Capacity

Collaboration

Connections

VICSES Community Resilience Strategy
Year Two Outcomes Report

March 2019

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Acknowledgements

Foreword

I'm very pleased to release our results from the second year of the implementation of the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) Community Resilience Strategy 2016-19 (the Strategy), namely the 2017-18 financial year (Year Two).

Community resilience is a strategic imperative for our organisation, and a core deliverable of our VICSES Strategic Plan 2018-22. Launched in March 2018, our four-year Strategic Plan sets ambitious targets for the sustainability of our organisation, our community reach, and our network strength and connectivity with others to build safer and more resilient communities.

Throughout Year Two of the Community Resilience Strategy's implementation, VICSES has continued its commitment to developing positive partnerships and working together to build safer and more resilient communities; while remaining accountable through timely, effective reporting to the Victorian Government.

A key highlight this year includes the finalisation of the Strategy's Indicators and Evaluation Framework. The framework establishes a series of Flagship Measures for expanding upon and evaluating the Strategy key performance indicators (KPIs).

We thank our volunteers, staff, communities and partners for their collaboration in these activities, and we welcome your feedback to assist us in the delivery and evaluation of Year Three.

Stephen Griffin
Chief Executive Officer

Purpose

The Year Two Outcomes Report presents some of the key highlights, activities and outcomes from the Strategy implementation that took place during the period of 2017-18. The report measures our achievements against the Strategic Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and is intended to support continuous improvement of programs and initiatives during the lifetime of the Strategy.

Background

Community engagement has long been part of the work of VICSES. As such, the Strategy is not so much a new direction for VICSES, but a reaffirmation and strengthening of what VICSES has always done as a community-based volunteer organisation.

The Strategy provides guidance to VICSES volunteers and staff (Our People) on how we can develop positive partnerships and work together to build safer and more resilient communities; while remaining accountable through timely, effective reporting to the Victorian Government.

The Strategy enables Our People to support communities to better understand the full scale of emergency events by:

- Building competency in knowing what to do in the future – **Believe they know how to do it**.
- Increasing individual capacity and capability to respond – **Believe they can do it**.
- Increasing awareness of their role, and the role of VICSES and others in the community – **Believe everyone has a role to play**.
- Realising the positive outcomes and relevance of preparing for future emergencies – **Believe it will make a difference**.

This approach will support the long-term vision of the VICSES Service Delivery Strategy 2025 for contributing to safer and more resilient communities, by providing sector leadership on building stronger community connectivity and better engagement practices.

Benefits of community resilience

For the purposes of the Strategy launched in July 2016, VICSES adopted Emergency Management Victoria's (EMV) definition of a resilient community, as outlined in A Modern Emergency Management System for Victoria (October 2015).

In the Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management released in April 2017, EMV updated this definition to, *"the ability to survive, adapt and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks experienced[1]"*.

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[1] Community Resilience Framework for Emergency Management, Emergency Management Victoria 2017.

A disaster resilient community is one in which people work together with emergency services, local authorities and other organisations to understand and manage the risks that may affect them. This approach is supported by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030[2] (of which Australia is a signatory) and the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (2011)[3].

[2] Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.
[3] National Strategy for Disaster Resilience, Council of Australian Governments, 2011.

Strategic objectives, goals and outcomes

The Strategy aligns with VICSES' corporate intent, and includes a set of strategic objectives, goals and outcomes (see Figure 1) to ensure the approach is embedded in all VICSES activities, plans, programs and systems.

Strategic objectives	Strategic objective 1: **Build capacity**	Strategic objective 2: **Increase collaboration**	Strategic objective 3: **Foster connections**
Goals	VICSES builds community knowledge and skills to support communities prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events	VICSES has effective partnerships where we can collaborate and facilitate inclusive participation to enable community led activities and solutions	VICSES is an innovative and influential leader that fosters community connectivity and promotes positive behaviour change
Strategic outcomes	Individuals, households and businesses believe that preparing for future emergency events is important	Program and service delivery with others is collaborative, integrated and community centred	Better connected communities that are able to adapt for future emergency events

Figure 1 VICSES Community Resilience Strategy – objectives, goals and outcomes.

The focus for VICSES is to develop a resilient Victorian community that knows what to do before, during, and after an emergency, and to build stronger connections between Victorians and the services, systems and structures that support them.

This approach, which includes building the capability of Our People, supports activity that is community-driven with the goal of equipping communities to be better prepared to take ownership of their priorities and needs in a way that is meaningful to them; promoting 'shared responsibility' and a reduced reliance on emergency services when future disasters strike.

Implementation methodology

Implementation of the Strategy is pivotal for VICSES to deliver on our legislative obligations as control agency for flood, storm, earthquake, tsunami and landslide hazards in Victoria.

Flood   Storm   Earthquake   Tsunami   Landslide   Road rescue
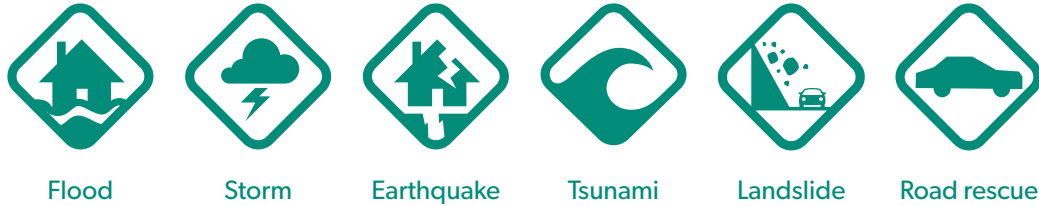
These hazards encompass 74% of the total cost of emergencies in the State[4], compared to bushfire which equates to 26%.

Stronger organisational investment in resilience supports VICSES to:

- Apply effort to reducing the impact and consequences of emergencies.
- Build knowledge and support tools for resilient-related activities.
- Utilise innovative and emerging practices.
- Foster a continuous learning culture.

Cyclone and earthquake   <.2%

Bushfire / Cyclone **26%**

Flood **27%**

Storm **11%**

Hail / Earthquake **36%**

Victoria **$2.7bn**
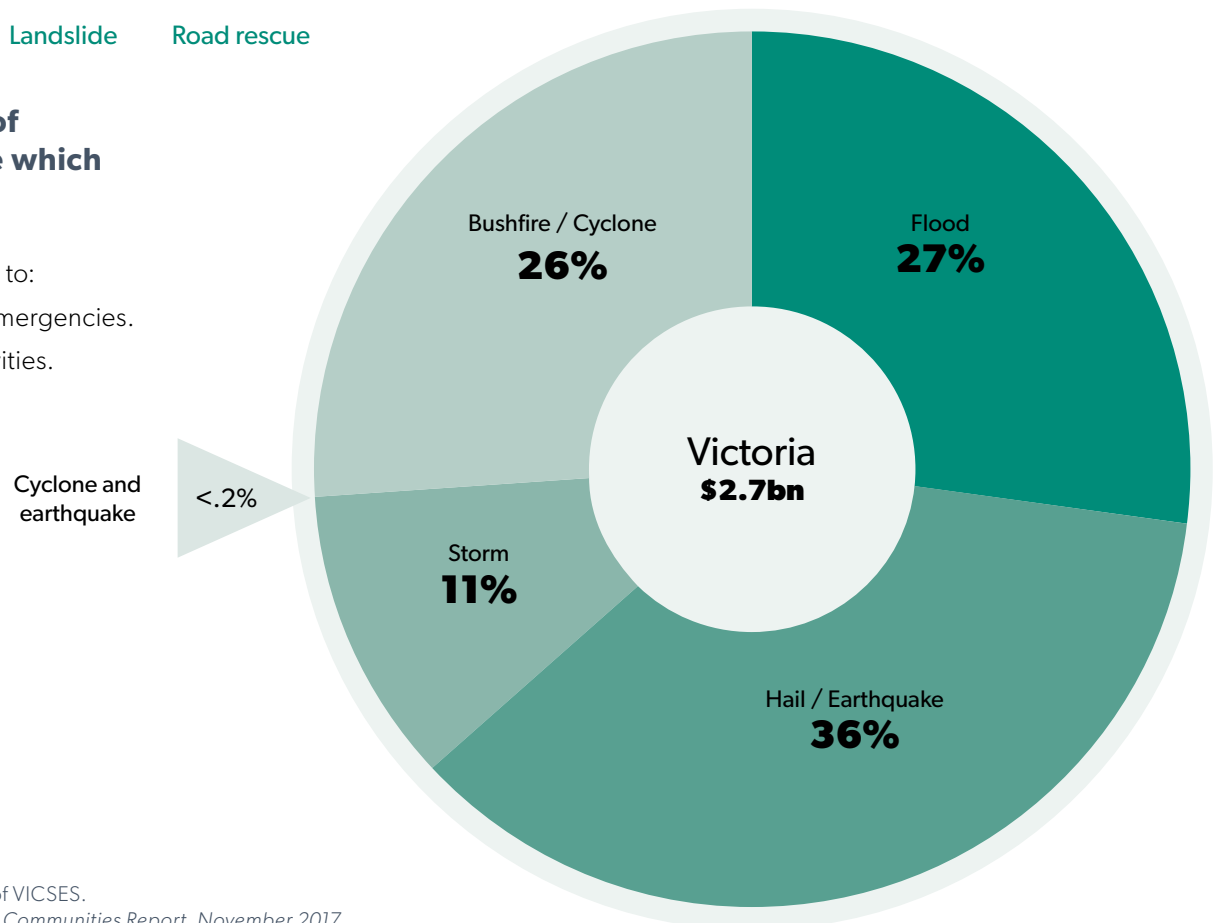
Figure 2 Economic cost of natural disasters to Victoria and value contribution of VICSES.
Source: Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities Report, November 2017

[4] Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities Report, November 2017 - average economic cost of natural disasters in Victoria over the past 10 years.

Focus areas for implementation

VICSES continued to adopt the implementation blueprint that was introduced in Year One, structured according to two distinct focus areas:

1. **Corporate management:** The internal processes, training (skills and knowledge) and controls required to ensure adequate and comprehensive policies, procedures and methodologies exist for rolling out, recording and tracking community resilience-related activities for performance, including adequacy of training for those responsible for implementation.

2. **Community and partners:** To support the delivery of well-researched, viable and localised community and partner activities for VICSES service delivery based on the Strategy's three strategic objectives, including emergency management planning, community risk, engagement and public information programs and activities.

Activities undertaken to implement the Strategy within Year Two have been categorised according to the above mentioned focus areas.

Figure 3 Implementation blueprint.

Corporate management

Community resilience is a prominent feature within the VICSES Strategic Plan 2018-22. Fundamental Goal 3 within that plan advocates that *'We will work with and empower the community to build confidence and resilience.'* This is driven by our key initiative 3.2 to *'Mainstream community resilience through our services, structure and systems.'*

The commitments pledged by VICSES within the Strategic Plan include:

- Adoption of contemporary approaches to service delivery and capability building of Our People and the Victorian community, along with the services, systems and structures that support them.

- Collaboration with community and partners to provide local services to meet local needs; to developing resilient communities through the development of strong connections, community partnerships and agile operating models – helping to keep all Victorians safe before, during and after, and reduce the consequences of, emergencies.

- Reviewing our progress annually to realise opportunities, inform decisions and positively influence the focus and direction of what we have committed to, to achieve better visibility of our performance.
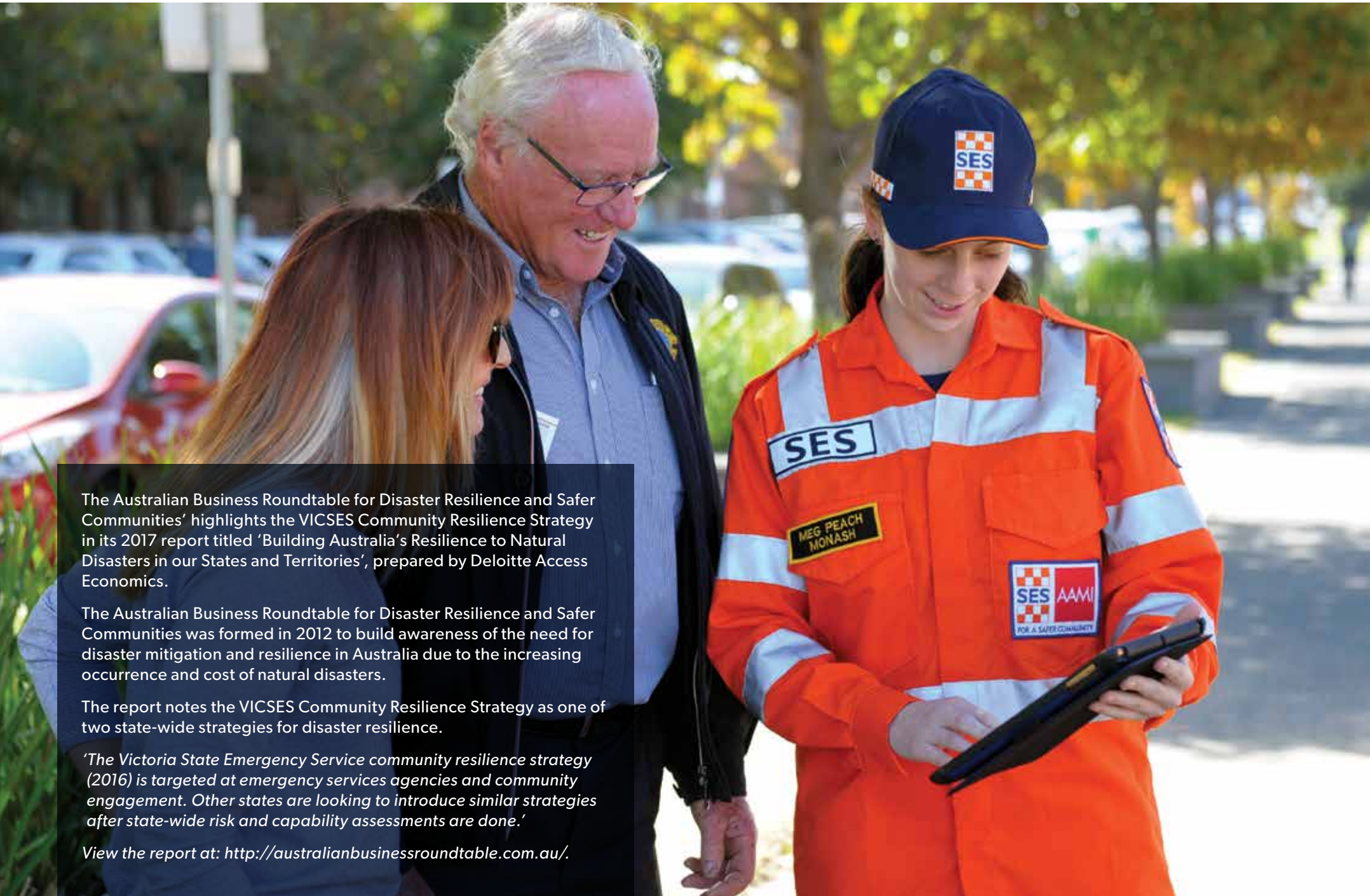
The Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer Communities' highlights the VICSES Community Resilience Strategy in its 2017 report titled 'Building Australia's Resilience to Natural Disasters in our States and Territories', prepared by Deloitte Access Economics.

The Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer Communities was formed in 2012 to build awareness of the need for disaster mitigation and resilience in Australia due to the increasing occurrence and cost of natural disasters.

The report notes the VICSES Community Resilience Strategy as one of two state-wide strategies for disaster resilience.

'The Victoria State Emergency Service community resilience strategy (2016) is targeted at emergency services agencies and community engagement. Other states are looking to introduce similar strategies after state-wide risk and capability assessments are done.'

View the report at: http://australianbusinessroundtable.com.au/.

Systems and structures

Capability of Our People is critical to the delivery and evaluation of our programs and resources for community resilience. This includes clarity on roles and accountabilities, to ensure successful delivery of the overall intent and desired outcomes of the Strategy.

A number of initiatives were undertaken during Year Two to improve the systems and structures in place for clear, simple and effective member communications.

VICSES Communication Pathways launched in late 2017 to increase visibility and clarity of how we engage with one another, the community and our stakeholders.

As part of the project, a range of new and/ or updated resources and tools were made available to members, including:

- Communications framework posters and factsheets.
- Updated forms and templates.
- Seasonal Schedule landing page on VICSES intranet.
- Digital toolkits for campaigns and events.
- New imagery and icons library.

A new quarterly publication was also introduced to communicate key organisational information, updates and activity more effectively on VICSES agency business, news and highlights. The first three editions were released in 2017-18.
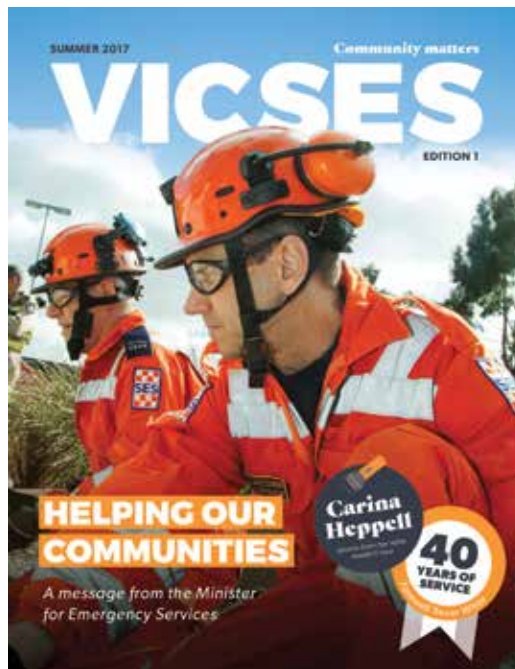
Figure 4 VICSES Community Matters editions 1, 2 and 3.

Key message booklet and social media tiles

As part of Strategic Goal 1 to build community knowledge on how to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events, VICSES developed a set of key messages and associated social media tiles. A broad and diverse group of VICSES personnel was involved in the development of the key messages to ensure accuracy and pertinence, through the VICSES Key Messages Working Group.

Figure 5 Sample of VICSES key message social media tiles.

Community Engagement Program Framework

Building on initiatives undertaken in Year One of the Strategy, and in line with our new Strategic Plan, VICSES commenced the development of a draft Community Engagement Program Framework in 2018. The framework brings together multiple evidence-based disciplines to achieve a step-by-step approach for community engagement programs.

The framework links objectives and actions, and provides VICSES members with a practical approach for engaging with their communities to increase preparedness and resilience. Implementation of the framework will commence in Year Three post final consultation with members and partners.

Authorised Activity Framework

A full review of the VICSES Authorised Activity framework has commenced, examining the activities that fall within the scope of VICSES' statutory functions under the Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005.

The purpose of the review is to improve clarity in relation to VICSES' statutory responsibilities and provide a more streamlined approach to planned and unplanned activities, while minimising administrative burden for VICSES members, especially in relation to community engagement events. Recommendations from the review are scheduled to be released for consultation during Year Three (2018-19).

Monitoring and reporting

Indicators and Evaluation Framework

Year Two saw finalisation of the Community Resilience Strategy Indicators and Evaluation Framework. The framework, completed in June 2018, follows on from an extensive process grounded in research, alignment with sector strategy and the Victorian Government outcomes architecture, and internal and external consultation.

The framework:

- Establishes a series of Flagship Measures for expanding upon and evaluating the Community Resilience Strategy KPIs. The Flagship Measures are limited in number and scope to focus on VICSES priorities, and minimise reporting and data collection burden.

- Provides guidance on the type of evaluation activities that will be used throughout the implementation of the Strategy and beyond.

- Highlights research activities that will be needed to support evaluation.

- Identifies how the Flagship Measures link to other strategic elements in VICSES and sector strategies, plans, and frameworks.

Key sector stakeholders were engaged during the development of the framework and at exposure of draft stage. This included:

- Extensive consultation and review with EMV and Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to ensure alignment with the Victorian Government outcomes frameworks architecture and the draft Emergency Management Outcomes Framework.

- Engagement with the Centre for Evidence and Implementation for independent research on the resilience models and measures to validate the selection of the Flagship Indicators and VICSES' approach to developing community resilience.

Additional works were undertaken in Year Two to support monitoring and reporting, and include:

- Engagement and participation in research projects through the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC), including those examining warnings, volunteering, flood risk communication, preparedness of older adults, and child centred disaster risk reduction.

- Proposals submitted to the BNHCRC's Tactical Research Fund to undertake further investigations in effective household preparedness actions.

- Rapid post-event research following the December 2017 Heavy Rain Event (for more information, see case study on page 20).

Flagship Measures

VICSES will focus on measuring a small number of "Flagship Measures" to identify important areas for focus and gain a better understanding of community resilience levels.

Strategic objective 1: Build capacity

Measure 1.1:   Proportion of households that have a documented emergency plan.

Measure1.2:   Proportion of households that have undertaken hazard-relevant maintenance actions.

Measure 1.3:   Proportion of people who avoid entering floodwater.

Measure 1.4:   Proportion of people who understand warnings.

Strategic objective 2: Increase collaboration

Measure 2.1:   Satisfaction of key stakeholders involved in community engagement program development, delivery, or evaluation.

Strategic objective 3: Foster connections

Measure 3.1:   Program level of quality assessed against the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Quality Assurance standard.

Reducing Disaster Impacts - How do we define success in the longer term?

Measure 4.1:   Number of fatalities from floods, storms, landslides, earthquakes, and tsunami.

Measure 4.2:   Number of homes damaged by floods, storms, landslides, earthquakes, and tsunami.

Measure 4.3:   Prevalence of disaster-related stress and mental illness in communities affected by floods and storms.
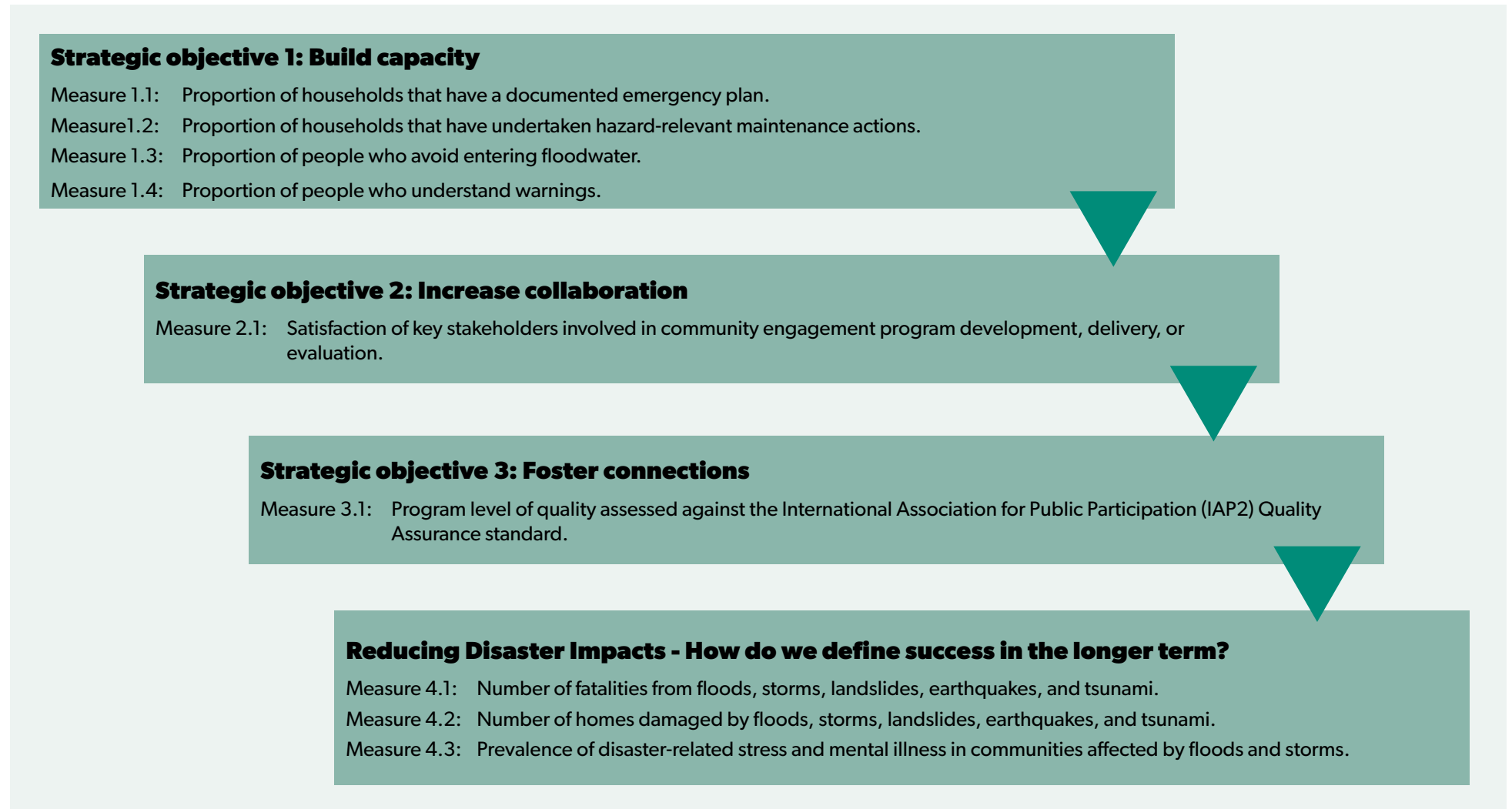
Figure 6 Indicators and Evaluation Framework Flagship Measures.

Skills training and development

VICSES is committed to ensuring Our People have the skills, competencies, support and structures in place to meet the current and future needs of building community resilience.

Actions undertaken during Year Two to achieve this commitment include:

- Review of the Community Engagement Facilitator (CEF) training course to ensure the content is up-to-date, contemporary and aligns with the Community Resilience Strategy. The review was informed by a community engagement capability survey undertaken in July 2017, in addition to consultation with Community Resilience Coordinators and (CRCs) and CEFs.

- The Country Fire Authority (CFA) and VICSES Community Engagement Forum was held in regional Victoria in August 2017, attended by VICSES CEFs and others with a keen interest in community engagement. The forums focussed on areas of interest for each region and provided an opportunity to develop relationships that will lead to increased collaboration with CFA in activities that promote community safety.

- Development of a training package for new Regional and State Duty Officers covering the use of EM-COP[5] Public Publishing and Emergency Alert platforms. The training comprises an online training component along with attendance at a skills workshop, and is designed to better equip VICSES duty officers to issue timely, tailored and relevant warnings and information to the community when Incident Management Teams are not established. Further support is now also available with the integration of VICSES personnel to support and undertake the functions of the whole of agency Warnings and Advice Duty Officer (WADO) role.

- Design and development of a new volunteer Media Liaison Officer (MLO) course, delivered in-house by the VICSES Media and Communications team. The objective of the new course was to provide a more in-depth training package, built from the ground up, to support volunteer media requirements. In-house delivery also allowed for additional training days, due to significantly lower costs. The updated course covers a range of new media elements, such as detailed unit promotional strategies, key message development, event management, writing, public speaking, interview techniques and organisational media requirements and procedures. The new course was launched at the Moe Regional Headquarters in October 2018, and delivered four times within the Year Two reporting period throughout East and Central Victoria, accrediting 41 new MLOs. The training course has received extremely positive feedback and ensures we deliver best practice and mentorship in this area.

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[5] EM-COP: Emergency Management Common Operating Picture or EM-COP is a web-based communication, planning and collaboration tool that has been rolled out across Victoria to enable emergency personnel to quickly share information and make strategic decisions (EMV 2016).

Community and partners

A critical component to the Strategy building blocks has been the many years' worth of research conducted by VICSES to provide scientific rigour and a base of evidence for what is proposed. This research has explored the chronic stresses and acute shocks faced by communities, along with their levels of understanding, and their attitudes and behaviours.

VICSES research has covered:

- Perceptions and beliefs about emergencies.
- How and why people prepare.
- Requirements for getting people to be more prepared.
- What community drivers could be used to enhance preparedness and build community capital.

Research has found, as expected, that some members of the community are active in preparing and maintaining readiness for the next emergency event, while a large proportion of the community is not interested and therefore, not planning to do anything to prepare for future emergency events.

VICSES has also found that hazard awareness is influenced by a number of key drivers and barriers that vary significantly across Victoria's diverse communities, and does not necessarily translate to higher levels of preparedness or action across the preparedness chain (see Figure 7).

Our three pillars provide guidance towards our commitment and enable VICSES to demonstrate our achievements during the lifetime of the Strategy.

Capacity

Collaboration

Connections

Not interested	Contemplating	Preparing	Taking action	Maintenance

There is a very low risk of an emergency happening in my area

I don't have time to prepare for emergencies

I find it simple to be prepared for emergencies

There isn't much I could do to prepare for emergencies

It costs too much to be prepared for emergencies

I have experienced an emergency and therefore know I need to be prepared

I don't want to think about preparing for an emergency

If an emergency did occur emergency services would take care of all my needs

Emergencies are just a part of where I live

It only takes a few simple things to prepare for all types of emergencies

I don't know how to prepare for emergencies

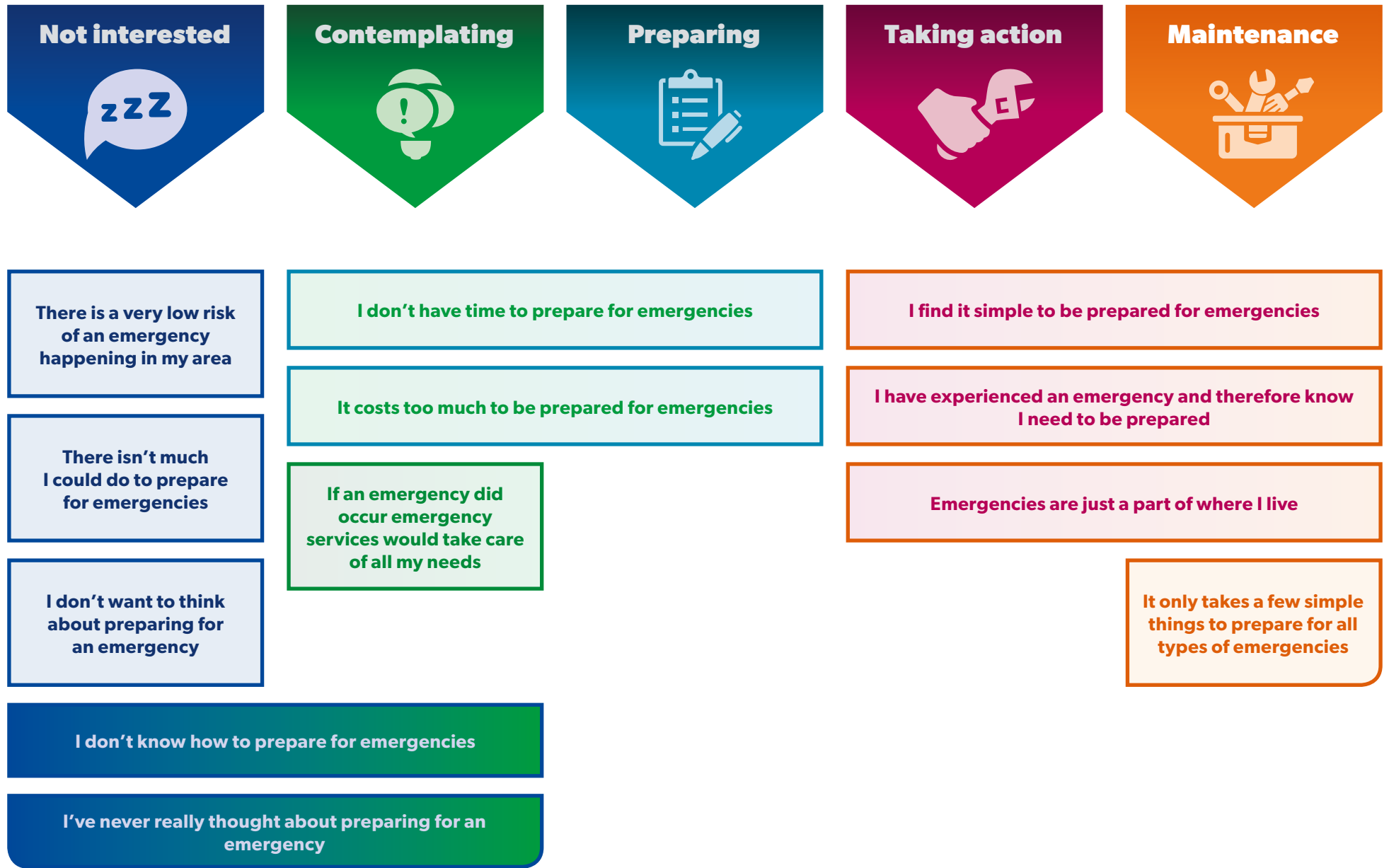I've never really thought about preparing for an emergency

Figure 7 VICSES preparedness chain.

Case studies

Re-launch of Local Flood Guides for Kerang, Quambatook, Murrabit and Benjeroop

VICSES Kerang Unit, Kerang and District Community Centre, Kerang CFA, Kerang Woolworths, and MIXX FM held a relaunch of the Local Flood Guides for Kerang, Quambatook, Murrabit and Benjeroop which had been updated following the flood of 2016.

Flood Guides are a valuable source of information for local residents and business owners, and help VICSES to demonstrate the local flood risks within some communities, and provide information on how to prepare for and respond to flood events.

Warracknabeal Community Engagement Facilitators engage local schools

Students from Beulah and Yaapeet Primary Schools took part in fun and interactive activities during the year with members from the VICSES Warracknabeal Unit. Unit members delivered a community presentation at the Beulah Business Centre where students were invited to learn about VICSES specialised equipment and ask our members questions. Developing innovative approaches to engage with young people as both learners and educators to build emergency management awareness and capability was a key component of the Victorian Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan.

Strategic objective 1: Build capacity

Goal: VICSES builds community knowledge and skills to support communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events.

Local Flood Guides

Throughout Year Two, VICSES continued to provide up-to-date, localised information to targeted communities on flood risk, including a guide for planning, preparing and responding to flooding, as part of the Local Flood Guide program. The guides, which align to the National SES FloodSafe program, were also updated during the period to include a new look and feel along with new and improved content.

Community engagement during the December 2017 heavy rain event

During the flood events in December 2017, members provided visibility of VICSES in key flood hotspots in metropolitan Melbourne, and attended sandbag collection points to collect feedback and distribute information to the public. VICSES Community Engagement Facilitators (CEFs) provided real value on the ground during the incident, and were an invaluable source of local knowledge and real-time feedback on incident communications during the event. Feedback on the engagement from the community was extremely positive and provided a model for future incident engagement.

Social media strategy

In support of the Strategy, VICSES launched a robust and detailed social media strategy in 2018, reinforcing the purpose behind our presence on social media, and setting the standard for how we plan to educate, engage and compel audiences across the 150+ social media pages[6] we operate throughout the state. The social media strategy is accompanied by a set of resources and tools for volunteers and staff to assist implementation, including new images and videos, and a creative suite of engaging collateral to promote VICSES initiatives and campaigns such as 15 to Float, Driver Reviver, Wear Orange Wednesday, and more. A wide range of hazard social media tiles was also created to provide guidance on what to do before, during and after emergencies. The hazard tiles have been effectively used to communicate key information during weather events and news broadcasts across VICSES state, regional and unit social media, and partner broadcast channels.

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[6] This includes state, regional and unit social media pages.

'15 to Float' campaign

In 2017, in association with our principal community partner AAMI, VICSES engaged Campaign Edge to develop an advertising campaign supporting the delivery of the Strategy.

Titled '15 to Float', the campaign was supported by the Victorian Government and based on research from the University of New South Wales, which found that a depth of as little as 15cm of water can cause a vehicle to lose traction, become unstable or start to float.

The key objectives of the campaign were to:

- Raise awareness of the critical risks associated with driving on flooded roads.
- Create community recall and compelling imagery by comparing 15cm to the size of a regular pen.

The '15 to Float' campaign was launched in June 2017 as a one-week online video, social media, radio and print media campaign, and delivered via VICSES media channels thereafter.

The campaign received a highly commended award at the Emergency Media and Public Affairs Award ceremony for Excellence in Emergency Communication in June 2018, and was nominated for a Creativity and Effectiveness Award from the prestigious Association for Data-Driven Marketing and Advertising (ADMA).

Figure 8 '15 to Float' campaign.

Post-event research case study: Victorians and the 2017 December heavy rain event

A key part of evaluating our success against the Strategy is to understand the reach and impact of our public information and warnings during emergency events.

The largescale heavy rain event from 1-3 December 2017 presented a unique opportunity for evaluation, due to the extreme volume of rainfall forecast and the unprecedented number of public information and warnings issued as a result. This included 7.4 million Emergency Alert (SMS) messages distributed to members of the Victorian community via their mobile devices due to forecast flood risk.

VICSES was keen to understand how average Victorians responded to the information issued through public information and warnings, to what degree local residents were prepared for the rain and/or flooding, and what impact the flood had upon them and their possessions. VICSES commissioned social and market research consultant Colmar Brunton immediately following the event to undertake research and analysis.

The key findings of the research:

■ Nearly 70% of Victorians were aware of the forecast before or at the very start of the heavy rain event, with awareness and perceptions of the severity of the event driven by traditional media (news, radio and print). Other key sources of further information included the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website as well as the websites and social media pages of emergency services agencies.

■ Comprehension of the Emergency Alert (SMS) message was high and the message was overwhelmingly deemed important and welcomed by the community. The majority of Victorians took some form of action on receiving the Emergency Alert message.

■ Information and warnings supported decision making, with two thirds of Victorians taking some sort of action to prepare for the event. However, the evidence suggested that Victorians didn't understand the difference between formal warnings and general emergency-related information. In particular, evidence suggested many thought the Emergency Alert message was a 'Flood Warning'.

■ Two thirds of Victorians took action to prepare for the event with higher rates of preparedness driven by prior experience of flooding, expectations of event severity and receipt of the Emergency Alert message. The outcome suggests emergency events drive higher interest in preparing given that an estimated half of the population is uninterested in emergency preparedness.

■ More than 9 in 10 Victorians who looked for additional information before or during the event found what they were looking for. Only a small number of people thought information was missing, irrespective of information source. Those who thought information was missing had a desire for more localised, to the minute and nuanced information with clear practical tips for what to do in a flood.

Where did people go for more information?

- Traditional — 46%
- BoM — 30%
- New media — 21%
- Emergency/gov. controlled — 16%
- Friend, neighbour or relative — 9%
- Other & don't know — 5%
- Did not seek additional info. — 29%

What did people do to prepare?

- Sought information — 42%
- Acted to avoid the event — 32%
- Protected belongings /property — 27%
- Something else — 7%
- Didn't take any other action — 33%

Was the Emergency Alert SMS welcomed?

- 52% VERY WELCOME
- 25% WELCOME
- 18% NEITHER
- 3% UNWELCOME
- 2% VERY UNWELCOME

Figure 9 Research findings on public response to warnings during December 2017 heavy rain event.

Case study

CEDRR Project and Whittlesea doorknocking, May 2018

In May 2018 VICSES volunteers worked alongside a research team from the University of Melbourne to conduct the initial round of questionnaires for the CEDRR project.

The CEDRR project originated from a CFA/ VICSES Community Engagement forum where our volunteers challenged presenters to come up with a way to engage that is evidence based.

A research team from the University of Melbourne took up the challenge and developed a methodology focussing on one-on-one engagement with community members. The method is centred on forming a relationship quickly and asking the community member to take some action that will make them safer if an emergency occurs.

Whittlesea was chosen for the initial doorknocks due to its flood risk, and results from the work is expected to be available in Year Three of the Strategy.

The CEDRR project will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of our engagement with communities.

Strategic objective 2: Increase collaboration

Goal: VICSES has effective partnerships where we can collaborate and facilitate inclusive participation to enable community led activities and solutions.

VICSES is committed to collaborating with our local communities and partners to maximise opportunities and provide local services to meet local needs; developing resilient communities through the growth of strong connections and community partnerships.

AAMI

VICSES was pleased to renew its Sponsorship Agreement with AAMI for a further term of three years in July 2017. Since signing on as VICSES community partner in 2002, AAMI as our Principal Community Partner, has contributed more than $7 million to our organisation, supporting community awareness campaigns such as '15 to Float', and funding essential equipment for our volunteers.

Melbourne Water

VICSES and Melbourne Water commenced negotiations to extend the current partnership for an additional three years, and provide an adaptable and collaborative way of moving forward and building on the work undertaken to date. Negotiations focussed on increasing reach into the community and facilitating future service delivery needs.

Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning (DELWP)

Regional Floodplain Management Strategies (RFMS) were a key focus during the period in our partnership with Department of Land, Environment, water and Planning (DELWP). VICSES played a role in informing and prioritising various floodplain management actions and sitting on RFMS steering groups. By the end of June 2018, five of the ten regional floodplain management strategies were complete, with the remaining five strategies progressed to final stages and scheduled for completion by the end of 2018.

Toll Driver Reviver

'Driver Reviver' is a national road safety community program operating for more than 27 years, and our participation in the campaign across Victoria remains one of our most recognised campaigns.

With the support of local partners along with the program's national organisers and sponsors, VICSES continued to lead campaign messaging about the dangers of fatigued driving around key holiday and long-weekend periods.

University of Melbourne

During Year Two, VICSES continued our participation in the research led by the University of Melbourne titled Community Engagement for Disaster Risk Reduction (CEDRR), to assess household preparedness for emergencies and learn more about how engagement and relationships influence behaviour change.

VICSES volunteers joined members of Victoria Police, Lions Club and Neighbourhood Watch to doorknock homes in the Whittlesea area using a CEDRR questionnaire. A second follow-up visit was then undertaken to assess any action post completion of the initial questionnaire.

Read more about the CEDRR project on page 22.

Case studies

Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day

Celebrated throughout March, Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Day recognise the diverse cultures making up the people of Victoria and Australia. In 2018, the Harmony Day message was 'everyone belongs', and VICSES members attended a number of family-friendly activities across the state.

These events are opportunities for units to connect with people from different backgrounds, especially if they are new to regional areas, or to the country. Participating in these events also allows you to experience diverse music, food, and dance. Last year, each unit received a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Resource Kit for use during operations. The kits build the capability of our members to help develop and maintain relationships with CALD communities.

Pyramid Hill Emergency Services Day

Kerang SES and the North West Regional Support Unit attended the Pyramid Hill Emergency Services Day.

The event, arranged by Country Fire Authority (CFA) and attended by VICSES, Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police, Life Saving Victoria and other partners, brought together 200 school children from the local area to learn more about the local emergency services, and hear from local spokespeople on how they have progressed in their emergency service roles. Kerang SES and Cohuna CFA provided an Extraction Demonstration, showing how the services work together to achieve a common goal.

Strategic objective 3: Foster connections

Goal: VICSES is an innovative and influential leader that fosters community connectivity and promotes positive behaviour change.

VICSES is a significant contributor and leader in emergency management. Our People engage with the community to raise awareness of emergency preparedness, understanding risk and the relevance of taking action before, during and after emergency events.

We acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all-approach: Victorian communities are diverse, speaking more than 260 languages and dialects and following 135 faiths and religions. What works well for one community may not necessarily be meaningful in another, and with such diversity, our service capacity to directly engage with communities may vary considerably across the State.

In Year Two, VICSES made significant efforts to better understand the drivers that will enable stronger community connections and enhance preparedness behaviour.

Central Region Demographics Project

VICSES has developed demographic profiles for 13 municipalities within Victoria's Central Region, identified as hotspots for flood and storm impacts. The profile cards will support the development of business strategy and community engagement by providing information on:

- Language spoken at home
- Employment locations
- Migration flows
- Cultural background
- Population growth

VICSES also conducted door knocks to raise awareness in the hotspot areas, connecting with approximately 2000 homes.

Information gathered throughout this process will provide base logic for programs, actions and projects to be rolled out during Year Three of the Strategy.

Evaluating our success

Each Strategic Objective within the Strategy includes a KPI to support VICSES to assess its progress (see Figure 10). These are:

KPI 1

8% increase in the number of people who are aware of their risk.

Outcome: Individuals, households and businesses believe that preparing for future emergency events is important.

KPI 2

12% increase in programs that partner with others to engage the community.

Outcome: Program and service delivery with others is collaborative, integrated and community-centred.

KPI 3

15% increase in activities that directly engage with the community.

Outcome: Better connected communities that are able to adapt to future emergency events.

Flagship measures

The Indicators and Evaluation Framework outlines Flagship Measures for each KPI in addition to a set of measures relating to disaster impact to ensure our efforts to build community capacity focus on the longer term.

Sustained behaviour change is a long-term goal requiring continued efforts over a number of years. As such, VICSES does not expect a substantial change in community behaviour in the first three years of Strategy implementation and it will take many years to observe a change in disaster impacts.

Building the evaluation capability in Our People and providing them with appropriate tools for evaluation will be a key focus for evaluating our success.

Implementation of the Indicators and Evaluation Framework will commence in Year Three with the development of new data sources, measurement activities and comparison with existing historical data for each Strategic Objective.

Capacity

VICSES builds community knowledge and skills to support communities prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events

Maintenance — Maintenance reminders to build on awareness and confidence of plans and processes through exercising

Not interested — Make risk information accessible and written in simple language consistent with the interest level and expertise of the intended audience

Contemplating — Deliver messages in bite sizes and encourage quick wins

Talk to homeowners met during response and engagement activities about how to prepare

Preparing — Targeted key messages and activities for people to personalise their risk

Taking action — Local business and commerce encouraged to undertake business continuity planning to build self-reliance.

Engage at-risk properties providing meaningful information that leads to planning and action.

Individuals, households and businesses believe that preparing for future emergency events is important

Key performance Indicator:
8% increase in the number of people who are aware of their risk

Collaboration

VICSES has effective partnerships where we can collaborate and facilitate inclusive participation to enable community led activities and solutions

Program and service delivery with others is collaborative, integrated and community centred

Key performance Indicator: 12% increase in programs that partner with others to engage the community

Maintenance
- Foster corporate partnerships to leverage shared value projects that foster resilience actions in preparing and responding
- Promote and use teachable moments that share community experiences with others
- Public campaigns use community and stakeholder networks to assist with the effective and sustainable integration of VICSES programs

Not interested

Contemplating
- Map, build and join community networks that can distribute information in an emergency
- Take advantage of networking, recruitment, training, access to shared resources and amplifying key messages

Taking action
- Work with others to broaden program reach in delivery preparedness programs before, during and after emergencies

Preparing
- Build and maintain media relationships to promote the service and deliver tailored emergency information

Connections

VICSES is an innovative and influential leader that fosters community connectivity and promotes positive behaviour change

Better connected communities that are able to adapt for future emergency events

Key performance Indicator: 15% increase in activities that directly engage with the community

Maintenance
- Preparedness assessment tools to identify additional actions people need to undertake
- Promote community events of all sizes that to discuss safety, preparation and the role of VICSES
- Community participation in preparedness and response initiatives

Not interested
- Focus community preparedness and response activities that can be undertaken in bite size steps
- Explore interactive engagement methods, including social media, technology and community groups to provide messages

Contemplating
- Our People will have the skills to support their local community's risk profile.

Taking action
- Data collection processes for Our People to record and measure VICSES activity and impact with the community

Preparing

Figure 10 VICSES Community Resilience Strategy resilience models.

Strategic objective 1: Build capacity

Flagship Measure 1.1: Proportion of households that have a documented emergency plan

Since 2007 the overall number of Victorian households with emergency plans appears stable at about 30% (any variation in results is within the margin of error), however the proportion of Victorian households that have documented their plan is smaller, ranging from 8-15% of the overall population (see Figure 11). There is substantial variation in the rates of plan making across the population, with it ranging from 16-88% in different places at different times and for different hazards[7].

Flagship Measure 1.2: Proportion of households that have undertaken hazard-relevant maintenance actions

With the exception of studies examining property preparedness for bushfires, limited work has been undertaken to examine property preparedness maintenance for floods, storms and other hazards. In an ABS survey in 2007, 55% of Victorian households reported clearing their gutters within the previous 12 months and in 2015 research commissioned by VICSES, 69% had undertaken an action to prepare their home including gutter clearing. Future work will better define the actions considered to be 'hazard-relevant maintenance' and gather data on the prevalence of these in the Victorian population.

Flagship Measure 1.3: Proportion of people who avoid entering floodwater

Behaviour around floodwater has been a key national research focus in Australia. Surveys commissioned by VICSES and the Inspector General for Emergency Management (IGEM) after flood events in 2010/11 and again in December 2017 asked how many people had entered floodwater during the event with responses ranging from 7-51%. However, these surveys have generally not accounted for the opportunity of the surveyed population to enter floodwater, and thus cannot be consistently compared. Future work will examine how to better ask this question to enable consistent comparison between flood events.

At a population level, surveys commissioned by VICSES in 2013 found that:

- 13% of parents of young children (3-13 years) reported that they or their children had ever entered floodwater, with 12% doing so themselves.
- 21% of young males (15-29 years) reported that they or their friends had ever entered floodwater, with 12% doing so themselves.

Flagship Measure 1.4: Proportion of people who understand warnings

Previous research commissioned by VICSES and IGEM has examined how the public comprehend Emergency Alert SMS messages. In 2011, 89% of those who received an Emergency Alert SMS understood the message and who was sending it and 72% recalled its content. In December 2017, 98% of those who received an Emergency Alert SMS understood the message, 93% understood who was sending it, and 93% were able to recall at least one element of the message. Future work will examine how best to investigate comprehension of warnings in post-event surveys, especially those distributed through the VicEmergency platform.

Household Emergency Plans in Victoria

Legend:
- ◆ Has emergency plan
- ■ Plan is written or rehearsed
- ▲ Plan is written

Figure 11 Flagship Measure 1.1.

[7] Data taken from VICSES commissioned reports and Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007), *Household Preparedness for Emergencies: NSW, Vic., Qld and ACT.*

Strategic objective 2: Increase collaboration

Flagship Measure 2.1: Satisfaction of key stakeholders involved in community engagement program development, delivery, or evaluation
Future work will develop and implement this measure to assess our partnerships.

Strategic objective 3: Foster connections

Flagship Measure 3.1: Program level of quality assessed against the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Quality Assurance standard
Future work will develop and implement this measure to assess the quality of our programs.

Reducing Disaster Impacts
– How do we define success in the longer term?

Flagship Measure 4.1: Number of fatalities from floods, storms, landslides, earthquakes, and tsunami

There has been extensive research into the extent and influencing factors of fatalities during disaster events in Australia. The historical record for flood fatalities is quite extensive with at least 245 deaths recorded from floods between 1900 and 2015 (see Figure 12). Between 1990 and 2015 floods and storms killed at least 62 people in Victoria[8,9]. Since 1900 there have been no recorded fatalities from earthquake or tsunami in Victoria and a small number of fatalities from landslide. Further work will continue to develop and update the historical record and provide a greater level of annual detail along with insights for targeting community resilience programs.

Flagship Measure 4.2: Number of homes damaged by floods, storms, landslides, earthquakes, and tsunami

Between 2009-10 and 2017-18 VICSES attended more than 51,865 homes damaged by floods, storms, earthquakes or landslides[10] (see Figure 13). This figure does not represent the full burden of damage on residential property in Victoria. For future analysis, VICSES intends to work with the insurance industry to obtain a more complete picture of damage to homes.

Flagship Measure 4.3: Prevalence of disaster-related stress and mental illness in communities affected by floods and storms

Due to the complexity and accessibility of multiple data sources required to support this Flagship Measure, reporting on this will not commence until clear direction is established by the EMV Resilience Recovery Strategy. The direction of the Resilient Recovery Strategy when released may require revision of this Flagship Measure.
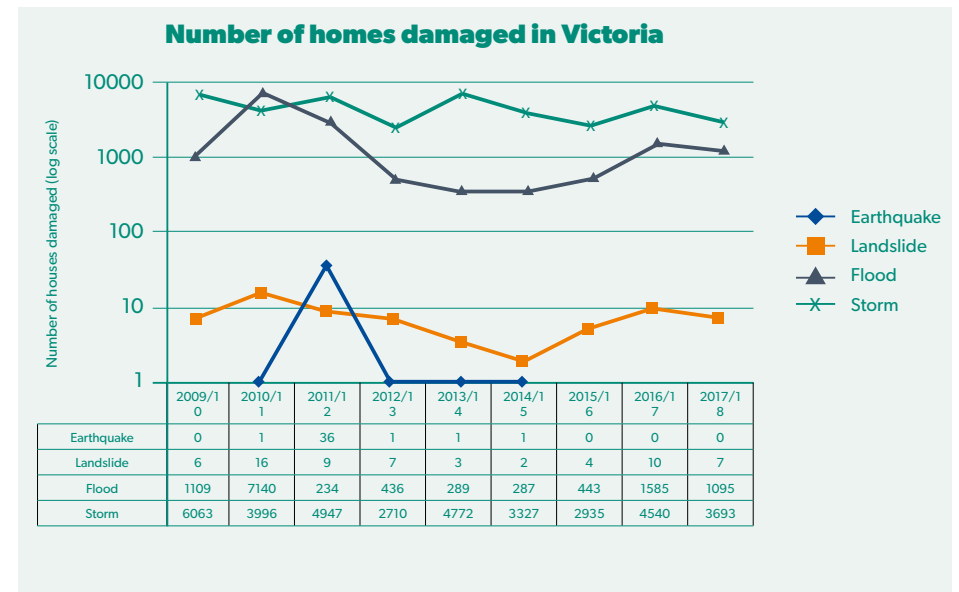

Figure 12 Flagship Measure 4.1.

Figure 13 Flagship Measure 4.2.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Earthquake	0	1	36	1	1	1	0	0	0
Landslide	6	16	9	7	3	2	4	10	7
Flood	1109	7140	234	436	289	287	443	1585	1095
Storm	6063	3996	4947	2710	4772	3327	2935	4540	3693

[8] Haynes et. al. (2016) An Analysis of Human Fatalities from Floods in Australia 1900-2015, Report for the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC
[9] Coates et. al. (2017) An Analysis of Human Fatalities from Cyclones, Earthquakes and Severe Storms in Australia, Report for the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC
[10] Based on VICSES incident data

Contact us

To provide feedback on the Year Two Outcomes Report or the VICSES Community Resilience Strategy 2016-19, please email resilience@ses.vic.gov.au or contact your local VICSES regional office.

Appendix A – References

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