

WINTER 2023

Community Matters

VICSES

EDITION 23



#ThankyouSES

WEAR ORANGE

WEDNESDAY

2023

Women in Rescue

VICSES supports the Australian Grand Prix

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

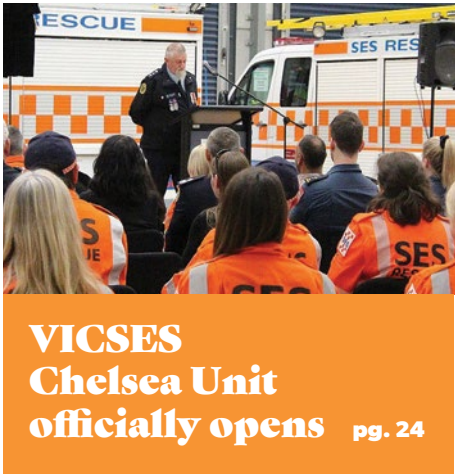
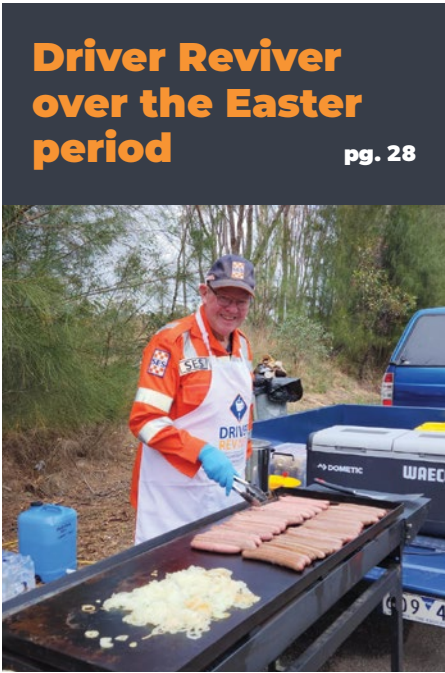
Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update

CONTENTS

Highlights from the winter edition



What's happening across our regions:

- EASTERN**
- 12

Preventative Search and Rescue activities in the Cathedral Range State Park
- 14

End of an era: Mansfield Unit Controller Tom Thoburne on stepping down
- 15

Multi-agency training on the Great Alpine Road
- WESTERN**
- 17

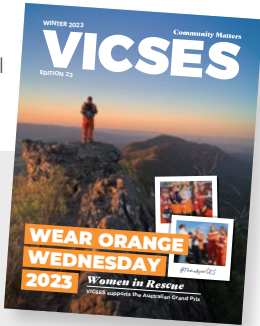
VICSES x Geelong Tech School
- 18

Loddon Mallee Region's Women in Rescue event
- 20

Western Region's newest 'Crew Member 2' graduates

Front Cover:

VICSES Marysville Unit member in the Cathedral Range State Park, Nanadhong.



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

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

Welcome to the second edition of *Community Matters* for 2023.

We're only halfway through the year and yet we have already celebrated many special events and achievements thanks to our hardworking VICSES members.

Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the 72 volunteers and staff who were honoured at events earlier this year for their efforts during the 2019-2020 bushfires.

Members from across the state were awarded the National Emergency Medal by His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DCS, Governor General of Australia, in recognition of their outstanding service during the national emergency.

VICSES members played an important role in the multi-agency response in affected areas, both through Incident Control Centres and the State Control Centre, so it was wonderful to see their efforts recognised.

During the busy Easter period we saw volunteers from across the state come together again to help keep the community safe with *Driver Reviver* sites set up for motorists to take a break, and avoid fatigue on the road.

Fatigue is a major issue on Victoria's roads and contributes to about 20% of fatalities. With many motorists driving great distances over the

long weekend, the volunteer-run *Driver Reviver* program provided an opportunity for drivers to pause and refresh.

There were 30 sites operating across the state this year, with volunteers serving hot drinks and biscuits to thousands of motorists. I'd like to thank all the VICSES volunteers who gave up their time to take part in the program and help people arrive safely at their destinations.

The annual VICSES *Women in Rescue* events took place in April, providing an opportunity for women to get hands-on experience with equipment while strengthening their rescue and leadership skills in a supportive environment.

What started as a one-off session at the Sunbury Unit in 2018 has grown into an event held simultaneously at regional locations across the state, giving VICSES women in orange an opportunity to take part.

I look forward to seeing more of these events in the future and want to congratulate the organisers and trainers for such a successful initiative.

I was proud to join my fellow Victorians in celebrating *Wear Orange Wednesday* (WOW Day) again on 17 May. Looking back at everything VICSES volunteers have accomplished so far this year, WOW Day was a fantastic opportunity to come together as a community and show our appreciation for our volunteers.

With the coldest months ahead for 2023, I want to thank you for your continued hard work at all times of the year, no matter the conditions. Stay warm and take care this winter.

Jaclyn Symes
Minister for Emergency Services



Welcome

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

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone for your participation and support as part of this year's *Wear Orange Wednesday* event on 17 May. It was fantastic to see our volunteers recognised across the state and nationally, for the incredible work that you achieve every day. Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES and our communities, and your unwavering resilience, dedication, and commitment to the safety of others is truly inspiring. I can't thank you all enough. Read all about our orange-themed celebrations on pages 4-5.

In April we held our annual *Women in Rescue* event at locations across the state, which shaped up to be our biggest year yet. This initiative is incredibly important in championing our organisation and the sector, by providing women with the opportunity to get hands-on with equipment, build on rescue skills, and have fun in a safe and supportive environment. You can read more on pages 6-7.

April also saw the launch of our *Driver Reviver* campaign ahead of the Easter long weekend, encouraging

drivers to rest, recharge, and arrive alive by stopping in for a cuppa at one of our many volunteer-run roadside locations. Our VICSES Marong Unit served a record 1,600 visitors on Easter Monday alone, highlighting the continued value of this program within our communities. A special thank you to our volunteers who gave up their time over the long weekend to support such an important road safety initiative. You can read more on page 26.

Last but not least, new unit builds and refurbishments have continued to progress across the state. In April I was pleased to attend the official opening of the brand-new, state-of-the-art facility for VICSES Chelsea Unit - an impressive and modern new unit headquarters, and a wonderful day celebrating with members and other special guests. Read all about it on page 28.

As always, thank you all for your fantastic contributions to our latest edition of *Community Matters*.

Kind regards,

Stephen Griffin
CEO Victoria State
Emergency Service

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns & events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational updates

Projects – what's new

Wellbeing services, & support

Community engagement

Media

Information Services (IS) update



FEATURE

Wear Orange Wednesday 2023

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Brand, VHO

On Wednesday 17 May, we joined together to celebrate another fantastic *Wear Orange Wednesday* (WOW Day) – a national day of thanks for the thousands of SES volunteers who serve our communities 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

This WOW Day was particularly important in recognising the contributions of our VICSES volunteers, during what has been one of the busiest operational periods in our organisation’s history, including our response during the 2022 Victorian Floods. This is in addition to call-outs for storm, road crash rescue, search and rescue, landslide, and much more.

We kicked things off with our WOW Day state media launch on Monday 15 May at URBNSURF, which also marked the beginning of National Volunteer Week. This year we showcased our VICSES Alexandra Unit, who rescued a young family from Acheron during the 2022 Victorian Floods, including 5-month-old baby Ollie. The family was reunited with the unit to thank them in person for saving their lives late last year. We also had VICSES Essendon Unit supporting the launch with a live water rescue demonstration, showcased across Channel 7, 9 and 10 news.

SES lapel pins were distributed to all members to help mark the occasion, courtesy of our Principal Community Partner, AAMI. For the second year in a row we also had McDonalds® on board, offering our volunteers a free hot drink at McCafé store locations across the state.

Victorian landmarks were lit in orange, WOW Day flags displayed in the City of Melbourne, and for the first time campaign banners and digital signs across outer metro areas and regional Victoria.

We saw messages of thanks across social media and had fantastic coverage across media outlets, including a live cross with 7NEWS Meteorologist Jane Bunn at VICSES Essendon Unit, and with Channel 10 at VICSES Chelsea Unit. VICSES Sunbury Unit volunteer Jarrod Bell was in the studio with ABC TV News Breakfast the morning of WOW Day, highlighting the importance of the campaign within our communities. We also saw great radio and print coverage, in both metropolitan and regional areas.

Last but certainly not least, community members and groups showed their support by wearing orange, hosting orange-themed events, and giving shout-outs on social media.

We want to thank everyone who helped us celebrate WOW Day 2023. And to our volunteers – thank you for all that you do, every day. You truly are heroes in orange.

Until next year! ■



Community members celebrating!



Orange dress-ups at school for WOW Day



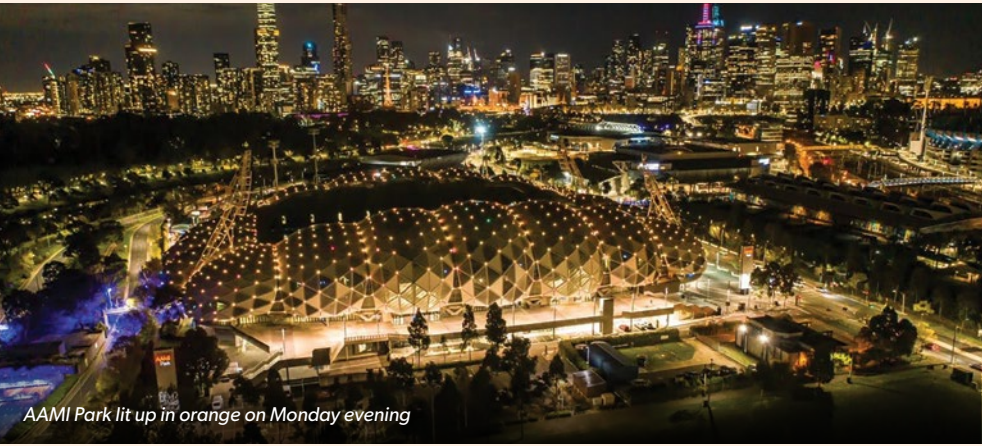
Keeping our volunteers on their toes!



VICSES Chelsea Unit member Kimba Wall with 10 News First weather presenter Jayde Cotic



Launch of WOW Day 2023 at URBNSURF

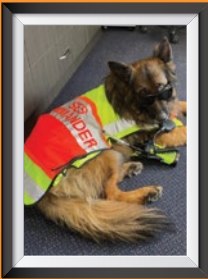


AAMI Park lit up in orange on Monday evening

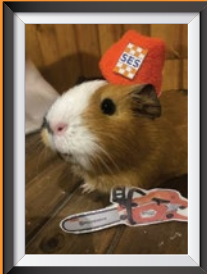
WOW Day Photo Competition

This year, we were once again on the hunt to find the best dressed pets in orange as part of our annual WOW Day pet photo competition.

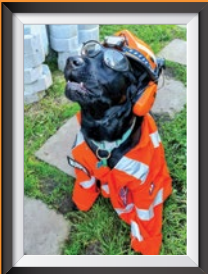
Congratulations to our five winners, who have each won a \$100 Bunnings voucher thanks to our Principal Community Partner, AAMI:



Andrea Wattis, Gisborne Unit – Stella



Jon Muller, Bellarine Unit – Group of Guinea Pigs



Andrew Khassapov, Glen Eira Unit – Murphy



Trent Linnel, Nillumbik Unit – Luna



Clarine Wheeler, Moorabbin Unit – Miss Muffin and Wags

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns & events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational updates

Projects – what's new

Wellbeing services, & support

Community engagement

Media

Information Services (IS) update



Women in Rescue: Back and bigger than ever

By Krystal Buckle, Corporate Communications Advisor, VHO



Urban search and rescue stand at Bangholme

Our *Women in Rescue* events were back and bigger than ever this year, held in April across eight locations in Ballarat, Bangholme, Bellarine, Gembrook, Gippsland, Huntly, Pakenham and Wangaratta.

Founded in 2018, *Women in Rescue* is designed to promote gender inclusion and diversity within VICSES and empower women to showcase their skills. This year saw a 93% increase in registrations – almost doubling the number of participants since the last 2022 event.

Women in Rescue coordinator, Kate Turner said “women and non-binary people have been underrepresented in the emergency management space for a long time and continue to be today. The event is a great opportunity

to show where our strengths are, and why it’s important that we keep working towards gender equity in our service.”

Focusing on the hands on, practical components of rescue operations, a variety of specialised training and exercises were set up to cover the diverse capabilities that VICSES volunteers require during a range of different emergencies.

Mirai Hinchy-Kirsanovs, event organiser and participant at the Bellarine event, said “we had representatives from the local Country

Fire Authority and a local paramedic and their ambulance, which was incorporated into our activities. Learning how we can work together more effectively with other agencies was a learning highlight for me.”

“Any event that brings together members from different units provides valuable learning opportunities. Some of my key learnings from the event came from listening to and observing members from other units as they shared new techniques and different perspectives” continued Mirai.

Since its beginnings, the event has evolved into an opportunity to meet with and learn from volunteers and staff from beyond immediate units, take on leadership roles in planning and delivering activities, and explore new pathways in a safe and supportive environment.

“This year’s event started from a multitude of spreadsheets and a tonne of meetings with working group members across the state,” said Kate Turner.



Members gathering round at the Bangholme event

“By the end of the day, I’d crawled through a rubble pit, cut off a car door, and led my crew through a casualty extraction in dark, smoky, tight spaces. Seeing it all come together and the smiles on people’s faces as they went home, was wonderful. A number of junior members attended the event this year, after their mums attended last year. I hope that seeing women in leadership positions and breaking down gender stereotypes can inspire and encourage the next generation of first responders,” continued Kate.

Currently, 34% of VICSES volunteers are women, and it’s important to boost these figures to ensure the organisation reflects the communities we serve. Event participant Renae Featherstone said she “loved watching and learning from other women’s actions. I’ve picked up a few new techniques and was able to compare knowledge and experience with others.”



Pakenham event

A huge thank you to everyone involved in organising, and participating in these events. See you on Saturday 16 March 2024! ■



View more

View more info about our *Women in Rescue* event in Huntly on **page 18**.



Road crash rescue demonstration at the Pakenham event

Stepping back in time



Volunteer rooftop training in 1992, at the old Geelong local headquarters in Swanston Street. Sheds such as the one pictured were often used during the implementation of rooftop safety systems back in the good ol’ days. Thanks VICSES Bellarine Unit for sharing this photo! ■



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**.

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns & events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational updates

Projects – what’s new

Wellbeing services, & support

Community engagement

Media

Information Services (IS) update

CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

Grand Prix 2023: Breaking records

By Dean Graham, Community Resilience Coordinator, Eastern Region

The 2023 Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix set a record this year with over 440,000 people in attendance from Thursday 30 March to Sunday 2 April.

13 members from eight units proudly represented VICSES alongside St John Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police, the Royal Australian Air Force, and the Australian Defence Force, engaging thousands of racegoers over the four days.

Melbourne's famous 'four seasons in one day' was on display, with racegoers flocking to our stand for sunscreen against the hot bright sun in the mornings, and cover from heavy rain in the afternoons - providing a chance for VICSES members to engage

those in attendance. Who we are and what we do was the focus of much discussion, alongside providing insight into the life of a VICSES volunteer for prospective members, who in turn returned words of appreciation for the work we do.

Groups of excited school children with assignments to interview members of an emergency service approached the stand on day one, and the proceeding days were just as busy with tens of thousands of people passing by our stand. Our members were prepared for the loud engines from the close

by racetrack this year, handing out VICSES branded earplugs to racegoers at the price of a chat concerning their preparedness.

A big thank you to the many units that assisted in making the event a success. VICSES Emerald Unit was kind enough to allow the use of a marquee, while Monash Unit's Ford Everest was on display alongside Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police service vehicles.

Much appreciation goes out to the 13 members who gave their time to attend all four days of the Grand Prix - including VICSES Narre Warren, Footscray, Greater



OSCAR PIASTRİ

Australian F1 driver Oscar Piastri thanked VICSES volunteers before the race!

Dandenong, Port Phillip, Monash, Malvern, Manningham, and Pakenham Units. Last but not least, a big thank you to staff who organised the event.

We look forward to returning next year! ■

AFL Emergency Services Match

By Krystal Buckle, Corporate Communications Advisor, VHO

This May, the AFL Emergency Services Match returned for 2023 to celebrate and say thank you to the wonderful people across our emergency services sector. Now in its fourth year, the event was hosted by Hawthorn Football Club, taking on Melbourne Football Club at the MCG.



VICSES Port Phillip members assisted in the Emergency Services Fan Zone during the day alongside our agency partners, with free activities for families and fans, featuring displays, vehicles, recruitment information, games, and more. Paddy the Platypus himself mingled with the other agencies' mascots and even with the Paw Patrol crew! He was a great hit with the kids, as always.

During the match, emergency vehicles took part in a motorcade around the ground before members from all emergency services formed a Guard of Honour for the Hawthorn players as they ran onto the ground, fireworks setting off around them. The roar of the crowd when VICSES members stepped onto the field for the half time Lap of Honour was heart-warming to see. Another highlight was Fire Rescue Victoria crews abseiling from the roof of the

MCG to the theme song of Mission Impossible - talk about an entrance! As well as recognising the efforts of VICSES, the game thanked and celebrated the work and efforts of Emergency Management Victoria, Ambulance Victoria, Fire Rescue Victoria, Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Life Saving Victoria, Forest Fire Management Victoria, ESTA 000, St John Ambulance, Red Cross, the Victoria Council of Churches, and Marine Search and Rescue.

In addition to this recognition, all proceeds from the event went to the Emergency Services Foundation, to support the wellbeing of our emergency service personnel.

A huge thank you to our members involved in the event activities throughout the day. What a great day out, and celebration of the selfless work and commitment of our sector every day. ■



Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

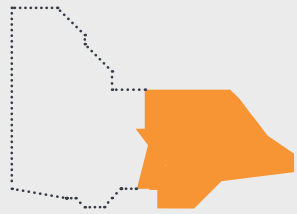
Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

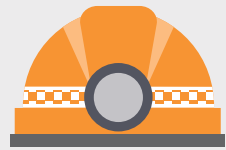
Information Services
(IS) update





EASTERN REGION

1 January – 31 March 2023

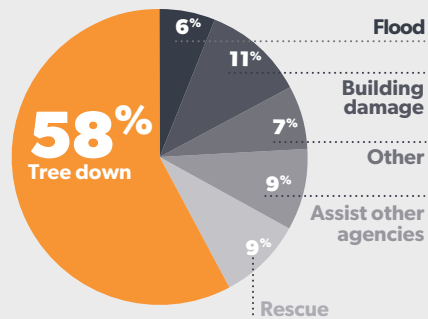


2,415

Volunteers

3,542

Requests for assistance



Jamieson: Tiny town, HUGE Emergency Expo

By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator, Eastern Region



Jamieson is a beautiful town of less than 400 people, where the Jamieson River flows into the Goulburn upstream of Lake Eildon and Bonnie Doon.

On 23 April, the population swelled, car parks overflowed, and hundreds of visitors came to see the Emergency Services Expo.

Planned and executed by the brilliant George Crawford of Victoria Police (also a VICSES Mansfield Unit member) and hosted by the Jamieson Country Fire Authority with support from emergency agencies big and small, the expo took place with a picturesque mountain backdrop and welcome sunshine.

Members from the VICSES Mansfield Unit worked tirelessly alongside other emergency services, government, and defence personnel to provide a vibrant, engaging, and fun experience for young and old.

Locals from miles around, campers, tree-changers, and van-life travellers all came to

see, touch, hear, and most importantly, talk safety and preparedness for all hazards.

There was something for every member of the family to get excited about and to learn from, with an event passport activity encouraging visitors to visit each exhibitor to find a key safety action or message. This included CPR practice, search and rescue dog demos, venomous snake bite first-aid, wildlife rescue, local flood guide information, and a multi-agency road rescue demonstration.

The expo has been years in the making after COVID-19 delays, and its success was a huge testament to George, his event committee, the VICSES Mansfield Unit community welfare committee, and the wider unit membership. ■



Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal

By Jim Kokkalos, VICSES Port Philip Unit member, Eastern Region

Now in its 23rd year, VICSES Port Philip Unit once again took part in the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal in April.

17 volunteers supported the event at the Melbourne Convention Centre, assisting with the 'Kids Day Out' event and

directing traffic within the money counting room.

As always it was a big hit - this year we had one of our vehicles on display, as well as our VICSES boat which

attracted lots of attention. We had kids activities and many discussions with people about what we do, and Paddy the Platypus even hitched a ride on the Coast Guard jetski!

Since the unit began supporting this event in 2000, it has been a constant in our calendar - it's all about the kids. Port Philip Unit is proud to take part in the fun day, alongside everyone else who's there for the one, inspiring cause. ■



Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update



Preventative Search and Rescue activities in Cathedral Range State Park

By Josephine Hunter, VICSES Marysville Unit Controller, Eastern Region

At VICSES we often look to put local solutions in place for local problems. For units, this can mean looking at the common types of preventable incidents attended and thinking of new and innovative ways to educate the community. For the VICSES Marysville Unit, this kind of thinking has recently led to the implementation of Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) activities in the Cathedral Range State Park in Nanadhong.



This popular park sees thousands of campers and bushwalkers enjoying the rugged ridgelines each weekend. The Marysville Unit responds to a high number of calls for injured or lost walkers in the area, often requiring the deployment of technical rescue crews or air support. Many become protracted rescues, taking up to 12 hours to resolve. While being proud of our skilled response, the unit recognises prevention is always a better option.

Over the March long weekend, we undertook a three-day PSAR effort, aimed at sharing information on the skills, knowledge, and gear needed to stay safe in remote areas, and to increase the community's understanding of risk management.

An information stand was set up, with members handing out water, snacks, maps, and safety advice. Members walked trails in the afternoon to provide advice, and to increase the unit's understanding of where visitors commonly reach difficult decision points - a key factor in search planning. The weekend proved effective, with hundreds of visitors engaging with members and learning about the vital role VICSES plays in assisting with search and rescue events.

The unit has also worked with Parks Victoria to address signage and trail upgrades over many years. Through proactive campaigning and activity planning, the Marysville Unit have influenced a positive change and improved visitor experience. ■

Latrobe City 2023 Neighbours Everyday event

By Ola Salako, Community Resilience Coordinator, Eastern Region

In March, VICSES Morwell Unit alongside the Latrobe City Council and other emergency services came together to celebrate the 2023 *Neighbours Everyday* event - aimed at building resilience within the local community.

After the June 2021 Traralgon Creek flood, the council identified a need to improve the community's social connectedness. Emergency services were present to discuss the importance of being connected to our neighbours and how it reduces loneliness and increases community resilience, especially when dealing with events that disrupt our lives, such as floods.

VICSES members were present at the event to discuss their role during emergencies. The members engaged the community to discuss important issues like flood preparedness, local flood guides, and sandbagging procedures. Overall the event was a great success, with positive feedback from the community. We look forward to attending again next year! ■



Messages
From CEO
From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update

Tony's Trek across Gippsland

By Ola Salako, Community Resilience
Coordinator, Eastern Region

After witnessing several colleagues suffer trauma due to their roles within the emergency services, Tony Pearce, Inspector General for Emergency Management Victoria and Chair of the Emergency Services Foundation, embarked on a solo trek to help raise awareness around members' mental health in the sector.



The trek spanned 50 days and over 1,500 km through some of the worst affected areas during the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires.

The event was proudly supported by VICSES and other emergency service members, who welcomed Tony into their regions. Tony met with local emergency service

volunteers and community members, and was able to share his vision. Funds raised from Tony's Trek will be used to deliver pioneering, prevention-focused mental health initiatives - a Lived Experience Program and Pilot Residential Wellbeing Program. Great work Tony! ■



TOM THOBURNE

End of an era: Mansfield Unit Controller Tom Thoburne on stepping down

By Krystal Buckle, Corporate Communications Advisor, VHO

After six years as the Controller of VICSES Mansfield Unit, Tom Thoburne is stepping down and handing over the torch.

His work growing the membership base and building strong relationships with other agencies has seen Mansfield Unit go from strength to strength. One of Tom's most memorable moments as Controller "would be watching the unit grow to our now 40 members" he said.

"I'm very proud of our ratio between men and women – when I first joined, we had two female members, and now we have 17."

"Tom has always been a thinker, and a very respected and well-liked Unit Controller," said Carolan

Miller, Volunteer Support Officer with Eastern Region.

"One of the things I really admire about Tom is how he evolved in the role; he was just an all-round likeable Controller. He gets out there and gets things done, doing his best to include and motivate everybody... he's a bit of an overachiever actually," continued Carolan.

Tom's focus on community engagement has also highlighted the importance of engaging junior members. "Certainly, having juniors in the unit and the culture change they bring helps

to keep us senior members on our toes!" said Tom.

While Tom believes "the time was right to hand over to another Controller," he's not leaving VICSES anytime soon. After returning from his four-month holiday up north

and recharging the batteries, he'll be back on board as an active member, helping out with training and looking to strengthen the unit's focus on junior membership. ■



Profile: Michael Isbister, Trainer, Eastern Region



Hi Michael, thanks for sitting down with us. Can you tell us a bit about your journey to become a trainer with VICSES?

I've been a Mansfield Unit volunteer for the past nine years, and initially I was looking to work as a casual trainer. When a full-time position came up with VICSES, I jumped on it. To be able to do what I love for a living full-time now, both VICSES and training, is fantastic.

In May you hosted a 4WD course for members – how did it go?

Our most recent courses in Myrtleford and Barnawartha went very well - it was fantastic to see the participants (some with a lot of experience, and some without) all take at least a little bit out of the course. The experienced members learnt new bits and pieces they either didn't know or forgot over time. If they do get faced with a situation where they're not safe, they have the know-how to recognise that and think of another way.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your role as trainer with VICSES?

For me, the aspect I find really rewarding is watching the development in the volunteers and seeing their passion and commitment to the service. Being able to see it from a volunteer point of view, and now as a staff member, is awesome. Teaching volunteers to be able to deliver a potentially lifesaving service to the community is a win-win to me. ■



Multi-agency training on the Great Alpine Road

By Vin Bigham, Operations Officer Lead Trainer, Eastern Region



East Gippsland Technical Rescue Group members kicked off a multi-agency training day on Saturday 29 May, alongside VICSES Bairnsdale and Bruthen Unit members, and Country Fire Authority members from Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale. Moving to the Great Alpine Road, the training day focused on skills enhancement, teamwork, communication, command and control, along with adaption to the new environment. ■

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

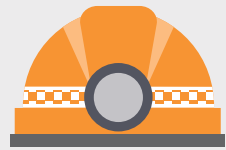
Media

Information Services
(IS) update



WESTERN REGION

1 January – 31 March 2023

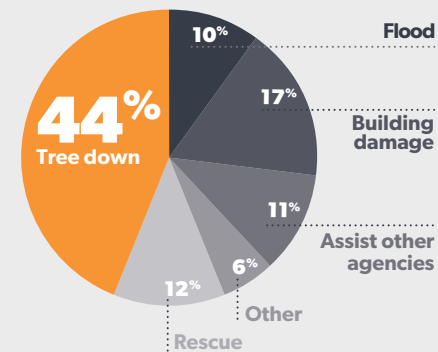


2,359

Volunteers

2,414

Requests for assistance



Murray Bennett's 46 years of outstanding dedication

By Sue Hatty, VICSES Winchelsea Unit Community Engagement
Facilitator, Western Region



Murray Bennett joined the VICSES Winchelsea Unit in March 1977. A 29-year-old at the time, Murray was one of the first crew members responsible for growing the unit from its very beginning.

Winchelsea Unit started with one trailer filled with equipment worth \$5,000, donated by the Winchelsea Shire. Back in 1977, this trailer was towed by members' vehicles, and the unit was granted \$325 as a yearly budget. To raise more money for the unit, volunteers would mow lawns and gather local sponsors. Holding every position in the unit up to Unit Controller, Murray has seen a lot of changes over the years and has been an important part of growing the Winchelsea Unit to what it is today.

As treasurer for the past 40 years, Murray is a well-respected member of our unit, and is always willing to help anyone. He plays an important role in training nights, passing on his valuable knowledge, and we love hearing about "how it was done back in



the day." We especially love his sense of humour, with more than a few jokes told over the years!

Murray has attended many call-outs and deployments to Sydney, Newcastle, Lismore, and South Australia. He has had "wonderful family support over the years, especially with the varied timing of call-outs."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed serving VICSES, and it really is heart-warming to get the occasional thank you from someone we have helped – this makes it all worth it," said Murray.

Our unit is what it is today because of members like Murray, and their dedication. We all love you Murray, and thank you for your 46 years (and counting!) of outstanding dedication. ■

VICSES x Geelong Tech School

By Alex Suwitra, Community Resilience Coordinator,
Western Region

Geelong-area secondary school students got to experience the real-life challenges of managing a flood emergency during a Geelong Tech School program with VICSES in March 2023.

The students from 10 local high schools were part of the three-day Industry Design Sprint organised by the Geelong Tech School. On day one, students visited industry partners to learn about their challenges. They aimed to empathise with each industry's problems, brainstorm, and prepare potential solutions, before presenting back to industry partners with an elevator pitch at Geelong Tech School.

The VICSES Geelong Office in Bell Park was abuzz on day one of the

program. The 12 students were given a tour of the Geelong multi-agency Incident Control Centre (ICC), and were then tasked to use the space to create an Incident Action Plan for a city-wide flood emergency. In small teams, the students worked together utilising the data and technology available in the ICC to identify priority locations for response – and did a fantastic job in record time!

After learning more about VICSES, the students worked on the design challenge 'How can we stop people from entering floodwater?'

Working together with guidance from Geelong Tech School mentors, the students got to work on developing two different sets of solutions.

The first group developed a public safety campaign based on the 'Dumb Ways to Die' campaign by Metro Trains, including radio and Spotify ads, TikTok videos, and animations explaining the dangers of entering floodwater. Their motto? "If you don't have a bill, floodwaters kill" (referring to native wildlife that can survive flooding conditions, like our mascot Paddy

the Platypus!). The second group developed an impressive model vehicle with working prototype sensors, which identifies when the car is approaching floodwater. Each group delivered a fantastic elevator pitch on their projects and the judging panel gave great feedback on their presentations.

Personally, we were absolutely blown away by the work these students did. In three short days, the groups took some vital safety knowledge about flood emergencies, and with Geelong Tech School guidance, were able to turn it into amazing ideas that could help the community. I can't speak highly enough of the program and the students in it. Well done! ■



Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update

Loddon Mallee Region's Women in Rescue event

By Jamie Macri, Community Resilience Coordinator, Western Region

Women in Rescue 2023 in the Loddon Mallee region was held again at the Huntly Emergency Management Victoria facility on 15 April, with over 25 participants and a team of both volunteer and staff support.

This year's Huntly event, coordinated by Bec Maskell from the VICSES Bendigo Unit and Mel Thompson from the VICSES Heathcote Unit, saw two Road Crash Rescue (RCR) stands, two Safe Working at Heights System (SWAHS) stands, and a very popular Domestic Rescue stand. In addition, trainers Emma Comello and Renae Knight designed and supervised a very well executed, advanced RCR scenario.

Workwear Group was in attendance this year, the designer and manufacturer of VICSES' new Female Fit uniforms. They were very keen to see how the uniforms perform in real-life scenarios, and spoke with many participants. The event allowed them to gather valuable feedback from volunteers already issued the new uniform, and provided an opportunity for volunteers who hadn't yet received theirs to try them on.

The final and always popular 4WD session saw all participants (and some of the support team!) take to the 4WD track. The day had been cloudy, with the Bureau of Meteorology forecasting storms, but it was only when the final vehicles came off the track that the skies opened. A perfectly timed end to another great Women in Rescue event! ■



A series of great snaps from training at VICSES Whittlesea Unit

By Natasha Bradley, VICSES Whittlesea Unit, Western Region

During the training session held on Wednesday 19 April, members were requested to set up a marquee to preserve several simulated crime scenes that had been established. This also included tarping and portable lighting.



Whittlesea Unit member Phoebe conducting a briefing with her crew, to give them direction for the upcoming task. This included lighting and preserving a crime scene.



Members during their debrief of the training session, which also included a line search.



CALD Community Champions graduate from Emergency Preparedness Program

By Tracey White, Community Resilience Coordinator, Western Region

The Bendigo Community Health Service (BCHS) Emergency

Preparedness Program helps refugees to settle in the Bendigo region, assisting them to

secure homes, jobs, education, and employment.

It also provides, in partnership with VICSES, the Country Fire Authority, and Bendigo Council, an emergency awareness and preparedness program.

Community Champions are selected by the BCHS from within the community to participate in a number of workshops on community preparedness including flood, storm, fire, and heat health. This program is now in its fourth year, and has proven to be a huge success in delivering vital information to vulnerable Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

The VICSES sessions are delivered by Loddon Mallee Community Resilience Coordinator, Tracey White, with the assistance of a translator. The champions then take this information back to their communities as trusted sources of information to deliver key messaging around safety and preparedness. Our most recent gathering was a graduation ceremony for our latest Community Champions, all of whom arrived in Australia from refugee camps in Myanmar. A wonderful celebration and fantastic outcome.

The program is gaining attention from other councils and health services, and is looking to expand into the Hume and Central Regions in the future. ■

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update

WESTERN
REGION



Western Region's newest 'Crew Member 2' graduates

By Emma Comello, Casual Regional Trainer, and Ashleigh Bartlett, Regional Trainer, Western Region



A big congratulations to our newest qualified members – Simon, Tyler, Emina, Mark, Kym, Joe, David, and Jack, who completed their Crew Member 2 course at the end of April. All members did a fantastic job during the assessment stands, and we look forward to seeing you all on future courses.

A special thanks to VICSES Sunbury Unit for hosting us! ■

A new generation

By David Murphy, Media Advisor, VHO

Meet Sanjan Dawson, Renae Featherstone, and Grayson Tanner, the new generation of VICSES volunteers.



During the October flood event in Skipton, all three members took on leadership roles within the VICSES Lismore Unit as the community experienced severe flooding. The unit of twelve active volunteers responded to 33 calls for help from the community throughout October, which included nine flood-related incidents, seven trees down over roads and properties, and six road rescue incidents.

Sanjan initially took on the role of Incident Controller and remained in the post until an Incident Control Centre was established, when he then took on the role of Division Commander for the rest of the operation. "Everyone was affected by the floods. I recently joined VICSES, but I've been with the Country Fire Authority since I was 16. I always liked helping people in their time of need and because I had exposure to these

events, I roughly knew what had to happen, and what goes on around Skipton," said Sanjan.

In the lead up to the flood event, Renae told her employer that she knew they wouldn't be opening for business, and that she would be assisting her SES team mates where she was needed most. "On 13 October, there was myself and two other members who turned out to all the calls for assistance in Skipton. Our crew was really good. We received crews from throughout the region to help us with sandbagging, and surrounding land-based swift water rescue-trained volunteers were ready to assist us with the flood rescues. With a bit of teamwork, we were able to access the floodwater from either side" she said.

When she wasn't turning out to requests for assistance, Renae

went on to record copious notes about any intelligence she could gather to support Sanjan and protect the town. Sanjan and Renae worked closely with Victoria Police, Corangamite Shire, Country Fire Authority brigades, and local people upstream to take note of the water level, to monitor vulnerable properties, road closures, and obstructions. Renae even fielded a call from a bus full of people, trying to navigate around the flooded town and its impassable thoroughfares.

Alongside Sanjan and Renae, Grayson worked through the

day at his regular job and took over operations overnight at the evacuation centre in Skipton, caring for those who could not return home. "As a small unit, we're a bit of family. As much as you love helping everyone else, you get it back in spades, on a personal level and in the community" said Grayson.

Sanjan, Grayson, and Renae represent the new generation of VICSES volunteers, and we thank them for the extraordinary work they undertook to protect Skipton in its moment of need. ■



VICSES Sunbury Unit at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service

Proud Sunbury Unit members attended the ANZAC Day Dawn Service and march this year. Lest we forget.

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

State Road Crash Rescue Workshop in Geelong

By Gerabeth Abbott, Operations Manager, Lessons and Improvement, VHO

Converging on the Geelong Regional Office in late March, the State Road Crash Rescue (RCR) Workshop brought together staff and volunteer trainers from across the state.



Storm Masterclass 2023 held at VEMI

By Kellie Oates, Operations Team Assistant, VHO



During a time of change to RCR arrangements and a strengthened volunteer focus on training delivery within the agency, the workshop allowed trainers to discuss sector changes, focus on consistency in fundamentals, and maintain skills in complex scenarios. The opportunity to delve into new technologies and consider the challenges they could face prompted much robust discussion.

By building understanding and capability in our lead trainer and facilitator cohort, VICSES is well positioned for these skills to be shared across the state in a consistent manner. Moving forward, opportunities for trainers to share learnings include regional RCR workshops, unit-based exercises, and multi-unit skills workshops and scenarios.

Emma Sutcliffe from EV Firesafe presented an interesting update to further developments in the electric vehicle space, with Rod Wells from PT Rescue delivering a presentation on tools and technology, on trial or available within VICSES, to support members responding to electric vehicle or alternative fuel incidents. These technologies (such as Moditech) can also be applied in all RCR responses to provide unit members with greater information on vehicles to lead to a safer approach. Practical, as well as show-and-tell sessions, allowed application of these tools and technologies to a range of vehicles, including electric and heavy vehicles.

Heavy rescue was also a focus of the workshop, with VICSES Morwell Unit member and Australasian Road Rescue



Organisation (ARRO) representative Michael Vanderzalm delivering a thought-provoking case study of a complex heavy rescue incident. Practical scenarios enabled workshop participants to consider the range and application of approved gear available to support in a heavy rescue situation, with all members gaining a strong appreciation for the volume of cribbing required.

Structures in place as part of the new VICSES Operating Model promote greater opportunities for training delivery and skills maintenance for volunteers, and in conjunction with the VICSES Learning and Development team, we look forward to supporting the continued development of our members' skillsets.

Thank you to the capability assessors for their support in the delivery and facilitation of this event, as well as all external presenters that contributed to the workshop. ■

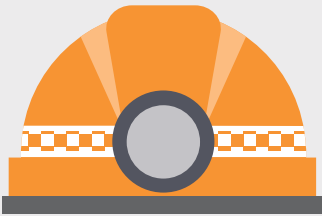
Guest speakers included Kevin from the Bureau of Meteorology, our colleagues from ESTA, and external panel members from Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, and Emergency Management Victoria. Dr. Greg Moore OAM, Committee Member of TREENET, was our dinner guest during the first Masterclass, and gave a captivating talk around the science and behaviour of trees. Participants also included guest attendees from New South Wales SES and the National Emergency Management Agency.

Thank you to everyone who supported, and participated in this fantastic workshop. ■

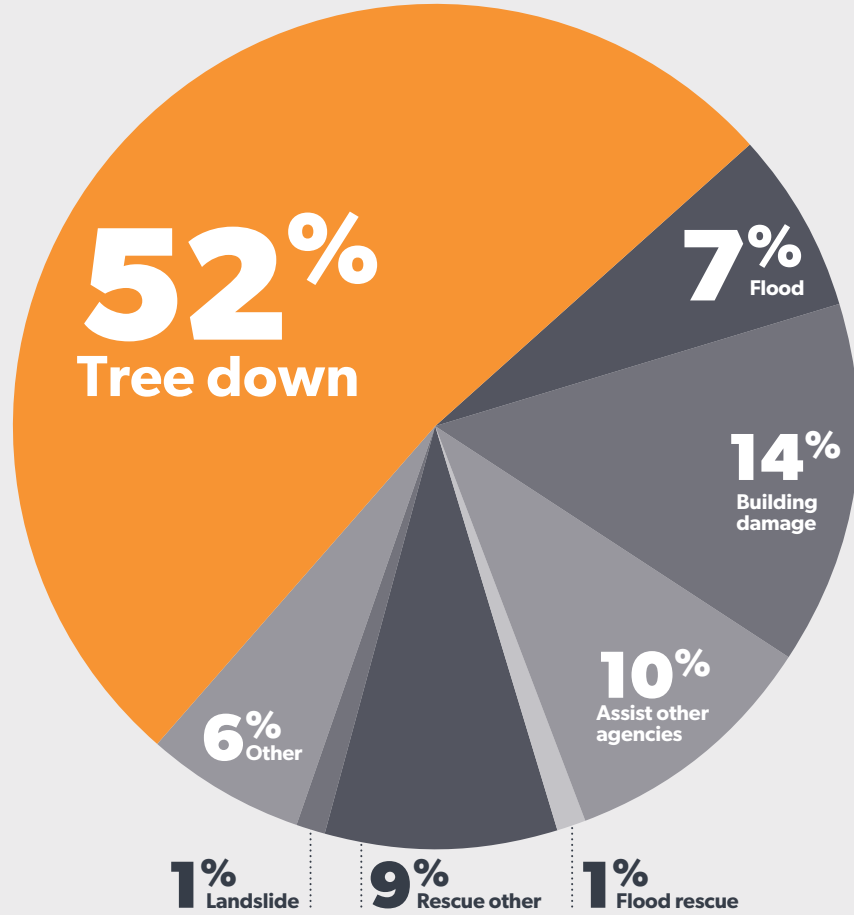
REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

1 January – 31 March 2023

Total
5,956



Breakdown



Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns & events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational updates

Projects – what's new

Wellbeing services, & support

Community engagement

Media

Information Services (IS) update



PROJECTS –
WHAT'S NEW

VICSES Chelsea Unit officially opened

By Phil Wall, VICSES Chelsea Unit, Eastern Region

On Sunday 30 April, the VICSES Chelsea Unit welcomed special guests for the official opening of our brand-new unit headquarters in Ashley Park Drive, Chelsea Heights.

What a special day it turned out to be, with our members being joined by the State Member for Mordialloc, Tim Richardson MP, who was instrumental in driving the project and representing the Minister for Emergency Services, Jaclyn Symes. He was joined by VICSES CEO Stephen Griffin, Emergency Management Commissioner, Andrew Crisp, Kingston City Council Mayor, Cr Hadi Saab, along with fellow Councillors, VICSES staff, Community Safety Building

Authority staff, representatives from Bunnings, and so many others.

We welcomed past member Graham Russell's family, as we opened the Graham Russell Meeting Room in his memory, as well as Natasha Drake's family, who opened the Natasha Drake Memorial Garden, fully sponsored by Bunnings Warehouse, which looked amazing.

It was such an emotional day for all of us at the Chelsea Unit - but especially Unit Controller Ron Fitch, after the many years of work he has put in to see the new unit

through to fruition and make the day a reality. It was during Ron's speech that emotions overflowed, both on stage and in the audience, and gave people a glimpse into the support and friendships that live in the Chelsea Unit.

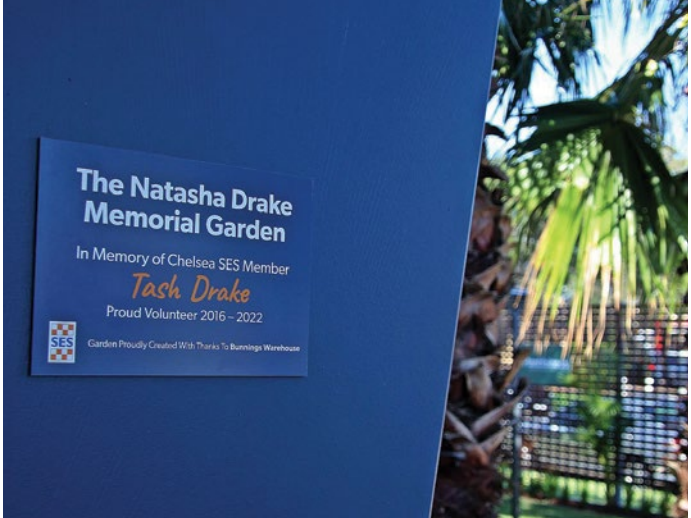
As Ron said, "as every volunteer organisation knows, volunteers will come and go as their life and work situations change, so change is inevitable and sometimes necessary. But that makes having a constant so important. This building is that constant - a home base that will stand the test of time and allow those new volunteers to fulfil their VICSES ambitions, just as those who go before them and after them will do."

Following the speeches, the guests then moved to the front of the building where Natasha's dad, Glenn Drake, and Tam Macauley from Bunnings Keysborough, shared the honours in cutting the orange ribbon to open the Natasha Drake Memorial Garden.

Sensational live music was supplied by Jon Mol, who kept everyone entertained, and even saw dancing breaking out, while a fantastic lunch was served and supplied by Alice Rebel's Bar and Café.

Established in 1953, the Chelsea Unit is one of VICSES' longest-running units in the state, and it now possesses the biggest local headquarters in Victoria. The state-of-the-art facility includes a six-bay motor room, as well as additional storage for boats and equipment. Existing infrastructure was also upgraded to support administrative operations, training, and emergency response coordination to create this fit-for-purpose, smart, and modern facility. The facility is fully compliant for people of all abilities, to work, grow, and shine.

All in all, it was the most wonderful and historic day, and such a significant day in the proud 70-year history of the Chelsea Unit. ■

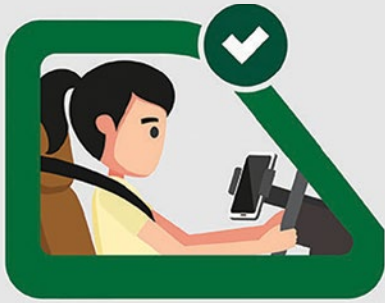
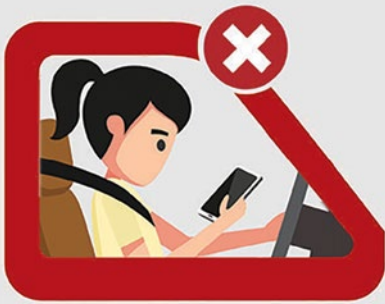


SAFETY

New distracted driver road rules

By Stewart Riddel, Health and Safety Advisor, Western Region

Distraction plays a significant part in road trauma. The risk of road accidents increases if a driver is distracted by in-vehicle technologies, including texting, browsing, or emailing. It is believed that distraction is involved in at least 11% of motor vehicle fatalities each year.



On 31 March 2023, new Victorian road rules were introduced to regulate the use of a range of portable, mountable, wearable, and inbuilt devices while driving a vehicle or riding a motorbike.

The rules are expanded from mobile phones and visual display units to cover:

- **Portable devices** (unmounted mobile phones, tablets).
- **Wearable devices** (smartwatches, wearable heads-up display).

- **Inbuilt devices** (information, navigation, and entertainment systems, heads-up display that is an inbuilt part of the vehicle).

- **Mounted devices** (heads-up display, tablet, mobile phone, media player, if securely mounted in or on a vehicle).

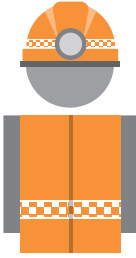
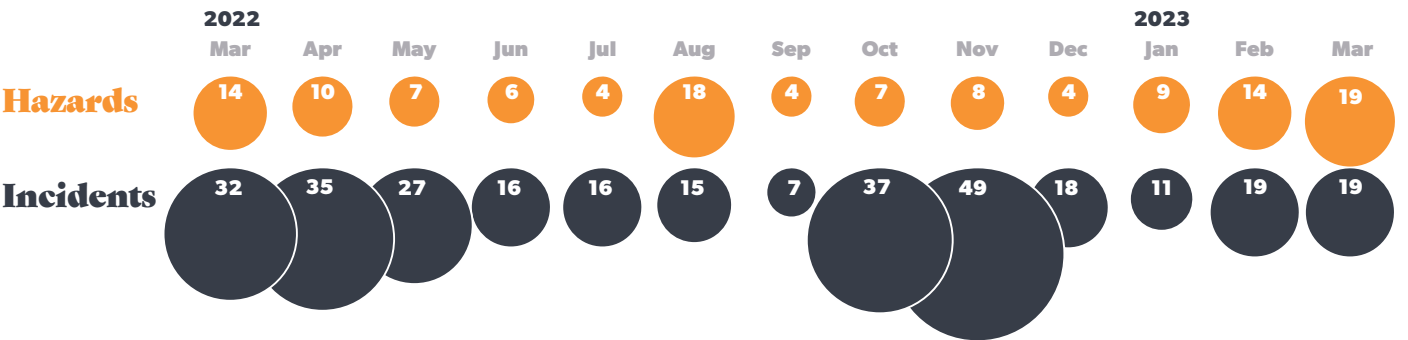
- **Motorbike helmet devices.**

Motorists caught driving distracted will receive penalties of four demerit points and a \$555 fine. ■

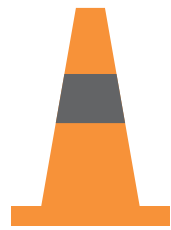
More information

More information about these new road rules can be found at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au.

YEAR AT A GLANCE



Workplace inspections



Injuries



Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update

WELLBEING SERVICES
& SUPPORT

6 Week Challenge

By Alison Wright, Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, VHO

With winter on its way, the Wellbeing Services and Support Team have got you covered. We put our heads together to come up with our top five tips to help you influence your immune system to keep it balanced and strong.

1 Eat your VICSES veggies

Orange and yellow fruits and vegetables are high in Vitamin A - a potent antioxidant that supports your immune health. Add a serve of VICSES vegetables to your day every day. You can:

- Swap out potato for sweet potato, pumpkin, or carrots.
- Roast your orange vegetables in some olive oil and herbs.
- Cut up some carrot and capsicum sticks to add to your meal, or use in a dip instead of crackers.

4 Add in the extras

What we eat has a huge impact on our immunity and ability to bounce back from illness. A diet high in processed foods and sugar can suppress some of our immune system wizardry, so try to add in those extra veggies, health supporting herbs and spices, and good quality protein. You can:

- Add some fresh ginger, chilli, or coriander to your curry, make a pot of ginger tea, or chop up some fresh parsley and basil for your pasta.
- Add a piece of salmon into your week.
- Add unprocessed foods like fruit, veggie sticks, hard boiled eggs, hummus, and raw nuts as snacks.

2 Get your beauty sleep

Sleep is restorative. Your body replenishes its energy and repairs cells, tissues, and muscles. Lack of sleep can suppress our immunity and increase susceptibility to viruses. You can:

- Set a regular sleep schedule.
- Go to bed 30 minutes earlier.
- Try not to look at your screen before bed.
- Avoid stimulants and sugary foods after lunch.

5 Rest and recuperate

If you do get sick, the best way to recover is to rest up, eat well, stay hydrated, and relax. Our 6 Week Challenge has been developed by VICSES for our members. With weekly challenges in nutrition, movement, and managing stress, we will support you in building some healthy habits. Plus, you have access to our team of nutritionists and dietitians for more specific advice and guidance.

3 Go the distance

You may not feel like exercising when it's cold and dark outside, but regular moderate intensity exercise will support your health, your mood, and help you manage your sleep and stress levels. You can:

- Move more – add in some incidental exercise.
- Schedule activities with friends and family.
- Make movement a priority – 30 minutes most days.



More information

To find out more about the 6 Week Challenge, email wellbeing@ses.vic.gov.au or register your interest via the QR code below.



The Working Mind First Responders Program

By Kay Czyrek, Psychologist, VHO

The Working Mind First Responders (TWMFR) Program is an education-based program designed to address and promote mental health, and reduce the stigma of mental illness in a first-responder setting.

MindFit AV SMART 2.0 Program

By Elise Camilleri, Psychologist, VHO

The Mindfit AV SMART 2.0 program is a 90-minute catch up with one of our VICSES clinicians.

It was developed by Ambulance Victoria and has been adapted for VICSES to best support our members' wellbeing. By the end of the one-off assessment, you will have a better understanding of where you are sitting on the Mental Health Continuum, which is a baseline of your psychological health. We'll also work through some strategies to ensure you stay 'in the green'.

The program is available now for all VICSES members to access, regardless of location, with sessions held either face-to-face or via video link. Register your interest for a MindFit AV SMART 2.0 check-in via the QR code below.



TWMFR PRIMARY TRAINING:

Open to all members, excluding Unit Controllers and Deputy Controllers. Sessions will be held at the following locations and dates:

Swan Hill Unit

16 June, 1:00pm-5:00pm

Wodonga Unit

17 June, 10:00am-2:00pm

Knox Unit

22 June, 1:00pm-5:00pm

Orbost Unit

24 June, 10:00am-2:00pm

Warrnambool Unit

24 June, 10:00am-2:00pm

Narre Warren Unit

19 August, 10:00am-2:00pm

Ballarat Regional Support Office

14 October, 10:00am-2:00pm

Wangaratta Unit

25 November, 10:00am-2:00pm

TWMFR LEADER TRAINING:

Open to all Unit Controllers, Deputy Controllers, and staff with one or more direct reports. Sessions will be held at the following locations and dates:

Sunshine Central Regional Support Unit

24 June, 9:00am-5:00pm

VICSES Head Office

24 August, 9:00am-5:00pm

Camperdown Unit

26 August, 9:00am-5:00pm

Ballarat Regional Support Office

23 September, 9:00am-5:00pm

Wangaratta Unit

21 October, 9:00am-5:00pm

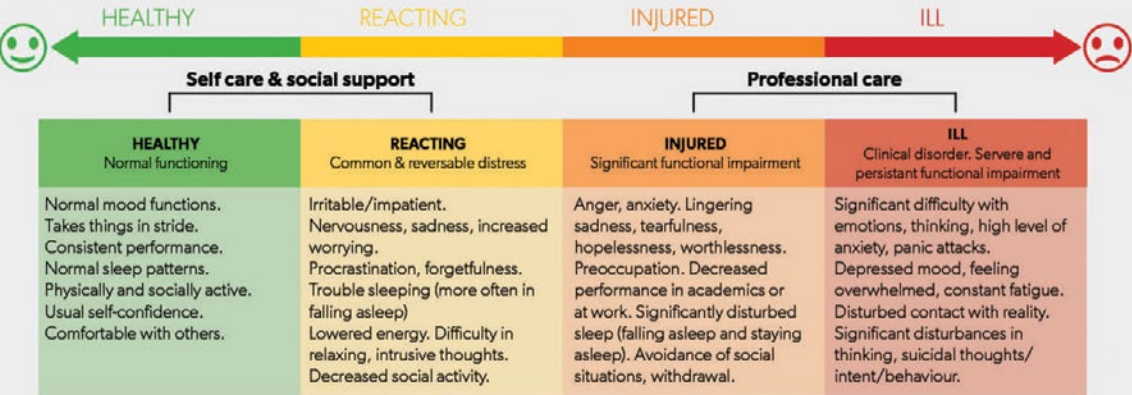


More information

For more information, or to register your interest, visit the Training Portal via the QR code on the right and search for 'The Working Mind First Responder' under the Mental Health and Wellbeing section.



The Mental Health Continuum



Messages

From CEO

From Minister for Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns & events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational updates

Projects – what's new

Wellbeing services, & support

Community engagement

Media

Information Services (IS) update





COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



Driver
Reviver over
the Easter
period

By Krystal Buckle, Corporate Communications Advisor, VHO

In November 1996, Lisa Constantine was involved in a life-threatening car crash, and VICSES volunteers from the Frankston Unit helped cut her free. 26 years later at AAMI park, she was reunited with her rescuers. They led the media launch for the Easter *Driver Reviver* activation on 5 April, encouraging drivers to take a break and avoid fatigue on the road.



Over the Easter holiday period, VICSES members together with Lions, Rotary, and RSL club members, activated over 30 Driver Reviver sites across Victoria as part of the Australia-wide program. Locations included Avenel, Balmattum, Bears Lagoon, Beaufort, Bruthen, Cann River, Colac, Coleraine, Donald, Dunkeld, Green Lake, Kaniva, Kerang, Lismore, Lockington, Longwarry North, Marong, Maryborough, Mildura/Lake Cullulleraine, Morwell, Murchison, Newmerella, Ouyen, Rochester, Rushworth, Seymour, Stawell, Wedderburn, and Wunghnu.

Thousands of cups of tea, coffee, and biscuits handed over by dedicated volunteers allowed travellers to rest and recharge this Easter period. VICSES Marong Unit served 1,634 people on Easter Monday alone!

Driver Reviver has been powered by volunteers Australia-wide for more than 30 years, with a mission to save lives by reducing fatigue-related road trauma, one of the biggest contributors to deaths on our roads.

VICSES Chief Officer, Operations, Tim Wiebusch said "I'm so grateful to the SES volunteers and other service club volunteers who gave up their Easter weekend to activate Driver Reviver sites and help reduce the road toll."

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who continue to support this fantastic road safety initiative. ■

Putting the spotlight on
community engagement
resources

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



Are you looking to engage with school kids and need a hint on where to find the best resources?

On the VICSES Hub, there is everything you need to conduct an engagement program, including resources specifically created for primary school students. You'll find lesson plans filled with activities and games that have been developed in consultation with teachers and align with the Victorian curriculum. These educational resources support students to understand flood dangers, recognise when their house is under threat of flooding, and how to take appropriate protective action.

We've all heard of *Bag It, Block It, Lift It and Leave*, but did you know there are posters, PowerPoint presentations, and animations relevant for both urban and rural settings to accompany the catchy tune? Head over to the Community Engagement Resources page on the Hub to find out more: **My State > Community > Community Engagement Resources**.

Did you know VICSES has collaborated with Scouts Victoria to deliver a nationally recognised SES Scouts badge? Not only does the badge encourage the development of practical skills in emergencies,

the program has also been recognised by Scouts Australia and has won a Resilient Australia award.

Completing the requirements helps young members gain the basics for dealing with emergency situations and helps them to understand how the skills they learn in Scouts can assist their community when disasters strike. Head over to the Hub for more info on how your unit can deliver a Scouts program for Joeys, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers: **My State > Community > Community Engagement Resources > Children and Youth Activities**. ■



Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns &
events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational
updates

Projects –
what's new

Wellbeing services,
& support

Community
engagement

Media

Information Services
(IS) update



MEDIA

1 January –
31 March 2023

Campaigns and events:

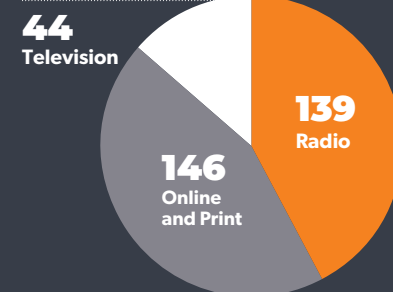
- International Women's Day
- Driver Reviver Easter Launch
- Harmony Week
- Neighbour Day

- Volunteers receive rare honour following Bright water rescue – 1 March
- VICSES members awarded National Emergency Medals – 5 March
- VICSES at Moomba – 14 March

Media releases:

- VICSES volunteers lead multi-agency rescue in Grampians – 4 January
- VICSES Mildura Unit joins the future of road crash rescue – 13 January
- Weekend storms wreak havoc at Benalla – 16 January
- VICSES Bright Unit joins the future of road crash rescue – 18 January
- VICSES at Pride – 7 February
- VICSES marks 40th anniversary of Ash Wednesday bushfires – 16 February
- Manningham at 60 looks to the future – 23 February

Mentions of VICSES in the news:



Social media highlights:

f FACEBOOK

Impressions:
74,773

Engagement:
7,315

16/02/23: 40th anniversary of the Ash Wednesday bushfires.

t TWITTER

Impressions:
8,924

Engagement:
136

07/02/23: Remembering the Black Saturday bushfires.

in LINKEDIN

Impressions:
4,088

Engagement:
553

25/01/23: VICSES Deployment to Western Australia.

ig INSTAGRAM

Impressions:
4,994

Engagement:
381

16/02/23: Remembering the Ash Wednesday bushfires on their 40th anniversary.

Watch this space: Media Liaison Course availability

By Dharni Giri, Senior
Media Advisor, VHO



New Media Liaison Officer (MLO) courses are running over the next quarter! Keep an eye out on the Training Portal for this online course, aimed at upskilling and accrediting volunteers who want to be the MLO of your unit.

Having a single point of contact for local and regional media can help to raise your unit's profile in your community and beyond. Whether you want to recruit new volunteers, highlight your unit's latest community engagement activities, or promote safety messaging during operational events, having a strong relationship with local journalists starts with your MLO.

The aim of this training is to provide VICSES volunteers with the knowledge and confidence to deliver valuable, professional, and focused messages to the community through all forms of media. It aims to prepare volunteers to liaise with media at an incident, as well as providing media with information about local events.

All MLO media activities are pre-approved by the Unit Controller or State Media Duty Officer (SMDO). This role also helps to assist units by ensuring that all unit members adhere to the correct media policies and procedures at a local level.

Many of our MLOs in smaller units also take on the Social Media Officer role, and/or work closely with our Community Education Facilitators (CEFs).

For more information, email the VICSES media team at media@ses.vic.gov.au. ■

INFORMATION SYSTEMS (IS) UPDATE

Online fraud

By Toby Köberle, Manager Information Security and Governance, VHO

Over the past few years, online fraud has become one of the fastest growing industries globally, and cybercriminals have become increasingly sophisticated. Here is a list of some common scams and what you can do to protect yourself.

- If you want to send them photos, it's best not to send photos you wouldn't want others to see. Some scammers blackmail people using intimate photos and videos.

Tech support scams

Scammers know that most people are afraid of getting hacked. In this scam, attackers trick you into thinking your device has been hacked or infected with viruses, and then pressure you into downloading software that gives them remote access to your computer.

Example:

- Scammers send an alarming email or text message declaring that your device has been compromised.
- The tech support phone number provided in the alert is a direct line to the scammer. Once they get you on the phone, they request remote access to your device to 'fix' the problem or install a free upgrade.
- The malware they install is used to steal financial information, usernames, and passwords.

How to stay safe:

- Be suspicious of any stranger on the internet who initiates a close personal relationship with you out of the blue.
- Cut off all contact if someone starts requesting money or tries pressuring you into making investments.

How to stay safe:

- If you get a troubling message or phone call from a tech support team, don't click on links, or respond via contact information listed in the message. Contact your normal provider through trusted channels.

Impersonation scams

When attackers hack into social media accounts, they will sometimes reach out to the victim's contacts, asking them to buy something for them, send a gift card, help them out of a tight situation, or even convince them to take part in an 'investment scheme.'

How to stay safe:

- If you receive a strange social media request and a friend is asking for money out of the blue, always call them directly on a trusted number.

'Hi Mum' texts

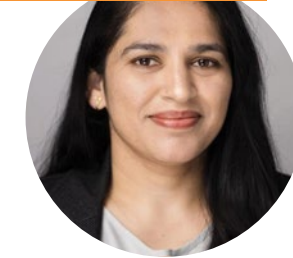
The scam involves perpetrators sending messages to victims, claiming to be loved ones in need of money. Its name stems from its most common incarnation – the message usually begins with 'Hi Mum', followed by an explanation of how the child or teenager lost or broke their phone and are using a friend's phone to message you. Next, they claim to need money, maybe for a taxi or to buy a new phone.

How to stay safe:

- If you receive such a text, phone your child directly on their known number to confirm the situation. ■

Meet the team:

**SINDHU
AAIREDDY**



Welcome Sindhu! Can you tell us a bit about your professional background before VICSES?

Thank you for the warm welcome. My previous role was IT Support Officer at Master Builders Association of Victoria, where I was the first point of contact for all user queries (both software and hardware). I enjoy troubleshooting and providing solutions for users!

What does your role at VICSES entail?

At VICSES, my role is IT Applications Administrator. My responsibilities are to ensure daily administration and maintenance of system applications, resolving any escalated incidents, and providing support and documentation for applications.

What is one thing you would like others to know about you?

I explore and learn new things, also I will always prioritise helping others.

Where can we find you in your spare time?

You can always find me home in my spare time. As a mother of two kids, I like to spend most of my time with my kids. I also enjoy spending time on craft, cooking new recipes, and exploring new places. ■

Messages

From CEO

From Minister for
Emergency Services

Feature

General news

Campaigns & events

Eastern region

Western region

Operational updates

Projects – what's new

Wellbeing services, & support

Community engagement

Media

Information Services (IS) update

Volunteer Service Desk Hours

Need support?

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

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

VICSES is proud
to partner with AAMI
for over 20 years,
in support of
our incredible
volunteers.

Creating safer communities – together