



Annual Report 2024-2025

Victoria State Emergency Service



50 Years of VICSES



This report provides an account of the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) during the 2024-25 financial year, as required under the *Financial Management Act 1994*.

It provides a record of events and activities, acknowledges the contribution of VICSES volunteers, staff, and supporters, and informs government and the public about VICSES services during the 2024-25 financial year.

This report is available for viewing online:

ses.vic.gov.au

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

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Year at a glance: 2024-25



VICSES at a glance



Who we are

Control agency for:



Flood



Storm



Earthquake



Tsunami



Landslide



154

Units

16

Permanently
staffed offices

104

Road rescue
providers

Our people in 2024-25



5,040
Volunteers*

Female 33%
Male 66%
Other 1%

Volunteer leadership (Controllers and Deputy Controllers)
Female 30% Male 70%

*active & non-active

368
Staff

Female 57%
Male 42%
Other 1%

Staff leadership (Executive, Senior Managers, and other people leaders)
Female 40% Male 60%



Our agency in 2024-25



342,374
Volunteer hours



Flood
11,287 hours 2,165 incidents



Storm
132,569 hours 24,188 incidents



Road crash rescue
16,269 hours 2,532 incidents



Tsunami, landslide or earthquake
2,619 hours 154 incidents



35,940
Incidents



Assist agency
45,430 hours 3,621 incidents



Community engagement
122,382 hours 2,121 incidents



Rescue (other/RAIR)
6,270 hours 1,007 incidents



Other
5,548 hours 152 incidents



2024-25 marks our busiest year on record for road crash rescue and assist agency response.



50 Years of VICSES
1975 - 2025

Chair Forward



On behalf of the VICSES Board, I am pleased to present the 2024-25 Annual Report.

What an exciting and momentous year for our organisation, celebrating 50 years since VICSES was first established in 1975. It has been incredible to look back and see how far we've come, and the people and events that have helped make us who we are today.

This past year we have experienced continued demand for our services, with over 342,000 hours contributed across flood and storm emergencies, rescues, assisting other agencies, and much more.

Notably, 2024-25 marks our busiest year on record for road crash

rescue and assist agency response – a testament to our critical road crash rescue provider units as well as our integral role and strong partnerships within the emergency services sector. This is in addition to significant interstate deployments, as well as severe weather impacts here in Victoria.

As first responders, our volunteers are often faced with challenging and unpredictable environments. Events such as those in August 2025 where two Victoria Police officers tragically lost their lives remind us of why the wellbeing and safety of our people is a paramount in everything that we do, every day. We are proud to support our partner agencies, and my condolences are with Victoria Police and impacted friends and family.

VICSES is a leader in community safety, underpinned by the tireless contributions and dedication of our volunteers and staff. Significant funding announced this year towards our fleet, wellbeing services, unit facilities, the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program will ensure that our people have the resources they need to continue to deliver our critical emergency response.

This year we said farewell to several long standing and respected Executive and Board members, as well as welcoming new appointments to our leadership team.

Debbie Mann commenced as Executive Director People, Safety and Wellbeing in August 2024. Debbie has played an integral role in building our organisational capability and the development, wellbeing and safety of our people.

In March 2025, we welcomed Rob Purcell as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), bringing with him diverse leadership experience across the emergency management sector and a passion for volunteerism. I look forward to Rob's leadership and support particularly towards driving our strategic outcomes.

In August 2025, Alistair Drayton was formally appointed to the Chief Officer Operations (COO) role on an ongoing basis. Alistair is a well-respected leader and peer within VICSES and the sector, with over three decades of experience in emergency management across volunteer and staff roles. Alistair's continued leadership within the operational space will be of great benefit to our VICSES service delivery. I am especially proud that we were able to make this appointment from within our own ranks.

To the Board we welcomed the appointment of Shikha Gupta in October 2024 and Gabrielle Castree in July 2025, who both bring significant experience across diverse portfolios and are passionate about VICSES' role in emergency preparedness and community safety. In particular, it is fantastic to have Gabrielle joining our Board as a current volunteer with the Bellarine Unit. I am deeply appreciative and grateful to be working alongside such talented and dedicated Board members including Shikha and Gabrielle, as well Bernadette Northeast,

Casey Nunn, Jane Foley and Noel Clement. Their wisdom, kindness, and passion for our organisation, our volunteers and our community is truly inspiring.

I would like to extend my gratitude to outgoing CEO Greg Leach for his leadership and advocacy for our people during his time with VICSES, as well as long serving outgoing Board member Lisa Borowick for her guidance and leadership as the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation for outgoing COO Tim Wiebusch, who served with VICSES for 33 years and helped lead our organisation through many significant emergency events and milestones. I cannot thank Tim enough for his leadership and dedication to the service, and I wish him all the best in his new role as Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner.

These Executive and Board transitions have marked a significant period of change for our organisation, and I would like to acknowledge the leadership contributions of Asad Zafar, Kate White, Kristy Cadusch, Silvia Silverii, and Toby Koberle for their positions in interim and acting Executive roles respectively.

As we reflect on the last 12 months, it is important to acknowledge our achievements and the challenges that we have overcome, as well as the road ahead. We know that there is still work to be done to further strengthen our service delivery, and we are committed to ensuring that we meet these objectives by listening and learning from the experiences of our people.

I would like to extend my gratitude to our volunteers, staff, and Executive team for your contributions throughout 2024-25. It is an honour to serve the people of VICSES, and I look forward to all that we will achieve together into the new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jasmine Doak .". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jasmine Doak
VICSES Board Chair
September 2025

CEO Report



I am pleased to present the 2024-25 VICSES Annual Report, highlighting our accomplishments and contributions during the last financial year.

It was my privilege to be appointed as the VICSES CEO in March 2025, joining such an established and respected emergency service organisation.

2024-25 presented many milestones for our service. Despite the ongoing cost-pressure environment VICSES successfully secured significant increased funding, providing a sustainable funding model that sets us up now and into the future. This is a testament to the advocacy work of our membership and ensures that our people have the resources they need to continue to deliver our critical emergency response.

Another significant milestone included our '50 years of VICSES' celebrations, marking 50 years since VICSES was first established in 1975. This provided an opportunity to come together to reflect on the incredible achievements of our past and present members, the evolution of the service and the essential role that we play as part of our sector and our communities today.

During 2024-25 our operational response contributed a total of 342,374 hours across 35,940 incidents. This includes our response to 2,532 road crash rescue incidents as Australia's largest road crash rescue network provider – a 21% increase on the previous financial year, and our highest recorded since 2009-10.

Once again, we experienced major flood and storm impacts here in Victoria including the extreme weather event from 27 August to 5 September, which saw our volunteers respond to over 9,500 incidents for widespread and devastating storm damage and sadly loss of life.

From December 2024 and into the new year our members contributed significant support hours to assist our fire agency partners for bushfires, particularly in the Grampians region. This coincided with response for our own hazards as severe weather not only spurred on fires, but also resulted hundreds of trees down and landslide impacts in bushfire affected areas.

Notably, our members also answered the call for help from our partner agencies across multiple events interstate, including deploying taskforces to Queensland in the wake of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred in March, and to New South Wales to support ongoing flood relief efforts in May. These deployments exemplified the dedication of our people, with our commitment to community safety knowing no borders.

Following the implementation of a new operating model in 2022-23, VICSES committed to gaining insights and feedback on the new structure, otherwise known as the Operating Model – Check, Learn, Adjust (OM-CLA) project. Following consultation with volunteers and staff, in October 2024 we released the OM-CLA Action Plan. The plan consolidated our member feedback into a high-level set of initiatives that the Executive team has continued to focus on and prioritise. Key milestones and actions are either complete or well underway and those remaining have been incorporated into our annual plan ensuring we are actively seeking to embed continuous improvements into our processes, systems and organisational structure where our members need it the most.

We also continue to prioritise delivering the key outcomes of the 2023-27 VICSES Strategic Plan as we now transition into year three. Key priorities include developing a risk-based and comprehensive asset management and fleet delivery system, a continued strong focus on people development and training, investing in maintenance and technology to improve and strengthen our facilities and systems and working through ways to

strengthen our support to our units so they can focus on service delivery and community preparedness outcomes.

Building on our investment in contemporary technology, in June 2025 we launched our VICSES Information Services Roadmap. The roadmap underpins our overarching strategic plan and creates a clear pathway for VICSES to enhance our current systems, drive transformation and deliver meaningful value across the organisation to enhance the experience of our members and the community.

Our strength is in our people and it is important that we also have the systems in place to support a safe, inclusive, and progressive culture. Key people, safety and wellbeing programs have included the re-structure of our Peer Support team to better support our volunteer wellbeing, continued work towards revising our VICSES Regulations, and the year two delivery of our Safety Drives Our Decisions Roadmap.

In 2024-25 we have continued our delivery of new state-of-the-art facilities to strengthen our response in high-growth areas, including unit openings at Aintree, Cranbourne, Point Cook and Officer. It has been fantastic to see the successful recruitment of volunteers as part of these newly established units where communities are now bolstered with additional emergency preparedness capabilities and response in times of need. Construction is currently underway for new units located in Mallacoota and Dunkeld, in addition to the design development of new units in Bannockburn, Devon Meadows, Footscray, Heathcote, Kalkallo, Kilmore, and Rochester, as well as land identification for new facilities at Corio, Sunbury, and Wyndham Vale.

Other exciting projects are also underway that will further enhance our service delivery and the experience of our people, particularly regarding the future of our fleet. This includes the ongoing delivery of our state funded award-winning Heavy Rescue Truck and the redesign of our most versatile emergency vehicle – the Medium Rescue Truck. We continue to support our volunteers with the implementation of volunteer driven and selected new personal protective clothing and equipment which ensures that our safety equipment and clothing evolve with the needs of our volunteers and the extensive services that we provide.

Alongside highlighting our achievements, it is also important to acknowledge our challenges. Ongoing climate drivers have seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters and severe weather events and an increase in requests for assistance from our sector partners, tightening existing pressures on our resources and our service delivery. Despite this, our members have continued to demonstrate their resilience and above all their dedication to the safety of others.

I am looking forward to the next 12 months, with a strong focus on leadership support and mentoring across our membership, capacity building, capability alignment through risk identification, building stronger partnerships across the sector and in the community and strengthening community preparedness and resilience driving through a people first approach.

Thank you to our communities and partners, our volunteers, staff, the Executive team and VICSES Board for your ongoing service and commitment to our shared vision of *safer communities – together*.



Rob Purcell
VICSES Chief Executive Officer
August 2025

About VICSES

Our Vision

Safer Communities – Together.

Our Mission

Partner with communities, government, other agencies, and business to provide timely and effective emergency management services, building community preparedness, disaster resilience and contributing to risk prevention.

Our Values



We pride ourselves on our credibility

We pride ourselves on delivering on our promises and commitments, and in doing the right thing consistent with our values.

We are responsive, trustworthy, skilled and respectful in our actions.



We are part of our community

We take a proactive, supportive and empathetic approach to achieve community outcomes.

We collaborate with our communities and partners, sharing knowledge and expertise.

We ensure we are integrated, connected and engaged with our community.



Safety drives our decisions

We empower our people to work within their capability to ensure we do not compromise the safety of our people and the community.

We promote open and honest conversations about the health and wellbeing of our people.



Focused and adaptable

We are disciplined in achieving our objectives; adaptable in our approach.

We recognise and respect the diversity of our capability.

We channel our resources to achieve results.



Together we are VICSES

We share a common purpose working together without fear, favour or prejudice.

We acknowledge that all of our people contribute to, and enhance our ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Who we are

VICSES is a volunteer-based organisation, providing emergency assistance to minimise the impact of emergencies and strengthen the community's capacity to plan, respond, and recover when emergencies occur. Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES, serving the Victorian community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

We are the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide throughout Victoria, and provide the largest road rescue network in Australia, with 104 accredited road crash rescue specialist units across the state.

We operate under the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005*, and collaborate with our partner agencies in line with control arrangements under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.

As a statutory authority, VICSES is governed by a Board, which is accountable to the Minister for Emergency Services. Operating since 1950, VICSES covers all of Victoria, via 154 operational units across two regions, in addition to strategically placed regional and state office locations.

VICSES is a significant contributor and leader in emergency management, and has served Victorians with distinction since 1950 (as the Civil Defence Organisation prior to 1975).

We strive to develop and lead best practice by focusing on further developing our core business activities and strengthening our relationships and partnerships in developing a resilient Victorian community that knows what to do before, during, and after an emergency.

We have a strong value proposition for government, community, employers, and partners, and we pride ourselves on being a values-based organisation of choice for our people. We enjoy having the highest level of unprompted awareness of any emergency services organisation – well above most other sector organisations.

VICSES is unique in that it provides multiple specialist services, including road crash rescue, response to flood and storm, in addition to swift water rescue, and supporting other emergency service agencies with everything from search and rescue (land, water, steep angle and alpine), crime scene support, fire and ambulance support, and other agency support.

Our broad remit means we are responsible for maintaining highly specialised services, training, vehicles, and equipment across the broadest range of legislative responsibilities of any emergency service organisation in the state of Victoria. However, this presents a range of resource and financial challenges and constraints for VICSES.

With an increase in the frequency and intensity of severe weather events due to our changing climate, population growth, greater diversity of our communities, and increased regulatory compliance and continued sector reform, VICSES is experiencing growing complexity and demand for the services we provide, and increased pressure on our current operating model.

These increased demands and expectations have implications on the experience of our volunteers, and their ability to deliver services safely and effectively for the communities we serve. As we continue to evolve to meet the changing demands and needs of communities, government, and the emergency management sector, continued investment in VICSES is vital to ensure our high-quality service delivery and operating model is sustainable to meet our current and future needs.

This document provides an overview of the work undertaken by VICSES in the 2024-25 financial year, and aims to highlight our unique strengths and expertise, while addressing our current challenges now and into the future. It demonstrates our strong commitment to advocate for the continued investment in our people, our capabilities,

the way we operate, and our technology to be a viable and sustainable emergency management service and realise our vision of *Safer Communities – Together*.

Our Value Proposition

Our People

VICSES celebrates an inclusive and diverse workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve and is committed to leading better public safety outcomes. Our strong investment in organisational values is a key driver in empowering and motivating our volunteers and staff (our people) in a work environment that acknowledges, respects, and values the diversity, abilities, and contributions of all. The safety of our people is paramount. Working in partnership with some of Australia's most respected health and wellness providers, VICSES is committed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of our people and in ensuring a healthy work life balance.

Community and Government

Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES, making up 93% of membership, who serve the Victorian community as an unpaid workforce 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. VICSES has a long and proud history of serving Victoria with a simple vision: *Safer Communities – Together*. As a significant contributor and leader in emergency management, our strength is our people, their highly skilled and extensive capabilities, and networks. VICSES provides significant economic value to the state through a multiple specialist volunteer workforce that provides emergency assistance to thousands of Victorians every year.

Employers

Volunteering for VICSES provides the opportunity to learn skills that are highly sought after and transferrable to the workplace. As a registered training office, all volunteers receive nationally endorsed and competency-based training in a broad range of operational and other critical support areas, and gain skills and experience in leadership, teamwork, communication, accountability, and commitment. Employers also benefit from increased employee engagement, morale, and motivation, while making a demonstrated contribution to corporate social responsibility.

Partners

Our research indicates that VICSES enjoys the highest level of recognition among the community compared to all other emergency service organisations within the Victorian community, and well above most other sector organisations, making VICSES a well-recognised and trusted brand. Our collaborations with others can assist in the achievement of objectives we might not be able to achieve on our own; executed through exchange of goods, services, financial, or in-kind support.

VICSES Today

VICSES has been involved in most major emergency responses in Victoria since we began in 1950. In 2025, we celebrated 50 years of VICSES.

1950

VICSES is established as a volunteer based Civil Defence Organisation which could quickly be activated in the event of war.

1972



Parliament passes the State Emergency Services and Civil Defence Act which formally legislates the role of the Victoria Civil Defence Organisation. At this time, around 100 voluntary Civil Defence Units had been established in municipalities across Victoria.

1981



The Victoria State Emergency Service Act is passed, formally recognising VICSES as a general emergency management agency.

1979

The Ministry for Police and Emergency Services is created, including Victoria Police, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Country Fire Authority and Victoria State Emergency Service.

1975

The Victoria Civil Defence Organisation is renamed the Victoria State Emergency Service to conform with other states.



2005

Victoria State Emergency Service is established as an independent Statutory Authority.

VICSES Today

"By 2027 we will be a progressive and agile leader in emergency preparedness and response, whose strength is in our people, capabilities, and strategic partnerships, leading to increased community safety."

VICSES Strategic Plan 2023-2027

2025



2025 marked 50 years of VICSES. This was a time to reflect and celebrate our achievements, challenges, and evolution from a Civil Defence Organisation to the organisation that we are today.



Our Strategy on a page: 2023-2027

Strategy statement: As a volunteer emergency service, by 2027 we will be a progressive and agile leader in emergency preparedness and response, whose strength is in our people, capabilities, and strategic partnerships, leading to increased community safety.

Outcome 1 We have actively shaped our service delivery to meet the changing needs of our operating environment	PRIORITIES 1.1 We will focus on understanding the supply and demand pressures on our services. 1.2 We will implement changes to our service delivery through active engagement with our volunteers, staff, partners, and community. 1.3 We will ensure our volunteers, staff, partners, and community understand the value of our services. 1.4 We will be a strong voice to government to support sustainable funding and services.	KEY MEASURES Services delivered safely and to scope. Increased performance in core response activities. Sustained financial resilience. Level of local response capability and capacity matched to community risk profile.
Outcome 2 We connect better to communities, enhancing their preparedness for emergency weather events	PRIORITIES 2.1 We will deliver targeted preparedness programs, based on risk and research, that directly engage the community. 2.2 We will ensure our program design, delivery and evaluation is collaborative and community centred. 2.3 We will design and deliver policies, programs, resources and development opportunities that reflect the diversity and uniqueness of our communities.	KEY MEASURES Increased level of community engagement. Increased access to preparedness resources. Increased community preparedness. Increased community knowledge and action.
Outcome 3 We have a culture that enables safe, highly skilled, and diverse volunteers and staff supported by effective systems	PRIORITIES 3.1 We will further develop a safe, inclusive, and progressive culture that represents the diversity of our communities. 3.2 We will maintain and strengthen a work and volunteer environment that ensures the health, safety, and wellbeing of our people. 3.3 We will embed practices to attract, engage, and develop the right people in the right roles. 3.4 We will focus on improving our systems and processes to enhance our peoples' experience.	KEY MEASURES Staff and volunteer demographics better reflect community. Improved staff and volunteer attraction, engagement, and retention. Reduced high and critical risk incidents. Improved satisfaction with effectiveness of systems.
Outcome 4 We have strengthened and influenced integral partnerships across community, business, government, and the emergency management sector	PRIORITIES 4.1 We will build the confidence of our volunteers to be a positive voice for VICSES. 4.2 We will cultivate community partnerships based on shared values and mutual opportunity. 4.3 We will partner with relevant organisations to share resources to deliver safety outcomes to the community. 4.4 We will work with business and government to create opportunities for increased volunteerism.	KEY MEASURES Maximised effectiveness of partnerships. Increased volunteer advocacy. Increased volunteer capacity.

Image: Excerpt from VICSES Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Emergency Management

We collaborate and consult with partner agencies and departments as part of the Victoria Government emergency management arrangements under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, coordinated by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV).

Emergency management requires swift, localised responses with trained and well-supported personnel to address the disruptive, largely unpredictable, sudden, and potentially destructive nature of emergencies.

Expanding our control agency response for flood, storm, landslide, earthquake, and tsunami, VICSES plays a key role in:

- Supporting our partner agencies:
 - Ambulance Victoria
 - Country Fire Authority (CFA)
 - Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
 - Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)
 - Parks Victoria
 - Victoria Police
- Rescue of persons from, or endangered by:
 - Road, aircraft, industrial and rail (RAIR) incidents
 - Steep and high angle incidents
 - Damaged or collapsed buildings
 - Swift water
 - Other emergency or dangerous situations
- Assisting:
 - Search and rescue on land, including caves and on water
 - Evacuation
 - Incidents involving mass casualties
- Provision of information and advice to the community and government before, during, and after emergency events.

The Volunteer Experience

VICSES is a volunteer-centric organisation that is committed to providing a volunteer experience that meets the cultural, family, and work need of our volunteers. This is supported by the implementation of our renewed Operating Model in early 2022, with a core focus on our volunteers, as well as outcomes, priorities, and key measures as part of our [2023-2027 Strategic Plan](#).

Service Delivery Strategy

The [VICSES Service Delivery Strategy \(2015 – 2025\)](#) helps us identify what services we will deliver to Victorian communities, and the most effective and efficient ways to deliver them.

The strategy provides a framework for assessing and planning our units service delivery in the context of their community, and a methodology for working towards sustainability, meeting the diverse needs of communities, changes to climate, and in managing areas of challenge or rapid growth.

VICSES Board

VICSES is governed by a Board of Directors (Board) who are accountable to the Minister for Emergency Services.

Jasmine Doak

Jasmine joined the VICSES Board in February 2023 and was appointed as Board Chair in May 2024, and is also the Chair of the People, Culture and Remuneration Committee.

Jasmine Doak has had more than 25 years' experience leading legal and human resource functions across various industries within both public and private sectors.

A passionate, inspired, and dynamic leader, Jasmine is well-regarded for her approach to driving organisational change and transformation, building high-performing teams, and supporting inclusive cultures to thrive. A practising lawyer, human resources professional, and graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Jasmine's career spans leading organisations, including senior executive positions at Minter Ellison, Mazda Australia, Linfox, AGL, Orica, and Coles Group.

Jasmine is a general board member of the Victorian Managed Insurance Agency and Chair of the Remuneration and Capability Committee. Previously, Jasmine has also served as a board member of the National Safety Council of Australia Foundation and as President of the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board.

Committed to living with connection and purpose, Jasmine is regularly engaged as a speaker and storyteller on the topics of people, culture, transformation, gender equity, leadership, and engagement.

Casey Nunn ASM

Casey Nunn ASM joined the VICSES Board in February 2020 and was appointed Deputy Chair in May 2024.

Casey has extensive experience in emergency services, having served as a volunteer with Ambulance Victoria for over 18 years and the CFA as an operational support volunteer for 13 years. She was awarded an Ambulance Service Medal in the 2011 Australia Day Honours.

In 2012, Casey was awarded an Emergency Services Foundation Scholarship and travelled throughout the United States and Canada studying recruiting, retaining, and leading volunteers.

Casey is a former Hume Young Citizen of the Year and a Youth Parliament Participant. In 2012, Casey was elected to Hume City Council and served as Mayor from 2013 - 2014. Casey serves as a Board member of the Salvation Army 3064 Advisory Board and is also a Trustee Director for Vision Super.

Casey is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2019.

Lisa Borowick CA

Lisa joined the VICSES Board in February 2017 and concluded her position in June 2025, including her role as Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee.

Lisa is a Chartered Accountant with more than 27 years' experience in commerce. Lisa's industry experience includes corporate travel, technology, insurance, residential property development, recruitment, risk management and accountancy. Lisa has spent over 30 years volunteering for not-for profits, such as environmental groups, and as the National President of sporting body, Maccabi Australia. Lisa sits on the Board of Goldman Group, LNB Projects Pty Ltd, and MAI Board of Governors.

Additionally, Lisa is the International Chair of the English-speaking Desk for Maccabi World Union and is a member of the International Sports Committee, who set and presided over the sporting regulations for the Maccabiah Games, a multi-sport event held every four years, and currently the third largest sporting event in the world.

Dr. Bernadette Northeast (B. Sci (Hons), PhD, GAICD)

Bernadette was appointed to the VICSES Board in September 2020.

Bernadette has post-graduate qualifications in fisheries management and aquaculture and a career background in natural resource management, strategic partnership brokerage, and stakeholder engagement. Bernadette has been a VICSES volunteer with the Warrnambool Unit since 2002. Holding a number of leadership, training, and operational roles; she has qualifications in almost all of the VICSES response areas.

Bernadette is passionate about community and volunteerism, and her contribution to community development and safety has been recognised a number of times, including a Royal Humane Society bravery commendation for her role in an ocean rescue event, 2017 Warrnambool City Council Australia Day Citizen of the Year, and 2019 Rotary International Peace Award.

Bernadette brings strong governance, risk, and strategic planning background from 25 years of experience on private and public sector Boards. She is currently the Deputy Chair of the Victorian Fisheries Authority, Deputy Chair South West Healthcare, Board Director PrimeSafe, and Chair Wimmera and South West Family Violence Partnership.

Jane Foley

Jane was appointed to the VICSES Board in August 2021.

Jane brings extensive corporate governance, strategy, risk, organisation improvement and change management experience. She has worked across a diverse range of sectors including superannuation, professional services, government, education, and international aid.

She has held diverse board and committee governance roles in commercial and not-for-profit organisations and is currently a Board member of Box Hill Institute and Chair of its Education Quality Committee.

Her qualifications include a Master of Arts (International Relations) and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Noel Clement

Noel joined the VICSES Board in October 2023.

Noel has over 30 years' experience in the community sector, working across a diverse range of social causes, with a particular depth of experience in emergency management and migration (asylum seekers and refugees).

He spent 20 years in senior leadership roles at Australian Red Cross, most recently as Director of Australian Programs where he was responsible for all programs and for state/territory operations across the country.

Noel has worked on emergency management issues from a local to global level. His experience encompasses the full spectrum of preparedness, response, and recovery programs, and he has been particularly active in calls for a greater investment in disaster risk reduction and community preparedness.

He has been involved in dozens of response and recovery initiatives for major emergencies over the last two decades, including the Bali Bombings (2002), Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), Black Saturday Bushfires (2009), Victorian Bushfires (2021), and many other significant events.

Noel is the current Chair of Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia, is a member of the Social Impact Hub's Professional Impact Network and has been undertaking a range of other work in the human services sector ranging from mentoring, teaching, and consultancy projects.

A critical thinker, Noel looks to unpack organisational and community issues to shape strategic and tactical responses. He has substantial experience in building effective relationships and collaborative partnerships across public, private, philanthropic, and not-for-profit sectors.

Noel is a qualified social worker and holds a Masters in Social Policy.

Shikha Gupta

Shikha joined the VICSES Board in October 2024 and was appointed as Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee in July 2025.

Shikha brings over 20 years of experience in leadership, strategic planning, and governance across various sectors, including public service. Currently, she serves as an Investment Director in the Credit team at the Future Fund, where she leads portfolio strategy, manages stakeholder relationships, and conducts rigorous due diligence on investment opportunities.

Prior to this, Shikha was a Principal at Partners Capital in London, where she led public equities research and provided strategic advice to institutional and high-net-worth clients. Her career also includes management consulting experience with the Boston Consulting Group, where she honed her analytical and strategic decision-making skills.

Shikha holds a Bachelor of Commerce with First Class Honours (Actuarial Studies, Dean's List) from the University of Melbourne and an MBA (Distinction) from INSEAD. She is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, underscoring her commitment to maintaining high standards of corporate governance.

In addition to her professional roles, Shikha serves on the Finance Audit and Risk Committee at Wesley College, Australia, where she contributes to effective risk management and governance practices.

Motivated by VICSES' mission to provide critical emergency services and support to the community, Shikha is eager to leverage her extensive experience in governance, financial management, and strategic oversight to help guide the organisation in its vital work of emergency planning, response, and recovery.

Gabrielle Castree

Gabrielle joined the VICSES Board in July 2025.

Gabrielle brings over 30 years' experience navigating complex environments, delivering strategic insights, and providing robust governance oversight. A specialist in Governance, Risk and Compliance, she has worked across diverse portfolios including environment, health, education, and primary industries, in both government and professional services sectors. Gabrielle currently serves on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of Cancer Council Victoria.

Gabrielle is passionate about empowering communities to strengthen their capacity to plan for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. Gabrielle has held various volunteer roles and is currently a volunteer member with VICSES Bellarine Unit.

VICSES Executive Team

VICSES is led by an Executive Leadership Team, who are accountable to the Board of Directors.

Rob Purcell, current Chief Executive Officer

Rob Purcell was appointed as CEO in March 2025, bringing with him over 35 years of experience in the emergency management sector and a passion for volunteerism. This includes key leadership positions at Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Airservices Australia, and the Royal Children's Hospital, as well as volunteer roles as part of local community groups and not-for-profit organisations.

Rob is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member of the Institute of Fire Engineers and a fellow of Leadership Victoria.

Greg Leach, former Chief Executive Officer

Greg was appointed as CEO in December 2023, before stepping down in October 2024.

Greg's experience in the emergency management sector spans over 30 years, including as Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, and senior and executive roles across Ambulance Victoria, CFA, and Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

Greg's formal qualifications include a Master of Business Administration, a Master of Emergency Management, and he is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Tim Wiebusch, former Chief Officer Operations

Tim Wiebusch was appointed COO in December 2017. In February 2025 Tim was appointed as the Acting Emergency Management Commissioner for Victoria, and in June 2025 Tim concluded his substantive position as VICSES COO following his formal appointment as Emergency Management Commissioner.

Tim brings a wealth of experience, with a career spanning 25-years in government agencies, in addition to significant long-term secondments at the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and EMV. He has also played a significant senior operational leadership role across a range of emergency events such as the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, major Victorian flood events (2010/2011 and 2022), Christmas Day hailstorm (2012), the Norwegian Star Incident (2016), and the Great Ocean Road landslides (2016).

Alistair Drayton, current Chief Officer Operations

Following his appointment as Acting COO in February 2025, Alistair was formally appointed to the ongoing role of COO in August 2025.

With over three decades of experience in emergency management, Alistair brings extensive operational expertise, leadership, and commitment to public safety.

A long-standing member of the CFA for more than 35 years, Alistair has served in both volunteer and staff capacities. He has over 25 years of experience in incident management and is an accredited Incident Controller, Regional Controller, and State Response Controller. Alistair has led responses during some of Victoria's most significant emergencies in addition to international deployments.

Kate White, Executive Director Community and Corporate Services

Kate joined VICSES in 2011, and is currently leading Community and Communications, Finance, Payroll, Strategy, Performance and Risk, Infrastructure and Property, and Assets portfolios.

Kate has extensive experience in emergency management, event management, and finance and banking across the public and corporate sectors. Kate is passionate about delivering improved public safety outcomes, building resilience and promoting innovative practices; driving sustainable and well governed solutions that are inclusive and aligned with the needs of our diverse and dispersed communities, workforce and stakeholders at VICSES.

Debbie Mann, Executive Director People, Safety and Wellbeing

Debbie joined VICSES as Executive Director People, Safety and Wellbeing in August 2024, bringing more than 20 years' experience in people and culture leadership across health, pharmacy, and publishing sectors.

Holding a Master of Management, Debbie is passionate about building organisational capability through a focus on developing and enabling leaders to meet current and future needs. A trusted, collaborative, and versatile leader, experienced in strategic advisory, business partnering, workplace relations, cultural transformation, change management and service.

Before Debbie's appointment to the role, Kristy Cadusch was Acting Executive Director People, Safety and Wellbeing from April 2024 – August 2024.

Silvia Silverii, Chief Information Officer

Silvia joined VICSES as Chief Information Officer in July 2018, leading the Information Systems directorate.

Silvia brings more than 20 years' experience in Information Technology and a wealth of experience and skills in optimising the use of data and information flow for organisations. Silvia was previously with the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria, where she held the role of Head of Information Technology and Management for five years, supporting IBAC's organisational objectives through the leadership of its information and communications technology programs. Prior to IBAC, Silvia was the Chief Information Officer for the Financial Ombudsman Service for six years. Prior to that, Silvia worked internationally and nationally for EPT Pty Ltd/KAZ Software Solutions.

Asad Zafar, Interim Chief Information Officer

Asad Zafar joined VICSES as the Interim Chief Information Officer in December 2024 to support arrangements as part of the recruitment period for the ongoing CEO role, finishing up in the position in June 2025.

Asad brings more than 20 years' experience in Information Technology and Digital across government, public transport, and logistics sectors. Holding an MBA and Bachelor of Business Systems, Asad is passionate about leveraging technology to meet organisation goals. An energetic, multi-cultural leader, Asad has experience in strategy development, cyber security and program delivery.

Before Asad's appointment to the role, Toby Koberle was Acting Chief Information Officer from November 2024 - December 2024.

Corporate Governance

Statutory Authority, Board, and Structure

Responsible Minister

The Minister responsible for VICSES is the Minister for Emergency Services.

Statutory Authority

The Victoria State Emergency Service Authority was established by the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005* (Vic) (VICSES Act). The Victoria State Emergency Service Regulations 2017 came into operation on 1 October 2017. These regulations set the expectations of the standards for volunteers in behaviour, training, exercising of skills and other administration matters.

VICSES also operates alongside our partner agencies in line with control arrangements under the *Emergency Management Act 2013* (EM Act 2013).

Board responsibilities

The Victoria State Emergency Service Authority Board (the Board) is constituted under the *VICSES Act*. The Board is accountable to the Minister for Emergency Services. The Board consists of directors appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Emergency Services.

The Board's key responsibilities include approving the organisation's strategic plan, monitoring its implementation and performance against the strategic plan objectives, and ensuring VICSES meets its statutory obligations. The Board also monitors and influences VICSES culture, reputation, policies, financial management, and legal compliance. The authority of decision-making on a number of significant matters is reserved for the Board.

Outside of those areas, the CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of VICSES. The CEO, together with the VICSES Executive Management Team, is responsible to the Board for the development and implementation of our strategy, and the overall management and performance of VICSES.

All Board directors are independent of VICSES. Board directors are required to disclose any conflict or pecuniary interests and submit an annual Declaration of Private Interests in respect of their responsibilities to the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority.

Board committees

There are two standing sub-committees that assist the Board in carrying out its responsibilities.

Risk and Audit Committee

The Risk and Audit Committee monitors and advises on matters relating to:

- Risk management, compliance, external audit, internal control, internal audit, policies, corporate governance, and matters that may significantly impact the financial condition or affairs of VICSES
- Work health and safety
- VICSES legal compliance

People, Culture and Remuneration Committee

The People, Culture and Remuneration Committee has been established to monitor and advise on matters relating to:

- Remuneration arrangements and outcomes
- Organisational culture
- Diversity and inclusion

The Board appoints the members and the Chair of each committee. Following each committee meeting, the Board receives a report from that committee on its deliberations, conclusions, and recommendations.

Sub-committees at 30 June 2025

Risk and Audit Committee	People, Culture and Remuneration Committee
Lisa Borowick (Chair)*	Jasmine Doak (Chair)
Casey Nunn	Jane Foley
Noel Clement	Bernadette Northeast
Shikha Gupta	

* Term on Board ended 30 June 2025. New Chair – Shikha Gupta

Board of Directors' attendance at meetings

A total of six meetings were held by the Board during the 2024-25 financial year, including four Risk and Audit Committee meetings and five People, Culture and Remuneration Committee meetings.

The below table outlines the attendance by Board Directors:

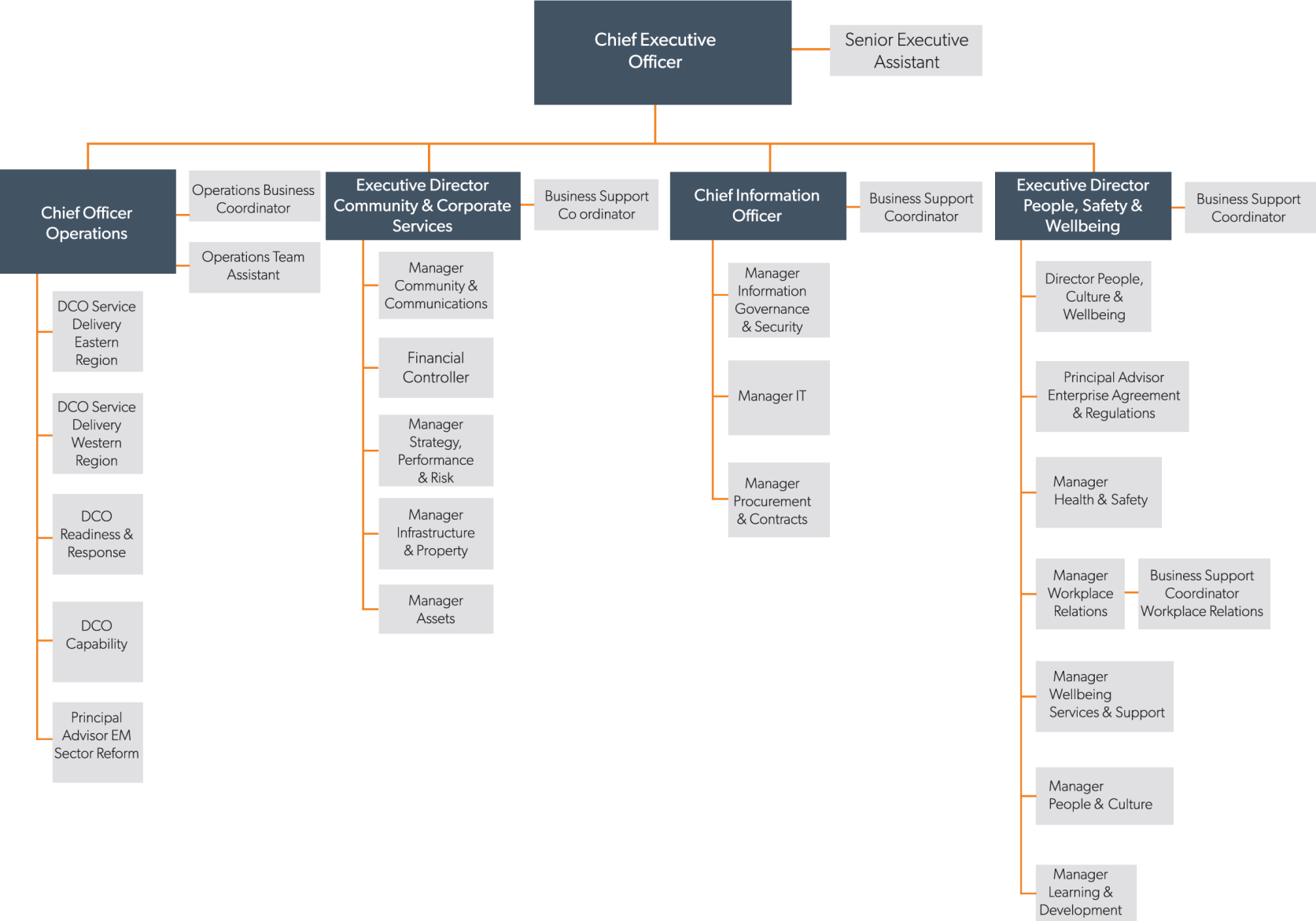
Board		Board sub-committees	
Board Directors	Board Meetings	Risk and Audit Committee	People, Culture and Remuneration Committee
Jasmine Doak	6		4
Casey Nunn	6	4	
Lisa Borowick*	5	4	
Bernadette Northeast	6		5
Jane Foley	5		4
Noel Clement	6	4	
Shikha Gupta**	4	2	

* Term on Board ended 30 June 2025

** Appointed to Board 1 October 2024

Note: Current Board member Gabrielle Castree appointed in July 2025 and therefore not in attendance for meetings within the 2024-25 financial year.

Organisational Chart



Governing Policies

Freedom of Information

VICSES is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. During the 2024-25 financial period, VICSES received 33 Freedom of Information (FOI) applications. In keeping with the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act 1982, VICSES endeavours, where possible, to satisfy requests for information outside of the FOI process.

Further information about VICSES' FOI obligations, including VICSES' Part II Statements, can be found at ses.vic.gov.au/freedom-of-information.

Privacy

As a Victorian statutory authority, VICSES must collect, use, and disclose personal information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic). VICSES runs regular privacy training and awareness initiatives and provides advice and assistance to ensure members are aware of their obligations. VICSES continues to apply the internationally endorsed principle of 'Privacy by Design' into its activities.

Surveillance

Following the publication of the Victorian Auditor General Office's Security and Privacy of Surveillance Technologies in Public Places Report from 2018, considerable effort has been undertaken by VICSES Information Systems to develop, communicate, manage, and maintain an appropriate and effective policy response so that the organisation meets its obligations under the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic). This is now a well-defined, ongoing responsibility that IS oversees and requires ongoing advice, assistance, and training, as well as management of the process for receiving, approving, and reporting surveillance requests and breaches.

DataVic Access Policy

Consistent with the DataVic Access Policy issued by the state government in 2012, VICSES continues to make public its datasets via data.vic.gov.au.

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

In keeping with the standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission in relation to the management of gifts, benefits and hospitality, VICSES publishes its Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register on a quarterly basis at ses.vic.gov.au/about-us/publications.

Protected Disclosure

VICSES encourages the reporting of corrupt, dangerous, or incompetent conduct. Any person who has concerns about such conduct should contact the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission on 1300 735 135 or via their website: www.ibac.vic.gov.au. VICSES supports employees and volunteers who disclose such conduct or assist with an investigation through its Protected Disclosure Welfare Policy.

Local Jobs First - Victorian Industry Participation Policy

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* requires departments and public sector bodies to report on the implementation of the Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy. Departments and public sector bodies are required to apply the policy in all procurement activities valued at \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne and for state-wide projects, or \$1 million or more for procurement activities in regional Victoria.

Disclosure of Major Contracts

Departments and public sector bodies are required to disclose, in accordance with the requirements of government policy and accompanying guidelines, all contracts greater than \$10 million in value entered into during the financial year. There were no contracts greater than \$10 million in value for the 2024-2025 financial year.

National Competition Policy

Under the National Competition Policy, the guiding legislative principle is that legislation, including future legislative proposals, should not restrict competition unless it can be demonstrated that: The benefits of the restriction to the community as a whole outweigh the costs; and the objectives of the legislation can only be achieved by restricting competition.

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure where services compete, or potentially compete with the private sector, any advantage arising solely from their government ownership be removed if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses are required to cost and price these services as if they were privately owned. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service. VICSES continues to comply with the requirements of the National Competition Policy.

Compliance with the Carers Recognition Act 2012

VICSES has taken all practical measures to comply with its obligations under the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*. These include considering the care relationships principles set out in the Act when setting policies and providing services and inclusion of relevant provisions in the VICSES enterprise bargaining agreement.

Project Development and Construction Management Act 1994

Under the *Project Development and Construction Management Act 1994* (Vic), public construction consists of any matter relating to the construction, maintenance, rehabilitation, alteration, extension, or demolition of any improvements on land by, or on behalf of, departments and public bodies. This includes design and construction practices, tendering processes, project delivery and contract administration. VICSES continues to carry out facilities upgrades and maintenance of its occupied buildings through a program of works in accordance with regulatory requirements. Any possible non-compliance issues are also remedied through a program of works in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Building Act 1993

VICSES complies with the *Building Act 1993* with respect to alterations and maintenance to the buildings owned by VICSES. VICSES carries out a periodic review of its facilities to identify the condition of facilities under its control. Possible non-compliance issues with facilities are remediated through a program of works in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement

I, Jasmine Doak on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority has no Material Compliance Deficiency with respect to the applicable Standing Directions under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jasmi Doak .". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jasmine Doak
VICSES Board Chair
September 2025

Consultancies

Consultant	Service	Fees Approved \$	Amount Expended 2024-25 \$	Future Commitments \$
Over \$10,000				
Scyne Advisory Pty Ltd	Integrated Risk Management Framework Refresh	168,157	168,157	Nil
Water Technology Pty Ltd	Goulburn Broken Flood Intelligence and Levees Arrangements Content Update	142,599	142,599	Nil
Baron Consulting	Probity Advisory Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment Redesign	12,950	12,950	Nil
Total		323,706	323,706	

Consultant	Service	Fees Approved \$	Amount Expended 2024-25 \$	Future Commitments \$
Under \$10,000				
On Point Emergency Management Consultants	IM Road Map	2,318	2,318	Nil
Total		2,318	2,318	

Information Communication Technology expenditure

Business as Usual ICT Expenditure	Non BAU	Non BAU Operational	Non BAU Capital
<i>Total \$m</i>	<i>Total A + B \$m</i>	<i>A \$m</i>	<i>B \$m</i>
3.31	0.54	0.54	0

Procurement

Declared Operations

Table one: Summary of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board reporting requirements

Summary of goods and services procured	Total value of goods and services purchased: Excluding travel, entertain personal	No. of contracts awarded over \$100,000 (inclusive of GST)
See table 2 below	\$460,479 (ex GST) *	0

*Excludes travel, entertain and personal expense and wage salaries (listed below).

Table two: Summary of goods and services procured

Expense category	GST excluded	GST included
Travel, entertain and personal expense	181,743	199,918
Communications	14,879	16,367
Contractors and professional service	258,464	284,311
Training and professional development	1,211	1,332
Motor vehicles and trucks	28,384	31,223
Operational clothing and equipment	54,046	59,450
Information technology	937	1,031
Rent and property services	4,960	5,456
Property utilities	1,106	1,217
Building/equipment repairs and maintenance	70,416	77,457
Other expenses	6,691	7,360
Wage salaries	1,252,903	1,378,193
Printing, postage, stationery and office	19,384	21,323
TOTAL	1,895,124	2,084,638

Social procurement

VICSES has a Social Procurement Standard that focuses on three social procurement objectives that best align to our 2023-27 VICSES Strategic Plan. These include:

- Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People
- Women's Equality and Safety
- Sustainable Victoria Regions

These objectives and processes are incorporated into our internal education programs for procurement, and are addressed either through the evaluation of supplier's response to the recommended Victorian Government Purchasing Board Social Procurement Objective questions (criteria - weighted score) and/or the supplier commitments throughout the engagement.

The following social procurement objective was met during 2024-25:

Social Procurement Objective: Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal People.

- **Project:** VICSES Test and Tag Project - 22 July 2024. Statewide test and tag of electrical equipment.
- **Supplier:** Electrical Testing and Compliance Service Pty Ltd T/A ETCS Electrical & Fire (ETCS). A majority Indigenous-owned and female-led organisation, proudly certified by Supply Nation and a member of the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce - Victoria.
- **Contract period:** Four years
- **Contract value:** \$500,000 (estimated)

Key Performance Measures

VICSES reports on key performance measures to the Victorian Government through the Minister for Emergency Services. We report on:

- **Quantity:** The number of members (volunteers and staff).
- **Quality:** The number of units and personnel trained and accredited for road rescue and Level 3 Incident Controller.
- **Timeliness:** The time it takes units to respond to road rescues.

Key performance measures of VICSES

Major outputs, deliverables and/or performance measures		Unit of measure	June 2025 QTR4 YTD		
			Target	Actual	% Variation
Quantity					
1	Permanent operational staff ^{1,2}	Number	90	128	42.2
2	Permanent support staff ¹	Number	122	90	-26.2
3	Volunteers – operational ¹	Number	3600	4077	13.3
4	Volunteers – support ¹	Number	800	313	-60.9
Quality					
5	Road crash rescue accredited brigades/units	Number	104	104	0.0
6	Level 3 Incident Controller trained staff and volunteers ³	Number	10	8	-20.0
Timeliness - Road Accident Rescue					
7	Emergency response times meeting benchmarks	Percent	90%	94%	4.4

- 1) Updates to sector-wide definitions have caused the recategorisation of staff and volunteers from the support category to the operational categories. This has caused variations between the overall targets and actuals for the year. Overall volunteer numbers are within 1% tolerance.
- 2) As a result of new funding through the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund, some staff that were previously classified as fixed term are now classified permanent staff.
- 3) VICSES is rebuilding to its Incident Management Team (IMT) target over the next three years, which is the time it takes to develop the skills and depth of experience required to be accredited at this level.

NOTE: Does not include non-active volunteers

Operations Overview

Regional statistics

Western Region



Office locations: Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Hamilton, Mildura, Swan Hill, Warrnambool, Wendouree.

75 operational units

56 accredited road rescue units

4 satellite units

4 regional support units

Supported by 7 Unit Support Teams

Eastern Region



Office locations: Bairnsdale, Benalla, Moe, Mulgrave, Wodonga.

71 operational units

48 accredited road rescue units

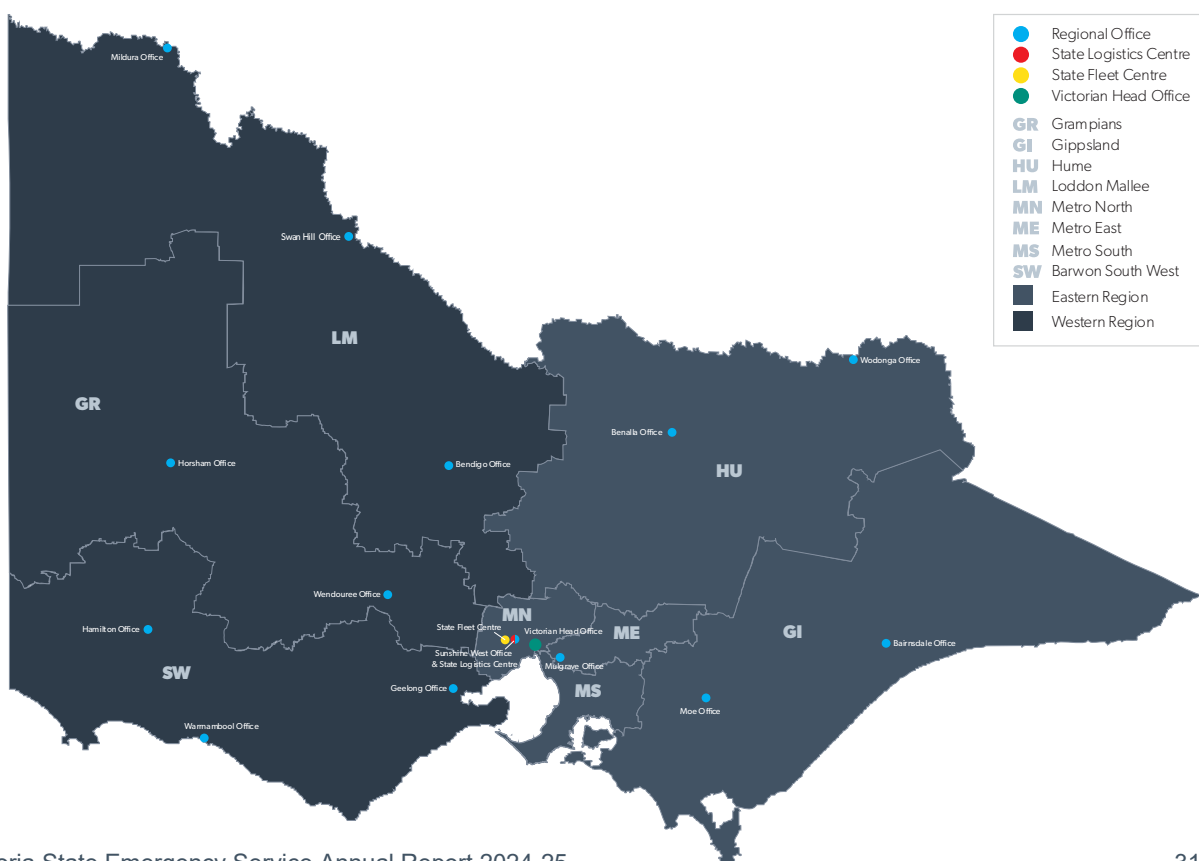
8 satellite units

4 regional support units

Supported by 7 Unit Support Teams

These locations are in addition to three state-based offices including the Victoria Head Office (Southbank), State Fleet Centre (Derrimut) and the State Logistics Centre (Sunshine West).

Our two-region Operating Model structure (Eastern and Western) is also inclusive of Victoria's eight emergency management regions. This includes Barwon South West, Grampians, Gippsland, Hume, Loddon Mallee, Metro East, Metro North, and Metro South (see map below).

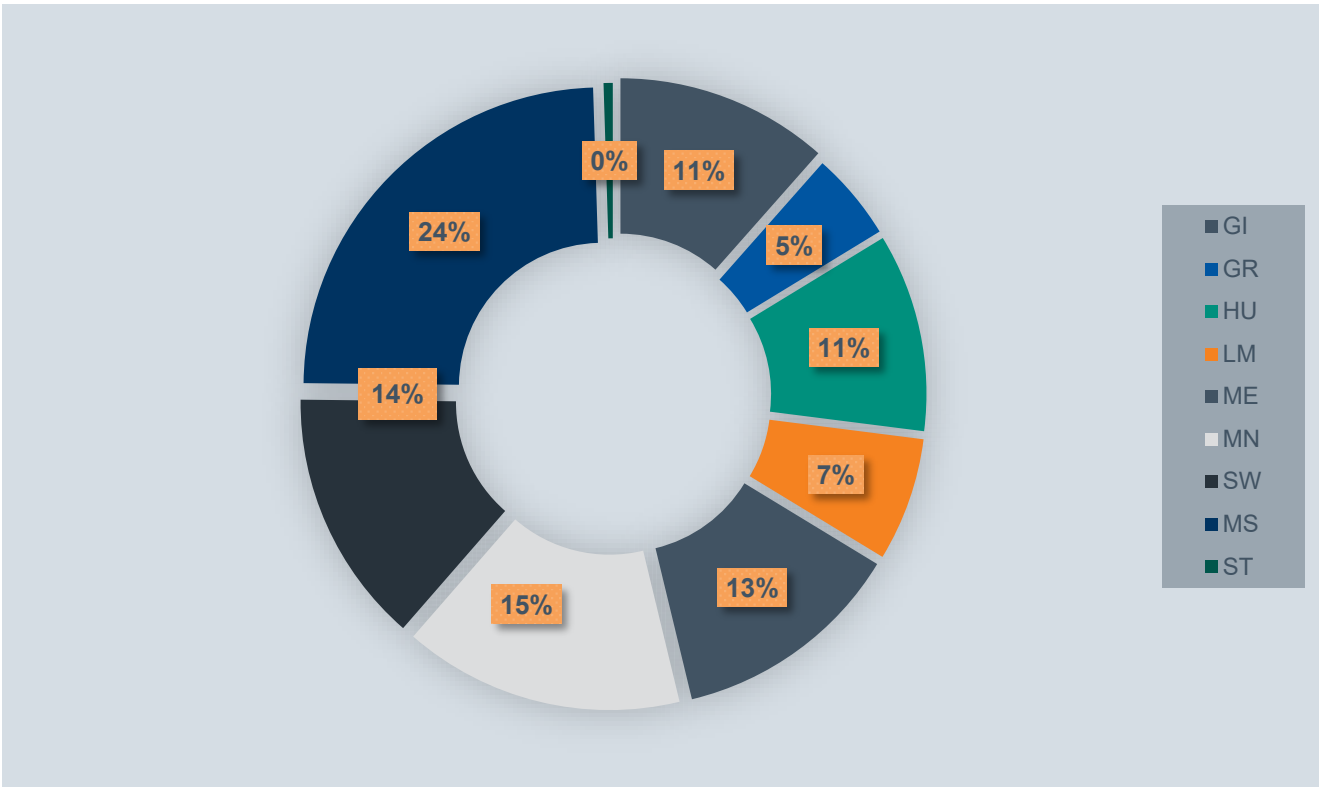


2024-25 Incidents/Hours

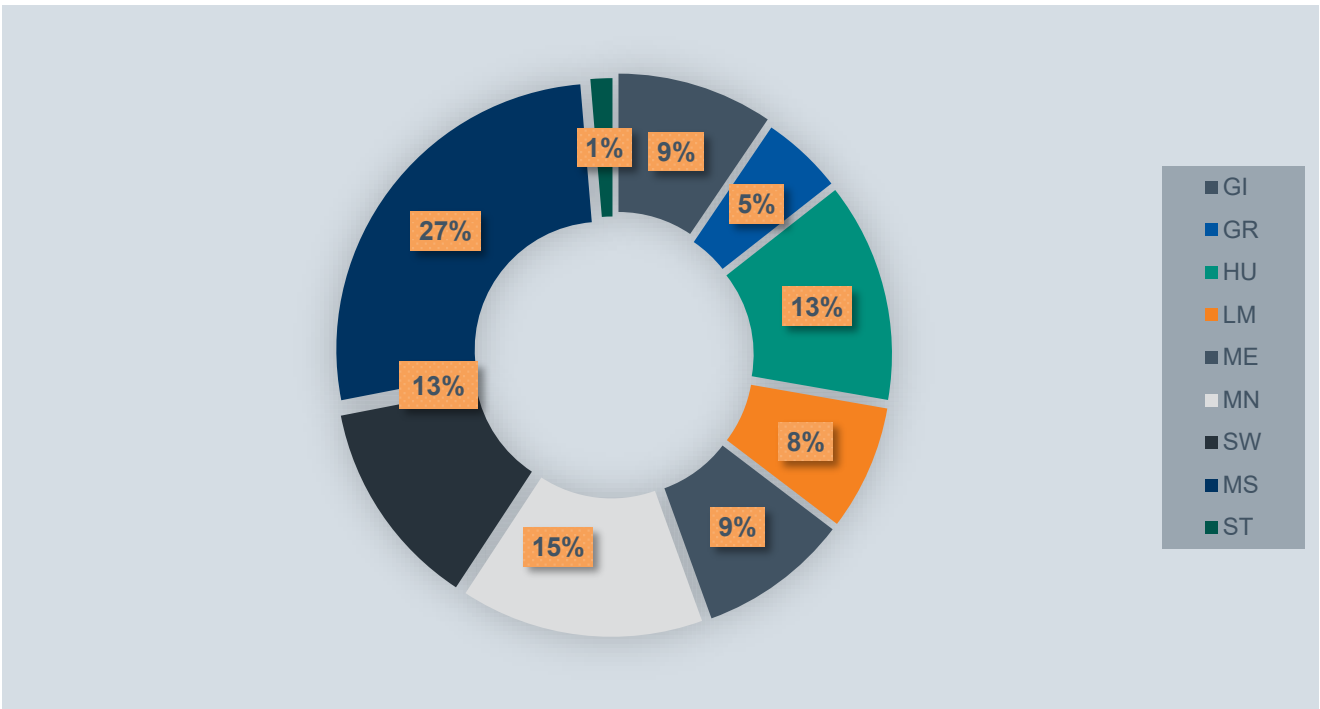
		Community	Control Agency			Rescue				Support Other	
EMR		Community Engagement	Flood	Storm	T L E	Rescue RAIR	Rescue Road	Standby Rescue	Rescue Other	Assist Agency	Total
Eastern Region	GI	131	132	3,084	30	13	328	19	94	310	4,141
		7,559	438	19,323	130	162	2,029	141	553	2,116	32,451
	HU	349	95	2,463	16	15	428	7	112	370	3,855
		20,137	390	12,460	121	156	4,048	44	2,270	6,039	45,665
	ME	173	341	3,324	18	5	206	13	82	343	4,505
		9,982	1,778	13,870	86	33	1,058	11	297	4,107	31,222
	MS	548	659	6,141	37	7	389	41	207	718	8,747
		31,620	2,629	39,824	2,026	76	1,597	4,144	623	8,977	91,516
Western Region	GR	101	48	1,042	8	6	138	6	59	304	1,712
		5,828	248	3,825	17	190	1,182	3	433	5,162	16,888
	LM	238	74	1,382	7	7	349	26	58	261	2,402
		13,733	348	5,170	37	84	1,837	573	187	4,058	26,027
	MN	382	475	3,332	20	12	246	13	206	769	5,455
		22,041	1,644	15,779	103	74	1,217	107	441	9,187	50,593
	SW	199	339	3,418	18	10	448	26	114	373	4,945
		11,482	1,836	20,148	99	169	3,301	488	522	5,425	43,470
ST (State)		0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	173	178
		0	1,976	2,170	0	0	0	37	0	359	4,542
Total		2,121	2,165	24,188	154	75	2,532	152	932	3,621	35,940
		122,382	11,287	132,569	2,619	944	16,269	5,548	5,326	45,430	342,374

Notes: For greater accuracy in reporting, the categorisation of each incident has been reviewed based on the reported incident type per the actions of the responding VICSES members, the reported cause of the event and the information in the initial page. This review is applicable to all available data from July 2009 to the current financial year and has resulted in a 1-2% variance in previously reported incident counts. **EMR:** Emergency Management Region **TLE:** Tsunami, Landslide, Earthquake **GI:** Gippsland, **HU:** Hume, **ME:** Metro East, **MS:** Metro South, **GR:** Grampians, **LM:** Loddon Mallee, **MN:** Metro North, **SW:** Barwon South West

2024-25 Incidents by Emergency Management Region (percent)



2024-25 Hours by Emergency Management Region (percent)



GI: Gippsland, **HU:** Hume, **ME:** Metro East, **MS:** Metro South, **GR:** Grampians, **LM:** Loddon Mallee, **MN:** Metro North, **SW:** Barwon South West, **ST:** State.

Comparison between 2024-25 and 2023-24 Financial Years

		Community	Control Agency			Rescue				Support Other	Total
		Community Engagement	Flood	Storm	T L E	Rescue RAIR	Rescue Road	Standby Rescue	Rescue Other	Assist Agency	
Incidents	2024-25	2,121	2,165	24,188	154	75	2,532	152	932	3,621	35,940
	2023-24	938	3,281	20,529	110	79	2,076	212	900	3,387	31,512
Hours	2024-25	122,382	11,287	132,569	2,619	944	16,269	5,548	5,326	45,430	342,374
	2023-24	33,709	22,248	166,320	2,323	607	13,806	6,349	6,487	56,873	308,722

Note: Previous Annual Report incidents and hours data refers to community engagement and standby rescue together as 'Non-Operational' activity. This has now been updated to reflect both activities as operational and independent of each other.

Significant increase in community engagement incidents and hours due to new reporting tool, capturing more accurate data on community engagement activities undertaken across the state.

Operational terms/category descriptions:

- **Assist agency:** VICSES may be asked by a control agency to support the response to an emergency by providing essential services, personnel (volunteers or staff), or material that may contribute to the management of the emergency.
- **Control agency:** A control agency is the primary agency responsible for responding to a specified type of emergency – VICSES is the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide emergencies. Further information as follows:
 - Response to storm and flood is the bulk (approx. 73%) of VICSES response activity.
 - T L E shows our preparation and response to damage caused or threatened by more extreme but less frequent natural events - tsunami, landslide, and earthquake.
- **Declared operations:** Declared operations are significant events requiring the allocation of resources and personnel for sustained periods to support a response in either a control or support capacity. They are declared by the VICSES COO (or authorised member).
- **Incident:** An incident is when a VICSES operational member or crew take an action in response to one or more RFAs relating to a single emergency at a unique location.
- **Request for Assistance (RFA):** A request for VICSES assistance to an incident can be made by a member of the public, another agency, or a VICSES member, and may be made multiple times for a single incident.
- **Rescue:** Includes our control agency and key support for different types and levels of rescues.
- **Rescue Other:** Includes both domestic and technical rescues such as swift water and high angle (rope) rescues.
- **Rescue RAIR:** A distinct type of technical rescue is that of road, air, industrial and rail. Road rescue is listed as a separate figure.
- **Rescue Road:** VICSES provides the largest road rescue network in Australia, with 104 accredited road crash rescue provider units in Victoria.
- **Support other agency:** Covers our assistance to other government agencies, primarily police, fire, and ambulance.

Operations of Significance

Overview

During 2024-25 VICSES responded to almost 36,000 incidents, equating to just over 342,000 hours of operational activity. This marks the fourth busiest financial year on record (dating back to 2009–2010) for incidents attended. Of these, 2,532 incidents were related to road crash rescue and 3,621 for assist agency – our highest ever recorded number for both of these incident types.

Emerald Unit was our unit busiest receiving 1,326 RFAs for the financial year, followed by Frankston Unit with 1,167 RFAs.

The summer period included 51% of our total RFAs, with over 18,100 occurring between December and February. Significantly, the month of February saw VICSES members responding to 7,975 RFAs during a single storm event.

In 2024-25 VICSES established and responded to 29 Declared Operations, which members contributed extensive hours. In addition to member response within Victorian borders, VICSES also supported interstate deployments in New South Wales and Queensland.

Severe weather: 24 – 26 August 2024

On Friday 23 August, VICSES received early advice from the Bureau of Meteorology of an increased risk of severe thunderstorms for parts of Victoria. These storms were expected to be fast moving, and generate damaging wind gusts, large hail, and a possibility of flash flooding. Based on this advice, readiness planning commenced with a focus on the Loddon Mallee, Hume, and parts of metropolitan Melbourne. Updated intelligence was received Sunday morning, with the area of focus expanded to all regions and an increased risk of destructive wind gusts (125+ km/hr) and giant hail (5+ cm) occurring with fast-moving severe thunderstorms.

As the storms began to develop, VICSES crews were kept busy with RFAs for trees down and building damage due to a passing of a supercell thunderstorm. Power outages were observed across the state due to thunderstorm damage, with just over 20,000 customers across the state impacted. Flash flooding occurred in Bendigo, with a Watch and Act emergency warning issued. Recorded wind gusts of 150 km/h at Mount Buller also resulted in the issuing of a Watch and Act emergency warning. The storms continued to move across the state into the evening.

Between 12.00pm Sunday 25 August and 12.00pm Monday 26 August, VICSES received 539 RFAs. Over 90 VICSES units were active in response to this event.

Damaging winds: 27 August – 6 September 2024

VICSES received early advice from the Bureau of Meteorology of an increased risk of damaging winds for parts of Victoria on Monday 26 August. A deep, complex low-pressure system and cold front generated strong winds, especially in the alpine and coastal regions.

Victoria experienced multiple strong cold fronts from Tuesday 27 August to Thursday 5 September with the strongest cold front crossing Victoria during the early hours of Monday 2 September. This cold front saw a large portion of Victoria lashed with damaging to destructive winds as well as Coastal Hazard warnings for abnormally high tides and damaging surf along a majority of the Victoria coastline. This weather phenomenon resulted in winds that resembled those of a Category 2 cyclone.

Significant power outages were observed across the state due to storm damage, with more than 180,000 customers impacted at the peak on Monday morning. VICSES responded to over 8,900 incidents during this period, majority of these relating to building damage and trees down.

2024-25 Higher Risk Weather Season

During the 2024-25 Higher Risk Weather Season our members contributed significantly to our state's emergency preparedness and response, showcasing our commitment to the safety of our communities while being flexible and adaptable in challenging situations. With members stepping away from family events and forgoing their holiday rest periods, VICSES members responded to 12 Declared Operations during this period. This was in addition to training, preparedness, resupply and logistics activities undertaken during the pre-season to ensure all units and members met assurance activities outlined by the Emergency Management Commissioner.

During this period VICSES contributed 106,104 hours across 15,409 incidents, with several units recording their busiest year on record.

We must also acknowledge the significant statewide response for the Grampians region, which saw long periods of extreme fire activity. VICSES members supported this emergency response across a range of activities including ground support, staging area management, and as part of IMTs. Given the scale and size of this fire, VICSES was required to undertake an important post-fire report which focused on the landslide risk which invariably arises once an area is fire affected. As the control agency for landslide, a team was established and led by VICSES to produce the Grampians National Park Landslide Hazard Plan. This document is a comprehensive guide to the impacted areas, outlining the risks and what triggers need to be met for VICSES to operationalise the plan.

Work continues on learnings and after-action reviews, imbedding risk assessments into Regional Control Teams to ensure we are prepared for potential events post fires.

Focus now turns to preparedness for the 2025-26 Higher Risk Weather Season, with predication by Bureau of Meteorology indicating an earlier than usual fire climate.

McCrae landslide: 14 January 2025

On 14 January a landslide in McCrae resulted in significant damage to one property, as well as direct impact to one home below and damage to two others above the landslide. A safe zone was established around the site of the destroyed house which included several other houses not safe to live in due to potential landslide risk.

VICSES assumed control of the incident and formed an IMT and Emergency Management Team on site who determined priorities and made the incident safe for the community. On Thursday 16 January, VICSES engaged with the local government authority regarding the transition to recovery of the site.

On 4 February 2025, the Victorian Premier announced an inquiry into the landslide in which VICSES has been requested for four notices to provide information. As at June 2025 the inquiry is continuing to September 2025 when the report will be finalised with actions.

Severe weather: February 2025

On the evening of 2 February intense storms crossed Victoria bringing large hailstones, damaging winds, and heavy rain. These conditions triggered significant damage across the state, with VICSES receiving more than 2,260 RFAs. More than half of these RFAs were in the Barwon South West Region, with a North West Metro taskforce deployed to assist. South Barwon Unit received 263 RFAs with a large portion of these for building damage.

From 10 February, Victoria experienced severe weather and localised flooding in the east of the state causing river rises and regular emergency warnings to be published in the Gippsland Region. During this period VICSES received 933 RFAs including 582 for trees down, with 125 units responding to these events.

Interstate deployments

Queensland: March 2025

On 8 March, Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner received a formal request from Queensland SES (QLDSES) for a Victorian deployment to support with RFAs caused by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. VICSES deployed 24 volunteers (as part of a combined Victorian Taskforce with 24 CFA members and three staff members), to support with the operations in Queensland following the impacts felt across the southeast of the state. In addition to the infield crews, VICSES also deployed a Jurisdiction Liaison Officer to support the Victorian Taskforce.

Members were deployed across four locations in VICSES/CFA formed teams. Victorian multiagency crews cleared over 130 RFAs in support to QLDSES. The Victorian crews engaged in meaningful work that was well suited to their skillsets, and our Queensland partner agencies were full of praise with the professionalism and efficiencies shown by the Victorian crews. All deployed members returned home Saturday 15 March 2025.

New South Wales: 21 May 2025

On 21 May, Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner received a formal request from New South Wales SES (NSWSES) for a Victorian deployment to assist with the impacts of heavy rainfall experienced during the week of 19 May. In response, 26 VICSES members were deployed to New South Wales to support both IMTs and ground operations. A Jurisdictional Liaison Officer was also deployed to provide coordination and serve as the primary point of contact for the Victorian personnel. All members returned home by 28 May 2025.

A standout success with this deployment was the application of lessons learnt from a similar deployment to the New South Wales Northern Rivers in 2022, where Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) deployed into remote regional towns, supporting communities who were experiencing a significant crisis and had holistic support needs. When this similar deployment request came through, then Acting COO Alistair Drayton quickly contacted the Australian Red Cross, requesting Australian Red Cross volunteers specially trained in providing psychological first aid, to embed in our CLO teams. Australian Red Cross was more than accommodating in supporting this request, ensuring that we created a very positive outcome for both the communities and importantly our members. Based on this success of this collaboration, work is underway to develop this into standard practice if similar circumstances occur here in Victoria.

Assist Agency

2024-25 marked the busiest year on record for assist agency, recording 3,621 incidents – an increase of 7% from the last financial year. Some of these events included our significant support for our fire agencies over the summer season, interstate deployments, and to Victoria Police. Over 2,000 of these incidents were attributed to supporting Victoria Police, including four Declared Operations.

Our People

Volunteers

Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES, serving the Victorian community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year, in what has continued to be a significant period of emergencies.

All our volunteers are well equipped and trained comprehensively in a wide range of skills to provide on-the-ground support during emergencies. This includes natural disasters such as flood, storm, earthquake, tsunami, and landslide, as well as road crash rescue, supporting other agencies in the sector, and assisting their units by undertaking roles such as finance, media, community education, and incident management. Our volunteers actively engage directly with communities to support them on how to best prepare for emergencies and minimise the impact of emergencies when they occur. As at 30 June 2025, VICSES comprised of more than 5,000* volunteer members, as per the below data:

Breakdown of active volunteers (as at 30 June, 2025)

Operational	Female	Male	Other	Total
Controller	39	101	0	140
Deputy Controller	128	281	0	409
Member Operational	731	1,730	7	2,468
Probationary/Junior	203	332	2	537
Section Leader	174	348	1	523
Member support	174	138	1	313
Total active	1,449	2,930	11	4,390

Breakdown of non-active volunteers

Non-Active	Female	Male	Other	Total
Non-active	77	149	0	226
On leave	160	262	2	424
Total Non-Active	237	411	2	650

* Includes active and non-active volunteers.

Staff

2024-25 saw our staff continue to deliver services across 16 strategically located offices throughout the state in support of our volunteers, providing units with access to vital equipment, training, and other support resources, ensuring all staff and volunteers are able to effectively serve their local communities. Each office supports a variety of state-wide initiatives, including the delivery of workshops and training, emergency management planning and development, and community resilience activities.

As at June 2025, the VICSES workforce comprised 223 ongoing, 64 fixed term, and 81 casual employees, equalling 368 staff in total.

A breakdown of our staff member count is as follows:

	Jun-25		Jun-24*	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
Ongoing Full Time	209	209	205	205
Ongoing Part Time	14	9.1	11	6.57
Total	223	218.1	216	211.57
Fixed Term	64	58.5	59	54.97
Casual	81	8.2	81	0
Total	368	284.8	356	266.54

**Dataset for June 2025 will yield a slight discrepancy in Casual FTE from the previous data provided. The refreshed dataset uses role-based FTE based on hours-worked in the last fortnight of the FQ to ensure org-wide alignment.*

The following table provides a breakdown of employee gender, age, and classification as at 30 June 2025:

		Ongoing	FTE	Fixed term	Casuals
Gender	Male	106	102.5	28	22
	Female	116	115	36	59
	Other	1	0.6	0	0
Total		223	218.1	64	81
Age	Under 25	2	2.0	2	4
	25-34	26	25.6	14	10
	35-44	72	71.5	17	17
	45-54	56	54	20	21
	55-64	56	55.3	10	14
	65 and over	11	9.7	1	15
Total		223	218.1	64	81
Classification	VPS 1	0	0	0	0
	VPS 2	16	15	3	24
	VPS 3	43	41.1	23	50
	VPS 4	81	79	22	2
	VPS 5	52	52	7	4
	VPS 6	25	25	3	1
	VPS 7	3	3	0	0
	Executive	3	3	6	0
Total		223	218.1	64	81

Our Business

People and Culture

Over the past 12 months, the People and Culture team has delivered a range of key initiatives focused on enhancing organisational culture, improving operational efficiency, and strengthening leadership capability across both volunteer and staff cohorts. A major focus was on streamlining processes to improve the experience of new starters. This included the implementation of a new onboarding module for staff, alongside updates to the Development and Performance Planning module to improve performance and development conversations. The team also worked closely with operational colleagues to enhance the onboarding experience for volunteers, ensuring alignment with organisational expectations and improved early engagement.

Volunteer attraction and recruitment remained a priority, with targeted actions to increase the effectiveness of recruitment practices. This included a refresh of recruitment content on the VICSES website to provide clearer and more accessible information for prospective volunteers, and the development of new resources to support Unit Controllers and interview panels during volunteer and Unit Controller recruitment processes. A formal Unit Controller Induction Program was established, delivering structured onboarding for new leaders. The People and Culture team also supported multiple volunteer recruitment campaigns throughout the year, contributing to a more proactive and professional approach to volunteer engagement.

In line with our commitment to a safe and respectful environment for all members, we undertook a comprehensive review of reporting pathways. This will result in the implementation of an external reporting hotline, which will provide all members with an independent and confidential avenue to report concerns about negative behaviours. To further support positive culture, units were provided with 'Above the Line/Below the Line' sessions and the opportunity to participate in individualised culture surveys, helping local leaders to identify strengths and areas for improvement within their teams.

Leadership capability was a key area of focus, with the successful pilot of both a Volunteer Leadership Development Program and a Staff Leadership Development Program. These initiatives have been designed to strengthen leadership skills, build confidence in people management, and ensure our leaders are well equipped to foster positive and high-performing teams. Collectively, these actions reflect our continued commitment to building a connected, capable, and values-led organisation.

To further embed a culture of engagement and continuous improvement, staff recently participated in the VPS People Matter Survey. This saw an increased response rate and provided valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of our people. The results reflected many positive improvements in key areas as well as highlighting areas where further work is needed. These insights will be shared more broadly over the coming months, and coupled with collaborative action-planning, will continue to guide our ongoing people and culture initiatives in the year ahead.

Health and Safety

Health and safety continues to be a priority focus for VICSES, reflecting our core organisational value of safety drives our decisions.

Statewide Health and Safety Report

- **Hazard:** A source of potential harm to people or a situation with potential to cause injury or loss to plant, property, or equipment.

- **Incident:** An unplanned event, which has caused or has potential to cause injury to persons, or damage to property or equipment.

In 2024-25 a total of 647 incidents and hazards were recorded, comprising 446 incidents and 201 hazards. This reflects a slight increase from the 633 reports recorded in 2023-24 but reflects a consistently high reporting rate (80% of all reports) of near miss and hazards.

Despite consistent numbers of members sustaining injuries, these are not converting into workers compensation claims (seen through the decreasing claims numbers over that last few years). This is a result of VICSES early intervention programs that provide early contact with every injured member with injury management advice and proactive person-centred case management.

A significant improvement in the average total paid per standard claim has also been realised over recent years, dropping from \$18,739 in 2022 to \$7,656 in 2025. This positive outcome reflects the impact of dedicated resourcing, early intervention, enhanced injury management processes, and an improving safety culture and management of risk.

Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024- 2025
Number of incidents and hazards	379	459	448	633	647
Hazard reporting rate*	1.64	2.36	3.69	3.80	3.72
Incident reporting rate*	6.44	8.93	8.07	12.09	11.97
Number of standard claims	20	21	7	8	6
Number of lost time claims	16	19	16	17	11
Total claims	36	40	23	25	17
Average cost per standard claim**	\$9,189	\$18,739	\$5,318	\$8,372	\$7,656
Average cost per standard mental injury claim**	\$52,210	\$49,264	\$165,924	\$8,704	\$5,037
Claims reporting rate	0.32	0.52	0.42	0.31	0.30
Mental injury claims* reporting rate	0.23	0.12	0.03	0.02	1.18
Fatality claims	0	0	0	0	0

* Agreed Industry Standards. Rate calculated = per 100 staff FTE and Vol Head Count (active).

** Calculated on Actual Cost

Safety Drives Our Decisions

The Safety Drives our Decisions Roadmap 2023-2025 has been pivotal in transforming our safety culture. Phase one of the roadmap saw 152 units and teams completing Safety Drives our Decisions sessions across the state, supported by a senior leader to assist in facilitating these sessions.

Key achievements and highlights as part of year two of the roadmap include:

- 99% of unit and staff teams participating in 'Ask, Listen, Act' sessions, with 40 staff leaders attending across these sessions. As part of these sessions members paused to consider safety, which provided

the opportunity to discuss why it is important that safety drives our decisions and to ask each other what they can do to keep, stop, and start doing to be safer.

- Member safety communications has improved, with monthly Health and Safety Insights newsletters published along with three special editions. This information provides early sharing of safety matters to all members and promotes discussion at a team level. Alongside this, there were five safety case studies developed to provide increased understanding into key health and safety incidents. A regular suite of 'You Said We Did' flyers was also promoted to showcase actions taken following member feedback.
- Seven priority safety theme areas were identified through general feedback, Safety Drives our Decisions sessions, and our Unit Controller Seminars. These themes include communication and consultation, facilities, training, fatigue, behaviour, critical assets and personal protective clothing and equipment, and improvements to our online incident, hazard and audit management system Safegate.
- A new Safety Leadership training package was developed and piloted with 37 attendees.
- Launch and implementation of the Minimum Physical Fitness for Role program.
- Development of a Health and Safety Critical Risk Process, which was integrated into the Enterprise Risk Framework. A critical risk assessment and control was piloted specific to landslide hazards and aligned to the development of the Landslide Masterclass.
- Learnings from health and safety investigations were integrated into our operational lessons learned management process.
- The new Psychosocial Safety Policy was launched, supported by ongoing mental health literacy training (The Working Mind First Responder) as well as Psychological First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills awareness programs.

Consultation: Safety Committees

VICSES has strengthened our health and safety consultation mechanism over the last 12 months, with a focus on local ownership of health and safety matters. Seven established Safety Committees (five staff committees and two volunteer committees) meet regularly to address emerging issues and monitor performance. By the end of the 2024–25 financial year, the number of Health and Safety Representatives had increased to 10, reflecting the growing engagement with our staff. This emphasis on local accountability has empowered members and fostered a more initiative-taking, preventative approach to health and safety across the organisation.

Wellbeing Services and Support

VICSES recognises that the nature of emergency services work presents unique psychosocial risks. In response, VICSES is taking deliberate, proactive steps to build a psychologically safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all our members. Our approach is embedded in a strong, preventative wellbeing strategy, one that continues to evolve based on data, evidence, and the lived experience of our people.

Through our Wellbeing Services and Support team, VICSES applies an integrated, three-tiered model: Protect, promote, and respond, to address psychosocial risk across the organisation:

- **Protect:** Reducing workplace risks by identifying and addressing hazards such as high workload, fatigue, traumatic exposure, and role ambiguity. We have developed a Psychological Health and Safety Policy to guide sustainable practices and align our psychosocial risk management with regulatory standards.

- **Promote:** Actively build protective factors and promote psychological wellbeing through training, peer connection, leadership development, and targeted health programs.
- **Respond:** Early intervention remains a cornerstone of our model, ensuring that volunteers and staff can access timely and appropriate support through our stepped care approach.

Support services with impact

VICSES continues to expand our internal support capacity to meet rising demand, with a 50% increase in service appointments this past year. Through 983 individual sessions (delivered via face-to-face, phone, and telehealth) our multidisciplinary clinical team and Peer Support network ensured tailored responses to emerging needs.

Our partnerships with Responder Assist (Phoenix Australia), the National Emergency Worker Support Service (Black Dog), and Fortem Australia, further strengthen our response options and specialist referral pathways.

VICSES is proactively managing psychosocial risk through initiatives like the MindFit AVSMART 2.0 program, which offers confidential one-on-one wellbeing check-ins with qualified clinicians. With 284 assessments completed to date (including both general members and those in leadership roles), the program supports early intervention, reduces stigma, and strengthens psychological safety. AVSMART 2.0 is also informing broader wellbeing strategies through de-identified insights and continues to evolve through improved accessibility, leadership engagement, and integration into routine wellbeing practices.

Empowering Peer Support

The Peer Support Program has undergone structural improvements to bolster leadership, governance, and state-wide coordination. With 66 trained Peer Support Officers and a new region-based leadership model, we are better positioned to deliver proactive and responsive support, particularly following potentially traumatic events.

While formal support requests decreased by 9.8%, the program remains dynamic, with a strong presence at proactive events and pre-incident briefings. This year, 40 tailored pre-incident awareness sessions were delivered to help members anticipate and manage stress effectively.

Training to build psychosocial safety capability

A core component of our psychosocial risk strategy is upskilling our workforce. Mental health literacy is being driven through programs like The Working Mind First Responder, with 267 participants attending leadership and primary courses. The training aims to reduce stigma, encourages open dialogue, and equips leaders to support psychological safety in their teams.

VICSES has also rolled out Psychological First Aid training via the online Training Portal, completed by over 360 members. Currently, VICSES is working on integrating Psychological First Aid into role-specific prerequisites with the aim of further embedding psychosocial awareness into our operational readiness.

To address critical psychosocial and physical risk factors, the Wellbeing Services and Support Healthwatch Team delivered 75 wellbeing program visits to units across the state over the 2024-25 financial year. These sessions focused on fatigue, sleep, nutrition, stress management, operational movement and physical fitness for role familiarisation, reaching almost 1,900 participants. Each initiative is directly aligned with our risk register, reinforcing our commitment to prevention and resilience-building.

A framework for the future

VICSES are in the advanced stages of embedding a comprehensive psychosocial risk management framework, underpinned by our Psychological Health and Safety Policy. This strategic approach ensures psychosocial hazards are identified, controlled, and monitored in the same way as physical risks.

Looking ahead, our priorities include:

- Embedding psychosocial risk considerations and training into operational planning and role design.
- Enhancing data analytics to track psychosocial trends and inform proactive responses.
- Co-designing solutions with multiple business units to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- Expanding leadership capability in identifying and addressing psychosocial risks.

Operations

Transport Accident Commission funding agreement

In April 2025 VICSES commenced a new four-year funding agreement with the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), designed to support and sustain our vital road crash rescue capability. The new contract includes subsidising unit funded road crash rescue vehicles and equipment. Road crash rescue battery operated equipment and all servicing costs will be funded through TAC, as well as some funding towards fuel and welfare costs.

Under this same contract, this year TAC also supported with professional development by sponsoring the attendance of four staff and three volunteers at the Fire Department Instructors Conference in Indianapolis, USA. This year the focus was on alternative fuel vehicles and heavy rescue. Participation in these hands-on workshops helped gain knowledge and learnings for the wider service.

Road Crash Rescue

2024-25 was a busy year for road crash rescues in Victoria with VICSES responding to 2,532 road crash rescue incidents in the financial year – our highest number on record. Over the past decade road crash rescue incidents have shown a steady upward trend, with a notable surge in the last two years. The number of incidents attended in 2024-25 was double what was attended in 2015-16 and the financial years prior to this. Despite the rising demand, VICSES continues to meet its key performance indicator for crew response times.

Road Rescue Capability Assessment

2024-25 was also a significant year for Road Rescue Capability Assessments, with 33 completed.

The Capability Improvement team including capability assessors have worked with regional Unit Support Teams and Learning and Development teams to increase training opportunities for unit members prior to assessment, as well as to continue development opportunities following assessments.

Two notable examples of successful assessments includes our VICSES Corryong and Wedderburn Units, which had both gone through a period of re-build and new recruitment, and were still able to meet the minimum requirements as set out in the arrangements. Structured training plans and support from capability assessors has led to the return to service of these units for road crash rescue response.

RRCA capability assessors also supported state and regional workshops and used assessment data to identify inconsistencies in equipment use and training. This informed targeted training and contributed to ongoing development of a service standard for road crash rescue techniques.

Units consistently reported improved experiences during assessments, noting reduced anxiety and increased engagement due to assessors' supportive approach. Administration assessments fostered open dialogue, accountability through treatment plans, and discussions on data accuracy. Discussions around data submissions and the importance of accuracy of data reported were also held. It is noted that awareness of access, interpretation, and regular use of the data dashboards is highly variable across the units.

The 2025-26 RRCA schedule is now released, with visibility extended to 2026-27 and 2027-28. The Operations Capability team continues to improve transparency around scheduling and outcomes with dates available on our VICSES intranet.

Women in Rescue 2025

The Women in Rescue event was held on 1 March 2025 across seven emergency management regions, bringing together nearly 380 participants from across the state. The event showcased strong collaboration among emergency services, with participation from multiple agencies, including CFA, Search and Rescue Dogs Australia, and Life Saving Victoria.

Also in attendance were members of the VICSES Executive team and Deputy Commissioners from Emergency Management Victoria, showcasing the importance of this initiative in supporting women in emergency services. Media were present at the Bangholme event to capture training activities, further increasing the event's visibility and public awareness.

A major achievement this year was the VICSES Women in Rescue working group receiving recognition at the Emergency Services Foundation Awards for promoting gender equality in the emergency services sector. This award is a testament to the ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for women in rescue.

Parliamentary inquiry

On 30 July 2024, the Environment and Planning Committee delivered the final report for the Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2022 Victorian flood event.

The final report groups its recommendations under three critical pillars that must be in place to guide emergency management responses to any event, but particularly flood emergencies.

The report included 90 findings and 73 recommendations across six substantive chapters. The findings and recommendations span several ministerial portfolio areas, but with particular impact on the water, emergency services and natural disaster recovery and planning portfolios.

The implementation and reporting of VICSES related recommendations will be addressed as part of the 2025-26 business planning process.

Incident Management Team: Accreditations and Training

Incident Management Team Leadership Development Program

VICSES hosted the fifth IMT Leadership Development Program in early April 2025. Six VICSES members (including two volunteers) on the pathway to Level 2 IMT Accreditation completed this intensive five-day program to prepare participants for IMT leadership during major emergencies. The program was also attended by members from Ambulance Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory, EMV, CFA, FRV, Forest Fire Management

Victoria, NSWSES, South Australia SES, and Tasmania SES.

Proudly, the program had a minimum of 50% female participation, and 75% of the facilitators, instructors, key speakers and support team were also female.

This program is always a great success thanks to the efforts of our delivery partner Red Flag Real Time Leadership Solutions, and feedback indicates that participants thoroughly enjoy how it is run. VICSES is the only agency hosting this specific type of training, that sees interstate partners joining the Class 1 Victorian emergency service organisations to improve their skills.

Emergency Management Victoria coordinated Incident Management Team Courses

As at 30 June 2025, we have seen 19 VICSES members complete EMV coordinated IMT courses, and 34 VICSES members have completed SES developed and delivered IMT courses. This is a reduction in EMV coordinated course attendance compared to the last financial year, due to VICSES nearing a saturation point for courses offered through EMV with prerequisite and other unit level courses not currently being offered.

In key EMV coordinated functional role courses, we have achieved the following member participation:

- Media Officer: 5 participants
- Operations and Planning: 2 participants

Due to the identified saturation point and lack of unit level training courses, VICSES developed and delivered skills focused training for Finance, Resources, and Situation and Analysis Officers late in 2024 with a total attendance of 34 VICSES members:

- Finance Officer: 12 participants
- Resources Officer: 11 participants
- Situation and Analysis Officer: 11 participants

VICSES has already commenced identifying members to complete courses for the 2025-26 schedule developed by EMV. We will continue to liaise effectively with EMV and our partners to ensure IMT capability building opportunities are explored that support VICSES and the broader sector needs.

Incident Management Capability Development Roadmap

In 2024-25, VICSES secured four years of funding via the Victorian State Budget to maintain its incident management capability development. To ensure that VICSES was investing these funds effectively, it developed an Incident Management Capability Development Roadmap under the approval of the VICSES COO. One of the challenges identified through anecdotal evidence was that VICSES volunteer members were deployed less frequently in incident management roles compared to staff. The evidence supporting this assertion is anecdotal only because VICSES does not have a single articulated system in place to track deployment opportunities, requests to deploy, and actual deployment of its members in IMT functions. Consequently, one of the seven objectives identified in the roadmap involved improving data, analytic and intelligence related to incident management development, and deployment.

The roadmap aims to establish clear structures that determine the capabilities and capacity VICSES requires for both volunteer and staff members to fulfil its incident management responsibilities and then build the requisite

systems to support development of members to meet the determined needs over the next four years. In the interim, VICSES has been proactively seeking to improve opportunities for volunteer deployment in incident management roles. For example, in major incidents in the last financial year such as the Grampians fires and deployment to Queensland for Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, VICSES has actively developed plans and advocated to the State Control Centre State Resources and Interstate and International Liaison teams, to implement shorter shift deployments in IMTs that suit volunteers, limiting them to three instead of five days.

The first objective of the roadmap was to improve the governance arrangement for incident management capability development, with proposed actions including the development of governance arrangements including a steering committee. The Incident Management Capability Steering Committee which consists of volunteer and staff representatives has now been established. The committee considered the draft roadmap action plan and determined the priority actions for 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years. Some of the priority actions approved for 2024-25 included specific IMT training programs focused on volunteer roles.

In April 2025, initial work commenced on another Incident Management Roadmap project associated with the objective of *supporting our members in attaining an effective level of competency in their development pathway through effective pathway recruitment/selection, training, exercising, mentoring and accreditation*. A project commenced to address sub-objective B - *providing a consistent approach to exercising by developing an exercising doctrine to guide VICSES exercising practices, develop an annual exercising calendar, and a library of prepared exercises*. On 26 June, the new exercising library went live on the VICSES intranet, with over 100 exercises readily available for use by all members. The available exercises cover all operational functions including incident management scenarios.

Additionally, under the same Incident Management Roadmap objective, VICSES has been refining a training package which was developed in August 2024. The three-day training package is designed for members to fulfil sub-functional IMT roles in three areas - finance, resources, and situation and analysis. This project will refine the material into a training package for each of these skills with an initial pilot course delivered in June 2025.

Level 3 Incident Management Team Accreditation Ceremony

The VICSES IMT Level 3 Accreditation Ceremony was held on 29 April 2025. At this ceremony VICSES members were recognised for their 2024 accreditation as a Level 3 IMT member in which VICSES had six members re-accredited and one member newly accredited.

These accreditations further VICSES' contribution to Level 3 IMT members, strengthening our IMT command and control capabilities.

Life Saving Victoria Ready to Lead Program

Our close partnership with Life Saving Victoria continues to expand with another 20 VICSES female volunteer leaders participating in this year's Life Saving Victoria Ready to Lead program, alongside 76 other participants from Ambulance Victoria, CFA, FRV, Life Saving Victoria, and the aquatics industry.

This is our fourth year as beneficiaries of the program that sees our current and emerging leaders immerse themselves in an intensive 'stretch with support' training program over eight weeks, with a mix of online and face-to-face leadership development opportunities, focusing on understanding self-impacting and leading and getting things done.

Previous graduates of the program speak highly of its benefit in developing them for success in unit leadership roles. We look forward to the current class of 2025 that graduated at the Life Saving Victoria Headquarters on 31 May, putting their newfound skills into practice back at their units.

Parliament of Malaysia representatives visit VICSES

On 5 May, representatives from the Parliament of Malaysia visited our VICSES headquarters in Southbank to gain insights into our role in emergency management. During the visit, VICSES presented on several key areas. These topics were tailored to the request for information on VICSES' role in managing floods, storms, and other emergencies, particularly in relation to infrastructure and transport disruptions.

The visit highlighted VICSES' critical contributions to flood and storm response, including early warning systems and public education initiatives, reinforcing our commitment to community safety and resilience.

VICSES Murchison and Corryong Units: Bolstering our regional response

In late 2024, a community meeting was held in Murchison to help boost recruitment of the VICSES Murchison Unit who were offline due to low membership. This saw the launch of the 'If not you, then who?' campaign, led by the regional Unit Support Team with AAMI-funded campaign assets. The campaign successfully recruited 11 probationary members and more onboarding, seeing the unit back online and responding to requests for assistance.

Training is currently underway through the Acting Unit Controller with leadership development and succession planning in progress, and is also being supported by Goulburn Broken Unit Support Team and nearby units. The unit is focusing on flood and storm response, general rescue and assist agency support, with future potential for boating. Crew Member training is expected to conclude by August 2025.

In addition, our VICSES Corryong Unit has also undergone a successful membership rebuild. After a community meeting in 2023 where the future of the unit was discussed due to low membership, the unit has continued to go from strength to strength and is now responding to requests for assistance in their response area.

State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) Flood Sub-plan Edition 4.0 and the SEMP Storm Sub-plan Edition 3.0

On 30 June, the SEMP Flood Sub-plan Edition 4.0 and the SEMP Storm Sub-plan Edition 3.0 were published, replacing editions 3.0 and 2.0 of these plans respectively.

A full review of each of these plans was undertaken, including two rounds of extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. Both plans were endorsed by the State Emergency Management Planning Committee on 29 May and approved for publication by the State Crisis and Resilience Council on 30 June 2025.

Floodplain Management Conference

On 14 May 2025, 20 VICSES volunteers and staff attended the Floodplain Management Australia National Conference in Melbourne, joining over 500 delegates from across Australia and abroad. Over three days, VICSES members delivered five presentations and two poster sessions, sharing valuable insights and showcasing our leadership in floodplain risk management.

A highlight of the event included VICSES member Steve Muncaster receiving the Flood Risk Manager of the Year Award for his outstanding contributions to flood emergency planning and policy.

The conference provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, with VICSES' community flood resilience work in northeast Victoria drawing particular interest, and VICSES Community Resilience Coordinator Liz Frazer being awarded the 2025 Young Floodplain Manager Outstanding Presenter Award.

Our team returned with strengthened networks, new ideas, and renewed energy to support our communities.

Learning and Development

During 2024-25, training program review and development activities included:

- **Managing Traffic at Operations:** Finalised development of a blended learning program combining online resources and face-to-face activities on how to set up and use traffic management to protect crew safety at incident scenes.
- **How to Prepare for and Hold Difficult Conversations:** Release of online training for unit management teams covering the importance of having difficult conversations to address disrespectful behaviour and ways to plan for the conversation to be a success.
- **Demolition Saw Safety and Operation:** Release of an online program covering the safe use of demolition saws during rescue operations.
- **Operational Leaders/Unit Duty Officer:** Updates across the online modules supporting the two programs to apply revised doctrine for activation levels for incidents and other continuous improvements.

Volunteer trainer and assessor capability

Many volunteers want to assist with training and assessment at VICSES but find the time and financial commitment to achieve a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to be too challenging.

During 2024-25, the Learning and Development team established an agreement with Chisholm TAFE to commence delivery of the national recognised qualification TAESS00030 Volunteer Trainer Delivery and Assessment Contribution Skill Set.

Minimum Physical Fitness for Role

The Minimum Physical Fitness for Role program is part of a nationally agreed approach across SES agencies to understand the minimum level of physical fitness that members need to have to safely undertake the operational activities that they perform.

In support of the nationally coordinated project through the Australian and New Zealand Council for Fire and Emergency Services, during 2024-25 VICSES Learning and Development teams supported the implementation of physical fitness assessments as part of the program to ensure our members are fit for role including for operational response, deployments, and training.

Activities completed during the financial year included training 167 members, of which 143 are volunteers, as facilitators to set up and conduct the assessments following nationally agreed guidelines, and development of reporting tools to inform course nomination and deployment decisions with assessment data.

The official implementation of the Minimum Physical Fitness for Role program was 30 June 2025, with VICSES recording 405 separate assessment sessions and 2,470 member participants by this date.

The Minimum Physical Fitness for Role program is the first field-based assessment that is now completely paperless. The program data portal can collect results live on a laptop or tablet in the field, eliminating the need for time-consuming paper-based record-keeping. The platform also calculates role and task allocation, sending timely notifications of assessment outcomes.

With a focus on supporting volunteers from a health and wellbeing perspective to participate in responding to incidents safely, the project has received widespread support.

By rolling out a nationally consistent, research-backed minimum fitness program, VICSES continues to keep *Safety Drives Our Decisions* at the centre of our organisational values.

Learning Management System User Reference Group

Since implementation in 2018, the VICSES Learning Management System has become an important support for capability development for volunteers and staff.

Following a successful upgrade in 2024, a User Reference Group with representation from volunteers and staff formed in 2025 to identify system enhancements. The enthusiastic group has discussed ways to improve the user experience by using enhancements achieved during the 2024 upgrade.

Learning outcomes

Throughout 2024-25, VICSES members engaged in a wide variety of online and face-to-face learning opportunities now available to VICSES members.

VICSES issued 46,252 skills/competencies for the successful completion of a training event, of which 6,577 align to a nationally accredited training outcome. The training programs with highest attendance during the financial year include:

Course	Attendance
Pre Incident Awareness Training	1274
Child Safety at VICSES	968
VICSES Induction for Volunteer Members	925
First Aid Course	907
Maintain Safety at Fire Support Operations	879
Tree Hazard Awareness	866
Crew Member Supervised - Theory	778
Emergency Vehicle Response Driving	761
Seasonal Preparedness 2024-25	668
Crew Member Level 2	649

Our Relationships

VICSES has successful partnerships so that we can collaborate and achieve inclusive participation to enable community-led activities, programs, and services. Our partnerships are more than simply an exchange of goods, services, financial, or in-kind support. Our collaborations span across the emergency services sector, government, and private sector.

Together, we can achieve what would not be possible if we operated in silos, aiming to create safer and more resilient communities.

Government and Emergency Services

Department of Justice and Community Safety

There is a strong relationship between VICSES and the Department of Justice and Community Safety, Emergency Management (DJCS EM) which is a group within DJCS. DJCS EM supports the Emergency Management Commissioner, who has overall responsibility for coordination before, during, and after major emergencies, including the management of consequences of an emergency. VICSES works closely with DJCS EM and shares responsibility, along with a number of other agencies, on a range of emergency management functions and initiatives.

VICSES actively contributes to the State Control Centre, as well as a number of sector wide initiatives and multi-agency training programs coordinated by DJCS EM. Some examples include the Supplementary Alerting System which is coordinated by DJCS EM and being developed for use by VICSES and other first responders, as well as other VicEmergency platforms which are hosted by DJCS EM, but with warning templates and business rules for VICSES hazards managed by VICSES.

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

The partnership agreement between VICSES and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action in relation to the Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy continues. This partnership aims to increase the awareness of Victorian communities, businesses, and government agencies of flooding, and encourage emergency preparedness through protective action associated with mitigation of flood risks and the consequences of flooding. The Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy has been strengthened through this partnership as the ability to provide effective flood preparation, response and recovery activities have been enhanced.

Transport Accident Commission

VICSES continues a longstanding partnership agreement with TAC, which provides better funding support for road rescue services, and joint initiatives that will help reduce the Victorian road toll. Our partnership with TAC incorporates road safety initiatives, such as our collaboration to support the national Driver Reviver program and provides funding for peer support with many members facing challenging situations when responding to RFAs.

Australian Red Cross

Collaboration between VICSES and the Australian Red Cross has seen community engagement programs including the use of the Red Cross RediPlan and Get Ready app. VICSES members have been able to use these tools to engage with various communities and work towards building capacity of individuals and households. VICSES has also encouraged the use of the Australian Red Cross Children's activity book in engagement programs with children.

Local government

VICSES has continued to play a leading role in support of Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees with the development of VICSES control hazard Sub-Plans and operational response. 2025 saw the commencement of series of Sub-Plan guidance templates and supporting materials to streamline the process and assist Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committees to meet legislative requirements and reduce workload. The Municipal Flood and Storm Sub-Plan Guidance Template was launched in early 2025 and is currently being trialled for future development of materials for earthquake, tsunami, and landslide at municipal and regional levels where identified as a significant risk.

Corporate Partnerships

AAMI

AAMI has been a proud Co-Principal Partner of VICSES since 2003 and has seen AAMI generously donate over \$10 million in contributions to support the incredible work of our VICSES volunteers. Our long-standing partnership continues to evolve and strengthen.

AAMI is now providing support to fund more specific projects and campaigns to support VICSES volunteerism, research, and community preparedness and engagement to help build a more resilient community.

AAMI continue to fund the role of Senior Events Advisor, which is a role within the VICSES Community and Communications team and agreed to in the AAMI and VICSES partnership contract.

In addition, AAMI also funded key campaigns and events, including:

- **Be Storm Smart:** A new awareness campaign focused on storm preparedness. The campaign includes a new interactive tool on our website, supported by a significant media buy for print and social media, as well as a Be Storm Smart snakes and ladders game.
- **Refreshed 'Join Us' campaign:** AAMI supported VICSES' recruiting efforts through the development of new videos for the VICSES website and supporting our rural communities with tailored radio advertising and boosted recruitment posts on social media. Refreshed 'Join Us' print collateral was also distributed to every VICSES office for their unit area groups.
- **We're stronger in orange:** Allocated funding for a recruitment campaign specifically aimed at identified regional and rural units who require recruitment support. The campaign includes opportunities for print and digital collateral that is localised to each unit location, in addition to radio advertisements. This campaign will continue to roll-out into 2025-26.
- **Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW Day)** 2025 saw AAMI branded assets featuring VICSES members displayed across over 110 digital and static billboards, in addition to WOW Day branded signage across 35 sites in metro and regional areas.
- In celebration of our milestone 50 years of VICSES in March 2025, AAMI funding contributed towards a range of special initiatives including our gala dinner for over 450 members, 50th pins sent to every member of the service, a 50th anniversary edition of our publication Community Matters, and 50th branded banners and signage for a range of 50 years of VICSES events.

Working on the business

Corporate Planning: Grants, frameworks and planning

Volunteer Grant Programs

VICSES has a number of possible avenues through which it can seek grant funding, including federal, state, and local government, as well as other community groups. These grants enable VICSES to fund community programs and provide our volunteers with the equipment, training and support they need to service the community including:

Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program

- In 2024-25, the Victorian Government committed \$2.51 million in Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program grant funding to VICSES. These funds resulted in 28 projects, which included facility upgrades and replacement of Twin Cab Utes, 4WD and Medium Rescue Trucks for VICSES units.

Volunteer Unit Assistance Fund Grants Scheme

- The Volunteer Unit Assistance Fund was established by VICSES to enable VICSES units to meet the cost of purchasing and maintaining equipment and facilities, providing training and resources, and to meet the administrative expenses of the units. The program, funded by public donations, resulted in projects in 2024-25 to purchase training courses, computers, tools, and other equipment.

Enterprise Risk Framework

Each year, VICSES delivers corporate risk management activities to ensure we can achieve our objectives and to consider the potential impact of all types of risks on all processes, activities, stakeholders, products, and services.

As an organisation it is important that we have a formal risk management process in place that allows staff and volunteers to systematically think about all the possible risks that may affect VICSES in achieving its objectives before they happen, so we can determine how VICSES can avoid, minimise, or accept the risk.

VICSES adheres to the updated ISO 31000 (2020) standard, assisting business units and regions to manage their risks with oversight and facilitating yearly risk register reviews and reporting back to the governance functions provided by the Risk Management Committee and the Risk and Audit Committee.

In 2024-25, VICSES initiated a comprehensive project to refresh its risk management framework, including policies, processes, and the organisation's risk appetite statement. This work is now nearing completion, with the full implementation of the updated framework scheduled for 2025-26.

Business Continuity Planning

VICSES continues to assist its business units, regions and volunteer units to manage their Business Continuity Plans with training and support, reporting back to the Risk Management Committee and the Risk and Audit Committee.

In 2025-26 VICSES will be carrying out a project to refresh its business continuity planning framework and training in line with the Ministerial Standing Directions and the ISO 22301:2020 standard. As part of this project VICSES' next Crisis Management Team exercise will be held and a full refresh of corporate continuity plans will be coordinated and tested.

The unit leadership teams of VICSES units continue to have access to their Business Continuity Plans via the pocketBCP mobile phone app.

Infrastructure and Property

VICSES operates from over 160 facilities throughout Victoria, including:

- Volunteer units: Local headquarters and satellite facilities.
- Staff offices: Regional offices, the State Logistics and State Fleet Centres (both located in Melbourne's west), and the Victorian Head Office (based in Southbank).

December 2024 saw the official opening of four brand new units, including Aintree, Cranbourne, Point Cook and Officer. These new state-of-the-art facilities allow for the expansion of our fleet, equipment and local membership, bolstering our service delivery in metropolitan growth areas.

In 2023-24, the Infrastructure and Property team successfully completed building condition assessments of 157 unique sites, consisting of both volunteer units and staff offices across Victoria. These condition assessments included a scope of works to renew ageing building infrastructure. In 2024-25 VICSES commenced the Facility Repair and Renewal Program, aimed at improving the overall condition and maintenance of VICSES facilities. The program, which included a total of 800 individual scope items, delivered facilities renewal upgrades to 32 units in 2024-25, with another 17 units in progress. 2025-26 will see another 52 units completed.

The Infrastructure and Property team tendered a statewide contract to undertake electrical equipment test and tag at all units and offices. The project is a significant step towards enhancing safety standards and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. The first year of this annual program was completed in March 2025 with the 2025-26 program to commence in September 2025. This has vastly improved electrical safety for all members and the public.

The ongoing development and delivery of the VICSES High Priority Infrastructure Program, in partnership with the Community Safety Building Authority and our volunteer units, saw the following major achievements over the last year:

- Completion of defect liability period for new builds at Aintree, Cobram, Cranbourne, Heidelberg, Port Fairy, Skye, and Wonthaggi.
- Commencement of construction of a new unit located at Mallacoota. Construction is on track for completion early 2026.
- Design development of new units at Bannockburn, Devon Meadows, Footscray, Heathcote, Kalkallo, Kilmore, and Rochester.
- Land identification and/or acquisition for proposed new facilities at Corio, Sunbury, and Wyndham Vale.

In addition to these builds, the new Dunkeld Unit is scheduled for completion in November 2025. This new facility is being delivered by VICSES internally with combined funding including the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability grants program, VICSES building fund, Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program, unit financial contributions, Victoria Police and a generous bequest.

Assets

During 2024-25, the Assets team has achieved key milestones while navigating complex challenges with professionalism and foresight. A standout achievement was the team's leadership in facilitating the Fleet Working Group to design the Next Generation Heavy Rescue Truck (HRT) - setting a new benchmark in safety, functionality, and capability for VICSES.

This work was underpinned by the development of the Rescue Truck Quality Assurance Framework, which provides a structured, repeatable approach to vehicle design and procurement. This innovative framework was recognised nationally, with VICSES receiving the Innovation Award at the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia Fleet Conference - a significant acknowledgment of the team's contemporary approach to fleet development.

The design of the Next Generation HRT was shaped by extensive consultation and collaboration. The Fleet Working Group included subject matter experts from across VICSES business units and volunteer representatives from units across the state, ensuring broad operational insight and frontline experience were embedded into the design process. In addition, a state-wide roadshow enabled volunteers to view the prototype in person and provide critical feedback, ensuring the vehicle's capability aligns with the practical requirements of our diverse volunteer workforce.

The establishment of the Rescue Vehicle Build Panel was initially scheduled to commence in 2024–25; however, this was delayed due to the extended HRT design process. The panel is now expected to be implemented late in 2025 with production to commence early 2026. Its establishment has remained a key priority focus for the Assets team throughout the year.

In parallel, in 2025-26 the Medium Rescue Truck will undergo a full redesign, underpinned by the VICSES Rescue Truck Quality Assurance Framework - consistent with the approach adopted for the Next Generation HRT.

The team also undertook a detailed review of the Twin Cab Support Vehicle design. A workshop was held with volunteers from across the state to evaluate the current configuration and identify opportunities for enhancement. Feedback from this session will inform a refined design that better supports operational efficiency, usability, and safety - ensuring the vehicles continue to meet evolving field requirements. This review reflects the Assets team's ongoing commitment to continuous product improvement, ensuring that fleet assets remain fit-for-purpose, responsive to user needs, and aligned with best practice.

This year also marked the commencement of the transition to a new supplier for personal protective clothing, representing a significant step forward in enhancing volunteer safety, comfort, and operational performance. The transition was informed by extensive volunteer feedback on the existing personal protective clothing, which highlighted opportunities for improvement in areas such as fit, durability, comfort, and functionality during operational use. In response, the new personal protective clothing range has been carefully selected to provide improved performance across a variety of conditions - including better breathability, mobility, and weather resistance.

In addition to improved core garments, VICSES has developed task-specific personal protective clothing kits to ensure volunteers are appropriately equipped to undertake specialised activities. These kits are designed to align with the unique requirements of roles such as chainsaw operations, road crash rescue, swift water rescue and land search, ensuring volunteers have access to the right protective clothing and equipment for the tasks they perform. This approach not only enhances safety but also reflects VICSES' commitment to operational excellence, practicality, and the wellbeing of our members in the field.

Additionally, the team has driven progress in the Equipment Replacement Program, ensuring that essential operational equipment is replaced in accordance with the organisation's useful life policy. These efforts continue to strengthen VICSES' operational readiness and directly support the capability of our volunteers across the state.

Assets deliveries: 2024-25

In preparation for the significant rescue truck build program scheduled over the next four years, the Assets team has placed a strong focus on strategic forward planning and procurement. This future-focused approach has included early engagement with suppliers, refinement of internal processes, and alignment of delivery schedules to support the broader fleet renewal strategy.

Despite the planning effort required to position VICSES for this large-scale build program, the Assets team has continued to deliver operational equipment ensuring VICSES maintains operational capability and supporting volunteer service delivery across the state.

This ongoing delivery, in parallel with preparation for the upcoming build phase, reflects the team's ability to balance current demands while laying the groundwork for a transformational period in fleet replacement.

Critical Assets Program

- 2 Medium Rescue Truck Refurbishments
- 39 Unit Operational Equipment Replacements
- 13 Road Crash Rescue Kits
- 2 Road Crash Rescue Training Trailers
- 17 4WD Twin Cab Support Vehicles
- 24 Transport Vehicles
- 4 Light Rescue Vehicles
- 3 Medium Rescue Trucks
- 1 Bus
- 2 Trailers (Generator Trailer and Cage Trailer)

Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program

- 12 4WD Twin Cab Support Vehicles
- 4 Light Rescue Vehicles
- 2 Medium Rescue Trucks
- 1 Cage Trailer
- 1 Rescue Equipment Kit

Planned delivery - 2025-26

Critical Assets Program

- 22 Medium Rescue Trucks (state funded)
- 8 Refurbished Medium Rescue Trucks
- 8 Next Generation Heavy Rescue Trucks
- 1 Ultra Heavy Rescue Cache
- 22 Road Crash Rescue Kits including 12 Refurbished Kits
- 105 Portable Compressor Kits
- 105 Airbag Regulators
- 39 Unit Operational Equipment Replacements
- 6 Medium Rescue Truck Conversions
- 15 Safe Working at Heights Kits
- 5 High Angle Kits and 1 Steep Angle Kit upgraded to a High Angle Kit
- 1 Swift Water Rescue Training Trailer
- 2 Staging Area Cache Trailers
- 2 Tree Operations Training Trailers

- 17 4WD Twin Cab Support Vehicles
- 1 4WD Twin Cab Support Vehicle
- 31 Transport Vehicles

Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program

- 28 4WD Twin Cab Support Vehicles (24-25 funding)
- 4 Light Rescue Vehicles (22-23 funding)
- 4 Medium Rescue Trucks (22-23 and 23-24 funding)
- 1 Lighting and Generator Trailer (24-25 funding)

Community and Communications

The Community and Communications team comprises media, communications, campaigns, events, community engagement, and corporate partnerships.

The team services our volunteers and staff, external stakeholders, and our communities by leveraging the organisation through our communication pathways, media opportunities, campaigns and events, community engagement, and partnership opportunities.

The Community and Communications team vision is for every Victorian to understand the role of VICSES and be prepared for emergencies, ensuring our VICSES volunteers are widely celebrated, with unanimous community understanding of who we are and what we do.

Ultimately, the work that the team delivers is to increase brand recognition and role awareness, leading to increased trust, desired community actions, volunteerism, and funding opportunities for VICSES.

Campaigns and events

Each year, the Community and Communications team lead a number of events and campaigns to showcase our organisation and support our people. Key campaigns and events for 2024-25 include:

Pride March and Carnival (February 2025)

VICSES is a proud annual participant in the Midsumma Pride events, including member participation as part of the Midsumma Pride March and stall activation at Midsumma Carnival alongside our partner agencies.

50 years of VICSES (March 2025)

5 March 2025 marked the 50 years since VICSES was established in 1975. As a significant milestone for our organisation and our people, an extensive event plan was developed and rolled out by the Community and Communications team to celebrate our golden jubilee. This included:

- Establishment of an event working group including volunteers and staff.
- Updates to our public facing website including new 50 years of VICSES event page, homepage banner, and special animated golden logo across the site.
- Digital toolkit for members including social media assets.
- Branded corporate templates including Microsoft documents, letterhead, email signature and more.
- 50 years of VICSES showreel, showcasing photos and videos of the last 50 years and interviews with long-standing members to tell our story.
- Special edition of our publication Community Matters, including messages from agency leaders, stories from our members, photos, pull-out poster showcasing 50 years of our fleet, and more.
- Media launch highlighting our history with new and long-standing members as well as new and old fleet (see below media coverage, page 62).
- Distribution of 50th pins to all members and plaques to all units and offices.
- Launch of merchandise store with 50th themed shirts and hat.

- Gala Dinner: The highlight of our 50th event roll-out, seeing around 430 guests including service life members, unit members, Executive and Board members, partner agency leaders and more come together to celebrate this incredible milestone. The gala event included guest speakers, a memorabilia walk-through, live music, and a formal dinner.

Women in Rescue (March 2025)

Support for our annual Women in Rescue training event on 1 March 2025, including development of member communications, video and photography, merchandise, and media pitch and coverage (see below media coverage, page 63).

Wear Orange Wednesday (May 2025)

VICSES celebrated Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW Day) on 21 May - a national day of thanks for the thousands of SES volunteers who serve the Victorian community every day of the year through flood, storm, road crash rescues, and more. Key initiatives as part of this year's WOW Day campaign include:

- Refreshed campaign branding and assets for social media and print.
- Significant regional and metro media coverage, including the state media launch (see below media coverage, page 62).
- Banner flags and billboards prominently displayed across metro and regional locations, thanks to our partner AAMI.

Driver Reviver (Easter and long weekends)

VICSES volunteers operate Driver Reviver sites around Victoria on holiday weekends and peak traffic days, encouraging drivers to stop and grab a free coffee, tea and snack to avoid driver fatigue. VICSES supports the promotion of activations via our state media launch (see below media coverage, page 63) and social media.

Media coverage

VICSES aims to provide timely and accurate responses to reactive media requests. Some highlights from the 2024-25 financial year included:

VICSES interstate deployments to Queensland and New South Wales

In March 2025, 28 VICSES volunteers and staff were deployed to Queensland to support colleagues up north with storm and flood response efforts to Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. This was extensively covered across all platforms with a media release and audio news release issued to media. Support efforts were largely focused on boots on the ground operations, with SES volunteers using their training and substantial experience of Chainsaw Operation and the Safe Working at Heights System to remove trees down over roads and properties and repair building damage such as roof repairs.

During May 2025, there was extensive media coverage across major networks regarding VICSES deployments into New South Wales to support the state with their flood and storm response. Regional Victorian outlets also covered local volunteers as they were deployed, including across several regional ABC broadcasts reporting on the deployment contingent. WIN News regional also covered the story. Deployed crews supported with incident management, community engagement and jurisdictional coordination roles in the flood-affected region of Metford, within the city of Maitland.

August 2024 storms: Significant VICSES response

August 2024 was the second busiest month this financial year in terms of media mentions with over 8,300 recorded. Severe weather with damaging winds commenced from 25 August with several storm fronts which generated significant media interest. Two state-wide press conferences were held with VICSES COO Tim Wiebusch on Tuesday 27 August and Wednesday 28 August speaking to statewide risk and impacts, with reach generated with all major networks.

VICSES volunteers received over 2,000 RFAs in less than a 48-hour period in late August on the back of damaging winds. Throughout these days, and into Friday 30 August, the COO spoke across national breakfast TV programs pushing out the latest community messaging, and preparing for the next cold front. Media reported extensively on VICSES' response to this weather event, with the increasing amount of RFAs and a tragic fatality following a tree over a vehicle. Almost 5,000 media mentions were recorded in just a few days across all broadcast, print and online platforms, and there was great vision of VICSES volunteers in-the-field across TV news. Several regional and State Duty Officers completed media interviews including ABC Statewide Drive, 3AW, and ABC Melbourne Drive shows speaking across severe weather key messages, warnings issued, and key actions for community.

September 2024: Significant VICSES response

September 2024 was our busiest month in terms of media mentions, with over 9,400 media items recorded. Severe weather with damaging winds commenced in late August and continued into early September with a number of cold fronts impacting Gippsland and Bayside suburbs of Melbourne, garnering significant media interest. Media reported on the rising number of RFAs as well as the substantial power outages observed. Media also reported extensively on the interstate support coming in from NSWSES to support our VICSES crews. 7NEWS completed a news story on this support, with VICSES Incident Controller Di Batley speaking at the Warragul Incident Control Centre.

These significant storms were reported on locally, state-wide, and nationally, with VICSES State and Regional Duty Officers speaking across broadcast media to VICSES hazard key messaging, as well as providing reassurance to affected communities.

There was also a political presence with Premier Jacinta Allan, and Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes attending a State Control Centre press conference alongside VICSES COO Tim Wiebusch, while the Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio visited the Warragul Incident Control Centre and VICSES Unit.

The Great ShakeOut – October 2024

In October VICSES promoted the Great Shakeout – the world's largest earthquake drill encouraging the public to know what to do if they ever experience an earthquake and practice how to drop, cover, and hold on.

As the control agency for earthquake in Victoria, VICSES led a media opportunity at Gardenvale Primary School with the VICSES Glen Eira Unit and Operations Manager Wayne Roberts to promote the Great ShakeOut and get students involved in earthquake preparedness. This received great coverage with 10 NEWS and on ABC Melbourne radio (Sammy J). Channel 10's 'The Project' also covered this story during an evening bulletin, speaking to some of the vital earthquake related key messages.

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund – December 2024 announcement

On 13 December 2024, the State Government announced that the Fire Services Property Levy would be replaced by a new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund, which included ongoing funding for VICSES. This was announced at a media opportunity at the VICSES Fawkner Unit, alongside the Minister for Emergency Services, VICSES members, CFA, and other key representatives.

Celebrating 50 Years of VICSES – March 2025

The official state media launch to celebrate VICSES' 50th anniversary was held on 5 March and recorded the most media engagement and reach for the month of March, with almost 250 separate media items documented across all platforms in one day. The media event was reported on by Channel 10 and 7NEWS, with a piece in the Herald Sun also recognising the anniversary and highlighting a member that had been with the service since 1975.

Several regional online and print publications also covered this extensively such as the Warrnambool Standard and Ballarat Courier, with case study highlights of volunteers that had served over 50 years of service included as part of the acknowledgement.

The state media launch involved VICSES Alexandra Unit Controller Peter Weeks and VICSES Footscray Unit volunteer Denis Brain, who have both been with VICSES throughout the organisation's entire 50-year existence. They were joined by newer member Amy Bracks from VICSES Footscray Unit to speak to their different experiences with VICSES during their ranging tenures, as well as acknowledging an operationally demanding year for VICSES volunteers having responded to over 35,000 requests for assistance in the past 12-months.

Wear Orange Wednesday 2025

To launch Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW) Day 2025, a lead-in press conference was held on Monday 19 May with VICSES Chelsea and Malvern Unit volunteers. The launch was built around a case study from a motorbike accident our Chelsea Unit attended in November 2024, which reunited our volunteers with the young motorcyclist they assisted after a vehicle collision. The story aired on Channel 9 and 10 News across their respective evening bulletins.

Another focus for WOW Day 2025 was our increase in assistance for our partner agencies with over 3,600 assist agency jobs recorded in the last year, supporting Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police, and our other emergency partners with search and rescue, scene lighting, and evidence searches. Spokespeople from Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police attended the WOW Day media launch to speak to this.

7NEWS Regional covered a separate WOW Day story, also acknowledging volunteers in regional areas for a busy 2025.

ABC News Breakfast (National TV) interviewed VICSES Nillumbik Unit volunteer Mel River on WOW Day to speak to volunteering with VICSES and the importance of VICSES volunteers in our communities. This was as part of a national approach with NSWSES and QLDSES, whose members also spoke to ABC News Breakfast across the morning's segment.

Additionally, 7NEWS (Jane Bunn) and 10 News (Jayde Cotic) held their weather broadcasts from VICSES unit locations that week.

A series of regional case studies were also developed and distributed to journalists in the Hume, Gippsland, Loddon Mallee, and Barwon South West regions. Overall, TV, Print, online and radio coverage achieved significant reach and engagement, with around 1,500 mentions either side of the May 21 (WOW Day).

Women in Rescue 2025

On 1 March, VICSES held its annual Women in Rescue training day, with major media coverage achieved. Targeted media releases were distributed to regional outlets to ensure local pick-up. Statewide regional WIN News bulletins covered the event for TV news with VICSES female volunteers speaking to the importance of the event and diversity within the service.

A media release was distributed to local media outlets across regions in advance of each of the seven simultaneous Women in Rescue events held to aim for maximum local coverage. This was beneficial as it dramatically increased media reach during this time, with many regional online and print publications attending various Women in Rescue events across the state.

Driver Reviver 2025

Prior to the Easter long weekend, VICSES also launched its annual Driver Reviver media campaign, highlighting our role in road crash rescue and reminding travellers and holiday makers to take frequent breaks on long drives.

The state media launch was held at the VICSES Knox Unit on April 15, alongside the Minister for Emergency Services Vicki Ward MP and TAC. Metro TV outlets Channel 7 and 10 News aired prime coverage of the story in state bulletins which featured the story of Ismo, a victim of road trauma who attended to thank and reunite with the Knox Unit volunteers that saved his life. VICSES Acting COO Alistair Drayton also highlighted the importance of the active VICSES Driver Reviver sites over the Easter long-weekend and showcase our important role in road crash rescue.

Messaging focused on data relevant to VICSES volunteers attending over 2,100 road rescues in the last year. A state-wide media release was also distributed to regional/local outlets, to meet publication deadlines prior to the launch. This helped to maximise local coverage on the local units participating in Driver Reviver, with more than Driver Reviver sites alongside Lions Club, Rotary and RSL members activating.

Media engagement 2024-25

	Radio mentions	Online/ print mentions	TV mentions	Total advertising revenue value (\$millions)	Total website visits (ses.vic.gov.au)	Facebook impressions	X impressions	Instagram impressions
Jul-24	1,837	944	943	\$2,239,590	31,043	1,007,430	191,123	34,379
Aug-24	3,496	1,309	3,500	\$5,083,451	41,480	2,371,486	149,239	27,921
Sep-24	4,412	1,535	3,504	\$5,066,802	55,754	1,906,920	131,069	62,237
Oct-24	2,578	1,769	2,083	\$4,216,750	50,545	2,574,442	558,087	29,760
Nov-24	1,167	620	882	\$1,833,509	36,008	4,897,724	62,846	979,302
Dec-24	1,453	926	282	\$1,927,657	33,572	5,672,331	47,690	1,377,161
Jan-25	2,632	996	1,838	\$4,583,304	35,251	474,523	23,593	30,625
Feb-25	2,266	1,217	2,210	\$3,354,440	39,488	663,112	60,851	25,405
Mar-25	1,529	567	486	\$1,414,695	44,257	6,329,240	35,066	2,874,811
Apr-25	1,326	799	1,326	\$2,315,244	28,724	1,186,001	20,733	41,559
May-25	4,703	1,970	1,653	\$4,429,020	33,550	2,545,517	37,197	620,256
Jun-25	1,843	914	3,826	\$3,265,628	31,072	7,069,871	56,357	1,599,626
Total 2024-25	29,242	13,566	22,533	\$30,730,090	460,744	36,698,597	1,373,851	7,703,042

Publications and content

The Community and Communications team produces a number of publications each year for internal and external audiences. These corporate communications engage our members and key stakeholders, demonstrating who we are and what we do.

Some of the key publications and content created 2024-2025 include:

Community Matters

Each quarter, a 32-page magazine is produced featuring content written by members of VICSES and edited by the Community and Communications team. This publication is then shared on our intranet, public website, and social media, with physical copies delivered to all VICSES unit and offices and other key stakeholders such as agency partners and local councils. This financial year included the production of a special edition in celebration of our 50 years of VICSES milestone.

VICSES Express

In September 2024 we launched our new all-member email newsletter, the VICSES Express.

The VICSES Express replaces our previous 'Bulletin' newsletter and was developed on the back of member feedback and consultation on our existing communication pathways.

The VICSES Express is issued on the first and third Monday of every month to better communicate to volunteers prior to their unit training nights, and consolidates all non-urgent emails from state and region with the aim to reduce the number of standalone emails received by members.

The launch of VICSES Express was also accompanied by a refreshed look and feel.

Campaign and events digital toolkits

To support the extensive calendar of campaigns and events across the year as well as preparedness messaging, a range of digital toolkits are developed annually to support our state channels and our volunteer units. This includes digital toolkits, social tiles, banners, posters, and more.

Refreshed emergency key message tiles

In June we launched a refreshed suite of our emergency key message tiles, which are designed for use across social media, and are authorised for use before, during and after emergencies. This includes our control hazards, when to call VICSES, and more.

The refresh includes new design, photography and text, and is supported by a new key messages social media quick guide with examples of social media messaging for different hazards.

Video content

During 2024-25 a number of video productions were delivered to demonstrate the brand in a contemporary manner. These high-quality videos were used across social media and website, and showcased some business highlights, including:

- End of year media coverage show reel
- 50 years of VICSES highlights
- End of year media showreel
- Women in Rescue event

Design and copy-editing support

Additionally, the team supported the wider business to ensure all VICSES publications and materials, whether intended for internal or external audiences, complied with the VICSES Design Style Guide and VICSES Writing Style Guide, ensuring a distinct and recognisable look and feel for the VICSES brand.

Community Preparedness and Resilience

Outcome 2 of the VICSES Strategic Plan 2023-27 outlines that we will aim to 'connect better to communities, enhancing their preparedness for emergency weather events'. This is led by our overarching VICSES mission which includes partnering with communities to build community preparedness, and our shared organisational Vision of *Safer Communities – Together*.

This is achieved through targeted community preparedness programs, supported by evidence-based research, and directly engaging with the community. During 2024-25, 2,121 community engagement activities have been undertaken across the state by our VICSES community engagers.

Key community engagement campaigns and program for 2024-25 have included:

Be Storm Smart

Launched in November 2024 and funded by our Co-Principal Partner AAMI, the Be Storm Smart campaign takes a fresh approach to storm preparedness, using stylised, easy-to-understand illustrations to clearly demonstrate proactive storm preparedness actions. In addition to targeted social-media advertising, the campaign features an interactive digital tool on the VICSES website, which

allows Victorians to engage directly with storm preparedness messaging and take proactive steps towards safety. The interactive webpage and social media content is also available in Arabic, Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese, ensuring our key messages reach as many Victorians as possible.

The social media component of the campaign was rolled out in three tranches during this financial year, and was geotargeted to areas of the state that are most prone to storm damage. The social media advertising performed well across all platforms and included targeted engagement with linguistically diverse communities.

The campaign was also supported with on-the-ground engagement utilising new engagement tools, including a Be Storm Smart snakes and ladders canvas floor game, which can be used in many different settings. It focuses on the good outcomes that can be achieved when community members take action to prepare by allowing them to advance by climbing a ladder. If they land on a square where a bad decision has been made like driving in floodwater, they slide down a waterway. The game allows our community engagers to have meaningful conversations regarding storm preparedness, and there is a QR code in the final square that links to the interactive web page. The key messages will also be reinforced with the development of a take-home tabletop game that is also being rolled out, with the aim that having these games in homes will prompt preparedness action.

School education for disaster awareness

In February 2025, VICSES were successful in obtaining a federally funded Disaster Ready Fund Grant to undertake a 12-month project focused on updating our primary and early years school engagement resources. This project will be completed in the coming financial year.

This is an exciting project, as engaging with children is a key activity of our community engagement facilitators across the state. The new engagement material will be welcomed by our members and teachers alike.

National recognition of VICSES Community Engagement methods

Community Engagement Facilitator (CEF) training over the last year has resulted in an increase in the number of CEFs across the state. With the great effort of our trainers there are currently 430 CEFs who are active in their units and building resilience in their local communities.

VICSES was delighted when the value of our CEF training received national recognition, with Liz Frazer our Community Resilience Coordinator from the Goulbourn Broken Unit Support Team recognised for her outstanding work at the Floodplain Management Australia National Conference in May 2025. Liz received the Young Floodplain Managers Network Outstanding Presenter Award, and an invitation to present at the New Zealand FLOODDEX conference in November 2025, for her presentation of anecdotes and data from community engagement work based on the methods and models taught in the VICSES CEF training program. Her presentation included the VICSES Preparedness Chain, based on an established trans-theoretical behaviour change psychology model, and motivational questioning techniques employed by our trained volunteer engagers around Victoria. The Young Floodplain Managers network chose this work out of over 100 presentations for its demonstrated value in improving floodplain community readiness in the Goulburn Broken catchment which was significantly impacted in the 2022 Victorian Floods.

Community engagement activity reporting

Our CEFs continue to engage across the Victorian community to increase emergency preparedness, with a focus on what actions community members can take to increase their safety if they encounter emergency situations. This activity is recorded as part of a community engagement activity capturing tool, with a total of 2,121 engagement activities recorded this financial year.

Some great examples of these valuable community engagement activities throughout 2024-25 includes:

Shepparton Mooroopna Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Work: Papua New Guinea Highlight

On 28 April 2025, VICSES partnered with Greater Shepparton City Council and the Shepparton Ethnic Council to provide residents from Papua New Guinea a flood risk and 72 hour preparedness program in Mooroopna.

With community and council providing the venue and funding culturally appropriate food to share, VICSES facilitated a floodplain awareness activity utilising giant flood inundation maps to identify properties and roads at risk of flooding and introduced the community to emergency warnings. Prior to the workshop, a show of hands indicated that only 2 of the 85 participants were aware of VicEmergency.

The session is one of many coordinated by flood recovery teams at local governments around Victoria, and while the events take place in just a few hours, it takes weeks of relationship and trust building by local community groups and community leaders to build interest, promote, and get people in attendance.

This work demonstrates the value in partnering across sectors to build community capacity to cope with emergencies, and VICSES' vital part in that work. By the end of the session everyone was aware of VicEmergency channels, including the app and radio, and understood the different warning levels and the appropriate level of attention and action required at each level. All 85 participants were provided with a VICSES Emergency Grab Bag with the intent of creating a small survival kit in case of isolation or evacuation.

Girls in STEM - Turning School Visits into Behaviour Change Programs

From 28-29 June 2025, VICSES engaged 15 Geelong Tech students in a Year 9 and 10 Girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) program. The engagement focused on a behaviour change opportunity, engaging the students in a problem-solving mission to design better solutions to stop people driving into floodwater, and to create new sandbagging technology.

The students designed several options and pitched them back to VICSES and private industry partners, including:

- An app that overrides phone settings to alert drivers of flash flooding in real time, instruct them to turn around, and quickly offer a route to safety.
- An alternative sandbag containing mixed corn starch media. This group worked through multiple prototypes in the 24 hours they had the scenario to make a very engaging presentation. It was a great use of teamwork and applied thinking to look at the key messages that they had been shown.
- A highly visible and easily deployable flood barrier with emergency lighting system to block and divert drivers.

The students' technical solutions and pitches back to industry partners were very impressive, with students clearly demonstrating their understanding not only of the technical problems, but the need for community safety behaviour change solutions in emergencies.

Elmore Field Days

In October 2024, VICSES attended the Elmore Field Days which is one of the largest and most well-known agricultural field days in the country. The event was well attended with around 1,000 people visiting our site over the three-day event. The VICSES site was designed to encourage interaction focused on home emergency preparedness for floods and storms. Actions that were encouraged included ensuring that community members had the VicEmergency app on their phones with appropriate watch zones. Those who didn't were keen to get up to date, and those who already had the app were keen to review their settings. There were also many conversations about home emergency kits with common items displayed to prompt discussion. The focus for flood engagement was on never driving through flood water with the VICSES key safety message that it can take as little as 15cm of water for a small car to float. The event was a great success, and plans are underway to attend again in 2025.

Melbourne Royal Show

The Melbourne Royal Show returned during the September school holidays in 2024, once again providing VICSES with a high-profile platform to engage with the public through an interactive and informative activation site. Our presence was a crowd favourite, taking home a Silver Ribbon for Best Indoor Exhibitor for the second consecutive year. The Port Phillip Unit's rescue boat remained a standout attraction, drawing in families and giving children the thrill of climbing aboard while parents connected with our volunteers to learn more about VICSES' flood and storm response efforts. This year also featured the addition of a mini VICSES truck, complete with lights and sirens, captivating children across the pavilion.

In partnership with our Co-Principal Partner AAMI, the 2024 activation introduced a new social impact component, encouraging visitors to complete short surveys via iPads to help VICSES identify gaps in public awareness. This initiative proved a hit, with over 1,150 surveys completed, and a bit of friendly competition between shifts adding to the energy of the site. The activation also offered colouring-in activities, knot-tying stations, and earned VICSES a feature in the official Melbourne Royal Show promotional video and social media content, reinforcing our role as a trusted and engaging emergency service for Victorians.

Information Systems

The Information Systems directorate is accountable for providing technology, security, and information management services to the organisation.

VICSES is committed to delivering a full range of administration and compliance services to ensure that network, telecommunication, mobile devices, and computers are always available to our members, and to ensure information is managed properly and securely.

In the last financial year, our main focus has been supporting strategic items to ensure the successful alignment and implementation of our corporate strategy and to continue to ensure our technical profile is correct, therefore ensuring our risks are clearly identified and prioritised. This includes alignment to sector-wide technology initiatives, as well as continued improvement of our security and customer service.

Importantly, we continue to work with our sector partners, particularly with EMV, in collaboration and support of the EMV sector wide technology and data strategy.

Information Services Roadmap

The Information Services Roadmap was launched in June 2025 and supports our Strategic Plan, specifically Priority 3.4 – We will focus on improving our systems and processes to enhance our people's experience.

The roadmap ensures that our technology investments focus on keeping existing systems updated and secure while planning on a transition into a more data inter-connected platform of our internal business systems, in particular for those that require integration with our sector partner shared services.

The roadmap also ensures that our technical investment principles are maintained, in particular our preference to leverage from shared service arrangements being developed by our other agencies, including the DJCS Emergency Management Technology and Data team, who are offering whole of sector platforms. This approach will avoid moving into a costly structure that would require ongoing in-house software development resources for bespoke, siloed solutions.

Sector wide partnerships

VICSES is a strong advocate of shared services for technology and related initiatives within the emergency management sector. We continue to participate with our sector partners to avoid duplication of systems and information, for more effective cohesive sector-based approaches to service our communities, especially due to increased and longer emergency activities requiring co-operation by all agencies.

During 2024-25 we have actively engaged in a number of initiatives, including:

- The development and implementation of the State Emergency Management Plan Cyber Security Sub-Plan Incident Response Plan, providing a mature response plan that required low investment for VICSES to integrate into its own incident response processes.
- Collaboration with the Department of Government Service's Cyber Security team to provide assessments and further support to strengthen our compliance to the national essential eight cyber security requirements, resulting in a more cost-effective outcome for VICSES.
- Working alongside the DJCS Emergency Management Technology and Data team, as they implement sector wide data exchange, data warehousing and analytics platforms which are being made available to VICSES and the emergency management sector, allowing us to avoid significant long-term investments into isolated (and duplicated) emergency management solutions of our own.

We have also continued to participate in Triple Zero Victoria's major technology initiative for a new call and dispatch system and continue to benefit from shared service arrangements with CFA, FRV, and the Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action.

Information Services Service Desk: Customer service

Over the last financial year, the Service Desk completed 11,538 service requests. This is up by 555 from last year (10,983). As part of analysis we completed based on last year's increase, a number of changes were applied to our processes and customer service systems to keep our service levels high. These changes related to updates to our service request analytics to better understand the types and target areas for improvement, a change to method for triaging requests as they are received to ensure better prioritisation, as well as the introduction of a call-centre system to avoid delays in phone call waiting times and responses.

Site visits continue to be an important part of our service, however the demand for these has dropped to an average of one to two per month compared to the previous year's average of four.

The team also continues to support our volunteers by providing support and services at no cost to them. This includes procurement and receipt and installation of any technologies they procure from their own fund-raising and grants.

Through our procurement services we continue to advocate for volunteers to be eligible for technology state purchase contracts pricing and services, wherever applicable.

Procurement

VICSES procurement documentation and processes have now been consolidated through implementing the compliance requirements of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board and our Standing Directions. The activity and outcomes of this work has also strengthened our partnership with key stakeholders within VGPB, and the State Purchase Contract and Panel Register category managers.

Our centralised approach for procurement governance provides improved visibility of our procurement activities across VICSES. These improvements together with the continuation of the education programs on procurement will provide VICSES personnel with the necessary skillset to meet their responsibilities when undertaking procurement activities.

VICSES also continues to look for opportunities to apply our social procurement objectives. See page 28 for social procurement activities and outcomes.

Glossary

Assist agency	VICSES may be asked by a control agency to support the response to an emergency by providing essential services, personnel (volunteers or staff), or material that may contribute to the management of the emergency.
Board	Victoria State Emergency Service Authority Board
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Officer Operations
Control agency	A control agency is the primary agency responsible for responding to a specified type of emergency. VICSES is the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide emergencies.
Declared operations	Declared operations are significant events requiring the allocation of resources and personnel for sustained periods to support a response in either a control or support capacity. They are declared by the VICSES Chief Officer Operations.
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
FOI	Freedom of Information
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
IMT	Incident Management Team
Incident	An incident is when a VICSES operational member or crew take an action in response to one or more RFAs (relating to an emergency at a unique location)
RFA	Request for assistance
TAC	Transport Accident Commission
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service

VICSES financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2025

How this report is structured

The Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (Authority) has presented its audited general purpose financial statements for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 in the following structure to provide users with the information about the Authority's stewardship of resources entrusted to it.

- Declaration in the Financial Statements
- Independent Auditor's Report
- Financial statements
 - Comprehensive operating statement
 - Balance sheet
 - Cash flow statement
 - Statement of changes in equity

1. About this report

The basis on which the financial statements have been prepared and compliance with reporting regulations.

2. Funding delivery of our services

Income and revenue recognised from taxes, grants, sales of goods and services and other sources

2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services

2.2 Income and revenue from transactions

3. The cost of delivering services

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

3.2 Other operating expenses

4. Key assets available to support output delivery

4.1 Property, plant, and equipment

4.2 Investments and other financial assets

5. Other assets and liabilities

5.1 Receivables

5.2 Payables

5.3 Other non-financial assets

6. How we financed our operations

6.1 Borrowings

6.2 Leases

6.3 Cash flow information and balances

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

7. Risks, contingencies, and valuation judgements

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities 7.3

Fair value determination

8. Other disclosures

8.1 Ex-gratia expenses

8.2 Responsible persons

8.3 Remuneration of executives

8.4 Related parties

8.5 Remuneration of auditors

8.6 Subsequent events

Declaration in the financial statements

The attached financial statements for the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (the Authority) have been prepared in accordance with Direction 5.2 of the Standing Directions of the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, applicable Financial Reporting Directions, Australian Accounting Standards including interpretations, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

We further state that, in our opinion, the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement and accompanying notes, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2025 and financial position of the Authority at 30 June 2025.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We authorise the attached financial statements for issue on 23 September 2025.



Jasmine Doak
Chairperson
Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Melbourne
23 September 2025



Robert Purcell
Chief Executive Officer
Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Melbourne
23 September 2025



Qiuran (Judy) Morris
Financial Controller
Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Melbourne
23 September 2025

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority

Opinion	I have audited the financial report of the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (the Authority) which comprises the: • balance sheet as at 30 June 2025 • comprehensive operating statement for the year then ended • statement of changes in equity for the year then ended • cash flow statement for the year then ended • notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information • declaration by the Accountable Officer, Acting Chief Financial Officer and Chairperson. In my opinion the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at 30 June 2025 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of part 7 of the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i> and Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosure.
Basis for opinion	I have conducted my audit in accordance with the <i>Audit Act 1994</i> which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the <i>Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report</i> section of my report. My independence is established by the <i>Constitution Act 1975</i>. My staff and I are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)</i> (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.
The Board's responsibilities for the financial report	The Board of the Authority is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosure and the <i>Financial Management Act 1994</i>, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is inappropriate to do so.

**Auditor's
responsibilities
for the audit
of the financial
report**

As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE
8 October 2025



Charlotte Jeffries
as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

Comprehensive operating statement

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Continuing operations			
Revenue and income from transactions			
Grants	2.2.1	87,668	92,743
Fair value of assets received free of charge		-	3
Other income	2.2.2	3,683	4,201
Total revenue and income from transactions		91,351	96,947
Expenses from transactions			
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	(45,490)	(42,380)
Depreciation	4.1.2	(14,067)	(12,981)
Interest expense	6.1.2	(831)	(317)
Other operating expenses	3.2	(35,919)	(38,300)
Total expenses from transactions		(96,307)	(93,978)
Net result from transactions (net operating balance)		(4,956)	2,969
Other economic flows included in net result			
Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets ^(a)		1,304	1,467
Total other economic flows included in net result		1,304	1,467
Net result		(3,652)	4,436
Other economic flows – other comprehensive income:			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result			
Total other economic flows – other comprehensive income		-	-
Comprehensive result		(3,652)	4,436

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) 'Net gain/(loss) on non-financial assets' represents gains from disposal of property, plant, & equipment.

Balance sheet

As at 30 June 2025

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Assets			
Financial assets			
Cash and deposits	6.3	85,196	82,781
Receivables	5.1	11,423	14,899
Investments and other financial assets	4.2	11,623	9,038
Total financial assets		108,242	106,718
Non-financial assets			
Property, plant, and equipment	4.1	219,975	213,163
Other non-financial assets	5.3	32,578	25,368
Total non-financial assets		252,553	238,531
Total assets		360,795	345,249
Liabilities			
Payables	5.2	13,146	8,128
Contract liabilities	5.2.1	3,245	3,785
Borrowings	6.1	15,825	15,576
Employee related provision	3.1.2	9,280	9,111
Total liabilities		41,496	36,600
Net assets		319,299	308,649
Equity			
Accumulated surplus / (deficit)		102,508	106,160
Physical asset revaluation reserve surplus		21,420	21,420
Contributed capital		195,371	181,069
Net worth		319,299	308,649

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Cash flow statement

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts			
Receipts from government		65,911	68,205
Receipts from other entities		6,879	3,987
Goods and Services Tax recovered from the ATO ^(a)		4,933	4,077
Interest received		2,751	3,061
Other receipts		22,715	7,043
Total receipts		103,189	86,373
Payments			
Payments to suppliers and employees		(86,524)	(78,876)
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(728)	(317)
Total payments		(87,252)	(79,193)
Net cash flow from / (used in) operating activities		15,937	7,180
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for investments		(11,623)	(9,038)
Proceeds from sale of investments		9,038	8,952
Purchases for non-financial assets		(14,686)	(18,946)
Proceeds from disposal of non-financial assets		1,304	1,726
Net cash flows from/(used in) investing activities		(15,967)	(17,306)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Owner contributions by State Government		5,587	3,965
Repayment of borrowings and principal portion of lease liabilities ^(b)		(3,142)	(3,483)
Net cash flows from/(used in) financing activities		2,445	482
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		2,415	(9,644)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		82,781	92,425
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6.3	85,196	82,781

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes:

(a) GST recovered from the Australian Taxation Office is presented on a net basis.

(b) The Authority has recognised cash payments for the principal portion of lease payments as financing activities; cash payments for the interest portion as operating activities consistent with the presentation of interest payments and short-term lease payments for leases and low-value assets as operating activities.

Statement of changes in equity

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

(\$ thousand)

	<i>Physical asset revaluation reserve surplus</i>	<i>Accumulated surplus</i>	<i>Contributions by owner</i>	<i>Total</i>
Balance at 1 July 2023	21,420	101,724	173,749	296,893
Net result for the year	-	4,436	-	4,436
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-
Capital appropriations	-	-	7,320	7,320
Balance at 30 June 2024	21,420	106,160	181,069	308,649
Net result for the year	-	(3,652)	-	(3,652)
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-
Capital appropriations	-	-	14,302	14,302
Balance at 30 June 2025	21,420	102,508	195,371	319,299

1. About this report

The Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (the Authority) is established pursuant to an order made by the Premier under the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005 (Vic)*.

Its principal address is:
Victoria State Emergency Service Authority
168 Sturt Street
Southbank VIC 3006

A description of the nature of its operations and its principal activities is included in Part One (About the Victorian State Emergency Service) and Part Two (Our work), which do not form part of these financial statements.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements are Tier 2 general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* (AASB 1060) and Financial Reporting Direction 101 *Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* (FRD 101).

The Authority is a Tier 2 entity in accordance with FRD 101. These financial statements are the first general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures. The Authority's prior year financial statements were general purpose financial statements prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (Tier 1). As the Authority is not a 'significant entity' as defined in FRD 101, it was required to change from Tier 1 to Tier 2 reporting effective from 1 July 2024.

These financial statements are in Australian dollars and the historical cost convention is used unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the note associated with the item measured on a different basis.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in preparing these financial statements, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

Consistent with the requirements of AASB 1004 *Contributions*, contributions by owners (that is, contributed capital and its repayment) are treated as equity transactions and, therefore, do not form part of the income and expenses of the Authority.

Capital grants which have been designated as contributions by owners are recognised as contributed capital. Other transfers that are in the nature of contributions to or distributions by owners have also been designated as contributions by owners.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about financial information being presented. The material judgements made in the preparation of these financial statements are disclosed in the notes where amounts affected by those judgements are disclosed. Estimates and associated assumptions are based on professional judgements derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in applying Australian Accounting Standards (AAS) that have material effects on the financial statements and estimates are disclosed in the notes under the heading: 'Material judgement or estimates'.

These financial statements cover the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (VICSES) as an individual reporting entity and include all the controlled activities of the Authority, including VICSES volunteer units. The financial statements include cash balances, investments, and property, plant, and equipment of individual VICSES volunteer units.

Where control of an entity is obtained during the financial period, its results are included in the comprehensive operating statement from the date on which control commenced. Where control ceases during a financial period, the entity's results are included for that part of the period in which control existed. Where entities adopt dissimilar accounting policies and their effect is considered material, adjustments are made to ensure consistent policies are adopted in these financial statements.

All amounts in the financial statements (including the notes) have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 unless otherwise stated.

Consolidation of VICSES volunteer units

The financial statements incorporate financial transactions of the 146 operational VICSES volunteer units on a cash basis. Management have not recognised any accruals on the basis that it is not material to the financial report.

The volunteer unit financial transactions incorporated by VICSES include:

- Cash and investment balances.
- Net movement in cash balances between financial years as either revenue or an expense.

Transactions between the volunteer units and the Authority are eliminated.

All VICSES volunteer unit property, plant, and equipment over \$5,000 are purchased by the Authority and recorded in the accounts of the Authority. Volunteer units do not record these items separately.

Revenue and expenditure balances of the Authority have not been grossed up to incorporate volunteer unit transaction with third parties.

Compliance information

These general-purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA) and applicable Australian Accounting Standards (AASs), which include Interpretations, issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB).

Where appropriate, those AASs paragraphs applicable to not-for-profit entities have been applied. Accounting policies selected and applied in these financial statements ensure that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported.

2. Funding delivery our services

Introduction

The Victoria State Emergency Service Authority's (the Authority) overall objectives are to provide emergency management, planning, auditing of municipal management plans, emergency response to floods, earthquakes, tsunami, storms and landslides, rescue services and support to other emergency agencies, and to assist with rescue operations on land and water.

To enable the Authority to fulfil its objectives, it receives income (predominantly parliamentary grants). The grants are received by the Authority from the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The Authority also receives gifts, donations, project grants and sponsorship.

Material judgement: Grants revenue

The Authority has made the judgement that amounts received in relation to Volunteer Emergency Service Equipment Program (VESEP) should be recognised under AASB 1058 *Income for Not-for-Profit Entities* (AASB 1058). The VESEP income is recognised at a point in time when the Authority obtains control of the asset.

Structure

- 2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services
- 2.2 Income from transactions

2.1 Summary of revenue and income that funds the delivery of our services

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Grants	2.2.1	87,668	92,743
Fair value of assets and services received free of charge or for nominal consideration		-	3
Other income	2.2.2	3,683	4,201
Total revenue and income from transactions		91,351	96,947

Revenue and income that fund delivery of the Authority's services are accounted for consistently with the requirements of the relevant accounting standards disclosed in the following notes.

2.2 Income from transactions

2.2.1 Grants

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Department of Justice and Community Safety		
- Operating grant income	65,912	75,180
- Volunteer Emergency Service Equipment Program (VESEP)	3,053	2,641
- Valuing Volunteer Program (VVP)	280	280
- Other	188	98
- Disaster Ready	2,623	-
- Enterprise Agreement 2024-25	1,739	-
- Mental Wellbeing Grant	133	-
- Major Incident Funding	1,857	4,309
- Fleet Rectification	5,015	2,883
- Special Appropriation Volunteer WorkCover	554	556
Other State Government Departments & Authorities		
- Department of Transport	-	840
- Melbourne Water	630	531
- Transport Accident Commission	5,550	5,366
Other grant income		
Other	134	59
Total grants	87,668	92,743

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Income recognised under AASB 1058		
General purpose	84,481	90,044
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	3,053	2,640
Other specific purpose grants	134	59
Total grants	87,668	92,743

Performance obligations and revenue recognition policies

The Authority has determined that all grant income is recognised as income of not-for-profit entities in accordance with AASB 1058.

The VESEP income is recognised at a point in time when the Authority obtains control of the asset

Consideration received in advance of recognising the VESEP income is recorded as a contract liability (Note 5.2.1).

Grants recognised under AASB 1058

The Authority has determined that the grant income included in the table above under AASB 1058 has been earned under arrangements that are either not enforceable and/or linked to sufficiently specific performance obligations.

Income from grants without any sufficiently specific performance obligations, or that are not enforceable, is recognised when the Authority has an unconditional right to receive cash which usually coincides with receipt of cash. On initial recognition of the asset, the Authority recognises any related contributions by owners, increases in liabilities, decreases in assets, and revenue ('related amounts') in accordance with other Australian Accounting Standards.

Related amounts may take the form of:

- contributions by owners, in accordance with AASB 1004 *Contributions* (AASB 1004)
- revenue or a contract liability arising from a contract with a customer, in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* (AASB 15)
- a lease liability in accordance with AASB 16 *Leases* (AASB 16)
- a financial instrument, in accordance with AASB 9 *Financial Instruments* (AASB 9)
- a provision, in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets* (AASB 137)

Income received for specific purpose grants for on-passing is recognised simultaneously as the funds are immediately on-passed to the relevant recipient entities on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

Income from grants to construct the Authority's asset is recognised progressively as the asset is constructed. This aligns with the Authority's obligation to construct the asset. The progressive percentage costs incurred is used to recognise income because this most closely reflects the construction progress as costs are incurred as the works are done.

2.2.2 Other income

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Sponsorship	500	500
Donations	64	379
Interest income	2,725	3,128
Other income	394	194
Total other income	3,683	4,201

Sponsorship income is recognised when the Authority is entitled to the economic benefit from the sponsorship.

Donations and other income included in the table above are transaction that the Authority has determined to be classified as revenue in accordance with AASB 1058.

Interest income includes interest received on bank term deposits and other investments and the unwinding over time of the discount on financial assets. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method which allocates the interest over the relevant period.

3. The cost of delivering services

Introduction

This section provides an account of the expenses incurred by the Authority in delivering services and outputs. In Section 2, the funds that enable the provision of services were disclosed and in this note the cost associated with provision of services are disclosed.

Structure

- 3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services
- 3.2 Other operating expenses

3.1 Expenses incurred in delivery of services

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Employee benefit expenses	3.1.1	45,490	42,380
Other operating expenses	3.2	35,919	38,300
Total expenses incurred in delivery of services		81,409	80,680

3.1.1 Employee benefits in the comprehensive operating statement

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Defined contribution superannuation expense		3,451	3,350
Defined benefit superannuation expense		34	37
Termination benefits		211	71
Salaries and wages, annual leave and long service leave		41,794	38,922
Total employee expenses		45,490	42,380

Employee expenses include all costs related to employment including wages and salaries, fringe benefits tax, leave entitlements, termination payments and WorkCover premiums.

The amount recognised in the comprehensive operating statement in relation to superannuation is employer contributions for members of both defined benefit and defined contribution superannuation plans that are paid or payable during the reporting period. The Authority does not recognise any defined benefit liabilities because it has no legal or constructive obligation to pay future benefits relating to its employees. Instead, the Authority discloses in its annual financial statements the net defined benefit cost related to the members of these plans as an administered liability (on behalf of the State as the sponsoring employer).

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated before the normal retirement date, or when an employee accepts an offer of benefits in exchange for the termination of employment. Termination benefits are recognised when the Authority is demonstrably committed to terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal or providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy. Benefits falling due more than 12 months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to present value.

3.1.2 Employee related provision

Provision is made for benefits accruing to employees in respect of wages and salaries, annual leave, long service leave (LSL) and time-in-lieu for services rendered to the reporting date and recorded as an expense during the period the services are delivered.

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Current provisions:			
Annual leave ⁽ⁱ⁾			
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months		3,054	2,947
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months		195	188
Long service leave			
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months		393	552
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months		2,864	3,136
Provisions related to employee benefit on-costs			
Unconditional and expected to be settled within 12 months		1,222	1,023
Unconditional and expected to be settled after 12 months		739	678
Total current provisions for employee benefits		8,467	8,524
Non-current provisions			
Employee benefits ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾		660	491
On-costs		153	96
Total non-current provisions for employee benefits		813	587
Total provisions for employee benefits		9,280	9,111

NOTES:

(i) Annual leave includes annual leave and time-in-lieu entitlements.

(ii) Provision for employee benefits consist of amounts for annual leave, time-in-lieu, long service leave and enterprise bargaining agreement accrued by employees. On-costs such as payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance are recognised as a separate provision.

Wages and salaries, annual leave and time-in-lieu: Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and on-costs) are recognised as part of the employee benefit provision as current liabilities, because the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlements of these liabilities.

The liability for salaries and wages are recognised in the balance sheet at remuneration rates which are current at the reporting date. As the Authority expects the liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, they are measured at undiscounted amounts.

The annual leave and time-in-lieu liabilities are classified as a current liabilities and measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid, as the Authority does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period.

No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and it is not considered probable that the average sick leave taken in the future will be greater than the benefits accrued in the future. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement as it is taken.

Employment on-costs such as payroll tax, workers compensation and superannuation are not employee benefits. They are disclosed separately as a component of the provision for employee benefits when the employment to which they relate has occurred.

Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability, even where the Authority does not expect to settle the liability within 12 months because it will not have the unconditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement should an employee take leave within 12 months.

The components of this current LSL liability are measured at either:

- undiscounted value – if the Authority expects to wholly settle within 12 months
- present value – if the Authority does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Conditional LSL is disclosed as a non-current liability. There is a conditional right to defer the settlement of the entitlement until the employee has completed the requisite years of service. This non-current LSL is measured at present value.

Any gain or loss following revaluation of the present value of non-current LSL liability is recognised as a transaction, except to the extent that a gain or loss arises due to changes in bond interest rates for which it is then recognised as an 'other economic flow' in the net result.

3.1.3 Superannuation contributions

Employees of the Authority are entitled to receive superannuation benefits and the Authority contributes to both defined benefit and defined contribution plans. The defined benefit plan(s) provides benefits based on years of service and final average salary.

As noted before, the defined benefit liability is recognised in the Authority as an administered liability. However, superannuation contributions paid or payable for the reporting period are included as part of employee expenses in the comprehensive operating statement of the Authority.

(\$ thousand)

	Paid contribution for the year		Contribution outstanding at year end ^(b)	
	2025	2024	2025	2024
Defined benefit plans				
State Superannuation Fund - Revised and New ^(a)	34	36	-	(1)
Defined contribution plans				
VicSuper	1,192	1,172	-	(47)
Other	2,259	2,049	-	(82)
Total	3,485	3,257	-	(130)

Note:

(a) The basis for determining the level of contributions is determined by the various actuaries of the defined benefit superannuation plans.

(b) All outstanding contributions at year end relate to unpaid superannuation contributions.

3.2 Other operating expenses

(\$ thousand)

	Notes	2025	2024
Contractors and professional services		6,889	7,764
Building service and professional maintenance		2,350	2,197
Travel and associated costs		745	1,043
Printing, stationery and other office expenses		370	690
Postage and communication expenses		9,708	9,286
Vehicle expenses		3,900	4,442
Technology services costs		3,852	4,352
Protective clothing		1,532	1,587
Emergency rescue equipment		2,247	3,076
Training (Volunteers and Staff)		2,263	1,825
Other		1,289	461
Short term leases		329	443
Net result of VICSES volunteer units		445	1,134
Total other operating expenses		35,919	38,300

Other operating expenses generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations. It also includes bad debts expense from transactions that are mutually agreed.

Supplies and services are recognised as an expense in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

The following lease payments are recognised on a straight-line basis:

- Short-term leases – leases with a term 12 months or less
- Low value leases – leases with the underlying asset's fair value (when new, regardless of the age of the asset being leased) is no more than \$10,000.

Variable lease payments that are not included in the measurement of the lease liability (i.e. variable lease payments that do not depend on an index or a rate and which are not, in substance fixed), such as those based on performance or usage of the underlying asset, are recognised in the comprehensive operating statement (except for payments which have been included in the carrying amount of another asset) in the period in which the event or condition that triggers those payments occur.

Net result of VICSES volunteer units is calculated by determining the movement in cash balances and eliminating transactions between the Authority and volunteer units (refer to Note 1).

4. Key assets available to support output delivery

Introduction

The Authority controls property, plant and equipment and other investments that are utilised in fulfilling its objectives and conducting its activities. They represent the resources that have been entrusted to the Authority to be utilised for delivery of those outputs.

Structure

- 4.1 Property, plant and equipment
- 4.2 Investments and other financial

4.1 Property, plant and equipment ^(a)

(\$ thousand)

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Crown land at fair value	34,093	33,886	-	-	34,093	33,886
Buildings and leasehold improvements at fair value	130,025	80,810	(20,992)	(16,439)	109,033	64,371
Plant, equipment & vehicles at fair value	89,853	77,618	(42,002)	(36,308)	47,851	41,310
Assets under construction at cost	28,998	73,596	-	-	28,998	73,596
Net carrying amount	282,969	265,910	(62,994)	(52,747)	219,975	213,163

Note:

(a) Property, plant, and equipment are classified primarily by the 'purpose' for which the assets are used, according to one of six purpose groups based upon government purpose classifications. All assets in a purpose group are further sub-categorised according to the asset's 'nature' (e.g. buildings, plant), with each sub-category being classified as a separate class of asset for financial reporting purposes.

Items of property, plant and equipment are measured initially at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Where an asset is acquired for no or nominal cost, the cost is its fair value at the date of acquisition. The cost of constructed non-financial physical assets includes the cost of all materials used in construction, direct labour on the project and an appropriate proportion of variable and fixed overheads.

The following tables are subsets of buildings, and plant and equipment by right-of-use assets and service concession assets.

4.1.1 Total right-of-use assets: buildings, plant, equipment and vehicles

(\$ thousand)

	Gross carrying amount		Accumulated depreciation		Net carrying amount	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Buildings at fair value	16,758	16,673	(5,285)	(4,672)	11,473	12,001
Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value	5,582	4,855	(2,874)	(2,564)	2,708	2,291
Net carrying amount	22,340	21,528	(8,159)	(7,236)	14,181	14,292

(\$ thousand)

	Buildings at fair value	Plant, equipment and vehicles at fair value
Opening balance - 1 July 2024	12,001	2,291
Additions	997	2,243
Disposals	-	14
Depreciation	(1,535)	(1,840)
Closing balance - 30 June 2025	11,463	2,708

Right-of-use asset acquired by lessees – Initial measurement

The Authority recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for:

- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date; plus
- any initial direct costs incurred
- an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located, less any lease incentive received.

Right-of-use asset – Subsequent measurement

The Authority depreciates the right-of-use assets on a straight-line basis from the lease commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The right-of-use assets are also subject to revaluation.

In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any and adjusted for certain remeasurements of the lease liability.

Impairment of property, plant and equipment

The recoverable amount of primarily non-cash-generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity, is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

4.1.2 Depreciation and amortisation

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Buildings and leasehold improvements	(5,464)	(3,885)
Plant, equipment and vehicles	(6,763)	(7,491)
Leased vehicles	(1,840)	(1,605)
Total depreciation and amortisation	(14,067)	(12,981)

All property, plant and equipment and other non-financial physical assets that have finite useful lives, are depreciated.

Depreciation is generally calculated on a straight-line basis, at rates that allocate the asset's value, less any estimated residual value, over its estimated useful life. Typical estimated useful lives for the different asset classes for current and prior years are included in the table below:

(years)

<i>Asset</i>	<i>Useful life</i>
Buildings (excluding the right-of-use assets)	3 - 50 years
Leasehold improvements	2 - 40 years
Plant, equipment and vehicles	3 - 15 years
Leasehold buildings	3 - 10 years

The estimated useful lives, residual values and depreciation method are reviewed at the end of each annual reporting period, and adjustments made where appropriate.

Right-of-use assets are generally depreciated over the shorter of the asset's useful life and the lease term. Where the Authority obtains ownership of the underlying leased asset or if the cost of the right-of-use asset reflects that the Authority will exercise a purchase option, the Authority depreciates the right-of-use asset over its useful life.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and their useful lives.

Indefinite life assets: Land, which are considered to have an indefinite life, is not depreciated. Depreciation is not recognised in respect of land as its service potential has not, in any material sense, been consumed during the reporting period.

4.1.3 Reconciliation of movements in carrying amount of property, plant and equipment (Incl. Right-of-use assets (ROU))

(\$ thous)

	<i>Land at fair value</i>		<i>Buildings and leasehold improvements at fair value</i>		<i>Plant, equipment & vehicles at fair value</i>		<i>Assets under construction</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Opening balance 1 July	33,886	23,518	64,348	50,341	41,333	39,922	73,596	54,678	213,163	168,
Additions	207	10,368	1,192	9,707	4,944	6,258	14,747	31,626	21,090	57,
Revaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(212)	(274)	-	-	(212)	(274)
Transfer in/out of assets under construction	-	-	48,934	8,185	10,412	4,523	(59,345)	(12,708)	1	
Reclass	-	-	23	-	(23)	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	-	(5,464)	(3,885)	(8,603)	(9,096)	-	-	(14,067)	(12,981)
Closing balance	34,093	33,886	109,033	64,348	47,851	41,333	28,998	73,596	219,975	213,163

Note

(a) Fair value assessments have been performed for all classes of assets in this purpose group and the decision was made that movements were not material (less than or equal to 10 per cent) for a full revaluation as per the requirement of FRD 103. The next scheduled full revaluation for this purpose group will be conducted in 2027. Refer to note 7.3 for more information.

4.2 Investments and other financial assets

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Current investments and other financial assets ^(a)		
Term deposits ^(b)		
Australia dollar term deposits > 3 months	11,623	8,640
Total current investments and other financial assets	11,623	8,640
Non-current investments and other financial assets ^(a)		
Term deposits ^(b)		
Australia dollar term deposits > 12 months	-	398
Total non-current investments and other financial assets	-	398
Total investments and other financial assets	11,623	9,038

Notes:

(a) All investments relate to volunteer units. Volunteer units have discretion over how volunteer unit funds are spent subject to VICSES policies and procedures, including but not limited to financial delegations and the Volunteer Unit Finance Management Manual.

(b) Term deposits under the 'investments and other financial assets' class include only term deposits with maturity greater than 90 days.

5. Other assets and liabilities

Introduction

This section sets out those assets and liabilities that arose from the Authority's controlled operations.

Structure

- 5.1 Receivables
- 5.2 Payables
- 5.3 Other non-financial assets

5.1 Receivables

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Contractual		
Grant receivables	9,881	13,423
Statutory		
GST input tax credit recoverable	1,119	1,326
Other receivables	423	150
Total receivables	11,423	14,899
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current receivables	11,423	14,899

Contractual receivables are classified as financial instruments and categorised as 'financial assets at amortised costs'. They are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. The Authority holds the contractual receivables with the objective to collect the contractual cash flows and therefore subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Statutory receivables do not arise from contracts and are recognised and measured similarly to contractual receivables (except for impairment) but are not classified as financial instruments for disclosure purposes. The Authority applies AASB 9 for initial measurement of the statutory receivables and, as a result, statutory receivables are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction cost.

5.2 Payables

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Contractual		
Supplies and services	12,950	7,805
Statutory		
Other taxes payable	196	323
Total payables	13,146	8,128
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current payables	13,146	8,128

Payables consist of:

- **Contractual payables:** Classified as financial instruments and measured at amortised cost. Accounts payable represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Authority prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid
- **Statutory payables:** Recognised and measured similarly to contractual payables, but not classified as financial instruments and not included in the category of financial liabilities at amortised cost, because they do not arise from contracts.

Payables for supplies and services have an average credit period of 30 days.

5.2.1 Contract Liabilities

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Contract Liabilities	3,245	3,785
<i>Represented by</i>		
Current contract liabilities	3,245	3785
Non-current contract liabilities	-	-

Contract liabilities relate to consideration received in advance where the Authority is yet to satisfy the performance obligations in an enforceable contract that contains sufficiently specific performance obligations.

Grant funding was received from the State Government as part of the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) to acquire or construct recognisable non-financial assets for Volunteer Units.

5.3 Other non-financial assets ^(a)

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Current other assets		
Prepayments	1,270	712
Total current other assets	1,270	712
Non-Current other assets		
Prepayments	31,308	24,656
Total non-current other assets	31,308	24,656
Total other assets	32,578	25,368

Note:

(a) Balance at June 30 2025 includes \$31.234 million (30 June 2024: \$24.997million) paid to the Community Safety Building Authority for the construction of new Volunteer Unit Headquarters.

Other non-financial assets include pre-payments, which represent payments in advance of receipt of goods or services or the payments made for services covering a term extending beyond that financial accounting period.

6. How we financed our operations

Introduction

This section provides information on the sources of finance utilised by the Authority during its operations, along with interest expenses (the cost of borrowings) and other information related to financing activities of the Authority.

This section includes disclosures of balances that are financial instruments (such as borrowings and cash balances). Notes 7.1 and 7.3 provide additional, specific financial instrument disclosures.

Structure

- 6.1 Borrowings
- 6.2 Leases
- 6.3 Cash flow information and balances
- 6.4 Commitments for expenditure

6.1 Borrowings

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Current borrowings		
Lease liabilities ^(a)	2,767	2,395
Total current borrowings	2,767	2,395
Non-current borrowings		
Lease liabilities ^(a)	13,058	13,181
Total non-current borrowings	13,058	13,181
Total borrowings	15,825	15,576

Notes:

(a) Secured by the assets leased. Leases liabilities are effectively secured as the rights to the leased assets revert to the lessor in the event of default.

'Borrowings' refer to lease liabilities associated with right of use assets.

Borrowings are classified as financial instruments. The measurement basis depends on whether the Authority has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either 'financial liabilities designated at fair value through net result', or financial liabilities at 'amortised cost'. The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest-bearing liabilities. The Authority determines the classification of its interest-bearing liabilities at initial recognition.

All interest-bearing borrowings are initially recognised at the fair value of the consideration received less directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Defaults and breaches: During the current and prior year, there were no defaults and breaches of any of the loans.

6.1.1 Maturity analysis of borrowings

(\$ thousand)

	Weighted average interest rate (%)	Carrying amount	Nominal amount	Maturity dates				
				Less than 1 month	1- 3 months	3 months to 1 year	1 to 5 years	5+ Years
2025								
Finance lease liabilities designated at fair value	4.42%	15,825	20,148	301	570	2,454	7,451	9,372
Total		15,825	20,148	301	570	2,454	7,451	9,372
2024								
Finance lease liabilities designated at fair value	4.78%	15,576	20,105	278	544	2,194	7,457	9,632
Total		15,576	20,105	278	544	2,194	7,457	9,632

Note:

(a) Maturity analysis is presented using the contractual undiscounted cash flows.

6.1.2 Interest Expense

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Interest on leases	831	317
Total interest expense	831	317

Interest expense' includes costs incurred in connection with the borrowing of funds and includes interest component of lease repayments.

Interest expense is recognised in the period in which it is incurred.

The Authority recognises borrowing costs immediately as an expense, even where they are directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset.

6.2 Leases

Information about leases for which the Authority is a lessee is presented below.

The Authority's leasing activities

The Authority leases various properties, equipment and motor vehicles. The lease contracts are typically made for fixed periods of 1-10 years with an option to renew the lease after that date. Lease payments for properties are renegotiated in accordance with contract terms.

The Authority leases IT equipment with contract terms of 1-3 years. These leases are short-term and or/leases of low-value items. The Authority has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for these leases.

Leases at significantly below-market terms and conditions

The Authority is party to below-market or "peppercorn" leases with municipal councils and state government entities in respect of volunteer unit premises.

6.2.1 Right-of-use Assets

Right-of-use assets are presented in note 4.1.1.

6.2.2 Amounts recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement

The following amounts are recognised in the Comprehensive Operating Statement relating to leases:

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Expenses relating to short term leases and leases for low-value assets	329	443
Total amount recognised in the statement of comprehensive statement	329	443

6.2.3 Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

For any new contracts entered into, the Authority considers whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'. To apply this definition the Authority assesses whether the contract meets three key evaluations:

- whether the contract contains an identified asset, which is either explicitly identified in the contract or implicitly specified by being identified at the time the asset is made available to the Authority and for which the supplier does not have substantive substitution rights
- whether the Authority has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits from use of the identified asset throughout the period of use, considering its rights within the defined scope of the contract and the Authority has the right to direct the use of the identified asset throughout the period of use
- whether the Authority has the right to take decisions in respect of 'how and for what purpose' the asset is used throughout the period of use.

Separation of lease and non-lease components

At inception or on reassessment of a contract that contains a lease component, the lessee is required to separate out and account separately for non-lease components within a lease contract and exclude these amounts when determining the lease liability and right-of-use asset amount.

Recognition and measurement of leases as a lessee

Lease Liability – initial measurement

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease if that rate is readily determinable or the Authority's incremental borrowing rate.

Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability comprise the following:

- fixed payments (including in-substance fixed payments) less any lease incentive receivable
- variable payments based on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate as at the commencement date
- amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee
- payments arising from purchase and termination options reasonably certain to be exercised.

Lease Liability – subsequent measurement

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification, or if there are changes in in-substance fixed payments.

When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset, or profit and loss if the right-of-use asset is already reduced to zero.

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The Authority has elected to account for short-term leases and leases of low-value assets using the practical expedients presented in note 3.2 and 6.2.1. Instead of recognising a right-of-use asset and lease liability, the payments in relation to these are recognised as an expense in profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Below market/Peppercorn lease

Right-of-use assets under leases at significantly below-market terms and conditions that are entered into principally to enable the Authority to further its objectives, are initially and subsequently measured at cost.

These right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful lives of the assets.

Presentation of right-of-use assets and lease liabilities

The Authority presents right-of-use assets as 'property plant equipment' in the balance sheet. Lease liabilities are presented as 'borrowings' in the balance sheet.

(\$ thousand)

	Minimum future lease payments ^(a)	
	2025	2024
Other lease liabilities payable		
Not longer than 1 year	3,325	3,016
Longer than 1 year but not longer than 5 years	7,451	7,457
Longer than 5 years	9,372	9,632
Minimum future lease payments		
Less: future finance charges	(4,323)	(4,529)
Present value of minimum lease payments	15,825	15,576

Note:

(a) Minimum future lease payments include the aggregate of all base payments and any guaranteed residual.

6.3 Cash flow information and balances

Cash and deposits, including cash equivalents, comprise cash on hand and cash at bank, volunteer unit cash, deposits at call and those highly liquid investments with an original maturity of three months or less that are held for the purpose of meeting short-term cash commitments rather than for investment purposes, and which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

For cash flow statement presentation purposes, cash and cash equivalents include bank overdrafts, which are included as current borrowings on the balance sheet, as indicated in the reconciliation below.

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Total cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet held by the Authority	63,896	60,712
Total cash and deposits disclosed in the balance sheet held by volunteer units ^(a)	21,300	22,069
Balance as per cash flow statement	85,196	82,781

Note:

(a) Volunteer units have discretion over how volunteer unit funds are spent subject to VICSES policies and procedures including but not limited to financial delegations and the Volunteer Unit Finance Management Manual.

6.4 Commitments for expenditure

Commitments for future expenditure include operating and capital commitments arising from contracts. These commitments are recorded below at their nominal value and inclusive of GST. Where it is considered appropriate and provides additional relevant information to users, the net present values of significant individual projects are stated. These future expenditures cease to be disclosed as commitments once the related liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet.

6.4.1 Total commitments payable

(\$ thousand)

<i>Nominal amounts</i> 2025	<i>Less than</i> 1 year	<i>1-5</i> years	<i>5+</i> years	<i>Total</i>
Capital expenditure commitments payable	13,344	153	-	13,497
Other commitments payable	7,872	1,458	-	9,330
Total other commitments	21,216	1,611	-	22,827
Less GST recoverable				(2,075)
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)				20,752

<i>Nominal amounts</i> 2024	<i>Less than</i> 1 year	<i>1-5</i> years	<i>5+</i> years	<i>Total</i>
Capital expenditure commitments payable	11,865	340	-	12,205
Other commitments payable	7,308	858	-	8,166
Total other commitments	19,173	1,198	-	20,371
Less GST recoverable				(1,852)
Total commitments (exclusive of GST)				18,519

7. Risks, contingencies and valuation judgements

Introduction

The Authority is exposed to risk from its activities and outside factors. In addition, it is often necessary to make judgements and estimates associated with recognition and measurement of items in the financial statements. This section sets out financial instrument specific information, (including exposures to financial risks) as well as those items that are contingent in nature or require a higher level of judgement to be applied, which for the Authority related mainly to fair value determination.

Structure

- 7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures
- 7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities
- 7.3 Fair value determination

7.1 Financial instruments specific disclosures

Introduction

Financial instruments arise out of contractual agreements that give rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Due to the nature of the Authority's activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statute rather than a contract (for example taxes, fines and penalties). Such assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments in AASB 132 *Financial Instruments: Presentation*.

Categories of financial assets

Financial assets at amortised cost

Financial assets are measured at amortised costs if both of the following criteria are met and the assets are not designated as fair value through net result:

- the assets are held by the Authority to collect the contractual cash flows
- the assets' contractual terms give rise to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interests.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less any impairment.

The Authority recognises the following assets in this category:

- cash and deposits
- receivables (excluding statutory receivables); and
- term deposits with maturity greater than three months.

Categories of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially recognised on the date they are originated. They are initially measured at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial instruments are measured at amortised cost with any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value being recognised in profit and loss over the period of the interest-bearing liability, using the effective interest rate method. The Authority recognises the following liabilities in this category:

- payables (excluding statutory payables)
- borrowings (including lease liabilities).

7.1.1 Financial instruments – Net gain/(loss) on financial instruments by category

(\$ thousand)

2025	Carrying amount	Total interest income/ (expense)	Impairment loss
Financial assets at amortised cost			
Cash and deposits	85,196	2,725	-
Trade receivables ^(a)	9,881	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	95,077	2,725	-
Financial liabilities at amortised cost			
Trade payables ^(a)	12,950	-	-
Borrowings			
Lease liabilities	15,825	(831)	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	28,775	(831)	-

Note:

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable)

2024	Carrying amount	Total interest income/ (expense)	Impairment loss
Financial assets at amortised cost			
Cash and deposits	82,781	3,128	-
Trade receivables ^(a)	13,423	-	-
Total financial assets at amortised cost	96,204	3,128	-
Financial liabilities at amortised cost			
Trade payables ^(a)	7,805	-	-
Borrowings			
Lease liabilities	15,576	(317)	-
Total contractual financial liabilities	23,381	(317)	-

Note:

(a) The total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts (e.g. amounts owing from Victorian Government and GST input tax credit recoverable and taxes payable)

7.2 Contingent assets and contingent liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed and, if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value.

Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable respectively.

Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity.

These are classified as either quantifiable, where the potential economic benefit is known, or non-quantifiable.

There were nil contingent assets of 30 June 2025 (2024: Nil).

Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:

- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the entity
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
 - it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligations
 - the amount of the obligations cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Contingent liabilities are also classified as either quantifiable or non-quantifiable.

There were no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2025 (2024: Nil).

7.3 Fair value determination

This section sets out information on how the Authority determined fair value for financial reporting purposes. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

The following assets and liabilities are carried at fair value:

- Land
- Buildings and leasehold improvements
- Plant, equipment & vehicles

Fair value hierarchy

In determining fair values, a number of inputs are used. To increase consistency and comparability in the financial statements, these inputs are categorised into three levels, also known as the fair value hierarchy. The levels are as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
- Level 2 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable
- Level 3 – valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

The Authority determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by reassessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

The Valuer General Victoria (VGV) is the Authority's independent valuation agency. The Authority, in conjunction with VGV, monitors changes in the fair value of each asset and liability through relevant data sources to determine whether revaluation is required.

How this section is structured

For those assets and liabilities for which fair values are determined, the following disclosures are provided:

- carrying amount and the fair value (which would be the same for those assets measured at fair value)
- which level of the fair value hierarchy was used to determine the fair value:
 - in respect of those assets and liabilities subject to fair value determination using Level 3 inputs:
 - a reconciliation of the movements in fair values from the beginning of the year to the end
 - details of significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value determination.

7.3.1 Fair value determination: Non-financial physical assets

Valuation techniques and significant assumptions of non-financial physical assets measured at fair value

AASB 2022-10 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial Assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities* amended AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* by adding Appendix F *Australian implementation guidance for not-for-profit public sector entities*. Appendix F explains and illustrates the application of the principles in AASB 13 on developing unobservable inputs and the application of the cost approach. These clarifications are mandatorily applicable annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024. FRD 103 permits Victorian public sector entities to apply Appendix F of AASB 13 in their next scheduled formal asset revaluation or interim revaluation process (whichever is earlier).

During 2021, the Authority undertook an independent revaluation of its property, plant and equipment in line with the five-year revaluation cycle based on the assets' Classification of the Functions of Government classification. Independent valuers were used to conduct the scheduled revaluation.

During 2023, the Authority conducted a revaluation of its motor vehicle, and plant and equipment in collaboration with the Fleet department of the Authority regarding replacement costs, considering factors such as market conditions and technology advancements. As a result of the fair value assessment, the carrying amounts of motor vehicle and plant and equipment were adjusted to their respective fair values less accumulated depreciation in alignment with the Authority asset policies.

The Authority will reflect Appendix F in its next scheduled formal revaluation in the financial year 2026-27 or interim revaluation process (whichever is earlier). All annual fair value assessments thereafter will continue compliance with Appendix F.

For all assets measured at fair value, the Authority considers the current use is the highest and best use.

The Department of Treasury and Finance has formally approved for deferral of the scheduled formal valuation for entities within the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Government Finance Statistics Classification of functions of government (COFOG) category of Public Order and Safety by one year from financial year 2025-26 to 2026-27 in accordance with paragraph 4.5 of Financial Reporting Direction FRD 103 Non-financial physical assets.

This approval is given on the basis that the entity impacted by this deferral continues to undertake the annual managerial valuation in the intervening period with the support of VGV (as necessary) to ensure that non-financial physical assets continue to be recognised at fair value in compliance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

During the current financial year ending 30 June 2025, the Authority performed managerial revaluation of its non-financial physical assets. The assessment did not reveal any significant movement in the fair value of its non-financial physical assets requiring adjustments to the carrying value of these assets as at the end of the financial year.

Non-specialised land is valued using the market approach, whereby assets are compared to recent comparable sales or sales of comparable assets that are considered to have nominal value.

An independent valuation of the Authority's land was performed by Valuer-General Victoria to determine fair value using the market approach. The valuation, which conforms to Australian Valuation Standards, was determined by reference to the amounts for which assets could be exchanged between knowledgeable willing parties in an arm's length transaction. Fair value is determined by direct reference to recent market transactions on arm's length terms for land of comparable size and location to the Authority. The valuation was performed based on the current replacement cost of the assets. The effective date of the valuation was 30 June 2021.

Non-financial physical assets such as land are measured at fair value, with regard to the property's highest and best use after due consideration is made for any legal or physical restrictions imposed on the asset, public announcements or commitments made in relation to the intended use of the asset. Theoretical opportunities that may be available in relation to the asset are not taken into account until it is virtually certain that the restrictions will no longer apply. Therefore, unless otherwise disclosed, the current use of these non-financial physical assets will be their highest and best use.

To the extent that non-specialised land does not contain significant, unobservable adjustments, these assets are classified as Level 2 under the market approach.

Specialised buildings: For the Authority's specialised buildings, the current replacement cost method is used, adjusting for the associated depreciations. As depreciation adjustments are considered as significant, unobservable inputs in nature, specialised buildings are classified as Level 3 fair value measurements.

Vehicles are valued using the current replacement cost method. The Authority acquires new vehicles and at times disposes of them before the end of their economic life. The process of acquisition, use and disposal in the market is managed by experienced fleet managers in the Authority who set relevant depreciation rates during use to reflect the utilisation of the vehicles.

Plant and equipment is held at fair value. When plant and equipment is specialised in use, such that it is rarely sold other than as part of a going concern, fair value is determined using the current replacement cost method. For plant, equipment and vehicles, existing depreciated historical cost is generally a reasonable proxy for current replacement cost because of the short lives of the assets concerned.

There were no changes in valuation techniques throughout the period to 30 June 2025.

For all assets measured at fair value, the current use is considered the highest and best use.

Description of significant unobservable inputs to Level 3 valuations

<i>2024 and 2025</i>		<i>Valuation technique</i>	<i>Significant assumption</i>	<i>Range (weighted average)</i>
Specialised buildings	Current replacement cost		Direct cost per square metre	\$147 - \$5 552/m2 (\$1 651)
			Useful life of specialised buildings	4-50 years (41 years)
Leasehold improvements	Current replacement cost		Cost per unit	\$1,159 - \$5,197,860 per unit (\$78,864)
			Useful life of leasehold improvements	3 – 40 years (24 years)
Vehicles	Current replacement cost		Cost per unit	\$1,080 - \$318,447 per unit (\$81,027)
			Useful life of vehicles	1 – 15 years (13 years)
Plant and equipment	Current replacement cost		Cost per unit	\$1,080 - \$318,447 per unit (\$81,027)
			Useful life of plant and equipment	1 – 15 years (13 years)

Significant unobservable inputs have remained unchanged since June 2024.

8. Other disclosures

Introduction

This section includes additional material disclosures required by accounting standards or otherwise, for the understanding of this financial report.

Structure

- 8.1 Ex gratia expenses
- 8.2 Responsible persons
- 8.3 Remuneration of executives
- 8.4 Related parties
- 8.5 Remuneration of auditors
- 8.6 Subsequent events

8.1 Ex gratia expenses

Ex gratia expenses are the voluntary payments of money or other non-monetary benefit (e.g. a write off) that are not made either to acquire goods, services or other benefits for the entity or to meet a legal liability, or to settle or resolve a possible legal liability of or claim against the entity.

There were no ex gratia expenses for both individual items and in aggregate that are greater than or equal to \$5,000 during the financial year ended 30 June 2025 (2024: Nil).

8.2 Responsible persons

In accordance with the Ministerial Directions issued by the Assistant Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 1994* (FMA), the following disclosures are made regarding responsible persons for the reporting period.

Names

Minister for Emergency Services

The Hon. Jacklyn Symes, MP

1 July 2024 to 18 December 2024

The Hon. Vicki Ward, MP

19 December 2024 to 30 June 2025

Acting Minister for Emergency Services

The Hon. Enver Erdogan, MP

1 November 2024 to 5 November 2024

The Hon. Jaclyn Symes, MP

4 January 2025 to 20 January 2025

The Hon. Enver Erdogan, MP

4 June 2025 to 9 June 2025

Accountable Officer

Gregory Leach

1 July 2024 to 27 October 2024

Kate White

28 October 2024 to 10 March 2025

Robert Purcell

11 March 2025 to 30 June 2025

Members of the board of governance, which includes Board Chair:

Jasmine Doak	Chair	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Casey Nunn	Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Lisa Borowick	Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Bernadette Northeast	Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Jane Foley	Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Noel Clement	Board Member	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025
Shikha Gupta	Board Member	1 October 2024 to 30 June 2025

Remuneration

The Minister's remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

(\$ thousand)

<i>Remuneration band</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2024</i>
\$0 - \$9,999	-	1
\$10,000 - \$19,999	1	2
\$20,000 - \$29,999	5	4
\$40,000 - \$49,999	-	1
\$50,000 - \$59,999	1	-
\$120,000 - \$129,999	2	-
\$140,000 - \$149,999	1	-
\$290,000 - \$299,999	-	1
\$370,000 - \$379,999	-	1
Total number of responsible persons	10	10
Total remuneration	597	772

8.3 Remuneration of executives

The number of senior executive service members, other than Ministers and accountable officers, and their total remuneration during the reporting period are shown in the table below. Total annualised employee equivalents provides a measure of full time equivalent executive officers over the reporting period.

Remuneration comprises employee benefits (as defined in AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*) in all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by the Authority, or on behalf of the Authority, in exchange for services rendered. Accordingly, remuneration is determined on an accrual basis.

(\$ thousand)

Remuneration of the senior executive service (including Key Management Personnel disclosed in Note 8.4)	Total remuneration	
	2025	2024
Total remuneration ^(a)	2,318	2,284
Total number of executives	15	9
Total annualised employee equivalents ^(b)	8.4	8.2

Notes:

(a) The total number of senior executive service members includes persons who meet the definition of Key Management Personnel (KMP) of the entity under AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosures* and are also reported within the related parties note disclosure (Note 8.4).

(b) Annualised employee equivalent is based on the time fraction worked over the reporting period.

8.4 Related parties

The Authority is a wholly owned and controlled entity of the State of Victoria.

The financial statements incorporate financial transactions of the 146 operational VICSES volunteer units on a cash basis.

Related parties of the Authority and 146 Operational VICSES volunteer units include:

- all key management personnel and their close family members and personal business interests (controlled entities, joint ventures and entities they have significant influence over)
- all Cabinet Ministers and their close family members
- all departments and public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of state consolidated financial statements.

All related party transactions have been entered into on an arm's length basis.

Key management personnel (KMP) of the Authority includes the Portfolio Ministers, the Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP and the Hon. Vicki Ward MP, Directors of the board and members of the Senior Executive Team, which includes:

Mr Gregory Leach	Chief Executive Officer	1 July 2024 to 27 October 2024
Ms Kate White	Interim Chief Executive Officer	28 October 2024 to 10 March 2025
Mr Robert Purcell	Chief Executive Officer	11 March 2025 to 30 June 2025
Mr Tim Wiebusch	Chief Officer Operations	1 July 2024 to 17 February 2025
Mr Alistair Drayton	Acting Chief Officer Operations	18 February 2025 to 30 June 2025

Remuneration of key management personnel

The compensation detailed below excludes the salaries and benefits the Portfolio Minister receives. The Minister's remuneration and allowances is set by the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* and is reported within the State's Annual Financial Report.

(\$ thousand)

Compensation of KMPs	2025	2024
Total ^(a)	774	1,474

Notes:

(a) Note that KMPs are also reported in the disclosure of remuneration of executive officers (Note 8.3).

Significant transactions with government-related entities

During the year, the Authority had the following government-related entity transactions (refer to Note 2 for more detail):

- \$81.36 million received from Department of Justice and Community Service (2024: \$85.95m).
- \$6.31 million received from the other state government-related entities (2024: \$6.80m).

Transactions and balances with key management personnel and other related parties

Given the breadth and depth of State government activities, related parties transact with the Victorian public sector in a manner consistent with other members of the public e.g. stamp duty and other government fees and charges. Further employment of processes within the Victorian public sector occur on terms and conditions consistent with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and Codes of Conduct and Standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. Procurement processes occur on terms and conditions consistent with the Victorian Government Purchasing Board requirements.

Other than the citizen type transactions, there were no related party transactions with the Authority or in relation to the 146 VICSES volunteer units which has been incorporated into the Authority's financial statements, that involve KMPs, their close family members and their personal business interests.

All other transactions that have occurred with KMP and their related parties have not been considered material for disclosure. In this context, transactions are only disclosed when they are considered necessary to draw attention to the possibility that the Authority's financial position and profit or loss may have been affected by the existence of related parties and by transactions and outstanding balances, including commitments, with such parties.

No provision has been required, nor any expense recognised, for impairment of receivables from related parties.

8.5 Remuneration of auditors

(\$ thousand)

	2025	2024
Victorian Auditor-General's Office		
- Audit of the financial statements	114	112
Total remuneration of auditors	114	112

8.6 Subsequent events

The policy in connection with recognising subsequent events that are for events that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue is as follows:

- adjustments are made to amounts recognised in the financial statements where those events provide information about conditions that existed at the reporting date
- disclosure is made where the events relate to conditions that arose after the end of the reporting period that are considered to be of material interest.

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may affect the operations of the Authority the results of the operations or the state of affairs of the Authority in the future financial years.