outcome. ■

The newest VICES members have certainly had their work cut out for them, learning the ropes amidst a global pandemic.

As an essential service, it is important that our members have continued to maintain skills and competencies when restrictions have allowed. This ensures that we have the capacity to respond, and to continue to serve our community at a high standard when required.

Since April 2020, we are proud to announce that 51

VICES members in the South West Region have been assessed, and awarded with their General Rescue/Crew Member competency.

The groups have trained in vital rescue skills such as casualty handling, ropes, knots, lighting and navigation, with much of the theory being conducted via video conference due to COVID-19 restrictions. Despite

the challenges, they have all passed their assessments with flying colours. This achievement means that these members are a great asset for the safety of their communities.

The newly accredited members significantly enhance the response and capability in the region, and we are proud to have them on board.

Well done to all, and welcome to the team! ■

Lorne Unit welcomes Geoff Bird as new Unit Controller

By Melanie Gill, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

Long-time Lorne Unit member Geoff Bird has recently been appointed as the unit's new Controller, filling the position vacated by former Unit Controller Phil Walsh.

Geoff has been with Lorne for almost 40 years. Having recently retired from teaching and planning a four-month holiday overseas, unfortunately

Geoff was forced to put his trip on hold due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, a committed volunteer and always ready to take on a new challenge, Geoff decided the time was right to take on the position of Unit Controller.

Although taking on this role during a challenging pandemic environment, Geoff is no stranger to stepping up to the plate and supporting the community during difficult times. Geoff began volunteering

with VICES in 1982 just before the devastating Ash Wednesday fires. Since then, Geoff has responded to a wide variety of operations with the unit, including search and rescues, road crash rescue, storm and flood response, assist agency and much more.

Geoff's wealth of skills, knowledge and experience working with VICES make him more than fit to lead the unit during this exciting new chapter. Congratulations Geoff! ■



OPERATIONAL UPDATES

On the frontline:

VICSES assists public housing towers during COVID-19

By David Tuček, Manager Operational Capability, VHO

Over two weeks from Saturday 4 July, nine public housing towers were identified as potential COVID-19 hot spots in Flemington and North Melbourne.

Almost 9,000 residents were immediately placed into police assisted isolation to allow for testing and control of any potential COVID-19 spread. Just some of the impact felt by residents who were not permitted to leave their premises included interrupted access to food, postal deliveries, medication, healthcare, online

shopping, laundry and waste disposal.

At the request of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), VICSES undertook a variety of tasks across both sites that included providing lighting, logistics support (including a Mobile Command and Forward Operations Vehicle), staging area

management, food coordination to tower hubs on scene, and planning and coordination of laundry services. Incident Management Team support was also provided with VICSES assisting Incident Control, Relief Coordination, Food Relief Coordination, Logistics, Operations and Intelligence functions.

In one evening alone, approximately 30 VICSES volunteers successfully coordinated the delivery of packaged food, fresh fruit and vegetables, and a number of special needs meals to residents. Agencies on scene alongside VICSES included DHHS, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Life Saving



Supplementary Alerting Service (SAS) roll-out dates

STEP 1

User Acceptance Testing (UAT) phase

Monday 27 July to Friday 4 September

35 members (road crash rescue and general)

STEP 2

Pilot phase

Tuesday 15 September to Friday 18 September

20 pilot units from across the state

STEP 3

Roll-out to first region

Tuesday 22 September to Friday 25 September

North East Region

STEP 4

Roll-out to western regions

Tuesday 29 September to Friday 2 October

Western regions (North West, Mid West and South West)

SAS app final submission to Apple and Google for approval



Victoria, Red Cross, Sheriff's Office, Local Government Areas, Forest Fire Management and Fire Rescue Victoria, who together provided hundreds of personnel daily.

Working to best assist culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) residents brought some challenges, and these challenges were overcome by partnering with local community leaders in order to provide relevant solutions that the community understood and supported. VICSES contributions on scene were well acknowledged by other agencies and community leaders. All of our VICSES volunteers and staff involved should be justifiably proud of their efforts to support some initially, very fearful members of our community. Once again our members demonstrated that we are part of our community, and are focused and adaptable. ■

STEP 5

Roll-out to remaining regions

Tuesday 6 October to
Friday 9 October

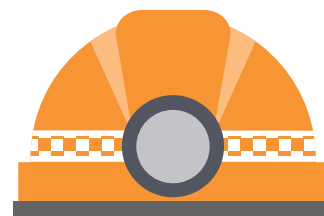
Central and East Regions

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

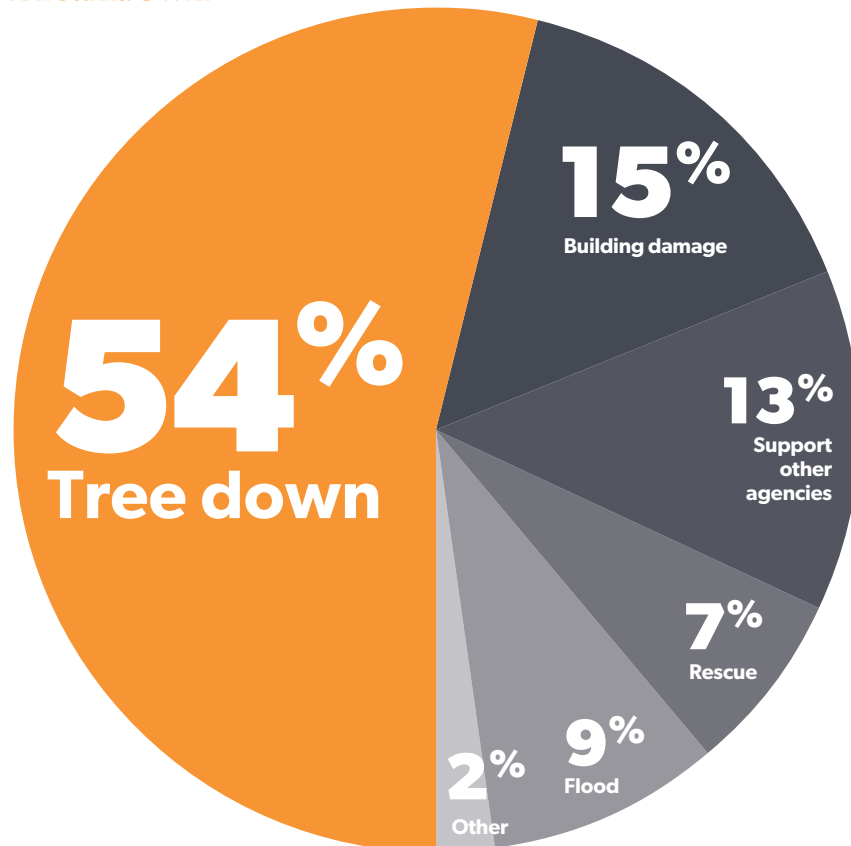
1 April – 30 June 2020

Total

6,082



Breakdown



PROJECTS – WHAT'S NEW

It's here: An updated approach to skilling our new recruits

By Paul Wallworth, Manager Learning and Development, VHO

The Learning and Development team is excited to confirm that the new training program targeted at our new recruits is being released from July 2020. Following an extensive review of the Fundamental and General Rescue Training Program, the new Crew Member role pathway has been developed with input from volunteers from across the state.



Volunteers from the Rescue Working Group provided invaluable input, as well as volunteers involved in pilot courses held in East, Central and South West Regions.

The new Crew Member pathway adopts the successful Systems Approach used in road crash rescue operations, to provide a structured framework for responding to all VICSES operations. With a blend of online, face-to-face and on the job learning experiences, recruits are taken through their role as a member of a crew applying the Systems Approach, with the equipment and techniques covered updated in consultation with the Rescue Working Group.

There are three roles in the pathway:

- **Crew Member Supervised:** Training comprises online content, session to practice techniques, and practical assessment stands.
- **Crew Member Level 1:** Checklists for performance of key skills at VICSES operations.
- **Crew Member Level 2:** Training comprises online content, session to practice techniques and practical assessment stands.

An important change is the introduction of storm and water damage techniques in the Crew Member Level 2 program to help improve unit capability for one of our control agency functions.

The training materials for Crew Member Supervised and Level 1 are now available in the Training Portal. Crew Member Level 2 training materials will be released when COVID-19 restrictions allow. ■



More information

More information on this new approach is available from your Regional Training Team or on the Hub under Training.

PROJECT UPDATE –

Windows Refresh Project and new printers

By Jo Taylor, Project Manager, VHO

The Windows Refresh Project has continued to progress, with Dell chosen as our vendor. We'll be rolling out new laptops across the state, commencing later this year.

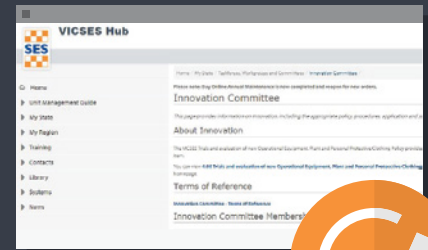
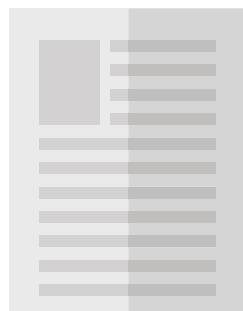
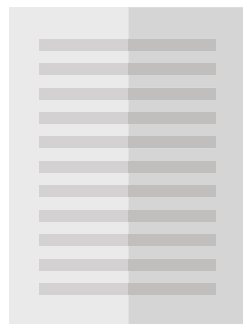
The logistics of managing the delivery of the correct laptop to the right person in a timely manner, along with the right software, is a complicated process. And in the middle of a pandemic, it's extreme!

All information about the delivery of laptops will be available on the Windows Refresh Project Hub page, under **Library > Projects > Windows Refresh Project**. Members will receive plenty of notice before laptops are delivered.

In addition to this, all state supplied printers in volunteer units, offices, Incident Controller Centres, Divisional Command Points, Mobile Command and Forward Operations Vehicles will also be updated to the latest models from Konica Minolta. The replacement will be seamless, and does not require any changes to your operation. Training material will also be provided for members for all new printers.

One of the great improvements will be the service and maintenance of all printers, which will be monitored remotely so new toners and service calls will be scheduled before they are needed - a great improvement for users.

With so much activity delivering new equipment to sites, both projects will be coordinated using the same centralised process. This means that units and offices will receive information and instructions from the same common contact via the email address laptopprinterrollout@ses.vic.gov.au ■



Upgrade to VICSES Hub and website

By Scott Morgan, Digital Content Officer, VHO

The current version of the Hub and website is reaching end of life, so we are undertaking an upgrade of the platform to the latest version. The current look and feel will remain the same, however the new platform will enable us to introduce new features over time that will make accessing the information you need to do your job simpler.

The first major change is the introduction of a new search engine, which will make it easier to find relevant documents and pages. We have received a lot of survey feedback that the current search is not performing to expectations, so we are keen to make improvements in this area. We've also recently run a 'Healthy Hub' campaign to remind Hub editors to keep their content up-to-date and to remove any outdated documents and pages. ■



More information

Stay tuned for more upcoming changes to the Hub and website. If you have any suggestions for improvements to the Hub or website, please email us at yoursay@ses.vic.gov.au

WELLBEING, HEALTH & SAFETY

Top five tips on coping in uncertainty

By Romeo Gaubert, Senior Advisor Hazard Intelligence, VHO

Taking care of ourselves psychologically and physically is essential within the emergency services sector, and now more than ever it is important to find balance in our lives.

My name is Romeo and I commenced the role of Senior Advisor Hazard Intelligence with VICSES during COVID-19 under Level 3 restrictions. I am originally from France, and I have an international background in emergency services with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Here are my top five strategies that I practice to feel more gratitude and balance in the present moment:

- 1 Maintain a routine.
- 2 Engage in a mindfulness session when I wake up, to start my day positively.
- 3 Go outside for exercise (walk, run, bike, sun salutation - yoga based).
- 4 Journal my thoughts.

- 5 Limit my consumption of news and view it once daily.

We've love to hear how you're looking after your wellbeing currently. Email our team at wellbeing@ses.vic.gov.au

For more health tips, visit the Mind Fit page on the Hub under **My State > Health and Wellbeing > Mind Fit.** ■



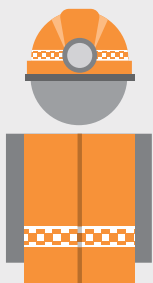
Your Health and Safety Representatives

By Stewart Riddle, WHS Advisor, VHO

A Health and Safety Representative (HSR) is an elected and voluntary role that can make a real difference in achieving better health and safety outcomes in your workplace. Having a HSR makes it easier to bring health and safety problems to the attention of management, so issues can be dealt with and resolved.

The primary role of a HSR is to represent the employees within their designated workgroup. This includes the communication of critical information about health and safety hazards between employers and employees, acting as a

'bridge' between the two, and providing support for unit based wellbeing, health and safety delegates. The role is not to 'fix' health and safety problems, but to monitor them to ensure health and safety standards within the VICSES are maintained.



Workplace inspections

July 2018 –
June 2019

236

July 2019 –
June 2020

200



Injuries

July 2018 –
June 2019

99

July 2019 –
June 2020

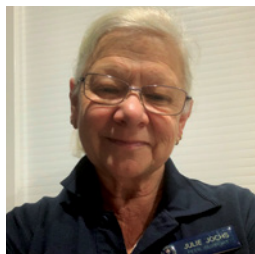
104



Mental Health and Wellbeing: Peer Support now recruiting

By Joy Etwell, Peer Support Coordinator , VHO

Want to know a little bit more about what it's like to be a member of our Peer Support team? Julie Jochs and Mark Stewart share their experience.



JULIE JOCHS

My journey with VICSES began in July 2000. When I joined VICSES I stated I would try anything once, and if I didn't like it then I wouldn't do it again. In 2002, a call came for members to apply for Peer Support, so I applied. It was another course, another way to help, but this time it wasn't to help the wider community - it was to help fellow members. I wasn't sure if I would be any good or if I would like it, but 18 years down the track I am still a peer.

VICSES is a family, and Peer Support is a family within this. I have met and worked with some amazing people during this journey, both volunteers and staff, in all regions of Victoria. There have been bad times where we have cried together, and there have been good times where we have laughed together. But through thick and thin, floods and fires, storms and trauma, we do it all by supporting each other.

Travelling the journey of life, people are sometimes touched by individuals who make a difference. VICSES peers are those individuals!



MARK STEWART

I joined Peer Support after taking part in several peer unit training sessions. As a full-time worker with a family, my availability for turning out can be limited. Peer Support looked like an interesting and different way to get more involved with VICSES. Although the Peer Support team is also on-call, the notice you get for jobs is generally longer, which for me is perfect as it allows me more opportunity to be involved.

In my time with Peer Support I've been able to undertake specialised training, visit lots of our units, and have got to know many wonderful volunteers that I wouldn't have normally met. Helping these volunteers to be able to do what they do best is why I love being part of Peer Support. ■



Interested?

If you are interested in joining our Peer Support team, we would love to hear from you.

Please email wellbeing@ses.vic.gov.au by October 11th 2020.

Nominated HSR's

Central

DIMITY LYNCH

East

KARINA OSGOOD

RACHAEL NICOLSON

Mid West

GRANT BRADSHAW

LAUREN HAWKINS

North East

DAN WALTON

North West

PETER PATTERSON

South West

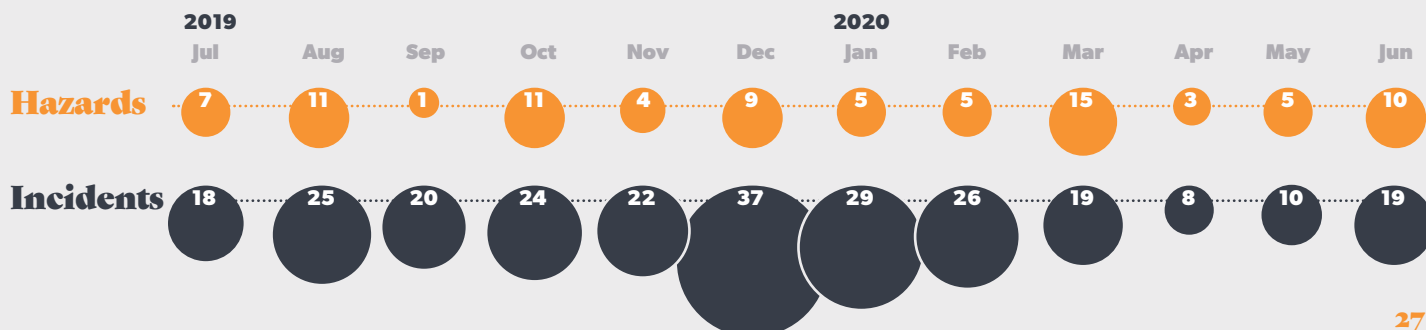
JEFF WEBB

Sunshine Complex

ROB WELLING

Further details can be found on the HSR page on the Hub under **My State > Health and Wellbeing** ■

YEAR AT A GLANCE



What
we do.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Member Series Guides

By Hannah Macdougall, Senior Advisor Community Programs and Campaigns

New resource development to assist
our Community Engagement Facilitators.



The Member Series Guides were developed to support the very important work of our Community Engagement Facilitators.

These guides bring together:

- The VICSES Strategic Plan 2018-22.
- The Community Resilience Strategy Renewal 2019-22.
- The Indicators and Evaluation Framework.
- The Community Engagement Program Framework.

The guides provide support for various community engagement programs, and emphasise the importance of having one objective, one key message, and one call to action. Evaluation and reporting is underpinned by international measurement approaches, and will enable us to have a shared language with our partners, the wider community, and celebrate the important work we do in community engagement.

Many of our Member Series Guides have now been completed, and include guides for the following community engagement programs:

- Digital engagement using draft local flood guides.

- Community events (face-to-face).
- Doorknocking (flood specific).
- Scouts programs (to support the roll-out of the SES Scouts Badge).
- Primary school visits.
- 'Bag it, Block it, Lift it and Leave' (school visits engaging Year 5 students).

Work is currently underway for programs focused upon digital engagement, multicultural communities, our First Nations Peoples and people of all abilities, which will be placed on the Hub as they are developed. Watch this space! ■

What we do.



Local Flood Guides

By Hannah Macdougall, Senior Advisor Community Programs and Campaigns

Staying connected to our communities during the pandemic using a digital approach.

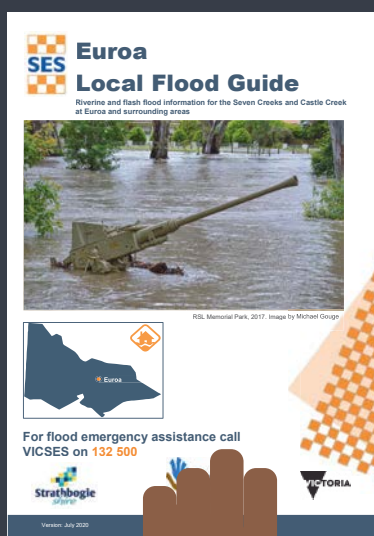
Featured in Edition 11 of Community Matters, Jane Fontana shared how East Region engaged with their local communities using Local Flood Guides (LFG's) and a digital approach. Community members were encouraged to share their feedback on draft LFG's using Facebook, creating rich dialogue and discussion between VICSES members and community.

One and Three of the Community Resilience Strategy Renewal 2019-22, where we are looking to 'Build Capacity' of community members and 'Foster Connections'. Feedback will assist with greater regionally bespoke LFG's, as well as the enhancement of direct relationships with community members. ■

Building upon this great idea, LFG's currently undergoing updates will be able to be placed onto the VICSES website and open for community consultation. This content will include information regarding how to provide feedback, time frames, and other details. This will help us bridge the gap for face-to-face communication, using technology and existing content to directly engage with targeted communities.

Community Resilience Coordinators have helped the Community Resilience and Communications Directorate at the VICSES Victorian Head Office to shape the above process.

The desired outcome for creating engagement opportunities with the community is to continue to work towards Strategic Goal's





Campaigns and events:

- Wear Orange Wednesday
- Thank a First Responder Day
- Road safety messaging for Easter long weekend
- Continued COVID-19 updates and messaging from the Department of Health and Human Services

Media releases:

- After bushfires, floods and a pandemic – it's time to say "thanks" to VICSES volunteers (18 May, 2020)
- VICSES and the City of Ballarat want your flood photos! (14 April, 2020)

Social media highlights:

FACEBOOK



27 April: Heavy rain predicted across North East Victoria.

Reach:
86,002

Post clicks:
4,377

Reactions, comments and shares:
540

TWITTER

Impressions: **38,355**

Media engagements:
60

Total engagements:
14



15 May: Promoting upcoming Wear Orange Wednesday campaign.

INSTAGRAM

Impressions: **2,875** **Reach:** **2,753**

Comments, likes and saves:
302



1 May: Falls Creek Unit covered in snow.

LINKEDIN

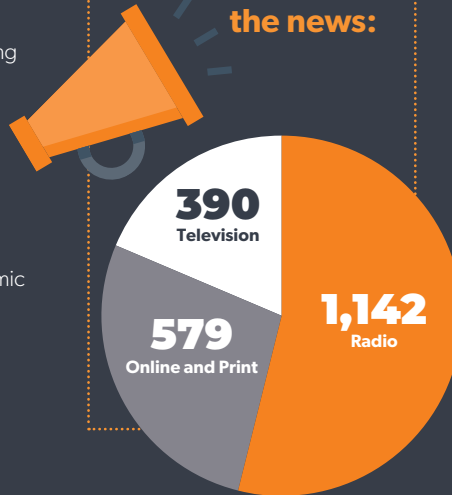
Impressions: **2,239**

Clicks:
9

Reactions, comments and shares:
97

2 June: Thank A First Responder Day

Mentions of VICSES in the news:



Meet the Communications and Media team:

Chloe Jeffers, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Brand

Hi Chloe, and welcome on board! Can you tell us a bit about your experience prior to joining VICSES?

It's great to be part of VICSES, so thanks for the welcome. In my career, I've enjoyed many years working in marketing and communications, in some pretty diverse roles. I've been fortunate to have roles that perfectly blend my passions with my professional experience. I have worked across a number of mediums (primarily radio and TV) and brands, in content, events, sponsorship, experiential and traditional marketing. Most recently I was the Director of Partnerships and Experiences at a sports marketing and media agency. I've had hands on roles working on sponsorships and events within the AFL and other sports, including some work with the emergency services round!

What are you most looking forward to in your new role in the Media and Communications team, and are there any challenges?

I am incredibly passionate about making an impact within our community and making the world a better place. I am excited to work alongside other great communicators at VICSES to empower our members and communities to prepare for emergencies, respond in the best way possible, and support each other after the event.

The biggest challenge thus far has been tackling the COVID-19 communications, which change rapidly and are so important to get right. That and learning all the acronyms!

Who or what inspires you the most?

I thrive on the positive energy of others, and love to see people smile. It goes without saying that since joining VICSES, I've been blown away by the commitment of our volunteers, who are there day or night on the frontline when things aren't going as planned. So hats off to all of you!

I'm also inspired by my gorgeous friends who are nailing the balance of work and family. As a mum to a young son, it's challenging to get the balance right. I've always been inspired by my mum, and her parenting has guided me as I've become a parent. It inspires me to always find the time for things that make you smile. For me, its family time, footy and cooking! ■

INFORMATION SERVICES (IS) UPDATE

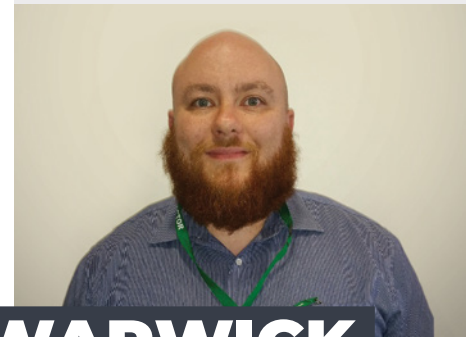
Is there an hour that goes by at the moment that doesn't have a COVID-19 lens on it?

It is certainly an interesting time – we are all experiencing it together, yet the impacts and effects are very much individualistic.

Meanwhile, the work we do is still important as it ever was. While many of our members are involved in storm and flood response and preparations for the fire season, here are the top 12 projects in progress over the next five months which our team is either leading or assisting other teams with:

#	Project Name	Project Manager/ Leader	Status/information
1	Supplementary Alerting System	Aaron White	Roll-out commencing mid-September. Due for completion in October.
2	Volunteer enquiry form and process	Jo Taylor	Deployed.
3	Volunteer – Reckon One Accounting System	Claire Farmer	Roll-out continues. Due to complete all units by September.
4	Driver's license renewal process	Sharon Osborne & Ross Elford	In progress. Due for release in September.
5	Windows Desktop Refresh	Peter Gaull	Hardware being ordered and software suite being designed. Roll-out commencing October/November.
6	MFD Replacement	Simon Scanlon	Roll-out being planned, due to be completed by November.
7	Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Upgrade	Josh Gamble	Due to be upgraded mid-October.
8	Hub and website upgrade	Jo Taylor	In progress. Due for completion in September.
9	Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA) application	Jo Taylor	Commencing testing. Due for completion in October.
10	Physical Security System	Silvia Silverii	Vendor assessment and selection process underway. Roll-outs to commence in December.
11 & 12	KRONOS and Chris21 upgrade	Warwick Mansour & Arturo Morales	In progress. Due for completion in October.

MEET THE IS TEAM:



WARWICK

APPLICATION SUPPORT LEAD

Hi Warwick! Can you tell us a bit about your role within the Information Services team?

Hello and thank you. I joined the VICSES information Services (IS) team a little less than four years ago as the Application Support Lead - a role I am still enjoying today. The role assists with bringing in new technology and systems, integrating systems, and the ongoing improvement and maintenance of current systems.

What do you enjoy the most about your role?

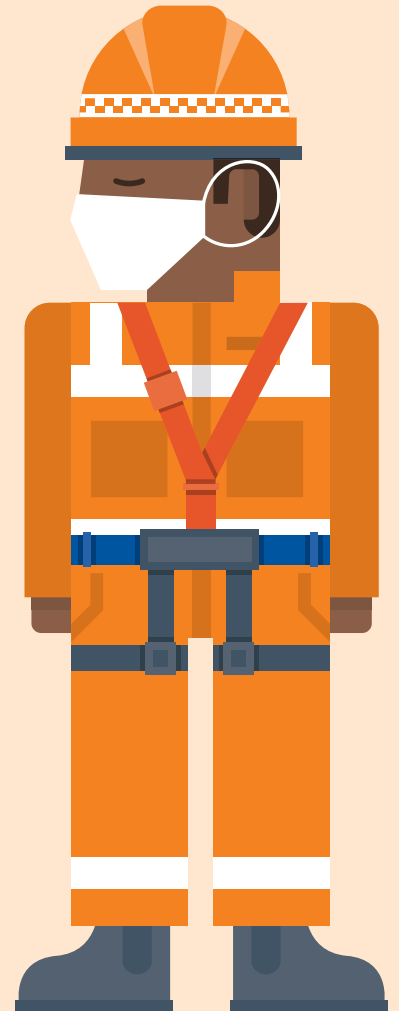
I most enjoy working with the great people in the IS team and the wider organisation to continuously improve our VICSES systems. Over the last few years we have delivered a number of effective improvements, and are working and planning many more for the future.

Are there any challenges that you have faced during COVID-19 in your role, and how have you managed this?

Having a small window to make sure all staff could work from home securely and reliably was quite the challenge. The IS team worked together to make sure this was a smooth transition for everyone required to work from home.

Finally, outside of work how do you like to unwind?

I enjoy playing pinball. Many people are surprised to learn that there is a growing competitive Australian pinball community. Due to COVID-19 all Melbourne competitions have stopped, but I am looking forward to playing again. ■



**Thank you to all of
our members for
your continued
dedication to the
community through
challenging times.**

Safer Communities - Together

