

AUTUMN 2022

Community Matters

# VICSES

EDITION 18



**Brand new VICSES unit openings across the state**



**International Women's Day celebrations**

***VICSES Emergency Service Medal recipients announced***



**Midsumma  
Pride March  
2022**

FLOOD STORM

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"Addiction is a signal that something has happened and that this person needs love and support."



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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 first edition of *Community Matters* for 2022.

One of the great privileges of taking on the emergency services portfolio has been the opportunity to see first-hand the best of Victorians and the strength of our communities during difficult times.

It's given me an even greater appreciation of our frontline workers, our emergency services workers and especially our volunteers.

Throughout the pandemic, this has shone through. The past two years have certainly tested our resilience, our patience, our ability to adapt, and our willingness to band together.

Whether it's COVID-19, earthquakes, or the wild weather, it feels as though a different, unforeseen challenge is thrown at us every week. Yet in every instance, it's been remarkable to see that our VICSES volunteers have risen to that challenge.

Indeed in many cases, our volunteers have played an essential role in helping Victoria weather the challenges wrought by a global pandemic.

If we thought 2021 was difficult, so far 2022 has not let up either, with the start of the year proving a particularly busy period with storms and unpredictable weather causing

disruptions during the summer holiday period.

This January alone, you responded to thousands of requests for assistance around Victoria, including more than a thousand trees down, as well as significant building and flood damage across some areas of the state.

As always, you acted swiftly, keeping Victorians safe and providing peace of mind and assistance to individuals and communities at their most vulnerable.

We've also seen many of you step up to support Ambulance Victoria with extra drivers during periods of high demand. This has helped to reduce the strain on the health system, provide vital medical care and in many cases helped to saved lives.

That's just a snapshot of what's been going on.

Across metropolitan Melbourne and the state, thousands of volunteers continue to work tirelessly and selflessly, and often thanklessly. It's why we're determined to give Victoria's emergency service volunteers the resources and equipment they need.

As your Minister and as a Victorian, I'm incredibly proud of all our volunteers. I'm grateful for everything you do, and I'll continue to support you in every way I can.

Thank you, stay safe, and best of luck for the year ahead.

**The Hon. Jaclyn Symes  
MP, Minister for  
Emergency Services**



# Welcome

Hello, and welcome to the first edition of *Community Matters* for 2022.

We've had a busy start to the year on the back of a declared La Niña summer, seeing severe thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, and flooding affect communities across Australia, particularly those in Queensland and our neighbours in New South Wales. A huge thank you to our members who have answered the call for help, and deployed interstate to support on the ground and across a range of Incident Management Team roles. There's still a huge job ahead, but as always, our members will be there to assist our SES colleagues and communities across the border. It's about creating safer communities – together.

In January, four of our members were recognised for their incredible contributions across the sector, being awarded the prestigious Emergency Services Medal. This award highlights their individual achievements in ensuring the safety of our communities, as well as skills in emergency management and disaster resilience. Congratulations to you all. You can read more on page 4-5.

On 6 February, I was fortunate to join our members in participating as part of this year's Midsumma Pride March. As a core organisational Value, at VICSES we work without fear, favour, or prejudice. Events like this are so important to highlight and show support for our LGBTIQ+ members, and the diversity of the communities that we serve. It was fantastic to have such a great reception from the march spectators on the day, in acknowledgement of our presence. You can read more about our involvement on page 8.

Continuing on supporting diversity, on 8 March we celebrated International Women's Day.

We have many amazing women that are a part of VICSES, and we wouldn't be the organisation that we are today without their contributions. I am proud of our commitment to working towards a more gender diverse workforce, and championing the importance of gender equality across VICSES, the sector, and our communities. You can read more about how we celebrated the women of VICSES on page 9.

In other exciting news, new unit builds continue to progress throughout state. VICSES Essendon Unit have moved into their newly renovated facility this month (March), VICSES Northcote Unit will move to Heidelberg in April, and VICSES Chelsea and Broadmeadows Units will be completed later this year. VICSES Cobram, Port Fairy, Wonthaggi, and Corio Units are slated for the first half of 2023. I look forward to updating you all on these builds as they near completion.

Last but not least, a special shout out to our VICSES Port Campbell Unit, who were featured as part of the ABC's *Back Roads* television program, which aired on Monday 7 February. The episode highlighted the amazing contributions of the unit's volunteers, both past and present, and their skills particularly in steep and high angle rescue. If you missed the episode, you can watch online via the ABC iView website.

Thank you for your contributions in creating another fantastic edition of *Community Matters*.

Kind regards,

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



# FEATURES

## VICSES Emergency Service Medal recipients announced



By David Murphy, Media Officer, VHO

Congratulations to our four VICSES Emergency Service Medal (ESM) recipients, whose distinguished service was recognised as part of this year's honours on 26 January.

**A**warded by the Governor-General, the ESM was instituted in 1999 to recognise distinguished service as a member of an Australian emergency service. It also recognises people who are involved in emergency management, training, or education.

The VICSES award recipients for 2022 include VICSES North East Regional Manager Keith O'Brien, VICSES Sunbury Unit Controller Anthony White, VICSES Morwell Unit Controller Raelene Billingsley, and VICSES Chelsea Unit Controller Ron Fitch.

Together, our four medal recipients have garnered over 100 years of experience in the emergency management and disaster resilience sector. Our VICSES medal recipients have had long, illustrious careers; to name just a few of their achievements:

- Worked in leadership roles during large-scale operations.
- Developed and upskilled new and existing members.
- Built constructive and lasting relationships with the community.
- Undertook deployments throughout Australia.
- Won new funding opportunities for their regions, to modernise our approach to planning and responding to major flooding events.

## Here's a closer look at each of our VICSES recipients:

Keith has been a senior leader at VICSES for over three decades. During his 32 years of service, Keith has been a significant leader and contributor to the development of our organisation, performing key roles in managing some of Australia's largest emergencies.



Perhaps his most important contribution was to lead the change in how we respond to floods at VICSES. Keith played a critical role in accrediting the first flood behaviour specialists from a range of industries. Keith has also provided senior representation on various projects, including the Victorian Flood Zoom (VFZ). Keith's work on VFZ means we now have a centralised flood intelligence platform. This is a sea-change in the way we are now able to plan for, assess, and respond to major flooding events in Victoria, which has likely saved lives.

Keith's passion for the development of our staff and volunteers has been vital to our work as an agency during many large-scale operational events, not only across the state, but also during emergencies in other parts of Australia.

Keith is a person of high integrity and an exceptional leader. He is an asset to us, but also to our partner agencies in the emergency management sector. Keith's commitment to constantly improve what VICSES can offer the community, is to be highly commended.



***To manage flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake and landslide events throughout Victoria, and to provide the largest road crash rescue network in Australia, takes exceptional leaders like Keith, Raelene, Ron and Anthony. We are grateful to them for their self-sacrifice and dedication, and their reward of the ESM is very well-deserved."***

***– VICSES Deputy Chief Officer, Ray Jasper.***



## **RAELENE BILLINGSLEY**

**Raelene Billingsley has been an exceptional volunteer leader in Gippsland, and as the leader of the VICSES Morwell Unit.**

Raelene has been instrumental in our response to large-scale emergencies in the Gippsland region, including flood events from 1993 to 2016.

Raelene is a natural leader and has set a high standard across the volunteer leadership roles in which she has performed. Over 25 years, this has included Deputy Controller, Officer of Probationary Members, Trainer and Assessor, Road Crash Rescue Competition Team Leader, and she is presently heading up the VICSES Morwell Unit as the Controller.

Raelene is highly regarded by her peers and VICSES management for her knowledge and her skills, particularly in rescue techniques.

Apart from being an exceptional team leader, Raelene is a compassionate mentor to her peers and new recruits under her command. We commend her willingness to train both new and existing members at a regional and state level.

Raelene's passion and advocacy for her unit was key to VICSES' work with local government and other stakeholders, to bringing

about a new facility in the heart of Traralgon. This new facility and prime location has enhanced response times to critical incidents, as well as greatly improving the profile of emergency service volunteers, resulting in a growth in volunteer membership.

Raelene's skills, knowledge, management style, passion, and dedication to serve her community both as a responder and a mentor to others, marks her out as a beacon to others within VICSES.



## **RON FITCH**

**This year VICSES Chelsea Unit Controller Ron Fitch will celebrate 30 years of commitment to VICSES.**

Ron first started as a VICSES volunteer member in 1992, becoming Controller of the VICSES Chelsea Unit two years later.

Ron has been involved with almost every deployment within the state and throughout the country over the last 20 years, including the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, the Yallourn Power Station fire, and most recently as a Divisional Commander at Mildura, where he was in post for many weeks.

For over a decade, Ron has led efforts to win funding for a new Local Headquarters at Chelsea. The 2017 State Budget saw Chelsea receive \$2.8m to make this dream a reality, supplemented by further funding in 2020. Ron was instrumental in this achievement, and in securing the future for his unit.

In 2017, Ron was made a Life Member of VICSES, the highest honour that can be bestowed on any volunteer. He has also received the National Medal from the Federal Government, and was

named as one of the Victorian Premier's Volunteer Champions in 2018, the same year he was named Outstanding Citizen of the Year by the City of Kingston.

Everyone at VICSES Chelsea Unit is proud that Ron's years of dedicated service to our community has been recognised with this honour. He is the heart and soul of the VICSES Chelsea Unit. His commitment to his fellow unit volunteers, present and future, is the golden seam that runs through his tapestry of accomplishments.



## **ANTHONY WHITE**

**Anthony White is not only a dedicated volunteer, but a leader for his own VICSES Sunbury Unit, as well as other units across central Victoria.**

Over 12 years, Anthony's work at VICSES has meant that VICSES Sunbury Unit volunteers are ready to respond to emergencies any time of the day or night. His tireless efforts supporting his community and providing extensive out-of-area coverage has meant so much to the many Victorians, to whom he has provided timely assistance.

In the many emergency events where Anthony has played an important leadership role, he has exemplified leadership, direction, emotional guidance,

and support to his colleagues, as he has simultaneously provided operational support to Sunbury and the wider community.

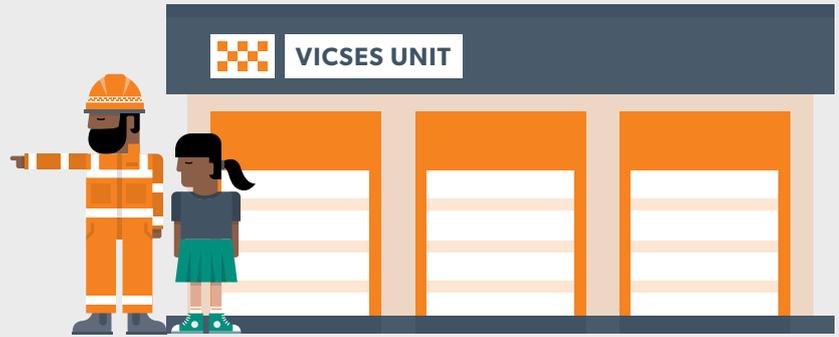
Anthony's commitment to his unit and to VICSES, has earned him the respect of his peers. His sacrifice and dedication of time has been above and beyond anyone's expectations.

Anthony has been the key leader and driver in transforming VICSES Sunbury Unit from having a small volunteer membership,

to the thriving community-based organisation it is today. The unit has relationships with other emergency services and local community groups, and has increased its operational vehicle fleet. This has ensured VICSES Sunbury Unit is a robust emergency service, capable of providing round-the-clock emergency response.

It is because of Anthony's persistence and dedication, that VICSES Sunbury Unit is the outstanding unit it is today. ■

# GENERAL NEWS



## VICSES celebrates openings of brand new unit facilities across the state

By Dharni Giri, Senior Advisor – Media and Publicity, VHO

Late last year, VICSES was excited to finally host the official openings of three new state-of-the-art unit facilities at Emerald, Knox, and Wangaratta.

**T**he new unit builds were welcomed as part of a \$125 million investment into facilities infrastructure for Victoria's emergency services volunteers, made by the State Government, and delivered by the

Emergency Services Infrastructure Authority (ESIA).

Each facility is designed to better support the service provided by our volunteers, and to enhance the safety of our local communities well into the future.

On Friday 26 November, VICSES Wangaratta Unit was the first cab off the rank, with their new unit facility officially opened by The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP, Minister for Emergency Services.

The very special event marked the first opening of a new unit since 2014. The decision to rebuild VICSES Wangaratta Unit on a new site was announced by the Premier back in April 2017.

Built on land provided by the Rural City of Wangaratta, the new facility forms part of an emergency service precinct, located alongside

Wangaratta Country Fire Authority, Fire Rescue Victoria, and Victoria Police. The precinct is designed to accommodate multi-agency operations, and act as a Divisional Control Point during large-scale emergency events.

With four motor bays, Unit Controller's office, communications room, training room, turnout area, and wellbeing space, the future-proofed facility reflects new ways of working in the emergency management sector, with a focus on collaboration.





## Stepping back in time

The VICSES Emerald Unit was next, with the new facility being opened by The Hon. James Merlino MP, Deputy Premier and State Member for Monbulk.

Completed in November 2021, the brand-new build located on the main street in the heart of Emerald is an advantage to the VICSES Emerald Unit catchment area, which includes large parts of the Dandenong Ranges, most affected by the devastating storms in June 2021.

This new facility is integral to the unit's ongoing service to the community. Over a ten-year period, the VICSES Emerald Unit has been the busiest VICSES unit in the state, responding to approximately 15,000 calls for help in total.

VICSES Emerald Unit Controller Ben Owen commented, "the event was really great. We had a big turnout with other agencies in attendance, as well as members from other units. Catching up with past members and celebrating this purpose-built facility, was perhaps the best part of the day for me."

"The new facility will also be able to act as an Incident Control Point in its own right, coordinating other local units without relying on other community facilities, as was necessary at the old unit," continued Ben.

Similar to Wangaratta, the VICSES Emerald Unit build also includes four motor bays, a Unit Controllers office, communications room, turnout area, and wellbeing space.

Last but certainly not least, on Monday 6 December, VICSES Knox Unit celebrated the official opening of their unit build, joined by Jackson Taylor MP, State Member for Bayswater, who represented The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP on the day.

Operational since August 2021, key features of the new facility include six motor bays, four vehicle storage bays, and training facilities for new and continuing volunteers. The design also incorporates solar panels, water tanks, native vegetation, and rain gardens to ensure the sustainability of the site for generations to come.

With 49 active members, volunteers from the VICSES Knox Unit are among the busiest in Victoria and have played a crucial role in keeping the community safe, responding to 1,227 requests for assistance in the last financial year.

The new fit-for-purpose facility is co-located with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning local headquarters and will enable an expansion of local services, while supporting the retention and recruitment of new volunteers. It also doubles as a Divisional Control Point, to coordinate emergency response activities with other emergency services agencies.

Entering 2022, we're excited to roll-out several more planned unit openings, with dates to be announced in the coming months.

Thank you to everyone involved in supporting these new unit facilities, and most importantly, a big congratulations to our volunteers on their new digs. ■

**I**n 1983, a training day was held for VICSES members in the Ballarat Region, focusing on rescue, operational control, and ropes confidence. The day including abseiling from 8 - 25 metre heights beside Trentham Falls, and zipping down a flying fox as part of the rope's confidence course from a 7-metre-high tree. Definitely a training exercise that wasn't for the faint of heart!



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

## CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS



# Supporting our rainbow communities at Midsumma Pride March

Midsumma  
Pride March  
2022

By Gabi Barkmeyer, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

On 6 February, VICSES was excited to be back at Midsumma Pride March for 2022.

**V**ICSES is a long-time supporter and participant of the Pride March, as an event that reflects the diversity within both the communities we serve, and our own organisation.

As a core Value at VICSES, we work without fear, favour, or prejudice. Events like Pride March are a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to this Value and our people, alongside our Vision of *Safer Communities – Together*.

Each year our members turn out in their orange and rainbow gear – some for the first time, or others attending year after year. For VICSES Moe Unit volunteer and LGBTIQ+ member Jason Clough, this year was his first time marching with VICSES.

“I’ve been a member of the VICSES Moe Unit since late 2019. I’ve been to one Pride March with the Red Cross, but never before with VICSES. When there are opportunities like Pride March, it’s great to make new connections, whether that’s in the pride space or our emergency services in general,” said Jason.

Inspired by our sectors participation in Pride March, Jason is even planning a pride event regionally.

“I’ve made a connection with the Emergency Management Pride Network, to help put on a pride event for our local emergency services in Moe. I’ve also made connections with Latrobe City Council, and to partner with local events in Gippsland as well,” continues Jason. Watch this space!

In addition to our own volunteers and staff, this year we were also joined by family, friends, and partners – all excited to join us in the festivities of celebrating our rainbow communities.

VICSES Deputy Chief Officer David Baker has been attending Midsumma Pride March since 2010. Last year, his daughter Olivia joined him and helped lead our VICSES contingent in the parade. When asked if she would like to join us again in 2022, it was a no brainer.

“She loved attending her first Pride March. When discussing with our family about attending this year,

she said ‘Mum, it’s the one day of the year where I can truly be myself in a safe place’”, said David.

Olivia was also joined by her sister and friend, in allyship of the LGBTIQ+ community. And David? He’s a proud ally too, of course.

“If the public sees how supportive VICSES is, they will want to be part of that. That inclusivity radiates out from our organisation. When the public see how we look after our own, they will say – that’s the organisation of choice for me,” says David.

Thank you to everyone that attended this fantastic event. We’re already excited for 2023! ■





# International Women's Day

By Chloe Jeffers, Senior Advisor, Corporate Communications and Brand, VHO

Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality. #IWD2022

The International Women's Day (IWD) 2022 campaign theme is #BreakTheBias. In March 2022, VICSES has focused on celebrating the strengths of the women in our service for IWD, and throughout the whole month of March. At VICSES, we have many amazing women who contribute significantly to our organisation and their communities. The achievements of our women have been portrayed through our social media, on our website, and at events attended, as we have told the stories of just some of the women who are achieving great things.

By bringing equality front of mind, we enable conversations to be had where women are considered equal, capable and ready to lead, or at least get involved without fear of prejudice.

As VICSES members, our code of conduct outlines how we embrace diversity and provide encouragement and support to one another. We treat people as unique individuals and will respect their cultures, beliefs, opinions, knowledge and experience. But we also need to consciously push for equality. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure our workplace at VICSES is free of these biases and that we call out these behaviours if they occur.

As our CEO Stephen Griffin, a Male Champion of Change, commented on IWD, VICSES is committed to taking a leadership role in gender

equality in the emergency management sector. In 2020, VICSES commenced a Gender Equality Project including appointing Gender Equality Champions. The project commenced with the auditing work to assess where we are at when it comes to gender equality, and where we need to reach to comply with the sector wide Victorian Gender Equality Act.

Today, and every day, we should take time to stop and reflect on the enormous achievements of women in the emergency services sector and the need to further promote and provide opportunities for all women to enrich our services to the community and VICSES.

It was empowering and heartening to attend the Emergency Services Foundation IWD event on March 7, to see that there is a whole sector of women and men who recognise there is more work to be done to #BreakTheBias. In reading this, I challenge you to take one step towards equality and consider your biases, conscious or unconscious, and call out behaviour that doesn't align with our values. Don't walk past bad behaviour. Support the women in your unit or directorate. Together, we can create a better world.

Collectively we can all #BreakTheBias. #IWD2022 ■



## Amy Shark at AAMI Park

By Jamie Devenish, Manager Community Resilience and Communications, VHO

On Friday 11 February, five lucky VICSES members were invited to an intimate Amy Shark concert at AAMI Park, thanks to our Principal Community Partner AAMI.

The event was held to celebrate AAMI's renewal of its partnership with AAMI Park. Our members were invited by AAMI, and were able to bring along a friend or family member to be a part of the exclusive live event of just 1,000 people.

VICSES Monash Unit Crew Leader Meg Peach, along with her sister Britt, were invited to meet Amy Shark backstage, where Amy was able to thank Meg for the hard work of our VICSES volunteers over the recent incredibly busy operational period.

Meg has been a VICSES volunteer for the past four years. As a team leader, Meg has contributed massively to our organisation's emergency response over the past 12 months. This includes being deployed to Traralgon during the June 2021 storm and flood event, and running an Incident Control Point during the significant October 2021 storms.

A huge thank you to AAMI for having us at this special event. Lucky we're with AAMI! ■



VICSES members celebrating women at the ESF IWD2022 event: (L-R) Goldie Pergl (Broadmeadows Unit), Eli Poldi (Craigieburn Unit), Chloe Jeffers (VICSES Media and Communications team), Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp and Kate Turner (Broadmeadows Unit)



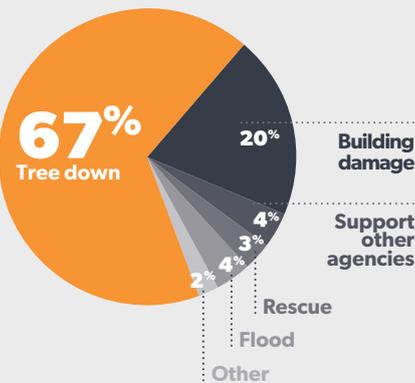
# CENTRAL

1 October – 31 December



**1,631**  
Volunteers

**13,343**  
Requests for assistance



# VICSES Knox Unit volunteers perform acute-angle rescue

By David Murphy, Media Officer, VHO

In late January, VICSES Knox Unit volunteers were called to a rescue located at The Basin, where a person had become trapped in their vehicle after it had rolled over a steep embankment at an acute angle, prompting a multi-agency effort.

**F**our volunteers from the VICSES Knox Unit, all accredited for road crash rescue, joined partner agencies on scene as the vehicle leaned dangerously, with the driver still inside.

The driver was acting as a counterweight with the vehicle precariously balanced at a 45-degree angle, meaning they could not leave without risking further injury.

The VICSES crew worked with Country Fire Authority, Fire Rescue Victoria, Ambulance Victoria, and Victoria Police

to set up stabilisation ropes, which they attached to a nearby tree.

VICSES volunteers and firefighters then attached a Tirfor winch to the front, and a StabFast Stabilisation System comprised of three devices was attached to the tilted side of the vehicle, to stop it rolling.

Several crews then assisted the driver out of the vehicle as they held the door ajar, and helped the driver down.

As it was still hanging over the embankment, a decision was made by the emergency crews

to recover the vehicle rather than wait for a tow-truck.

Forest Road was closed as the VICSES rescue truck was positioned with a winch attached to the rear, so the vehicle could be brought down on to the road.

Though it was a warm day and our VICSES Knox Unit volunteers were a little hot, no one suffered injury thanks to their demonstration of skills, alongside our partner agencies. A fantastic effort by everyone involved in this challenging rescue. ■



# VICSES volunteers assist in major power outage at nursing home

By David Murphy, Media Officer, VHO

In December, almost 40 VICSES volunteers were called to an incident at a local nursing home in Blackburn, after the property's power had gone out during the night due to a large tree that had fallen on nearby powerlines.

Volunteers from the VICSES Whitehorse Unit were dispatched at 7:45pm, along with Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) members. FRV managed the scene on Lake Road to ensure the power lines were made safe, while our VICSES Whitehorse Unit volunteers worked to cut up and remove the fallen tree. This allowed utility provider United Energy, to commence emergency repair work.

The nearby aged care facility - which provides high-acuity patient care that includes a dementia ward - requested lighting from our VICSES volunteers, given the fall risk to residents in the darkened facility.

At this point, VICSES Whitehorse Unit set up an Incident Control Point and requested assistance from neighbouring units. Nearly forty VICSES volunteers from five units arrived over the course of the night, including:

- Thirteen further volunteers from the VICSES Whitehorse Unit, each arriving throughout the night. Having set up lighting rigs all the way through the building, our volunteers used portable power packs to maintain mattresses - which require power to remain inflated - for approximately ninety vulnerable residents.

Crews of volunteers worked to manually inflate the mattresses every thirty minutes. The VICSES Whitehorse Unit volunteers also set up power packs in the kitchen to prevent food spoilage.

- Three volunteers from VICSES Lilydale Unit arrived at 10:00pm with a lighting trailer and power supply. The volunteers remained until past midnight, when it was decided the lighting rig would be required overnight.
- Six volunteers from VICSES Manningham Unit arrived at 9:20pm to set up temporary lighting in the interior of the building on the first and second level, including Goliath lights - powered by a generator - and battery-powered Pelican lights throughout. The volunteers remained on site until 2:30am.
- Seven volunteers from VICSES Knox Unit arrived at 9:45pm in two vehicles with two trailers and a lighting rig, staying on site until 2:00am.
- Five volunteers from VICSES Maroondah Unit arrived at 10:15pm with ten portable light banks and generators. The volunteers stayed until midnight, with two volunteers returning the next morning to pack up the vital equipment.

VICSES Incident Controller Matthew Rankin led the Emergency Management Team to manage the needs of residents, placement of the lighting rigs and generators, and positioning the volunteer crews as the events unfolded into the night.

Having called out additional crews, United Energy successfully

reconnected the power seven hours ahead of schedule, at 5:00am the next morning.

"It was a stellar effort by VICSES in supporting the needs of our aged care residents and local communities, during this prolonged power outage," said Matthew Rankin on the incident.

*We had people at risk. We had an opportunity to make a difference, and we did make a difference," continued Matthew.*

**Well done to all of our units involved in supporting this event, in ensuring the safety of vulnerable community members. ■**



VICSES Incident Controller, Matthew Rankin.





# EAST

1 October – 31 December

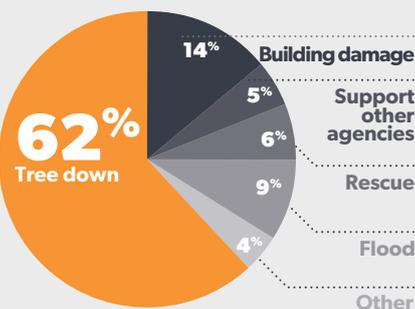


# 519

Volunteers

# 1,680

Requests for assistance



## Livingstone creek floods Omeo Caravan Park

By Merryn Henderson, Community Resilience Coordinator, VHO

Residents and visitors at the Omeo Caravan Park had their sleep interrupted during the night on Wednesday the 5th of January, as the Livingstone Creek, which runs through the park and the town, took everyone by surprise and overflowed.

**V**ICSES Tambo Valley Unit received the call for assistance around 10:30pm from the caravan park owners, to help relocate those at risk staying at the park.

The unit worked quickly to wake residents and holiday-goers to ask them to move to the recreation reserve on higher ground, as the floodwaters continued to engulf cabins and access roads to the park.

The Livingstone Creek sits at the bottom of the Omeo Valley, with a catchment area of the surrounding mountain ranges, meaning heavy rainfall can cause the creek to rise rapidly and flood. Although not forecast, more than 110 millimetres of rain fell within a 15-hour period on the 5th of January, causing a great deal of water to enter the creek very quickly.

Mud from the floodwaters entered the park's cabins and lapped at the doorsteps of caravans as the water rose, while our volunteers continued to work through the evening to ensure that people left the park safely and calmly.

"The flood waters came up quickly and unexpectedly, however we managed to have everyone on higher ground by 2:00am," commented VICSES Tambo Valley Unit Controller Shane Peach, who was supported

by his unit members alongside VICSES Sale Unit volunteer Pat Barnes, who both live directly across from the park.

In the aftermath of the flooding, quite a lot of visible damage was left throughout the town and the park. As a result, the Omeo Caravan Park was forced to cancel bookings and close until further notice, while the clean-up continues. We hope that park is able to reopen soon, and thankful that no people were injured. ■

## Snakes, mud, and the tide no barrier for VICSES Orbost Unit rescue

By Gail Cumming, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

**I**n a very successful joint operation, also on the 5th of January the VICSES Orbost Unit, Victoria Police, and the local Coast Guard managed to rescue five kayakers from dire straits on Lake Corringale in the late afternoon.



- Rescue operator team leader, attending many incidents including the major flood and storm events across Gippsland over several decades.
- Supporting over 800 RFAs since July 2009, when VICSES started recording members' individual operational turnouts.



## Celebrating the service and achievements of Raelene Billingsley

By Gail Cumming, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

For more than three decades, Raelene Billingsley has been an active, dedicated, and valued member of the VICSES Morwell Unit. In recognition of Raelene's recent Emergency Service Medal (ESM) award, we take a deeper dive into Raelene's service as a VICSES volunteer.

Anyone who knows Raelene would completely understand why her service has been so highly accoladed – you could write a book! Just some of many of her many achievements and milestones as part of VICSES include:

- Current Controller of VICSES Morwell Unit.
- Officer of probationary members.
- Road crash rescue trainer, assessor, and competition leader.
- Incident Commander throughout years of local, regional, and state road crash rescue challenges. Raelene's passion in this area enabled East Region to host some of these events, and in some cases lead this field.
- Developing strong relationships between VICSES Morwell Unit other local emergency service agencies and council.
- Strong advocate for VICSES volunteers in rescue forums and working parties, both at a regional and state level.
- Key driver of the ongoing VICSES Morwell Unit fundraising program, encouraging all members to assist with raising much needed funds for equipment and upgrading and maintenance of unit owned vehicles.
- Achieved the acquisition of a shed in a prominent location in the response area for the housing of a VICSES rescue truck.
- Taskforce Crew Leader as part of the VICSES response to Cyclone Yasi, to assist with the response and initial clean-up efforts.

"It is great to be recognised with an ESM, and it was a bit of a surprise! But I just do this because I love it. I feel like I'm good at it, and I know that it helps my community so much when things are tough and they really need it," says Raelene reflecting on her recent award and service.

"It's amazing working with the other VICSES volunteers – we all get so much out of it. It's hard work and challenging sometimes, but then you see how you may have saved someone's life, or at least made it better than it could be. And well...that's a pretty good feeling," continues Raelene.

**We are so thankful to have Raelene as part of our East Region family, and the work she continues to achieve to support our volunteers and the wider community. Well done to the amazing Raelene Billingsley! ■**

VICSES Orbost Unit Controller Allan Smeaton said it was a really great outcome, especially after a tough operation for the unit the week before.

"It was a joint effort – we worked so well together. The two adults and three small kids were in the worst part of Lake Corringale – in amongst the reeds with the tide going out and tiger snakes everywhere! We all got stuck at various times and had to pull each other off the sandbars."

Allan said the unit was paged after the group managed to call for assistance via Triple Zero. The unit then got a hold of the Coast Guard and set off to the rescue. It was a race against time, with the tide rapidly going out and dusk coming.

"We got out there eventually and found them. It would have been impossible without their mobile phones giving us the location. Then the Coast Guard got stuck – they had the people from the kayaks in their boat, and we had to pull them off the sandbar," continued Allan on the rescue.

"The tide was charging out - we were in six inches of water, and we knew we had a long trip back. We had blankets thankfully, so the kids got wrapped up in them. The family were really cold, but the kids were great and seemed to be enjoying it as a big adventure under their blankets! I don't think the adults were quite as excited – more relieved I'd say."

Finally having the family of kayakers safely on board and warming up, the trip back to shore was still a lengthy ordeal.

"It took us four hours to get back to the Marlo boat ramp – we only got there around 8:00pm. The cops were great, just chatting to the kids and keeping them entertained. Everyone was tired and cold, but also very happy to be back on solid ground," said Allan.

Well done to the VICSES Orbost Unit team and our emergency service partners on this challenging, but successful rescue! ■



**MID**

**WEST**

**1 October – 31 December**

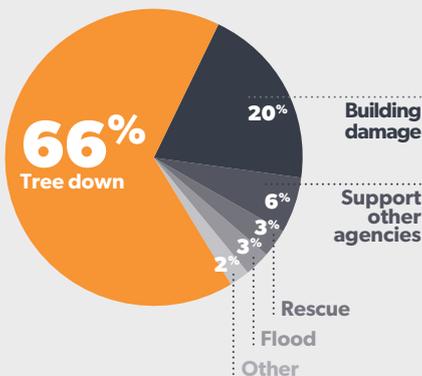


**294**

**Volunteers**

**918**

**Requests for assistance**



## Flood risk products prove invaluable for guiding VICSES emergency response

By Clare Mintern, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region

The Mid West Region has recently focused on developing flood risk products and undertaking flood training for staff, volunteers, and external agency support staff.

**T**his work has provided better access to key flood risk information to enable VICSES to help guide our on-the-ground response during a flood event, as well as raising awareness of flood risks to build flood preparedness, and ultimately community resilience.

Firstly, the region developed large maps for their Incident Control Centres (ICCs) to improve access to flood risk information. These large maps contain key waterways, stream gauges and flood impact triggers for each ICC area, and are especially useful for staff who are not familiar to the area or the local flood risk information.

A3 size flood folders have also been developed for the Horsham and Ballarat ICCs. These folders contain flood risk triggers, flood depth maps, and the location of buildings and roads at risk of flooding. These flood folders provide ICCs quick access to flood maps that can be used when door knocking, to show people that will be impacted by flooding where the floodwater is likely to go before the flood peak arrives, and to help guide where sandbagging is needed.

Similar flood folders have also been provided to many of our units within the region.

Over the last five months, the region has delivered flood training sessions to regional staff, as well as our units. Because flooding occurs quickly in some areas, it's important that our volunteers have knowledge of, and are able to quickly access key flood risk information, to guide VICSES operational responses. These flood training sessions provided an overview of:

- The flood risk triggers for all high flood risk towns.
- Flood peak travel times.
- Flood behaviour (what dams are likely to spill, the location of weirs, and how they influence flood risk).
- Infrastructure, buildings, and roads that are likely to be impacted by flooding.
- Stream gauge monitoring available.

The recent flood event in early January across the Mid West Region demonstrated how invaluable flood risk information and training is. Although Clunes experienced minor flooding, the flood maps and flood trigger summary was invaluable to guiding VICSES' emergency

response. If flooding did escalate, we had the maps readily available at our fingertips, which detailed the buildings and roads impacted to support key actions to take, including targeted door knocking for evacuations.

In addition, our staff have delivered several training sessions to external agency staff that undertake Public Information Officer and Warnings Incident Management Team roles. Agency staff involved in this training included Country Fire Authority, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and Parks Victoria. This training has improved knowledge and access to flood risk information, enabling staff to better communicate local flood impacts to the community during flood events.

The Mid West Region will continue to deliver targeted flood training sessions for other high priority locations such as Halls Gap and Natimuk. The focus of these sessions will be to ensure our members and external agencies have flood information needed to quickly respond and support their community during flood events. ■

# VICSES Ballarat Unit celebrates 140 years of member service

By Jane Patton, Community Resilience Coordinator, VHO



On Tuesday the 14th of December 2021, the VICSES Ballarat Unit held their annual awards evening at the Golden City Hotel in Ballarat.

**T**he event was held to recognise the service of unit members, and celebrate their wonderful achievements.

Awards were presented by Mid West Regional Officer Gavin Kelly on the evening to the following members, who combined have dedicated 140 years' service:

#### 5 years:

- Elise Ashfield
- Victor Gartside
- Mark McGrath
- Louise Minard
- Neil Paramathan
- Damien Slater

#### 10 years:

- Norm Baker
- Craig West
- Jeff Webb

#### 15 years:

- Josh Smolenaers

#### 25 years:

- Leonie Sharpe

In addition to these service awards, VICSES Ballarat Unit member Gary Hickson was the recipient of a VICSES Life Membership Award, for 40 years of dedicated service to the unit and the greater organisation. Gary is a much-valued unit member, and has contributed greatly to VICSES across both operational and support roles, with great leadership, skills, and knowledge.

VICSES Ballarat Unit was established more than 50 years ago, and currently has 87 active members. Over the years the unit has grown in strength, and provides significant support to the Ballarat community and surrounding areas. The awards ceremony evening provided

a great opportunity to come together to celebrate and acknowledge the service and commitment of all the unit members, together.

VICSES Ballarat Unit Controller Gordon Hicks provided some moving words on the dedication of the unit's volunteers:

**"There is nothing purer than the heart of a volunteer. They are the heart of every rescue, the inspiration in every training course, and the soul of all things VICSES. They not only inspire me, but they also inspire each other. It doesn't matter if they have been a part of our incredible history for five weeks or 50 years - these**

**incredible people are VICSES, to the core," said Gordon.**

"These members have not only given incredible service to our own community, but have travelled to other units, regions, and even interstate whenever called upon to lend a hand, to whichever service requires it. They eagerly look to the future and willingly embrace improvements to better their skills and service and ultimately – our unit. I am truly honoured for this group of dedicated, caring, and competent professionals, to accept me as their Controller," continued Gordon.

What moving words to sum up the contributions of our VICSES Ballarat Unit members. Congratulations, all! ■

## DESTRUCTIVE STORMS AND FLOODS HIT CRESWICK AND BALLARAT

By Clare Mintern, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region

**H**heavy rainfall and severe thunderstorms lashed the Grampians region in January, causing significant flooding and storm damage in Creswick, Ballarat and Ararat.

160mm of rainfall was recorded in just two hours surrounding Creswick on Wednesday the 5th of January. An Incident Control Centre

was established on the same day in Ballarat, with Divisional Control Points in Ballarat and Creswick to manage the incoming response.

In the three-day period from the 5th – 7th of January, the Grampians region alone received almost 300 requests for assistance (RFAs), including 150 callouts for flood and 97 for building damage. Creswick and Ballarat were the most affected areas, receiving majority of the region's RFAs during this period.

The VICSES Ballarat Unit responded to a whopping 240 of these call-outs, which was a mammoth effort.

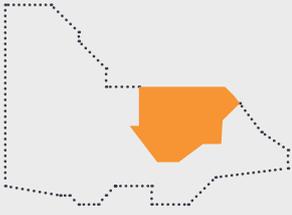
Initial estimates indicate the size of the Creswick flood to be a 1-in-50-year Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flooding event. The region experienced multiple concurrent RFAs from people trapped in floodwater in Creswick, Ballarat, St Arnaud, and Ararat during the three-day period, including people trapped by floodwater in cars and houses.

"On the ground there was a significant amount of hail that fell in Creswick and in the surrounding areas during the storm, with the depth of the hail up to 0.4m deep

in parts. This extreme hailstorm exacerbated flooding in Creswick, contributing to blocking the drainage network and causing additional buildings to be impacted by flooding," reported VICSES Ballarat Unit Deputy Controller Craig West.

In addition to the flooding and hail damage, over 5,000 residents were without power overnight due to the severe storms that passed through, although was soon restored.

We are so grateful to our VICSES Ballarat Unit, and surrounding unit volunteers who assisted in responding to the vast amount of call-outs. Thank you all! ■



# NORTH EAST

1 October – 31 December

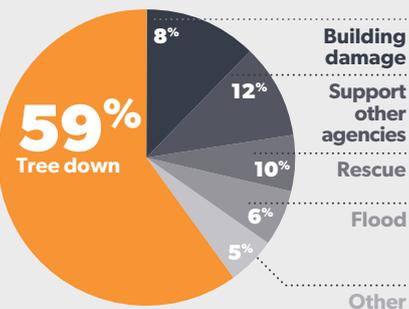


# 557

Volunteers

# 837

Requests for assistance



# Celebrating the new Wangaratta Unit

By Sue Sheldrick, Acting Manager Regional Operations  
Emergency Management, North East Region

After many attempts to formally open Wangaratta’s new VICSES headquarters during COVID-19, in November the opening was finally hosted!

**M**inister for Emergency Services, The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP, was finally able to unveil the official plaque on Friday 26 November and announce that the magnificent facility was now formally ‘open for business’ - emergency business that is!

The small COVID-19 compliant, formal opening ceremony took place amidst proud VICSES volunteers, staff and VIP guests, who watched on as the Minister, Rural City of Wangaratta Mayor Dean Rees, VICSES Chief Officer Tim Wiebusch, and long-time local volunteer Fran Whitehead delivered the opening speeches. Other official guests included Federal Member for Indi Dr Helen Haines MP, Member for Ovens Valley Tim McCurdy MP, VICSES CEO Stephen Griffin, North East Regional Manager Neil Payn, as well as representatives from the Emergency Services Infrastructure Authority (ESIA).

The Wangaratta facility is the first start-to-finish build led by ESIA, and is also the first of the modern designed ‘units of the future’ for VICSES.

Funded by \$1.6 million allocated to relocate during the 2017-18 State Budget, the move takes the Wangaratta Unit from their Millard Street site where it had been operating since 2009, to Handley Street where the unit will form part of an emergency services precinct.

The ‘unit of the future’ design journey started in 2018, with construction commencing in June 2020 and was completed in just six months.

“The new facility at Wangaratta is a credit to the team from state level, council, and local VICSES members, both past and present, that have been involved in its design and construction,” said North East Regional Manager Neil Payne.

“The building and grounds provide the VICSES Wangaratta Unit team room to grow, and can support indoor and outdoor training, a Divisional Command and Coordination Centre during large emergencies, and excellent welfare and office facilities to support our volunteers in the amazing work they do, often during the worst of weather conditions,” continued Neil.

To top off an eventful day, little did those at the opening ceremony know that at her nearby workplace, VICSES Wangaratta Unit Controller Tracy Harper was using her first aid and leadership skills to ensure an unwell customer received urgent medical attention. Tracy ensured that the situation was managed with compassion, respect, and discretion, and she supported her co-workers who were not trained responders and found themselves faced with a challenging emergency. All in a day’s work as a VICSES volunteer! ■





## GUEST SPEAKER EVENING AT VICSES BRIGHT UNIT

By Roy Kennedy, Bright Unit Controller,  
North East Region

Recently the VICSES Bright Unit decided to switch up their weekly training sessions and invited along several guest speakers to one of their November training nights.

**G**uests included Tom Nicholson, a local arborist, who spent time with the high angle team planning how they could work together in paraglider rescues over summer.

Michael Bennett from Ambulance Victoria brought along an ambulance and showed members through, explaining how members could assist Ambulance Victoria personnel during operations.

VICSES staff members Dan Walton from the North East Regional Office and Stewart Riddel, Wellbeing Health and Safety Advisor from the Victorian Headquarters Office, also attended to discuss wellbeing health and safety matters with the unit.

The evening was interactive and informative, with all members enjoying the sessions held. ■

# VICSES Family

Laura Nish, Yarrawonga Unit Deputy Controller, North East Region

Let's talk about VICSES families.

The ones who hold the fort until we get home.

The wife who resettles the baby after the pager goes off at 1:00am.

The mum who always says 'be careful' before her son goes out to a job.

The dad who tells anyone who will listen that his daughter is a VICSES volunteer.

The kids who know that mum won't be tucking them into bed tonight because it's training night.

The partner who was getting a sleep in, but now has to get up and help the kids because dad's answering an emergency page.

The family members who feel like they're anxiously holding their breath until we get home on a wild stormy night.

The ones who wash our wet and dirty uniforms. Who don't complain when we walk our muddy boots through the house, because we were too tired to take them off.

The ones who make us coffee when we get home.

The ones who listen to us debrief after a long night.

The ones who encourage us to ask for help when we're struggling.

The ones who smile and nod when we talk about 'SMEACS' and 'DRAs', 'SWAHS', 'USAR' and 'RCR';

because we've forgotten not everyone speaks in VICSES acronyms.

The mums, dads, wives, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, kids, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, and friends - the ones who tell us they're proud of us every day.

We can't do what we do without you. We are forever grateful. Thanks to all of our VICSES family members.

Remember to thank those who support you when we celebrate the *Your family, our family* weekend later in the year. ■



## More information

Find out more here:  
[ses.vic.gov.au/news-and-media/campaigns/your-family-our-family](https://ses.vic.gov.au/news-and-media/campaigns/your-family-our-family)





**NORTH**

**WEST**

1 October – 31 December

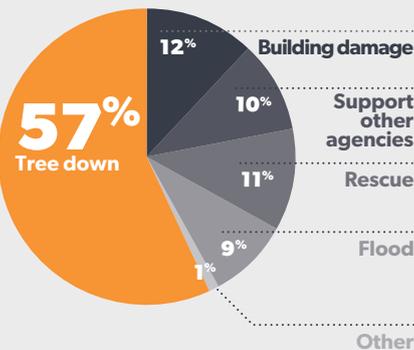


**544**

**Volunteers**

**748**

**Requests for assistance**



# All in a day's work

By Tracey White, Community Resilience Coordinator, North West Region

There's a fair chance you're already aware that each of our six regions across Victoria has a designated Regional Headquarters Unit (RHQ Unit). What you may not know, is the specialised skills and backgrounds of these units and their members, which are often tailored to their local and community needs.

**M**embers of the North West Region Headquarters Unit are based in various towns across the patch, with fortnightly meetings held at VICSES offices in Bendigo and Swan Hill.

Members are responsible for the Field Operations Vehicle (FOV), which can be deployed for operations, training, and community engagement events anywhere in the state, as well as being skilled radio and OIMS operators who are called to assist with effective coordination and communications during emergency events, such as large-scale land searches.

Many RHQ Unit members also hold Incident Management Team (IMT) roles in specialised areas such as Information and Warnings, Logistics, Operations, Mapping and Planning, and some also trained as Base Camp and Staging Area Managers. Members are also at the ready to assist with important community

engagement events across the region - some are trained support peers, and others provide critical transport and logistical support during and after incidents.

The 22-member-strong North West RHQ Unit recently held their annual award presentations, which saw nine of its members receive long service awards. Other prestigious awards included a National Medal awarded to John Morris, a National Medal second clasp awarded to Wayne Grincais, and member Stan Hendy awarded a National Medal third clasp, after a staggering 47 years of service as both a VICSES volunteer and staff member. You can read more about Stan in our volunteer profile on page 19.

North West Region members and volunteers are extremely proud of the RHQ Unit's achievements, and wish to thank each member for sharing their valuable skills and ensuring the safety of our local communities. ■

# VOLUNTEER PROFILE:

## Stan Hendy

By Tracey White, Community Resilience Coordinator,  
North West Region

To many in the service this man needs no introduction – Stan Hendy is a VICSES icon, and one of the longest standing members in the organisation.



**S**tan formally joined VICSES in 1975 after having been involved for a short period of time prior at the age of 22, when he worked for the Postmaster General Department as a telecommunications technician. Stan was asked by his boss to lend a hand at his local Shire of Lowan Unit, which later became the VICSES Nhill Unit.

During Stan's 13 years at Nhill, he held the positions of Communications Officer, Rescue Officer, Deputy Controller and Unit Controller.

Stan later resigned his position with the unit to pursue a career with VICSES based in Bendigo, where he was able to use his experience as a volunteer to help units develop their management and operational capabilities, and indeed to shape the service as we know it today.

After an impressive 24 years as a staff member, Stan retired in 2013 and resumed his volunteering;

this time with the North West Region Headquarters Unit (RHQ), where he held the position of Deputy Controller.

During his time with VICSES, Stan has been involved in many large-scale emergencies, including the 1992 Avian Influenza outbreak, the 1999 Sydney hailstorms, the Bendigo tornado in 2003, and the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, as well as numerous flood and storm events across North East, North West, Gippsland and Central Regions.

Stan has also received several awards and commendations for his contributions, including being awarded the Emergency Service Medal in 2014 for services to emergency management, and most recently the National Medal third clasp for almost five decades of service awarded at the North West RHQ Unit awards night in December.

Of course, Stan has many stories he could share during his service as a

VICSES member. Stan shared with us his recollection of the first road crash rescue he ever attended, not long after he had joined VICSES Nhill Unit, where the crew responded to a call from the local police to attend a crash between two trucks on the Western Highway. At the time, the unit crew had been training for road crash rescue for just six months, and turned out with private vehicles towing a tandem box trailer with a very basic rescue kit, including a lighting generator and hand operated hydraulic rescue kit. With very few tools, they were able to free the trapped driver for a successful outcome.

Stan also fondly recalls a few years later, when the unit decided to raise funds to build a new rescue truck. In just under two years, the unit members had raised enough funds to buy a new dual cab truck. With the assistance of local businesses and the unit members time and skills, they were able to build an equipment pod on the back of the truck.



***To me, it shows the power of what a group of motivated volunteers can achieve if they focus their collective mind and efforts into a project," says Stan on recalling the group's efforts.***

We sure are thankful to have Stan as part of our family at North West Region, and the invaluable skills and knowledge that Stan has been able to impart on his fellow volunteers and colleagues. What a legend! ■



**SOUTH**

**WEST**

**1 October – 31 December**

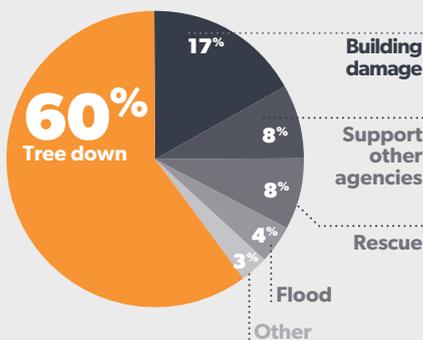


**549**

**Volunteers**

**1,145**

**Requests for assistance**



# VICSES South Barwon Unit volunteer highlights first responder road safety



**By Alex Suwitra, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region**

**V**ICSES South Barwon Unit Deputy Controller Caroline Taylor features in a recent Transport Accident Commission (TAC) campaign, 'slow to 40km/h' for emergency workers.

In November 2021, the TAC launched a 'humans of the road' style campaign to raise awareness around the safety of first responders and roadside workers. The campaign highlights the law in place in Victoria since 2017 for road users to slow down to 40 km/h, or less, when passing law enforcement and emergency services that are active or with lights flashing.

Caroline is well placed to support the TAC campaign. A volunteer with VICSES South Barwon Unit for 17 years, Caroline is an experienced road crash rescue (RCR) member of VICSES and has responded to countless rescues, often in the VICSES Commander role. Her experience is well-rounded,

including representing VICSES in the intensive Australasian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO) competition eight times, and acting as an RCR trainer and assessor for VICSES for almost five years.

"I got involved with this TAC campaign because nothing is more important than the safety of our volunteers," said Caroline.

"We know that working around traffic on our region's roads poses a real risk for our members. The opportunity to ask everyone to look out for us and make sure we get home safely was very important to me and my fellow volunteers," continued Caroline.

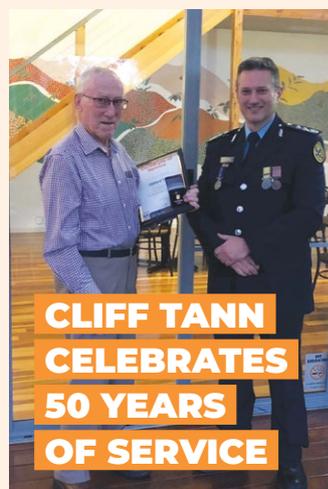
First responders are at high risk of being struck by passing vehicles or debris. A recent survey of more than 1,600 emergency service and enforcement workers revealed that 17% had a 'near miss' involving a passing vehicle on four or more occasions.

"It's so important for everyone that road users slow down when passing emergency vehicles stopped on the roadside – we want everyone to get home safely," said Caroline.

Well done to Caroline for her role in this important campaign. ■

You can watch the video on the Transport Accident Commission Facebook page and on their website at

[www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/staying-safe/emergency-and-road-workers](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/staying-safe/emergency-and-road-workers)



**By Alex Suwitra, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region**

**I**t's not often that we get the opportunity to thank someone for a lifetime of volunteering to help their community. However, recently VICSES Colac Unit had that honour, recognising member Clifford (Cliff) Tann for his 50 years of service with VICSES.

Cliff began volunteering in 1970, at what was then the Civil Defence Unit in Yuulong near Lavers Hill (now the VICSES Otway Unit). Cliff held many roles at the unit, including a long duration as the unit's Controller, and had the unit operating out of a shed on his farm in the early days. Cliff also served for 16 years with the Country Fire Authority Otway Rural Fire Brigade, including



# Western VICSES volunteers win Wannon Awards

By Alex Suwitra, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

Congratulations to the VICSES Portland and Port Fairy Units, whose members were recognised as part of the Wannon Awards by The Hon. Dan Tehan MP, Member for Wannon, in an online awards ceremony in December 2021.

**V**ICSES Portland Unit were recognised for their tireless efforts and commitments to emergency response and their communities. In particular, Gary Hein, Ray Polaski ESM, and Charlie DeBono were individually recognised for their long service to their communities, each having contributed over 40 years of volunteer work to ensure the safety of their communities.

Gary Hein was recognised as a dedicated, passionate, and active member, with 45 years' service. Gary is the only remaining founding member of the unit, and has shaped volunteerism within the VICSES Portland Unit.

Ray Polaski ESM was recognised for his 40 years of service, including over 23 years in the role as the unit's Controller. Ray's influence over the unit's

procedures and instilling a sense of pride in all aspects of the unit's operation were highlighted.

Charlie DeBono was recognised for more than 40 years of service, including his time as dual Controller of VICSES Portland and Heywood Units. Charlie's willingness to assist the Portland community in times of need, as well as his work during operational deployments in large scale events, was highlighted.

Congratulations also to the VICSES Port Fairy Unit, who were the recipients of the Emergency Management Award, having served their community for over 40 years. The unit responded to over 140 requests for assistance in 2021, and it was recognised that during the 2020 October floods they received over 60 events in a single week.

The unit was recognised not only for the time and commitment spent responding to emergencies, but also for time spent undertaking vital duties such as member training, administration, and community education.

A special mention was made to the unit's dedication to staying connected with their community during COVID-19 restrictions, using social media and a monthly radio segment on ABC Western Victoria to continue to share updates and emergency preparedness messages.

Well done again to both VICSES Portland and Port Fairy Units for being recognised for their strong sense of duty and commitment to responding to emergencies, as part of their respective communities. ■

six years as the Captain and Communications Officer.

Cliff later moved closer to Colac and continued his volunteering with the same unit. Familiar with all areas of VICSES operations, Cliff took on the role of Training Officer at Colac Unit, sharing his valuable knowledge and experience with new members.

"Training members and seeing people grow is one of the most rewarding things, and the biggest reward of training is that it can save a life," said Cliff.

Through his experience across all areas, Cliff's specialty was vertical rescue. He and his fellow volunteers at the Yuulong Civil Defence Unit were trained by the Victoria Police Search and Rescue team to provide vertical rescue on the coast in their local area. A memorable operation was using a 'flying fox' to transport a patient following a vehicle accident from one cliff ledge to a helicopter waiting on another, where the rescue team had to stand on the chopper's skids to stabilise it.

VICSES Colac Unit Controller Steve Tevelein was full of praise for Cliff.

"When he speaks, we listen, because we know there's more than 50 years' experience coming out of his mouth," Steve told the Colac Herald in an article on Cliff's service.

"It's amazing to have someone like that in the unit," continued Steve.

The 50-year service award was presented by Acting Regional Manager David Tuček at the Colac

Unit's annual dinner and awards presentation evening, which celebrated the contributions of multiple unit members. Daniel Zappelli was recognised for 15 years' service, Heather Cardinal and Steve Tevelein for 10 years, and Jake and Lee Mahoney for five years.

A huge congratulations to Cliff and his fellow unit members, and thank you to all from the South West Region for your commitment and dedication! ■

# OPERATIONAL UPDATES



## APX Radio Remediation Project Overview

By Tash Child, Project Coordinator, State Logistics Centre

In 2020, agencies across the sector reported to the state that the APX8000 portable/handheld radios were showing a trending fault with an error which caused the radios to stop receiving transmissions.

This was found to be a fault within the radios A08 microchip. As a result, the manufacturer *Motorola* have agreed to swap out all APX8000 radios within VICSES to ensure they remain operationally ready for our members.

The State Government has initiated a project to facilitate the extensive amount of work required to make this as seamless as possible, and minimising the impact to VICSES operations. This project has been called the APX Radio Remediation Project (APX-RRP). Motorola have established a team of technicians who will visit every unit and regional facility to update, upgrade, or replace the radios and MDS accessories. The VICSES Operational Communications team (Ops Comms) has established a

crew to lead the project, who will pair up with the Motorola teams to liaise with units and regions to oversee this work.

### What will happen?

Commencing in March 2022, a member of the APX-RRP team will contact units and regions to advise the scheduled date for the remediation works to occur. As part of the remediation works, all of the following items must be available at each location:

- APX8000 portable radios, batteries, antennas and RSM's will be swapped out with updated codeplug and firmware.
- APX7500 mobile radios codeplug and firmware will be updated.

- APX7500 & APX2500 fixed station terminals codeplug and firmware will be updated.
- APX8000 desktop charging units' firmware will be updated.

The firmware update to the APX radios will address several issues found across all APX radio types.

The codeplug development has been configured and tested by the Ops Comms team to include some new features and menu items in each of the radio types.

Fundamentally, the radios will look and operate in the same manner; there will be no need to refamiliarise yourself with its basic functionality.

Units will be taken offline for the duration of the works to replace (approximately 2-3 hours), and our staff will ensure impact to operational capability is kept to a minimum.

### When will this happen?

The State Government and Motorola are finalising the deployment plan, which will include the schedule of works. The roll-out will be a phased approach,

first upgrading the Ops Comms spare radio stock to ensure our technicians have updated stock for any immediate break fix requests from members. Next, we will target four Central Region units, to ensure the process goes smoothly prior to launch to other units and regional facilities.

There will be two teams visiting two – three units per day (Monday – Thursday). Neighbouring units will not be scheduled simultaneously, to ensure our operational capability is not impacted.

With a project of this size, we anticipate it will take approximately six months to complete.

The roll-out will be phased approach, commencing in March 2022, and it is anticipated to be complete in September 2022.

### What can we do to prepare?

To ensure the remediation happens smoothly at your unit, it would be beneficial to complete a stocktake of all MDS equipment to ensure they are all available on the day of your visit. ■

## Extending battery powered road crash rescue kit trial

By David Baker, Deputy Chief Officer – Capability, VHO

VICSES has extended the trial on Holmatro battery powered road crash rescue (RCR) tools, with the provision of new kits to VICSES Sunbury, Sorrento, Morwell, South Barwon and Bendigo Units as part of this year’s critical assets program.

The latest technology Holmatro Pentheon RCR tools will be provided to each of these units, with the intention to fully evaluate their use in principal provider units and their potential for rescue support provider environments.

“The new Pentheon tools are at the leading edge of RCR tool technology, and will make a difference to effective and safe operations,” said Operations Officer, Capability Improvement, Gerry Sheridan.

The trial units will be provided five tools, consisting of a spreader, cutter, combitool, two RAMs, as well as spare batteries and chargers, and will receive instruction in battery tool tactics and use. For the period of the trial, the units will still have access to core tools through their unit rescue fleet.

The trial and evaluation will inform the further roll-out of battery powered RCR tools to VICSES RCR principal provider and rescue support provider units, and will also provide our members greater agility in their response options. The new generation Light Rescue Vehicle RCR support version will also be built to stow battery powered RCR tools, to further enhance our response to better support the community. ■

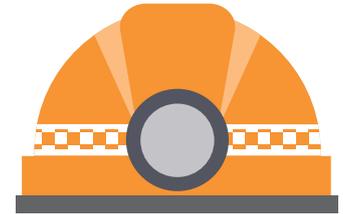


# REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

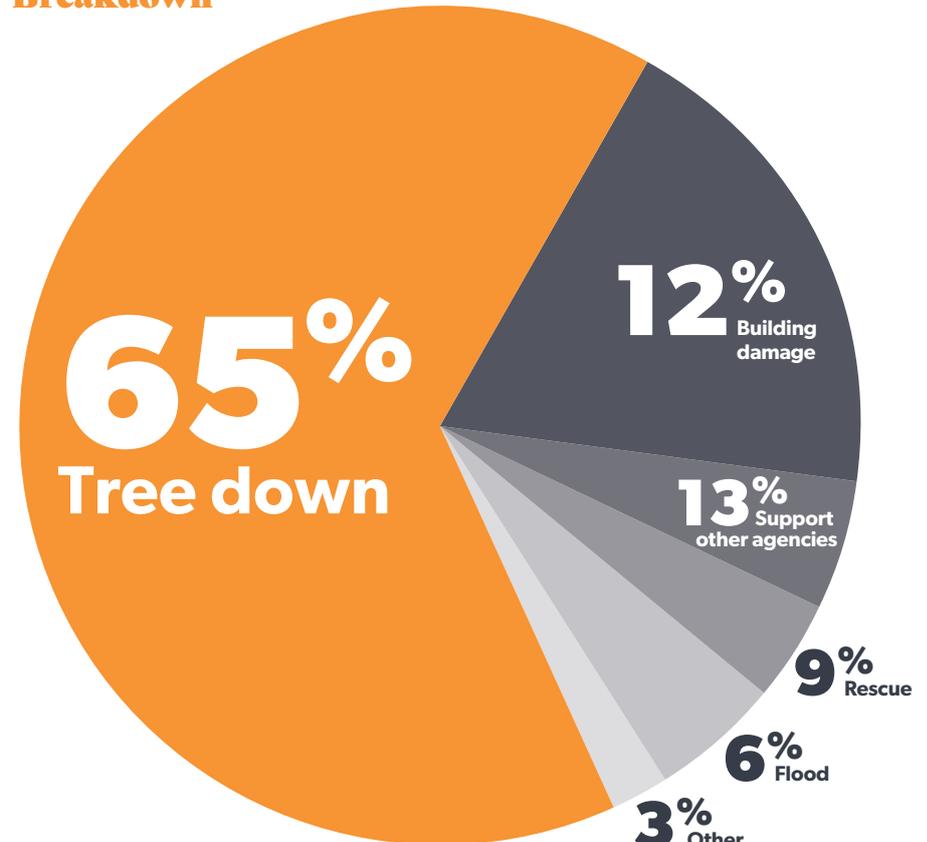
## 1 October – 31 December

Total

# 18,698



Breakdown



# PROJECTS – WHAT'S NEW

## Managing our VICSES Fleet with Robert Welling

VICSES Fleet Manager Robert Welling sits down with us to give an honest, and insightful view into managing projects within our VICSES Assets team, and the hard work and challenges along the way.

### Hi Robert, and welcome! Can you tell us a bit about your role within the VICSES Assets team?

Hi! I'm currently the Fleet Manager for VICSES and have held this position as a secondment since May 2019. I started with VICSES in 2017, in my previous and substantive role as an Assets Project Officer.

As Fleet Manager, I am responsible for all things 'vehicle', from the development of new assets, in service maintenance and issues, through to disposal. This includes managing vehicle related projects along the way where rectification or improvement is required.

I am also one of the Asset Duty Officers who provide out of hours support for all members.

### What sparked your interest in pursuing a career managing fleet and vehicles, particularly as part of an emergency service?

Coming from an automotive engineering background in the UK, after emigrating to Australia I struggled to find a role that made me want to get up in the morning. This included trying car sales, recruitment for the major automotive players, and a short

stint as a Business Development Manager for a scientific recruitment company. None of these roles excited me or made me feel like I was adding value or making a difference to people. Realising I needed to make a change I undertook a qualification in something I had a genuine interest, Project Management. Immediately following qualifying I found a vacancy with VICSES that perfectly matched my skillset and 'wants'. This role as Asset Project Officer led to my eventual secondment into Fleet Manager, where I've been able to use my broad automotive background to benefit the organisation and implement process improvements.

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

I have always wanted to do something that made me feel as though my efforts mattered. Being an immigrant to Australia, it was important for me to feel that I could add value and genuinely help people. Initially I looked toward joining Victoria Police, however the 'no beard' policy ruined the 'new to Melbourne hipster' look I was trying to achieve.

This is part of what I enjoy most about working for VICSES;

being able to not only assist the community, but also directly impact and improve the lives of our members. A close second to that would be the Assets team I work with.

### What are the most demanding, or critical aspects of your position as Fleet Manager?

The Fleet team comprises of 2.5 staff who support approximately 1,300 assets, and any members that interact with them. There is rarely a quiet moment - every day is filled with a range of different activities such as maintenance issues and queries, project work, vehicle development, and more. Our most demanding aspects are managing the requirement for business-as-usual activities, such as continuing maintenance, while progressing the great projects and initiatives we have in place. COVID-19 has made that a much more difficult process.

### Has there been any challenges that you and the team have faced during your time with VICSES, and how have you been able to manage it?

Immediately after taking on the role of Fleet Manager, we recognised an issue with a large portion of the fleet, whereby a significant

programme was required to rectify issues. This programme was critical to ensure the continued safety and operational capability of our members. However, it also placed an unavoidable burden on members who were unable to fully utilise their vehicles until the programme completed. Unfortunately, this discovery caused a significant drop in confidence of our members toward both the physical fleet and Fleet team staff members. To assist with alleviating the concerns of members, we conducted a state-wide roadshow to explain the issues and exactly how they were to be rectified, answering any questions along the way. This open forum allowed members the opportunity to voice concerns and greatly improved and repaired the relationship between the team and members.

Similar works have continued over the past three years with the same approach to openness and honesty surrounding the issues being employed, which I hope will encourage members to get involved and work with us to improve the service.



**ROBERT  
WELLING**

**Do you have any big ideas or improvements that you'd love to see integrated as part of our current fleet?**

Fortunately, my current role enables me to bring the ideas to the table and implement the ones that add value. During my three years as Fleet Manager, we have implemented state-wide roadside assistance, began the centralisation of fleet maintenance, improved the Twin Cab Support Vehicle, increased the capacity and capability of existing vehicles, implemented a structured asset development system (nearly), and started the redesign of both the Heavy Rescue Trucks and Light Rescue Vehicles.

Once we have finalised all of the existing projects, the next big thing will be the shift toward zero/low emission electric vehicles.

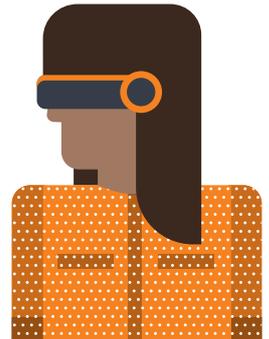
**Work aside, how do you wind down and enjoy your time outside of VICSES?**

Outside of work I spend time with my family, consisting of my wife Leanne, our five and two-year-olds Lyra and Freya, and our dog Astrid. When I'm not being used as a climbing frame by our children, I'm either playing guitar or video games. Pre COVID-19 (and hopefully post), I considered myself a foodie, and thoroughly enjoyed working my way through the different cultures and cuisines available in and around Melbourne. ■

# Virtual reality at VICSES

By Paul Wallworth, Manager Learning and Development, VHO

From virtual reality games to virtual practice surgeries for medical students, or virtual shops to try on the latest fashion, there appears to be no stopping the global move towards using this technology in our everyday lives.



**R**ecently news outlets even reported a Turkish farmer had used virtual reality headsets on his cows to provide them with pleasant outdoor views during milking to achieve a greater yield.

VICSES is keen to see how the technology can complement existing learning strategies to improve capability development and skills maintenance. With the awarding of a grant by Emergency Management Victoria, the VICSES Learning and Development team is working with the VICSES State Operations team to see how that may be possible.

The grant was awarded to allow development of road rescue scenarios and purchase two virtual reality kits to support piloting of the technology. The Learning and Development team has been working with FLAIM Systems Pty Ltd, a team within Deakin University now exporting virtual

reality training systems to the world, to prepare for a pilot that will commence in 2022.

Following an expression of interest process, 39 road crash rescue (RCR) units have requested a session where a RCR trained facilitator will bring a virtual reality kit and the scenarios to their unit, to trial and gather feedback. The scenario covers the systems approach to RCR, as well as incident command and inter-agency liaison. At the conclusion of the pilot, the kits will remain with VICSES, and recommendations will be made about how VICSES should apply this technology across a range of volunteer capabilities.

The Learning and Development team is also monitoring other immersive technologies grouped under the term 'extended reality' to find ways to incorporate this into our learning program design. Watch this space! ■



# WELLBEING, HEALTH & SAFETY

## Movember wrap-up

By Paul Fitzgerald, VICSES Psychologist, VHO

WE MADE IT! In the (literal) final moments of Movember in 2021, we smashed our target of \$7,500, to reach \$8,346 in donations!

A huge thank you to everyone who donated and raised funds - you are all Mo' champions!

True to their words, VICSES Deputy Chief Officers Alistair Drayton and David Baker dyed their renowned moustaches bright VICSES orange, and Mark Amos from our Wellbeing, Health and Safety team shaved his big ol' bushy beard via an online livestream on Tuesday 7 December.

VICSES also placed 17th in the 'Mo First Responder Challenge', which is an amazing effort!

### Movember champions:

Here's the rundown of our VICSES Movember champions:

**Winning team:**  
VICSES Corio Unit:

**\$ 3,321**

**Winning individual:** Erin van der Veen, VICSES Corio Unit:

**\$ 1,536**

This year's individual runners up include:

**Matt Gilchrist, VICSES Essendon Unit:**

**\$ 1,205**

**Joel Vermaas, VICSES Maroondah Unit:**

**\$ 710**



Thank you everyone for one of our greatest Movember results to-date, and helping to change the face of men's health. ■

### New training module now live: Alcohol and other dependencies

This new program from the Wellbeing, Health and Safety team provides information and interactive activities aimed at challenging the stigma surrounding addiction, provides education about what addiction looks like, and how to best access support for yourself or others experiencing problems with addiction.

The program is available to complete for all VICSES members online via the Training Portal by searching 'Alcohol and other dependencies', and can be completed individually or in a group setting with a facilitator. For more info contact the team at [wellbeing@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:wellbeing@ses.vic.gov.au). ■



### VICSES MindFit podcast: Professor Dan Lubman

Recently the VICSES MindFit team sat down with addiction specialist Professor Dan Lubman AM.

Dan holds several titles as a Professor at Monash University, Psychiatrist, Director of the leading addiction research and education centre 'Turning Point', and also features as part of the SBS TV series 'Addicted Australia'.

In this episode, we explore the challenges of overcoming addiction, discuss the outdated stigma it's often associated with, and provide some insight into how to support others that may be experiencing addiction.

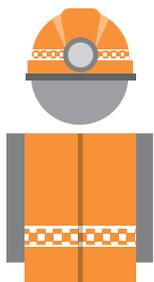
Listen to the episode now on Podbean or Spotify, by searching 'VICSES MindFit Podcast'.

For more information about addiction, head to the *Rethink Addiction* website at [rethinkaddiction.org.au](http://rethinkaddiction.org.au) ■

"Addiction is a signal that something has happened and that this person needs love and support."



Our guest **Professor Dan Lubman**  
Addiction Specialist



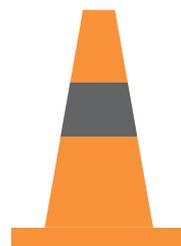
### Workplace inspections

July 2020 –  
January 2021

**118**

July 2021 –  
January 2022

**89**



### Injuries

July 2020 –  
January 2021

**51**

July 2021 –  
January 2022

**65**



# FIRST RESPONDER STORIES WITH FORTEM

By Fortem Australia

Recently Fortem Australia sat down with VICSES Nillumbik Member Melissa Anderson to discuss her experiences as a first responder, and how Fortem Australia has been a part of the journey along the way.

**F**or Melissa, a volunteer with VICSES Nillumbik Unit in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, being a first responder is all about the community.

“With VICSES, there’s always a sense of community,” she says. “Whether we’ve been to an incident that’s difficult or we’re dealing with people who are distressed, the communication is very open. All of us volunteers debrief and talk about what we’ve seen.”

Having previously volunteered with the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue, Melissa was keen to keep up those skills when she moved back to Melbourne, so that she could keep doing the work that she believes in.

“My brothers are part of the Country Fire Authority, and my mum is always doing lots of volunteer work in the community, so I’ve seen the value in volunteering and helping people,” she explains.

It’s also important, she adds, to keep challenging herself in new ways. “I like to learn new things. I’m a teacher, and I tell the kids in my classroom that they should learn something new each week. I’m modelling that.”

“I’ve learnt things I never thought I’d know how to do: how to use a chainsaw, drive a truck, climbing on roofs to respond to storm damage – those skills have come from VICSES, and I use them in my general life as well.”

**Family connection is important for first responders.**

Melissa says her partner and his son worry about her when she’s called out to jobs.

“I talk to my partner about it when I get home. Sometimes it’s hard that it takes me away from them, but talking about it openly really helps us all,” says Melissa.

As well as being a good role model for her students, Melissa also believes it’s good for her stepson to see what she does.

“When I explain the activities and call-outs that I’ve undertaken to my stepson, he sometimes says,

‘Dad could have done that’. I tell him that’s true, but I like to show him that women can do these things as well.”

Melissa says that engaging with Fortem’s free activities for first responders has helped to make up for the family time that she sometimes misses.

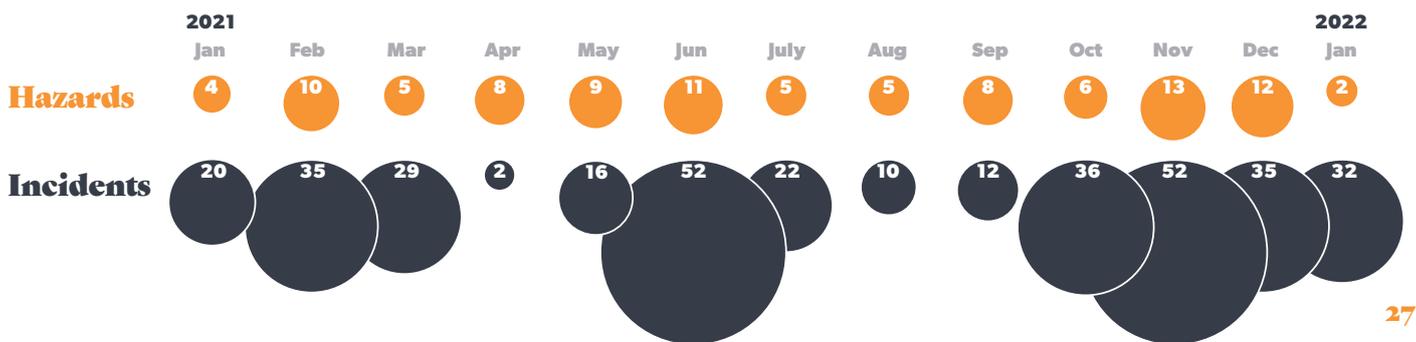
“Last school holidays my stepson and I participated in some Fortem activities, including a visit to Werribee Zoo, and horse riding another day,” she says. “To do those experiences and try new things together was exciting. It was a great chance to turn the pager off and have one-on-one time, as well as a chance for my stepson to talk to kids from other first responder families.”

There was another way that Melissa felt the connection with Fortem and her community recently, too.

“The Fortem team came out to our unit training one Monday night, and they gave us thank you cards from some of the kids in the community (pictured). It was really nice to see and hear that the kids are recognising who we are. And it helped more volunteers in our unit find out what Fortem do, and how to get into these activities that promote our wellbeing.”

Fortem Australia supports the mental health and wellbeing of first responders and their families – the people who protect and care for our community. For more information about their free wellbeing activities and clinical support services, explore the Fortem website at [www.fortemaustralia.org.au](http://www.fortemaustralia.org.au) or call 1300 33 95 94. ■

## YEAR AT A GLANCE



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



## South West support Driver Reviver supplies

By Amy Miles, National Driver Reviver Program Coordinator, VHO

A big thank you to the volunteers and staff in the South West Region, who assisted in preparing supplies for distribution for the national *Driver Reviver* program in November.

**T**hese supplies were delivered to sites across the country, providing them with the essential supplies required for summer operations. By visiting a *Driver Reviver* site, motorists can enjoy a free cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit. Most importantly, it provides an opportunity to stop and revive so you reach your destination safely.

VICSES operates 28 *Driver Reviver* sites across the state on holiday weekends and peak travel periods. Locations can be seen at [ses.vic.gov.au/driverreviver](https://ses.vic.gov.au/driverreviver). ■



**More information**

Understand how you can get involved with *Driver Reviver* on the Hub at **My State > Community > Driver Reviver**.



## Bringing diversity to online community engagement

By Susan Davies, Manager Community Connections, VHO

As the pandemic lingered and restricted community engagement opportunities, the Community Connections team hosted a virtual workshop in December 2021. The workshop was attended by over 50 VICSES members who

are interested in community engagement from across the state, coming together to connect with each other.

We were thrilled to collaborate with Expressions Australia, who came along to teach us some

Aslan basics and the VICSES key message of '15 to float'.

The workshop was interactive with input from participants using Menimeter, an interactive presentation software.

# 2021 FLOOD PREPAREDNESS CAMPAIGN:

## Did you hear '15 to float' on the radio?



By Hannah Macdougall, Senior Advisor Community Programs and Campaigns, VHO

Do you listen to KISS, Gold, 3AW, Vision, HIT, TRSN, or Leba radio stations? If so, then perhaps you may have heard the most recent state-wide VICSES media campaign!

The campaign featured two key messages and calls to action for flood preparedness:

1. 'It only takes 15cm to float a small car. Never drive on flooded roads' (road safety).
2. 'Bag it, block it, lift it, and leave' (home flood preparedness).

The government-approved campaign ran

from mid-November to mid-December 2021. Media communication channels included socials (Facebook and Instagram), radio, regional press, and Google Search Engine Marketing (SEM). Both regional and metropolitan audiences were targeted, inclusive of multicultural audiences and Vision Australia radio.

Our social campaign reached just under 3.4 million Victorians, and received more

than 6.53 million impressions. Within the social media space, our 15 second 'bag it, block it, lift it and leave' video had the strongest interaction with audiences, and the '15 to float' static imagery provided significant commentary. Our SEM was highly efficient at driving the community to our website, with 'SES' related key words being the highest performer.

Keep listening out for future campaigns! ■

This is a great way to engage and create conversations in a digital space.

Another highlight was recognising the four winners of our Community Engagement Awards, for their fantastic ongoing contribution to community resilience.

Congratulations to the following VICSES members:

- Adam Cox – VICSES Horsham Unit.
- Judith Gledhill – VICSES Rochester Unit.
- Michael Sitton - VICSES Hepburn Shire Unit.
- Shanleigh Meldrum – VICSES Gisborne Unit.

The positive feedback received from the workshop has helped build momentum for further events in 2022. Keep an eye on the Hub for further information and dates for upcoming virtual community engagement workshops. ■

## Media campaign for VICSES



Date: 17 Nov, 2021  
Newspaper: Warrnambool Standard  
Page: 4



Date: 17 Nov, 2021  
Newspaper: Horsham Wimmera Mail Times  
Page: 7



Date: 19 Nov, 2021  
Newspaper: Stawell Times  
Page: 2

# MEDIA

1 October -  
31 December 2021

## Campaigns and events:

- Australian Women in Emergencies Day.
- International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- International Rural Women's Day.
- Great ShakeOut.
- Movember.
- International Day of People with Disabilities.

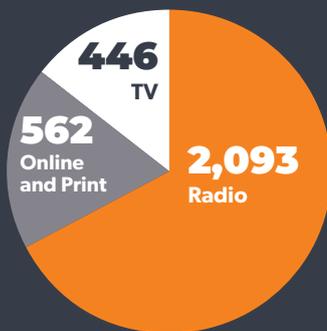
## Media releases:

- Victorians flock to VICSES in record number for help during COVID years.
- NSW SES volunteers to assist Victorian crews with storm response.
- Busiest period in VICSES history.
- A wet and wintry end to the week.
- Rain event over Gippsland has VICSES volunteers ready to respond.

## Ministerial events:

- VICSES Emerald Unit new facility official opening
- VICSES Wangaratta Unit new facility official opening
- VICSES Knox Unit new facility official opening

## Mentions of VICSES in the news:



## Social media highlights:



**f** FACEBOOK

Impressions:  
**461,494**

Engagement:  
**42,168**

29 October: VICSES volunteers respond to thousands of calls for assistance after devastating storms across the state.



**t** TWITTER

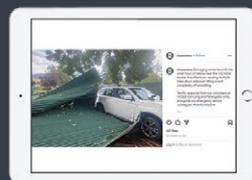
Impressions:  
**82,363**

Engagement:  
**1,312**

5 October: A magnitude 3.0 earthquake recorded near Rawson, Victoria.

**@** INSTAGRAM

Impressions: Engagement:  
**4,443 159**



18 December: Damaging winds hit the small town of Walwa.



**in** LINKEDIN

Impressions:  
**6,887**

Engagement:  
**479**

6 December: Official opening of the new state-of-the-art VICSES Knox Unit facility.



## UPCOMING MEDIA AND CAMPAIGNS EVENTS FOR 2022

This year sure is shaping up to be full of great opportunities for our organisation to get involved in!

Here are all of the upcoming important events and dates for our VICSES members, to mark in your calendar:

- **Women in Rescue:**  
Saturday 19 March.
- **Powercor AFL Country Game: (Geelong V Essendon, MCG):**  
Saturday 19 March.
- **Neighbour Day:**  
Sunday 27 March.
- **Driver Reviver (Pre-Easter Launch):**  
Thursday 14 April.
- **AFL Emergency Services Match (Hawthorn v Richmond, MCG):**  
Saturday 14 May.
- **National Volunteer Week:**  
16 – 22 May.
- **Wear Orange Wednesday:**  
Wednesday 18 May.
- **State Controllers Seminar (West):**  
Saturday 28 May, Creswick.
- **State Controllers Seminar (East):**  
Saturday 18 June, Healesville.

You can help celebrate relevant events such as *Wear Orange Wednesday* on social media. Keep an eye out on the Hub for campaign and event digital toolkits, under **My State > Media and communications > Digital toolkits > Campaigns and events toolkits**.

Do you have a media opportunity or campaign that you think VICSES should get involved in? We'd love to hear from you! Email our team at [media@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:media@ses.vic.gov.au) ■

# INFORMATION SERVICES (IS) UPDATE

Many of you enjoyed a well-earned break on the back of another challenging year; not only in respect to the impact on all of our workloads due to the weather, but also our lives in general as we move into another year living with COVID-19.

**T**he more of these challenges we have to deal with, the more we rely on the information and its communication systems. The integrity and safety of our information 'assets' is vital.

Our information is more unstructured (videos, chats, pictures, voice), and needs to be provided via a myriad of systems and formats, as well as being able to reach our mobile workforce securely and when needed.

Over the next year, the VICSES IS and Governance team will be updating our information management standards and implementing changes to existing systems, which in-turn will support you all to continue to safeguard VICSES information, its integrity, and your privacy. ■



 **More information**

The IS team is available to support and help you now with information management, including training.

You can contact us via the IS Service Desk by emailing [ictservice@ses.vic.gov.au](mailto:ictservice@ses.vic.gov.au) or calling **1300 737 101**.



## Recordkeeping for VICSES volunteers

By Dale Grant, Information Compliance Officer, VHO

### What are records?

Records comprise information of any kind, and in any form, that has been created, received, and maintained as evidence of decisions made, activities undertaken, and transactions performed.

**A**t VICSES, the following types of records are typically encountered: electronic documents, emails, websites, audio-visual records, databases, and system-generated records, as well as physical documents and files.

To support the organisation in effective recordkeeping, volunteers are asked to:

- Create full and accurate records of all work-related decisions and activities.
- Ensure records include information that will allow others to easily understand when, how, where, why, and by whose authority actions took place and decisions were made.

- Ensure records are captured in accordance with organisational policies and processes (e.g., by saving to the corporate electronic document management or other business system or by printing and placing in the corporate file).
- Ensure safety and security of records and the information they contain.
- Not release or destroy records without authorisation.

Further information can be found in the Hub under **My State > Records management**. ■



*VICSES has a role for everyone.  
Join us: [ses.vic.gov.au/joinus](https://ses.vic.gov.au/joinus)*

For flood or storm emergency assistance, call **132 500**.