

SPRING 2018

Community Matters

# VICSES

EDITION 4

## STATE CONTROLLERS SEMINARS 2018

We take a look at this year's  
key themes for the future of VICSES

Launching the  
**Volunteer  
Hub  
Project**

**ARRO  
competition**  
comes to  
East Region

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**WITH SILVIA SILVERII**

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### Interested in contributing?

Submit your article here:

[publications@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:publications@ses.vic.gov.au)

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

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

As Minister for Emergency Services, I am incredibly proud of everything that has been achieved during the past four years.

It's been incredible seeing the 5,000 SES volunteers turn out for major emergencies. From July 2014 until June 2018, we've seen 103,412 incidents responded to, including more than 5,000 rescues, and nearly 76,000 storm incidents.

Volunteers like you have provided more than 1.1 million hours of their time to keep Victorian communities, properties and people safe.

Our emergency services volunteers and staff put their lives on the line for their fellow Victorians. It's only right that the Andrews Labor Government should provide the equipment and facilities they need to keep Victorians safe.

Some of the key milestones and funding commitments we've made over the past four years include:

- Passing the Emergency Management Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, which provides no-fault compensation for VICSES volunteers. This addresses inequality between emergency services volunteers. It also makes sure that all people are looked after if they give their time to making their community safe with VICSES.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between VICSES, the state government and the Municipal Association of Victoria. This MOU secures the future of units on land owned or managed by local councils by facilitating long-term leases on minimal or nominal rent, with the government now

responsible for funding the maintenance costs.

- Announcements of new or redeveloped units in Caroline Springs/Plumpton, Northcote, Broadmeadows, Chelsea, Corio, Frankston, Clyde, Craigieburn North, Cranbourne, Officer, Emerald, Point Cook, Wonthaggi, Cobram, Essendon and Wyndham.
- To date, \$6.4 million in new VICSES equipment, via the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP). In addition to this, VICSES units will share in part of the \$13.34 million that will be allocated to emergency service volunteers via the VESEP in 2018-19.
- To date, \$5.7 million in additional grants through the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability (ESVS) program, which funds operational equipment, training and development, community engagement and more. In addition to this, VICSES units will share in part of the \$10 million that will be allocated to emergency service volunteers via the ESVS program in 2018-19.
- \$4.2 million in funding to replace assets and equipment, allocated through the Critical Asset Replacement Program.

To date, \$840,000 towards initiatives that support the health and wellbeing of VICSES volunteers, through the Valuing Volunteers Program (VVP). The VVP is returning in 2018-19.

It has been a privilege to meet so many VICSES volunteers and staff and see first-hand your dedication and commitment to protecting Victorian communities.

All the best for the rest of 2018.

Yours sincerely,

**Hon James Merlino MP**  
**Deputy Premier**  
**Minister for Education**  
**Minister for Emergency Services**



## Welcome

### Hello and welcome to the Spring edition of Community Matters.

Firstly, I am very pleased to welcome Silvia Silverii to VICSES in the new role of Chief Information Officer (CIO). With a 20-year career in the field, Silvia brings a wealth of experience and skills in applying cutting edge thinking and technology to optimise the use of data and information flow. As part of the Executive Management Team, Silvia will provide a strategic focus on information technology and management within VICSES. You can read our interview with Silvia on page 4.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in the State Controllers Seminars for the East and West Regions earlier this year. These seminars were a fantastic opportunity to share learnings and network with leaders from across the state. The feedback provided during these sessions was invaluable, and will help us to tackle key challenges and strategic matters that we face today, and into the future.

As you may be aware, the deadline for the State Government Budget Bid 2018-19 is approaching. I want to assure you that we are working extremely hard to promote the needs of our organisation, and what our units need to perform their roles. I will keep you updated on this as more information becomes available.

I also want to congratulate all of you for your continued dedication and support for the emergency service sector. Victoria Police has written to me to thank you – our volunteers – for your support throughout recent incidents and events, noting how valued and appreciated that support is. So well done on all of your efforts.

Finally, as we move out of a busy winter season, remember to put safety first – whether at an incident, at training, or in the office – and ensure you look after yourselves and each other.

Stay safe,

**Stephen Griffin**  
**CEO Victoria State Emergency Service**





## Features



# 5 x Qs with Silvia Silverii

Silvia Silverii joined us as our new Chief Information Officer on 30 July. We asked her a few questions to get to know her...

### Welcome on board Silvia! Can you tell us a bit about your career prior to VICSES?

Thank you!

On paper, I've been a CIO or Head of IT for the past 11 years in Melbourne within non-profit and government agencies. Before that, I spent 14 years based in Sydney and working internationally for a small company that provided leading edge solutions for banks, airlines and telecommunications. It meant I had to undertake many roles... the technical hamburger with the lot!

However, my career really started before home computers were even thought possible, and technology was something only organisations could afford. I started as a data entry operator for a service bureau, then became the supervisor and software programmer. In a way, I've

been combining the same three skills ever since – helping people adapt to the technical and information landscape as it evolves.

### What are you most looking forward to in your new position as CIO?

Meeting and learning from our members to understand what opportunities there are for enhancing what is already a great organisation. I've given myself a personal challenge to meet and/or talk with as many members as I can, but this may take some time – Victoria is a big place!

### What role do you see technology playing in the future of VICSES, and are there any challenges in this space?

Without sounding cheeky, the role of the technology is to be less technical. The traditional

roles of technology (to fix, upgrade, secure, support) may provide a stable and strong platform (and that's important), however it won't do much to enable the organisation to realise its goals for 2022 – a piece of technology rarely provides the whole answer.

The first challenge will be to identify how to evolve work practises, procedures and information handling.

### Who or what inspires you the most?

Positive people who are generous with their time and knowledge – I think I have come to the right place.

### Finally, what TV shows are you binge-watching at the moment?

Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee – I love, love, Seinfeld. ■



## VICSES and Red Cross – Going the distance

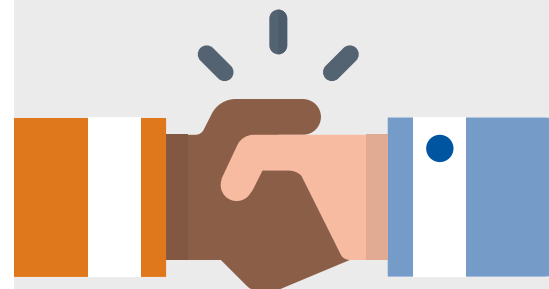
By Ben Beccari, Senior Advisor  
Monitoring and Evaluation, VHO

**V**ICSES and Red Cross have worked together for a long time with the shared vision of safer communities together, and the VICSES Community Connections and Red Cross Emergency Services teams have recently begun talks to enhance our partnership.

Discussions have included collaborating on engagement programs, training, using the Red Cross RediPlan and Get Prepared App in VICSES engagement activities, and even developing a state-wide public emergency exercise.

The teams are very excited about working together and there will be much more happening over the months and years to come. Already there are some great examples of working together with Red Cross, for example the Pillowcase Project (see page 10). VICSES is also now using the Red Cross RediPlan as our template for household emergency planning.

We would love to hear about any other local examples that you may have. Let us know at [education@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:education@ses.vic.gov.au) ■



# VICSES launches new style



By Stephanie Makin,  
Senior Advisor Corporate  
Communications and Brand, VHO



VICSES has launched a new corporate style guide, rolling out the first phase of the launch on 25 July.

**T**his is the first update to the VICSES Style Guide since 2011, and incorporates a refreshed colour palette and new graphic elements.

The release coincides with the release of the VICSES 2018-22 Strategic Plan, emphasising our focus on the volunteer experience and our commitment to remain an organisation of choice for our people and partners.

It also follows the 2017 launch of this very publication, Community Matters.

Features of the new style include:

- Orange and charcoal grey as the new VICSES primary colours, creating greater contrast and added vibrancy.
- A new checkerboard design promoting our important role as an emergency service agency.

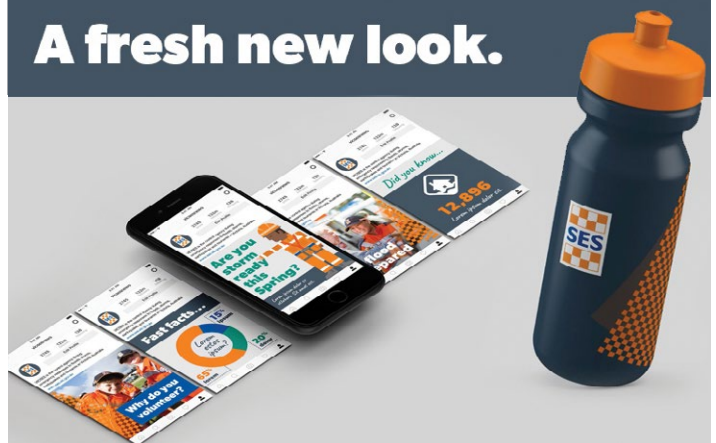
- A special focus on teamwork, connection, community, diversity and the volunteer experience across all of our imagery.
- New digital provisions for corporate stationery, to replace the pre-printed stationery of the past and strengthen our pledge to be an environmentally-friendly organisation.

A new range of updated templates is now available on the Hub.

The second phase of the roll out will focus on expanding the template range and updating existing corporate collateral to the new style.

**For any queries, please email [publications@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:publications@ses.vic.gov.au)** ■

## A fresh new look.



## New VICSES merchandise for units and offices

By Amy Hanson, Project Support Officer, VHO

Units and regional offices will soon receive a new range of VICSES-branded items, updated to the new VICSES style.

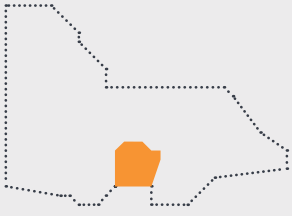
**U**nits will receive a variety of items they can use for community engagement such as stickers, magnets and pens, in addition to new premium branded umbrellas for high value sponsors. Regional offices will be receiving newly updated volunteer and supporter window

decals, unit calling cards, a suite of pull up banners and some new umbrellas.

These items will be distributed in August and September.

**For further information, contact Amy Hanson at [amy.hanson@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:amy.hanson@ses.vic.gov.au) or 9256 9048.** ■





# CENTRAL

1 April – 30 June 2018

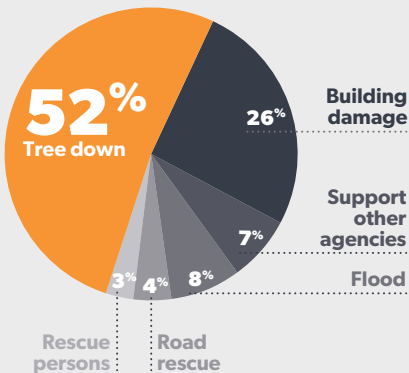


# 1,747

Volunteers

# 2,626

Requests for assistance



# Central Region salutes long term Controller Chris Patton

By Marisha Patton, Regional Officer Emergency Management, Central Region

Northcote Unit Controller Chris Patton is standing down as Controller after 26 years.

Chris first joined VICSES in 1987 to help his local community. Not long after he was appointed Controller in 1992, making him the one of the longest standing Controllers within Central Region. Chris however, is still very much part of the furniture, and has undertaken the role of Deputy Controller – Operations.

During his time as Controller, Chris was dedicated to educating the community on floods and storms long before the introduction of the FloodSafe and StormSafe programs, and was a key leader in the 'Operation Chaps and Chainsaws' initiative.

In 2009 Chris was actively involved in the devastating Black Saturday fires, and received a National Emergency Medal for his commitment to the wider Victorian Community. And in 2015, Chris was awarded the prestigious Emergency Services Medal (ESM).

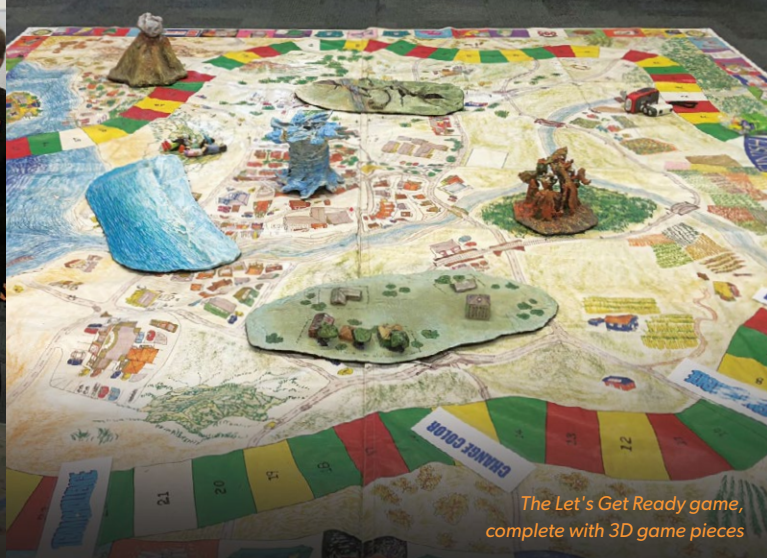
**Besides his involvement with VICSES, Chris is also the Central West Director of the Victoria Emergency Service Association (VESA), and has been a member for almost 20 years.**

Chris has always put VICSES at the forefront of his life. We thank Chris for his dedication and contributions as Unit Controller, and wish him all the best in his new role. ■





Let's Get Ready creator Jennie Schoof engaging VICSES members



The Let's Get Ready game, complete with 3D game pieces

# The 'Let's Get Ready Project'

By Jule Syme, Community Resilience Coordinator, Central Region

The 'Let's Get Ready' disaster resilience game was developed in Queensland, by Jennie Schoof.

Jennie later moved to Melbourne and commenced work as the Emergency Management Project Coordinator for the Maroondah, Knox, and Yarra Ranges Council Cluster Project, where she adapted the game to meet the needs of a Victorian environment in partnership with emergency service agencies.

The overarching objective of Let's Get Ready is to engage with youth and schools in a broad exploration of resilience, and prepare today's children and youth to become informed and resourceful adults.

The disaster resilience game, a 3x3 metre interactive game, is best played outdoors on a school play yard or community green space. The game comes with all resources required for a facilitator to implement the scenarios: a game token, large game dice, team signs, game and scenario cards, a facilitator guide, score sheets, and game pieces, which include a 3D bushfire, cyclone/wind, volcano/landslide, earthquake, tsunami, and flood.

The enquiry-focussed, immersive approach of the game assists in planning for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and emergencies. The project challenges participants to think about what they need to know in order to prepare for and respond effectively to natural disasters and emergencies. It encourages teamwork, leadership, negotiation, exercise, excitement, and education.

The game's hands-on teaching method for disaster resilience education as a fundamental life skill can easily be translated into a child's local environment. The interactive participant-focussed activity urges the investigation of effective methods for youth and their families to prepare for, cope with, and recover from natural disasters and emergencies.

Training has been rolled out with Community Education Facilitators (CEFs) in the Southern and Eastern Metro area, with the game to be developed and rolled out across all regions. ■



## Central Region CEF Workshop

By Gavin Quinn, Community Resilience Coordinator, Central Region

On 14 July 2018 more than 50 VICSES Community

Education Facilitators from several areas gathered in Central Region and met at the Victorian Police Academy.

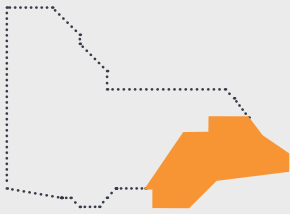
Presentations were given by keynote speakers from MFB and local government, while CEFs from Central units shared best practice, and updates were provided from representatives from VHO.

In the afternoon breakout sessions were held for Let's Get Ready, and Interactive engagement using tablets, smartphones and the Community Engagement Program Framework.

The event was organised by the Central Region Community Education Advisory Group and Central Community Resilience Coordinators.

Presentations were recorded and are available on the VICSES Community Engagers Group on Facebook. ■





# EAST

1 April – 30 June 2018

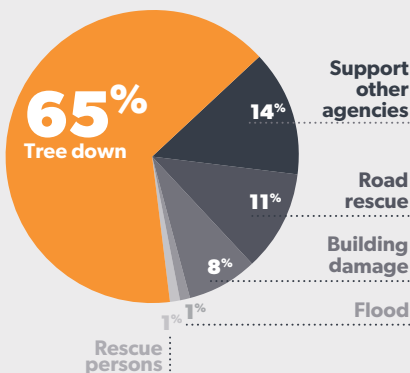


# 695

Volunteers

# 410

Requests for assistance



Acting Regional Manager Russell Wilmott, Geoff Hodge, and Regional Officer Emergency Management Ken Bodinnar

## 37 years of service to the Buchan Community

By Merryn Henderson, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

**B**uchan Unit member Geoff Hodge was recently acknowledged for his 37 years of service with VICSES.

Geoff first joined Buchan Unit on 5 November 1981, signing up to become a volunteer. In 1998 Geoff was appointed Buchan Unit Controller, with the aim of

increasing membership and community involvement. Geoff has recently passed the reigns over to long-term member and friend Jim McCole.

During his time with VICSES Geoff brought with him extensive knowledge of the high country, including walking trails and 4WD tracks in and around the Alpine

National Park and Snowy River National Park. This knowledge came in particularly handy when assisting Victoria Police and other emergency services in a number of challenging land searches.

Geoff has also been involved in assisting many road accidents and tragic recovery missions, helping support local families and visitors in times of need. Despite the ups and the downs of his role, Geoff has continued to service his community 24/7. ■

## VICSES and CFA team up to teach kids how to be safe

By Elizabeth Wharton, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

**V**ICSES Warragul Unit volunteer Gel Joseph and Paddy the Platypus teamed up with April Himmelreich and her friends from CFA to teach kids about being safe during floods and fires.

Captain Koala, Paddy the Platypus, April and Charlie the Fire Dog sang and danced with catchy tunes to teach Drouin West Primary School students what to do in a flood and fire. The June

performance was the first time a joint show had been run utilising both VICSES and CFA emergency services.

The applause and interaction of students proved the show to be a fantastic hit.

“We had an absolute blast!” April said, thanking VICSES and Paddy for sharing our important flood safety messages.

The popularity of the session has led to future opportunities for collaboration and shows at other schools throughout East Region. ■





# ARRO competition comes to East Region

By Elizabeth Wharton, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

In June VICSES members, emergency service providers and members of the public gathered in Lardner Park near Warragul for the annual Australasian Rescue Challenge.

**T**he event, hosted by the Australian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO), saw 18 teams from across Australia, New Zealand and Asia gather to share skills with a full day learning symposium, and to compete across a range of rescue events, including vehicle extrication and trauma challenges.

This year the VICSES team was made up from South Barwon and Corio Units, consisting of Team Leader Caroline Taylor, Medic Tamiaka O'Toole and the Technical Team of Joshua Hutton, Lisa Keys, Andrew Welshe and Brendan Marretta. East Region volunteers assisted throughout the three day event with

scenario setup, judging and demonstrations.

On the final day, Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) Wanaka was announced to be the overall winning team. Big congratulations to all members of the VICSES team for their incredible effort, skills and teamwork.



The VICSES team with Chief Operations Officer Tim Wiebusch



The next ARRO Competition is set to be held next year by NSW SES and NSW Fire and Rescue in Dubbo, NSW. ■



For more information, visit [www.arro.org.au](http://www.arro.org.au)



From left: Tamiaka O'Toole, Lisa Keys, Caroline Taylor, Josh Hutton, Andrew Welshe, and Brendan Marretta



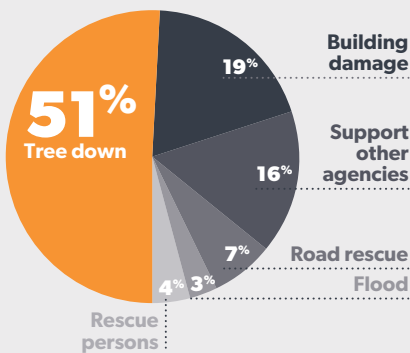
# MID WEST

1 April – 30 June 2018



**459**  
Volunteers

**295**  
Requests for assistance

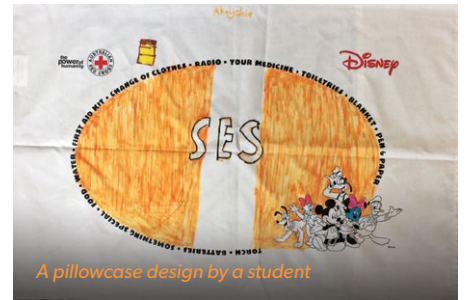


# The Pillowcase Project

By Christine Berry, Community Resilience Coordinator, & Belinda Marchant, Manager Regional Operations – Emergency Management, Mid West Region



Christine Berry engaging students on the Pillowcase Project



A pillowcase design by a student

The Mid West Community Engagement team has established a relationship with Australian Red Cross to co-deliver the Pillowcase Project to Primary Schools in the Ballarat Region.

The Pillowcase Project was first established by a group of international Red Cross workers who saw students from a local university carrying their possessions in pillowcases following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. It was from this observation that the concept of a pillowcase as an emergency kit was developed, which soon received financial support from The Walt Disney Company.

The project is targeted at children in grades three and four, based on research of their willingness to learn and participate in group activities. The objective of the project is to create a generation of children who understand the importance of preparedness in an emergency, what to pack in an emergency kit, and how sharing this knowledge can contribute to community resilience.

Mid West has been delivering this course alongside the Australian Red Cross for over three months, with an overwhelming response across four schools and more than 300 students. The pilot project in this region has been so

successful, that Red Cross International has agreed to have the project delivered as a co-branded, co-delivered VICSES and Red Cross program across Victoria.

This level of commitment to the Pillowcase Project does not happen without significant efforts, including tailoring the VICSES components to work within the Red Cross curriculum and also in providing energy and effort in delivering the courses. Special mention must be made to Mid West Community Resilience Coordinator Christine (Chris) Berry, who has dedicated significant hours to integrating this project into our organisation. Without her initial vision and determination, we would not be able to co-deliver such an incredible internationally recognised community resilience program. ■





# Rescued hiker signs up to become VICSES volunteer

By Brody Stewart, Deputy Controller - Training, Stawell Unit

On 9 June Stawell Unit set out for its 30th rescue from the Grampians for 2018. Once again, a hiker on The Pinnacle had gone off track and slipped, breaking two bones in her lower leg.



**2017-18**

**FINANCIAL YEAR**

**MOUNTAIN  
RESCUE**

**ACCOUNT FOR OVER**

**30%**

**OF STAWELL UNIT'S**

**TOTAL RFA'S**

**T**he hiker's name was Viv. Accompanied by three exchange students, they had no idea who these random people in orange were. Once the paramedics had Viv ready to move, we loaded her up and got going. During the 1.5-hour walk, Viv said she had seen VICSES out and about but had no idea what we got up to. She was so impressed that she promised to sign up to join the service once she had recovered, and is now on the waiting list.

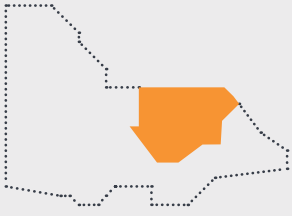
The 2017-18 financial year saw mountain rescue account for over 30% of Stawell Unit's total RFA's, making it a huge part of our operations. We

know that we're not going to see people on their best days during these rescues, so we make an effort to reinforce a positive environment. As well as training new members in proper casualty handling,

we have found that humour can sometimes be the best painkiller of all. This is just one example of how we aim to turn a negative experience into a day that everyone remembers for the right reasons. ■



*VICSES, Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police assist the injured hiker*



# NORTH EAST

1 April – 30 June 2018

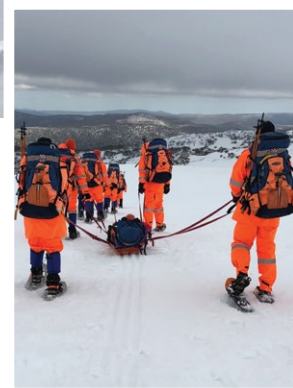
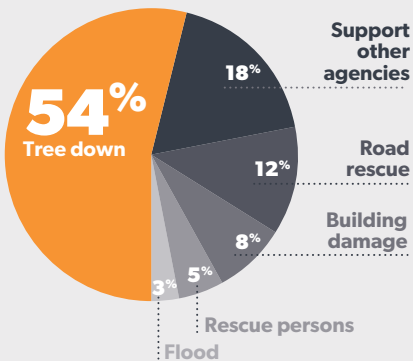


# 745

Volunteers

# 369

Requests for assistance



## Alpine Search and Survival Training

By Rob Johnstone, Regional Officer Training, North East Region

On 9 July North East Region volunteers from Bright, Tallangatta, and Beechworth Units completed the Alpine Search and Survival Training course alongside Regional Trainers and a CFA Officer from Falls Creek.

The candidates brought a range of existing skills to the course, and over three days learnt how to sustain themselves in remote alpine settings while conducting search and rescue operations.

The three day course began with classroom sessions about gear preparation, avalanche safety and alpine searching skills.

A two day 'on-snow' practical weekend followed,

where the group headed out on Mount Loch and put everything they learnt into practice. This included using snow-shoes to walk over deep snow, building emergency shelters, managing hypothermic casualties and using a range of alpine equipment.

Congratulations to the new Alpine Search and Survival members in the North East. ■

## VicRoads donates abandoned cars for road rescue training

By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator, North East Region

A valuable agreement between VicRoads and the North East Region has seen abandoned cars that would normally

be sent to wrecking yards put to good use by VICSES volunteers undertaking road rescue training.

Victorian Government Minister Jaclyn Symes and senior managers from VicRoads visited the North

East Regional Office in July to view a Road Crash Rescue training demonstration by members from Wangaratta and Benalla Units.

The 24 road crash units across the North East Region undertaking Road Crash Rescue can access the vehicles through the training team at the regional office.

"These nuisance cars, which might otherwise be turned into scrap metal, can now help to improve our volunteer training, and ultimately help us save lives on Victorian roads," said VICSES North East Regional Manager Keith O'Brien. ■



Wangaratta and Benalla Unit members perform a road rescue demonstration





# General Rescue Skills Course

By Graham Gales, Bright Unit Deputy Controller, North East Region

In August, North East Region ran a General Rescue Skills course for new members. Regional Officers, Troy Milner and Robbie Johnstone, assisted by volunteer trainers, took 19 volunteers from nine units through the course.

The course enables members to get to know each other and be open about their needs, while the range of instructors provides different approaches and techniques,



improving learning opportunities for all participants. Delivering this course across several units also ensures consistency in training across the region. ■



***All the trainers have been very impressed with this group of new members,” said North East Operations Officer Robbie Johnstone.***

***“They are all enthusiastic and everyone has been keen to have a go in all of the training exercises.”***

## NAIDOC Celebrations in North East

By Mick D’Elia, Manager Regional Operations – Readiness, North East Region



Joanne Atkinson presents to VICSES staff.

Darren, Kevin, and Joanne Atkinson, proud local Aboriginal Australians, joined the North East staff during NAIDOC Week for a lunch to talk about the significance of NAIDOC to Aboriginal people and this year’s NAIDOC theme; “Because of Her, We Can!”

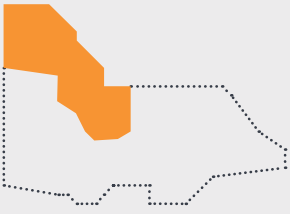
Keve opened proceedings with a welcome to country in his traditional language, and Darren spoke about the history of NAIDOC and some of the steps forward that have been taken because of NAIDOC celebrations.

Joanne, Manager of the Koori Court Program across Victoria, spoke about the amazing women who have been, and still are, in her life, and how they have inspired her to be a mum, a sister, an auntie, and a leader in her community and others.

Joanne is a passionate Bangerang woman and welcomed all of us to participate in learning more and getting involved in Aboriginal communities across the region.

The North East Region encourages units to engage with their local Indigenous Australian communities. If you’d like help getting started, contact your Community Resilience Coordinator at the Regional Office. ■





**NORTH**

**WEST**

1 April – 30 June 2018

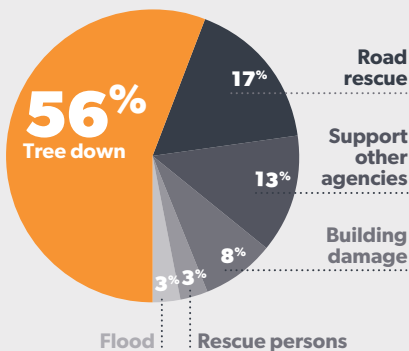


**671**

**Volunteers**

**322**

**Requests for assistance**



(From left) Acting Deputy Chief Officer Operations Mark Cattell presents Reg Ellis with his Life Membership

# Life membership for Reginald Ellis

By Judith Gledhill, Rochester Unit Controller, North West Region

Rochester Unit is proud to now have four VICSES Life Members. In July, unit member Reg Ellis was presented with his Life Membership by Acting Deputy Chief Officer Operations Mark Cattell, surrounded by family and friends.

**R**eg first joined VICSES Rochester Unit back in 1985. Since then, he has made significant contributions to the unit thanks to his unwavering passion and commitment. He has attended hundreds of operations, including motor vehicle accidents, land searches, and storms and floods, including large scale events within Victoria and interstate.

Reg is the self-appointed manager of all small motors within the unit, keeping all of our chainsaws sharp, serviced and ready for use. He has always been our go-to 'fix it' or 'make it' man, whether it be minor items requiring maintenance, or if we need a gadget to make a task simpler. After the 2010-11 floods, Reg created a sand bag filler out of a traffic cone that we still use to this very day.

Reg, together with Rochester's other Life Members, Ken Major, June Major and Glenn Major, have given a combined total of 135 years' service to VICSES and the community of Rochester, which is an incredible achievement and testament to their dedication. ■



**Reg, together with Rochester's other Life Members, Ken Major, June Major and Glenn Major, have given a combined total of 135 years' service to VICSES and the community of Rochester.**





# Kerang welcomes 14 new recruits

By Gabi Barkmeyer,  
Corporate  
Communications  
Officer, VHO

**K**erang Unit has welcomed 14 new recruits, following successful completion of their general rescue assessment.

The new members, 12 hailing from Kerang and two from Birchip, spent months preparing for the assessment, which was overseen by regional trainer Kevin Cahill.

“We’ve been really impressed with them,” Kevin said. “They would come in on the weekend which is a big ask, because some of them work full time throughout the week. It’s a lot of commitment from them.”



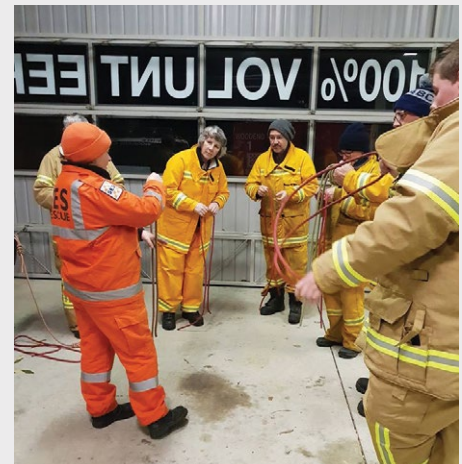
*It’s just good to know that you’re helping the community and making it better.*

*I volunteer to get experience in different branches...*

*I enjoy talking to people and helping them.”*

Unit Controller Glyndia Gee said that the unit had never received such a huge intake of members, and that some would go on to complete their Road Crash Rescue assessment the following month.

New member Bo said that becoming a VICSES volunteer was a very fulfilling experience. ■



## Woodend Unit and CFA join together for training

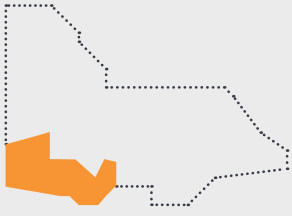
By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate  
Communications Officer, VHO

Woodend Unit and Woodend CFA have come together to share skills and knowledge through several collaborative training nights.

**I**n May, the teams joined training to swap roles with each other, proving to be a great learning and team building exercise.

In June, Woodend Unit was invited to the CFA training night to run a Rope Safety and Knots skills session. As these skills are commonly used by both agencies when dealing with casualty management, securing loads, and lifting equipment, it is important that members of both agencies know how to perform these skills correctly.

Both teams are looking forward to many more joint training exercises in the future. ■



# SOUTH WEST

1 April – 30 June 2018

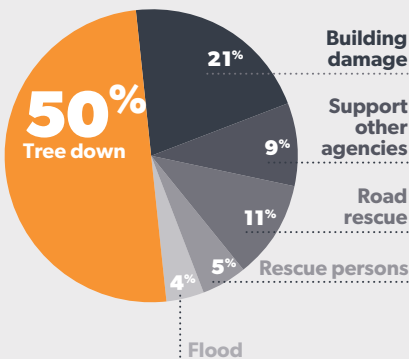


# 676

Volunteers

# 499

Requests for assistance



# Otway Unit celebrates 50 Year anniversary



By Jake Johnson, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

The Otway Unit, one of the earliest volunteer-based rescue groups to form in the state, has recently celebrated its 50th birthday.

The unit was established as the Otway Search and Emergency Squad (OSES) on 5 May 1967 under the driving influence

of local Constable Lennie Beale, in response to a tragic drowning near the Cat Walk on the coast at Moonlight Heads.

It was initially formed as a cliff-top rescue team, with training provided by Police Search and Rescue, and the support of Civil Defence. In 1975 the team was renamed

under the Victoria State Emergency Service as it continues today.

Otway Unit is now based at the Community Fire Refuge in Lavers Hill, a shared location with the CFA, and has 14 members. The unit is well resourced thanks to some recent success with Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) grants, and is kept busy with many flood, storm and road rescue jobs. ■

## South West Awards

By Jake Johnson, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region



South West – Eastern side recipients with Chief Officer Operations Tim Wiebusch and Regional Manager Alistair Drayton

South West members have been recognised for their significant service to the community at recent Awards Ceremonies across the region. The awards provide an occasion for us to recognise and thank volunteers and their families for their significant contribution.





# Training the next generation of paramedics

By Jake Johnson, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

South Barwon Unit has developed a relationship with Federation University Ballarat to introduce paramedicine students to road rescue incidents. The annual training program has been running for seven years and provides the students with comprehensive hands-on experience.

**40** paramedicine students attended the unit, where they learnt about the challenges of managing casualties in motor vehicle accidents, the process of handing over a patient, and the chance to view a road crash rescue demonstration.

VICES member Tim Hutton said, "The partnership provides us with an opportunity to work with paramedics while they are students before we meet them on the road. It's a chance to increase their awareness of how the SES and

other emergency services operate, particularly at a road rescue scene."

The Federation University lecturers and students highly value the opportunities provided through the partnership.

"The skills and knowledge I have gained today will help me, when I'm employed by an Ambulance Service, to work with the SES and safely manage patients around car incidents," said student Zac Harrington. ■



We are very proud of all 63 members who received service awards for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years' service, and the following members who received a Clasp, National Medal, SES Life Membership or 40 Years Service Award.

Name	Unit	Award	Name	Unit	Award
Robert Timms	Bannockburn	40 Years Service	Neil Hedger	Port Fairy	National Medal 2nd Clasp
Andrew Turner	Bellarine	National Medal	David Hedger	Port Fairy	National Medal 1st Clasp
Peter Willsher	Camperdown	National Medal 1st Clasp	Ray Polaski	Portland	National Medal 2nd Clasp
Robert Burns	Colac	40 Years Service	Wayne Justin	Terang	National Medal
David Dixon	Geelong	40 Years Service	Mack Sinclair	Terang	National Medal 1st Clasp
Colin Pickering	Lismore	SES Life Membership	Michael Belton	Torquay	National Medal 2nd Clasp
Adrian Sleep	Lorne	National Medal	Gerard Billings	Warrnambool	40 Years Service

# OPERATIONAL UPDATES

## Utility type vehicles join the ranks



The new Utility Type Vehicle for Loch Sport Unit

By Brad Dalglish, Operations Officer – Operational Readiness, VHO

Sorrento and Loch Sport have welcomed the introduction of speciality built Utility Type Vehicles (UTVs) to their units. The new additions will provide increased support for Victoria Police search and rescue, and the recovery of casualties in remote areas when working alongside Ambulance Victoria.

**D**esigned in consultation with Victoria Police, Mt Baw Baw Alpine Snow Patrol, Life Saving Victoria and units in the South West, North West, Central and East Regions, the UTVs can operate in a variety of environments, including snow, sand, mud, and mountainous terrains.

With patient care in mind, VICSES UTVs can carry four people, a basket stretcher with casualty and associated

equipment in a speciality designed tray with a roll cage, and tool storage.

Supporting the use of UTVs, SOP 027 – Use of Utility Type Vehicles has been released, aiding in the safe operation of UTVs, training, and pre and post check lists. A copy of this SOP can be found on the Hub under [Library > Operational Doctrine > SOPs > SOP 027 – Use of Utility Type Vehicles](#). ■



OCEP tower upgrades at Hepburn Shire Unit

## OCEP project update

By Simon White, Program Manager OCEP, VHO

**A**fter several years in design and planning, Monday 6 August marked a major milestone for the Operational Communications Enhancement Project (OCEP), with the statewide roll-out commencing at the Broadmeadows and Monash Units with installation and training.

The roll-out of the new radios – to be completed by the end of November – will allow

VICSES to move to a new digital platform, improving our safety with better-quality coverage, better useability and enhanced duress functionality, including directly off the new portable radios. The replacement of the radios will also allow VICSES to comply with the Australian Communications and Media Authority's directive to not use our current UHF frequencies.

I would like to say a huge thanks to the Port Phillip and Hepburn

Shire Units for supporting the pilot phase, along with the volunteers that have contributed to the project through testing, checking, consulting and providing feedback. Together, we have identified a few items that needed a tweak and included them in the new training documents, and finalised our Concept of Operations and policy documentation.



# Unit Incident Reporting System reports

By Jackson Bell, Operations Manager – Operational Improvement, VHO

**W**ith another financial year down, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who finalised and completed their unit's outstanding Incident Reporting Systems (IRS) reports for the 2017-18 year. Our reports help us form a complete picture of our activities throughout the year, including attending to trees down, building damage, road crash rescue events or our community engagement activities.

This year, thanks to the support of units and the assistance of regional staff, VICSES only had 40 IRS reports outstanding at the end of the financial year, resulting in the least amount of reports being force validated to date, and a more accurate reflection of the work our volunteers do. This is a significant effort and one that should be celebrated. Reports aren't traditionally the reason our members join the service, however they are an integral part of our organisation in ensuring we are accurately capturing the incidents and community activities we are attending, and help to inform future decisions on unit capability and activity. This provides a timely reminder that reports should be completed within two weeks of attending an event.

Once again, thank you to all those members who have assisted in completing these reports and I look forward to seeing us beat this record of 40 in June 2019. ■



The official roll-out will start in Central Region, and will then head to South West, North West, and North East Regions, finishing in the East.

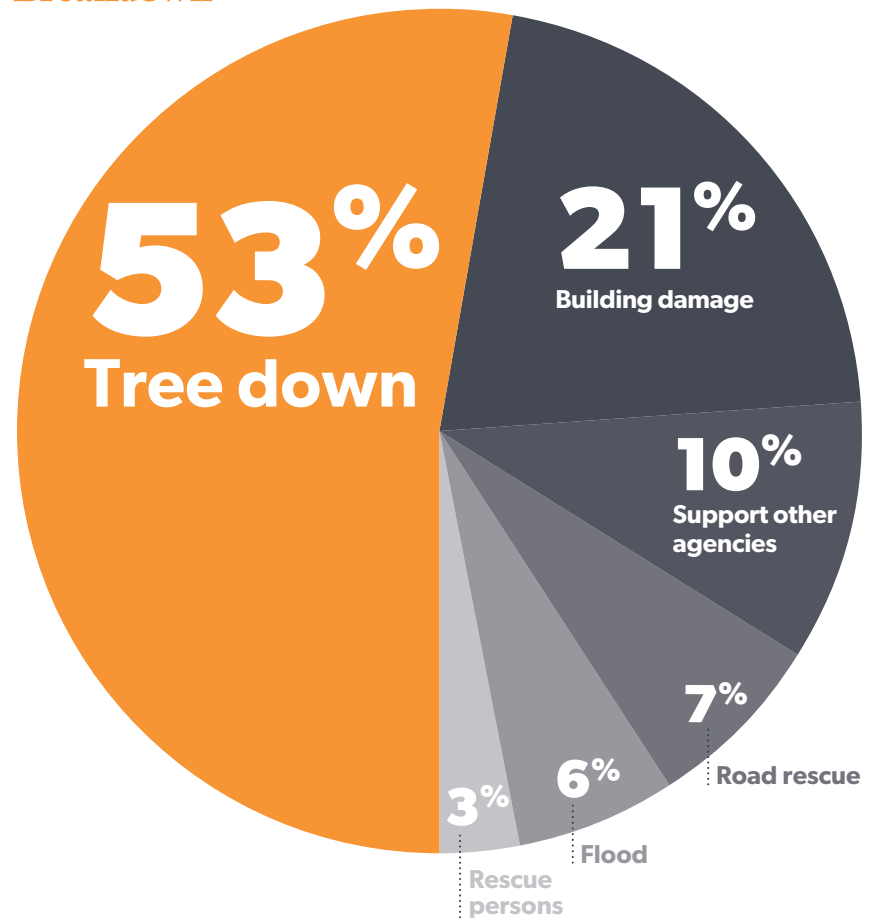
For further information, please head to the [Hub > My State > Projects > Current Projects > Operational Communications Enhancement Project \(OCEP\)](#). ■

## Requests for Assistance 1 April - 30 June 2018

Total

# 4,526

Breakdown



# PROJECTS – WHAT'S NEW

## Learning and Development training program review



**ACROSS**  
**60**  
**AVAILABLE**  
**COURSES**

**28** Joint Standard Operating Procedures (JSOPs)

**66** Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

**62** Work Instructions (WI's)

**51** Legal Acts and Regulations

By Keith Mitchell, Project Officer Learning and Development, VHO

Learning and Development has recently completed a review of all training programs, checking and updating individual course trainer and student resources.

**P**roject Officer Keith Mitchell undertook this complex task, reviewing over 480 documents, online courses and videos. The review also included incorporating continuous improvement actions as a result of feedback from trainers and members after participating in a course.

To illustrate the complexity of this review, the 60 available courses, there are references to 28 Joint Standard Operating Procedures (JSOPs), 66 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), 62 Work Instructions (WI's) and 51 legal Acts and Regulations.

These references are continually being updated, requiring an impact assessment for each course. A great example of this was the release of AIIMS 2017, which was an update of the Australian Inter-Service Incident Management System used to manage incidents by most emergency agencies, including VICSES. This update enhanced and introduced further incident management concepts for three of our courses – Introduction to AIIMS, AIIMS Crew Leader and AIIMS Sector and Division Command.

Work will continue on developing and updating course content as we get ready for the launch of the Training Portal, our Learning Management System, and the exciting prospect of more blended, online member learning opportunities.

Trainers wishing to review details of resource changes can refer to the Course Training and Assessment Strategy document version control amendment list, located at the front of each document. ■



# Launching the Volunteer Hub Project

By Jane Harris, Senior Communication Officer - Projects, VHO

An exciting new venture is launching at VICSES to establish a Volunteer Hub that is accessible, relevant and easy to use.



## Why we're doing this

Recent analysis of the Hub has identified and confirmed some common challenges and critical barriers for volunteers in using the Hub in its current format. The Volunteer Hub Project will address these barriers in partnership with you, our valued members.



## How we'll do it

A volunteer working group has been established to determine what information and content is most important and relevant to you. Our project team will support the design and technology components in meeting these needs where practically possible.



## Have your say

Throughout the course of the project (August to December 2018), the project team welcomes your feedback. Have your say on the project page on the Hub and take part in the recently released survey, to help us create a platform that better supports your needs. ■



## Want to know more?

For further information about the Volunteer Hub Project and to fill in the survey, visit [Hub > My State > Projects > Current Projects > Volunteer Hub Project](#)



## New and Relocated units

By Keith Mitchell, Project Officer Learning and Development, VHO

A new project was initiated in March to support the relocation and establishment of a number of VICSES units throughout Victoria, which we received funding for in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 State Budgets. The new units include Kalkallo (Craigieburn North), Point Cook, Clyde, Officer, Skye (satellite of Frankston), Cranbourne and Caroline Springs (Plumpton). The relocations include Corio, Wangaratta, Emerald, Broadmeadows, Chelsea, Cobram, Wonthaggi and Northcote.

Consultation with staff and existing members from neighbouring units occurred from March to May to assist with the development of new unit establishment plans and relocation plans. These plans are now in a draft form, and cover the new unit Emergency Response Activity Standards (ERAS) profiles, unit boundaries and volunteer training and recruitment plans, and identify any impact on neighbouring units.

The Emergency Services Infrastructure Authority (ESIA) was established in June within the Department of Justice and Regulations to work collaboratively with VICSES to build modern, safe and fit-for-purpose facilities for VICSES volunteers to operate from. ESIA representatives have now come to many of the consultation meetings with volunteers and have a clear understanding of VICSES needs and priorities when it comes to fit-for-purpose facilities and working environments.

Applications have been submitted to Growth Area Infrastructure Funds (GAIC) for land acquisition funding for these new VICSES units. We are expecting the outcomes to be announced in the lead up to the state election in November.

In the meantime, further consultation with volunteers will continue, and we look forward to a positive result on land acquisition to establish these vital new units. ■

# WELLBEING, HEALTH & SAFETY



## Timber! – Tree Down

In the last year we have seen almost triple the amount of reported injuries when attending tree jobs, including five significant injuries.

**I**t's important to be aware of all hazards associated with tree operations, including the use of chainsaws.

### Assess the risk:

- Before starting the task, stop and take some time with the team to discuss what you are about to do, identify potential risks, highlight hot zones, and plan team roles and positions.
- Keep talking to each other during the job and reassessing the risks.
- Develop a plan to mitigate identified risks.
- Check equipment (e.g. chainsaws and ropes) and PPC&E (e.g. helmet, chaps, boots) are in good condition.
- Ensure you have an escape route.

### Look out for:

- Broken/damaged/dangerous trunks and branches.
- Potential stored energy (spring back).
- Awareness of surrounding area (e.g. other trees, ground condition, presence of electricity).

### Further Information:

- SOP 019 – Operations Involving Trees
- Serious hand injury performing pole saw activity - March 2017 (CD/16/87373)
- Safety Alert 37 – Storm Damaged Trees Operations

**For more information email WHS at [health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au) or contact your Regional staff. ■**



**Workplace inspections**

July 2016 – June 2017

**95**

July 2017 – June 2018

**111**



**Injuries**

July 2016 – June 2017

**104**

July 2017 – June 2018

**105**



**Wellbeing initiatives  
(Total participants)**

December – June 2017

**426**

December – June 2018

**876**





In the spotlight

# Meet Penny Armes

One of our Healthwatch professionals.

Penny is one of our experienced nutritionists, splitting her time between working for VICSES and running her own nutrition business.



Penny Armes and Healthwatch teammate Bec Maggs

### Tell us a bit about your role with VICSES

I visit units all over Victoria to conduct health checks and run information sessions. We share a healthy meal with the unit, which is a nice way to meet everyone, and hear a bit about the unit and their local area.

I also provide nutrition consultations and feedback as part of the 6 Week Challenge.

### What do you enjoy most about your role?

Meeting the VICSES members and travelling all over Victoria to spread the health and wellbeing message.

### What nutrition question do you get asked about the most?

I'm too tired when I get home – what can I eat that's healthy but easy to prepare?

### What would be your top nutrition tip?

Eat a variety of nutrient-rich, colourful wholefoods - the less processing the better!

### What's the best meal you've ever had?

My gran's delicious home-cooked meals with fresh veggies picked from the garden. Chicken and leek pie with veggies on the side, followed by rhubarb with cinnamon and cloves and real custard (no powder here – milk, eggs, real vanilla)!

### How do you spend your time when you're not at work?

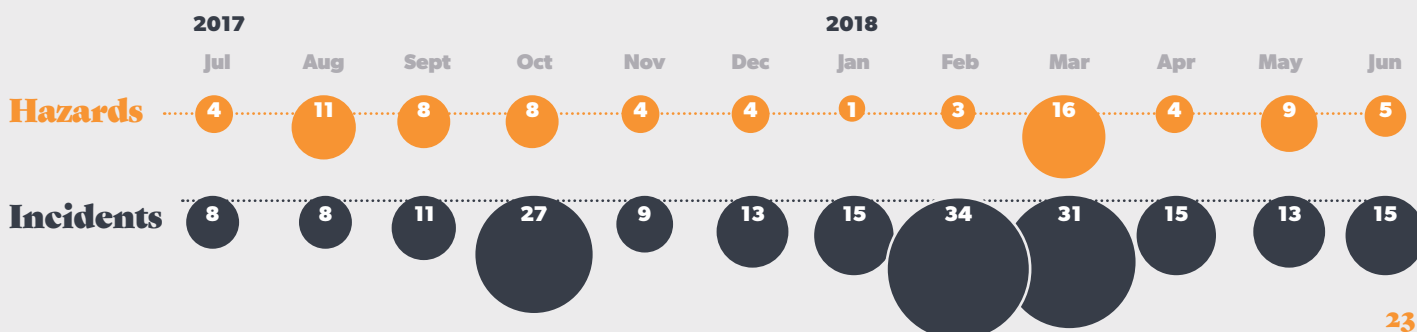
A passion of mine is finding picturesque places in Victoria to wander and explore. I enjoy an awesome coastal walk, like the Bass to Kilcunda or Bushranger's Bay, or up to the Dandenong Ranges for a wander amongst the forest, ferns, fauna and fresh air. ■



Contact WHS to book a visit from our Healthwatch team for your unit at [health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au).



## YEAR AT A GLANCE



# CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

## State Controllers Seminars 2018



The State Controllers Seminar is an annual event that VICSES volunteer leaders – specifically Unit and Deputy Unit Controllers – to effectively motivate their teams and others, providing a forum for discussion on agency-wide strategies and projects for the future.

A graphic of a calendar page for the month of June 2019. The year '2019' is in the top left corner, and 'JUNE' is written in large, bold, orange letters in the center. The calendar page is white with a grey shadow effect.

**Save the Date for next year!**

More information coming soon.

### Key themes of this year's seminars

- **Top three challenges facing Unit Controllers today:** Provided an opportunity for delegates to have a say and explore solutions to the key issues identified by Unit Controllers.
- **Engaging within the organisation and sector:** Delivered by the CEO, COO, Board, Chair and Commissioner, these updates focussed on the current issues for leaders and the future direction of the sector.
- **Volunteer safety and leadership:** Highlighted some of the challenges in this space, particularly with regard to serious injuries that have impacted VICSES members since the last seminar.
- **Leveraging your networks and partnerships:** Focussed on communication and engagement skills for leaders, facilitated by one of Australia's leading creative marketing professionals. This interactive session also highlighted the importance of creativity to help us get the message across.
- **Tools and resources to support unit management:** Provided an update on work currently underway to streamline the Unit Management Manual.



*The seminar will help me a lot to develop my own management skills and also my unit members."*

*"As a new Controller, all information was beneficial for increasing my knowledge about the role."*

*"Lots of simple tips to take away and try with our unit."*



# Our Vision

...for Communities -  
...her



From left to right: VICSES Board Chair Peter Akers, VICSES CEO Stephen Griffin, Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards MP, South Barwon Unit Controller Caroline Taylor, Mildura Unit Controller Michael Hellwege, and VICSES COO Tim Wiebusch.)

**“Good networking opportunity.”**

## What's next?

**Volunteer Consultation:** For those who expressed an interest in getting involved in a specific project, program, or topic, a relevant contact will be in touch.

**Working Group:** If you're interested in assisting with planning the 2019 event, please send an email to Manager Community Connections Susan Davie at [susan.davie@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:susan.davie@ses.vic.gov.au)

**Presentations can be found on the Hub under My State > Community Connections > Development > Conferences > Controllers Seminars. ■**

## Unit representation

### EAST SEMINAR



Central

**22**

out of 34 units

East

**6**

out of 25 units

North East

**11**

out of 26 units

### WEST SEMINAR



South West

**14**

out of 25 units

Mid West

**9**

out of 15 units

North West

**12**

out of 23 units

**+**

the State Support Unit



**75**  
**UNITS**

**(50%) REPRESENTED**

# MEDIA



## Meet the Media and Communications Team

Put a face to the name of the people behind the media and communications at the VICSES Victorian Head Office.

From left to right: Gabi, Dan, Steph, Matt, Dharni

### **Matt Gallant** *Manager, Media and Communications*

Matt comes from a background in journalism, working on camera and behind the scenes of television news for Channel 10. As the head of the team, Matt oversees all internal and external media and communications. Matt is an avid basketball fan, and has a man crush on actor Jeff Goldblum.

### **Stephanie Makin** *Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Brand*

Steph joined VICSES in October 2017, and comes from the mining and renewable energy industries. Her major focus is on corporate and internal communications, enhancing the VICSES brand and finding ways to improve and increase our presence across digital

platforms. In her downtime, Steph enjoys powering through a good book and practising Bikram yoga, and won't say no to a glass or two of red.

### **Dan Verkys** *Graphic Designer*

A VICSES veteran, Dan has been with the organisation for over 23 years, designing digital documents, graphics, and other collateral for volunteers and staff. Most recently, Dan played a huge part in the creation of the new Style Guide. Outside of work, Dan is a renowned artist in the dark fantasy genre, both nationally and internationally, and a master of cooking Japanese cuisine.

### **Dharni Giri** *Media and Publicity Officer*

Dharni is the newest member of the team, joining us in August

as our new Media and Publicity Officer from the Victoria Police media team. At VICSES, Dharni is responsible for reactive and proactive media, and promoting all the great work our volunteers are up to across the state. When she's not at work, Dharni's into riding her new motorcycle and watching repeat episodes of the TV Show Friends! She also enjoys a good veggie burger.

### **Gabi Barkmeyer** *Corporate Communications Officer*

With a passion for social media, Gabi helps to create content across the VICSES Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn platforms. She is also plays a big role in the production of Community Matters, and website and Hub updates. In her spare time, Gabi likes to watch cooking shows and complete celebrity crozzles.

## SMDO line

The VICSES Media and Communications Team can offer a range of advice and strategies, to support you when creating high quality media collateral.

Some of the things we can assist with include:

- Social media advice.
- Tips for writing a media release or media alert.
- Methods to attract and engage with local media outlets.
- Tips to film and edit high quality video and photographs.
- and much more.

**For advice on any of the above, feel free to email any member of the team, or call the State Duty Media Officer on 1300 783 933 from 06:00-22:00.**

COMING SOON

## Social Media Working Group coming soon...

**By Stephanie Makin,**  
**Senior Advisor**  
**Communications**  
**and Content**  
**Management, VHO**

**A** Social Media Working Group will be launching soon to provide unit and regional Facebook page editors with a greater level of support and resources for managing your Facebook presence.

The forum, to live on Facebook as a closed group, will be a place for members to tap into monthly social media themes, content plans and resources, and discuss tips and ideas.

We will soon be reaching out to page editors with invitations to join the group. For further information, please email the Media and Communications team at [publications@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:publications@ses.vic.gov.au) ■



# IT UPDATE

## Introducing WebEx Teams

By Craig Duffy, Manager Information Services (acting), VHO

Following consultation with staff and volunteers, it became very clear that VICSES members needed a way to collaborate without spending time trying to co-ordinate people to a physical location.

**A**fter a long, but productive process of testing and trialling various technologies, VICSES is happy to announce the new Unified Communications technology using a solution called WebEx Teams.

WebEx Teams is a complete, cloud-based collaboration service for staff and volunteers to create, meet, message, call, whiteboard, and share information regardless

of whether you are onsite, out in the field, or at home.

Information Services will be leading a project that integrates WebEx Teams with our current communications systems, and infrastructure.

The new service has already been trialled and formally endorsed by the executive team, and we hope to integrate it in a working environment by the

close of 2018-19 business year. We believe this will provide much-needed communication channels between all members and external agencies, and will provide an operational capability not yet experienced as an emergency service agency.

Further information on WebEx Teams can be found here: [www.webex.com/products/teams/index.html](http://www.webex.com/products/teams/index.html) ■



## VICSES iPad replacement program and OIMS lite upgrade

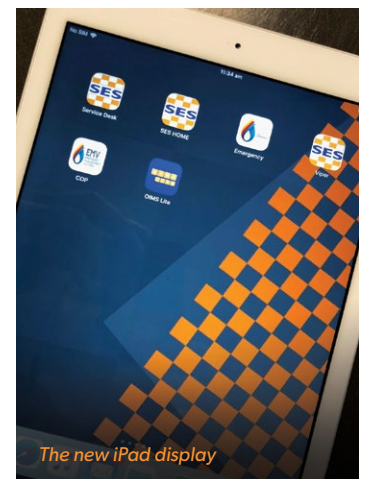
By Craig Duffy, Manager Information Services (acting), VHO

**I**nformation Services and State Operations have developed a joint program to deliver new state-funded iPads.

By replacing Airwatch (a mobile device management software platform), the new iPads will be easier to set up and use with a more efficient and user-friendly interface, running a pre-loaded VICSES image across unit and staff iPads. ■



Gaurav Kiri and Tom Wright (also pictured top right) testing out WebEx Teams



The new iPad display

# EMERGENCIES HAPPEN: PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST



Your Emergency  
**RediPlan**

[redcross.org.au/prepare](http://redcross.org.au/prepare)

the  
power of  
humanity



Emergency preparedness

For more information [www.redcross.org.au/prepare](http://www.redcross.org.au/prepare)  
Or contact Hannah Macdougall [hannah.macdougall@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:hannah.macdougall@ses.vic.gov.au)