



Victoria State Emergency Service

Safer Communities – Together



WHAT DRIVES US

VICSES is about two things: people and connections. We work with people, and for people. We are proud of the trust that comes from strong community connections and successful partnerships.

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) continues a long tradition of people from the community serving the community.

From the agency's origins as the Victoria Civil Defence Organisation in 1950 to the emergency service organisation we know now, volunteers have united to proudly keep Victorians safe.

We know that the impacts and costs of extreme weather events are expected to increase¹. Despite this uncomfortable certainty, we also know we can rely on the dedication and commitment of our incredible volunteers who form the backbone of our frontline emergency service.

To ensure volunteers are most effective when needed, we're building volunteer skills and capability. We also remain a flexible organisation that accommodates people's availability as they juggle career and family, and their changing needs.

Continuing to attract, train and retain a highly skilled network of volunteers will ensure Victoria's safety and quick recovery from extreme and sometimes devastating emergency events, well into the future.

When a community is ready and knows what to do before, during and after an emergency they are resilient. Resilience is built over time, and it involves stronger connections between people and the services, systems and structures that support them.

Victoria is well placed, with skilled and committed people who live and work in their communities and embody the spirit of community service. Our people play an important role in influencing and supporting community actions and decisions before, during and after emergency events.

We're proud to be a part of this process in building stronger communities – together. We invite you to learn more and discover how you too can be a part of our community supporting the community.



Stephen Griffin
Chief Executive Officer



¹ *Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements, Productivity Commission Enquiry Report V1, Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2014.*

WOOLLEN JACKETS

5

OUR VISION

Safer Communities – Together

OUR MISSION

Partner with the community and other agencies to provide timely and effective emergency services while building community preparedness and resilience

OUR VALUES

Integrity:

Adherence to moral and ethical principles

Respect:

Esteem for, or a sense of worth or excellence, of a person, a personal quality or ability

Trust:

The obligation of responsibility – confidence

Responsive:

Ready and receptive to act

Innovative:

New, different, change

WHO WE ARE

Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) is the control agency for floods, storms, tsunamis, earthquakes and landslides in Victoria, and we also operate the largest road rescue network in Australia.

We count on more than 5,000 volunteers – of all ages, professions and backgrounds – who have a shared desire to make a difference for all Victorians. This dedicated group of community volunteers operates out of 142 units across the state, and is backed up by a cohort of professional officers and staff responsible for the strategic and business success of the organisation.

Our highly skilled and well equipped volunteers are trained comprehensively in a wide range of emergency environments. To minimise the impact of emergencies when they occur and strengthen the community's capacity to recover swiftly and safely, VICSES focuses on working with communities and partners to achieve more aware, informed and prepared communities. We support them to understand their risk and the relevance of taking action before, during and after emergency events.





5,000

VICSES volunteers

142

units across Victoria

206

career officers
and support staff

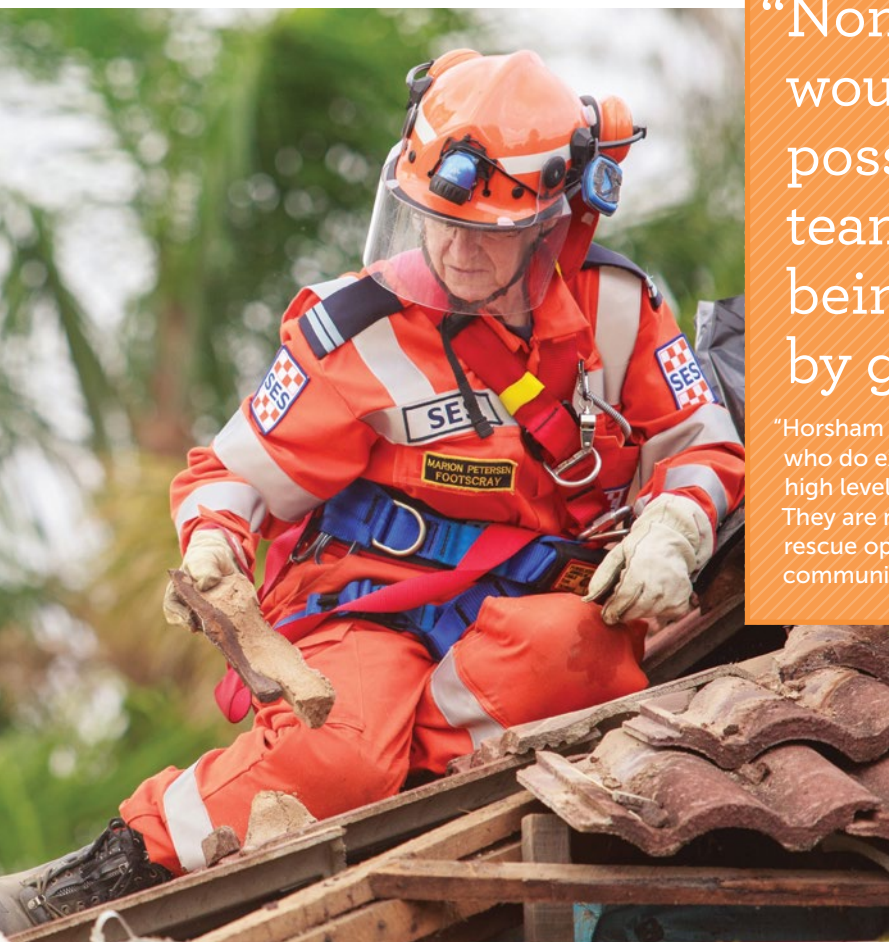
Ordinary people, extraordinary tasks

In his 19 years with VICSES, Jarrod McLean, Unit Controller has been part of three units – Nhill, Goroke and Horsham. He’s been at Horsham for 12 years and has been in several roles, including that as an ordinary member, OHS Officer, Trainer Assessor and Unit Controller.

“Some of the tasks that I never thought I would do through VICSES include coordinating the sand-bagging of the Lutheran Retirement Rest Home during the 2011 floods, using hydraulic cutters to rescue people out of cars, and assisting with the rescue of a person trapped in a rock at the base of Mount Arapiles,” he said.

“None of this would have been possible without teamwork and being surrounded by great people.”

“Horsham Unit members are everyday people who do extraordinary tasks to an extremely high level to keep their community safe. They are motivated, dynamic and flexible in rescue operations and have great pride in their community,” Jarrod said.



WHAT WE DO

We have two main roles, the first being to help communities to prepare for emergency through effective planning, collaboration and engagement. We also offer emergency response both during an event and in its wake, so that communities stay strong, resilient and connected.

We ensure communities are informed and ready by providing information and warnings via a range of communications channels, including social media and the VicEmergency app and website, and by working with our Emergency broadcaster partners in the media. We provide the community with emergency preparedness plans and advice for the home, work, school and on the road.

As the largest road rescue network in Australia we have specialist teams in 102 of the 142 VICSES Units across Victoria, providing a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week response to road accident and trauma incidents using specialised equipment such as the jaws of life. As the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake and landslide emergency, we take the lead in the preparation and response for those hazards.

Under the coordination of Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), VICSES works within the broader

emergency management sector, wherein all agencies and services work as one to ensure the safety of the state. We assist Victoria Police in search and rescue operations, and play an important role in supporting Ambulance Victoria, the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) during fire and emergency incidents.

We also work closely with key partners and municipal councils throughout Victoria to develop and improve their emergency management plans by providing advice, information, education and training.

Whether VICSES joins a search and rescue mission for a missing bushwalker, or responds to a major storm affecting thousands of people, homes and trees, our volunteers are involved in a range of emergency response situations.



OUR STRUCTURE

VICSES is headed by CEO Stephen Griffin and an experienced executive team, and is governed by a board of independent directors. VICSES's Board is accountable and reports directly to the Victorian State Government Minister for Emergency Services.

Our corporate staff ensures the agency has the systems, processes and support needed to maximise effectiveness. This includes information services, media, communications, finance, fleet, assets, work health and safety, and project management.

The State Operations team provide key support and direction for our volunteers. They support units to be ready to respond to emergency events, whether that is through training, policies and procedures, and development, or by providing command and control functions during an incident in accordance with Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS).

Driving our service in emergency preparedness and response are the 5,000 strong volunteers who dedicate their time to helping Victorians during a crisis. They hail from all walks of life. They may be teachers, healthcare workers, office professionals, transport workers, or students. They come from every industry, community and sector; they may be the person driving alongside you on the road.

We are thankful to every single VICSES member who commits to being ready to do this important work.

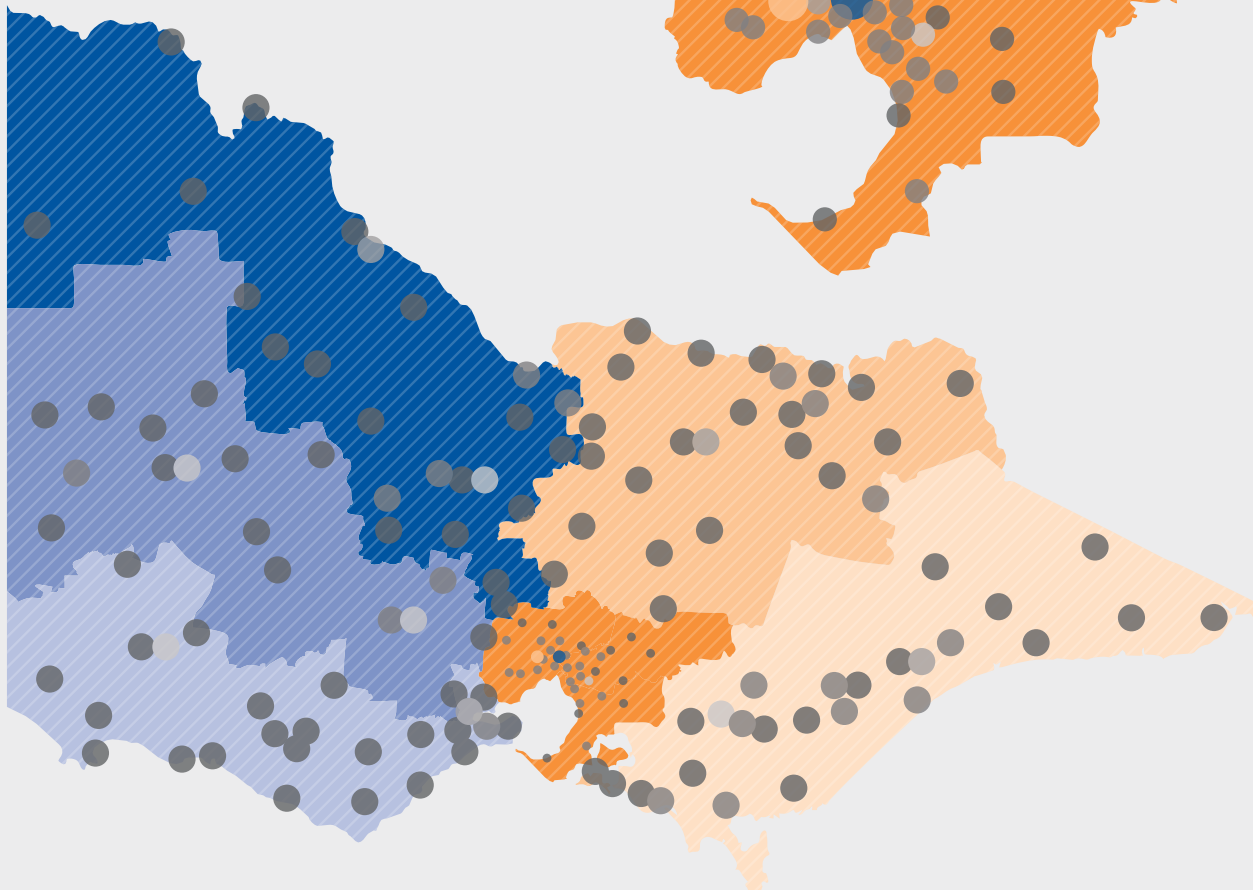
WHERE WE WORK

We have 12 permanently staffed offices, including our Victorian Head Office based in Southbank. There are 142 municipal units and 10 support units operating across Victoria. In 2015-16, VICSES volunteers attended 21,221 incidents and contributed 234,697 hours of their time to helping Victorians in need.

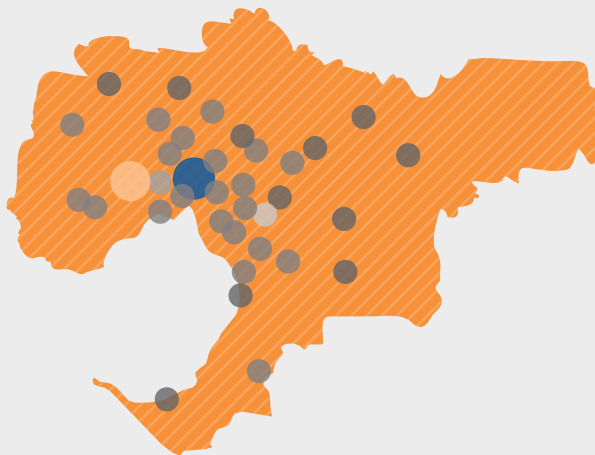
SES MAP KEY

- Unit Road Rescue Accredited
- Unit General
- Regional Office
- Regional Head Office
- State Logistics Centre
- Victorian Head Office

VICSES UNITS



CENTRAL REGION (ENLARGED)



“I really appreciate the training and learning opportunities I have received, and continue to receive, as a member of VICSES.”

Martin (Marty) Ledwich
Craigieburn Unit member since 1987



Developing Victorian leaders

At just 25 years of age and after one year of service, Ashleigh Davis is the Deputy Controller of the Corio Unit.

With women in leadership, opportunities to progress and a team of younger members, Ashleigh saw the potential to excel.

Outside of VICSES, Ashleigh continues to help others as a case manager and program coordinator for disability and mental health programs for youth.

“I like to create positive change and make processes better.”

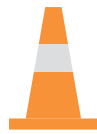
In just one year, Ashleigh has filled several leadership roles which helped her become deputy controller.

Her past roles include the public relations and community education officer, duty officer, media liaison officer and sectional leader of operational readiness.

Ashleigh was involved in setting up a regular road rescue demonstration at a Geelong trade tech college. It helps get a road safe message across to students.

“We’ve had interest from students wanting to join as junior members,” she said. The college also donate their old cars to the unit for training, which highlights the strength of the partnership.

Ashleigh’s fast-track to leadership has brought the role of unit controller one step closer.



VICSES offers

24/7

emergency response



OUR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

From severe weather events to unforeseen accidents, our committed and dedicated volunteers save the lives and property of countless Victorians, providing emergency services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Our people work on the front lines, in the control centres, in rural and metropolitan locations – anywhere there is a community need.

We lead the response for:



STORM

Storms bring high winds, heavy rainfall and flash flooding, causing significant damage. A single Melbourne storm event in December 2011 cost \$700 million in insurance payments².



FLOOD

Floods, either from rising rivers or heavy rainfall, can ruin homes and roads, sweep away cars and isolate communities for long periods of time. Historic Victorian floods from September 2010 to March 2011 cost the state about \$1.3 billion³.



EARTHQUAKE

Minor earthquakes are relatively common in eastern parts of Victoria, and the threat of major earthquake is real. Regional examples, in Japan and New Zealand, demonstrate the potential consequences.



TSUNAMI

The risk of a large wave caused by earthquake or disturbance (tsunami) to Victoria may be lower than many other parts of the world, but the consequences are extreme. Our volunteers are prepared to respond.



LANDSLIDE

Heavy rainfall, or even earthquakes, can result in earth shifting down sloping terrain, causing destructive landslides. The result can damage property and block roads, hamper transport and cause economic impacts, and be a risk to community safety.



² State Emergency Response Plan – Storm Sub-Plan (Edition 1), Emergency Management Victoria, 2016

³ State Emergency Response Plan – Flood Sub-Plan (Edition 1), Emergency Management Victoria, 2016



ROAD CRASH RESCUE

We are the largest provider of road rescue in Victoria. At the scene of a motor vehicle accident, VICSES's role is to remove casualties from vehicles, or to provide access to them for Ambulance officers by opening up a wrecked car. Volunteers undergo rigorous, specialised trainings in a range of tools and techniques to achieve this. A typical accident scene will see Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and the CFA all on scene, managing their part of a complex response activity.

SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

We are part of a broader emergency sector that operates under the stewardship of Emergency Management Victoria. Other emergency response agencies include the Victoria Police, CFA, MFB and Ambulance Victoria, along with government departments including Parks Victoria and DELWP.

We support these and other agencies as they respond to emergencies, including bushfires, searches, alpine rescues and even outbreaks of blue green algae on the Murray River.

2015 / 2016



21,221
emergency events
in 2015-16

8,765
in Regional Victoria

12,456
in Melbourne and
Central Region



Beyond a pile of rubble

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Category One training is one of our most popular courses. It is a specialised technical rescue course that gives volunteers the skills to rescue people trapped under collapsed buildings.

Category One (CAT 1) is aimed at those who would be the first responders to a structure collapse, and focuses on the rescue and removal of surface victims. CAT 2 and CAT 3 are more advanced, and focus on the technical aspects of rescue and management in USAR operations.

Andrew Feagan, Operations Officer – who runs the training – said the course attracted a huge amount of interest, because everyone knows the extensive damage that earthquakes, tsunamis and storms can cause, which can result in thousands of people needing assistance.

“The USAR training gives members next level skills to help those people in their time of need. The other major drawcard for the course is that CAT 2 operators in Central Region co-facilitate the course.

“All of the CAT 2 operators have been deployed to events, including Black Saturday Bush Fires, Queensland Floods and the Christchurch Earthquakes. Their operational experience and training means participants learn from the best in a real world scenario, which helps ensure their training is up to the highest standard.

“From previous building collapse incidents, it’s been proven that the CAT 1 team generally rescues 70 per cent of the casualties.

“This proves how valuable it is to give first responders the increased knowledge to work effectively as a part of a CAT 1 team,” Andrew said.

In October 2015, 23 volunteers from Central Region participated in the CAT 1 course.

Joel Vermaas, Port Phillip Unit Officer, said all training was great, but the Urban Search and Rescue CAT 1 course was definitely a highlight.

“The best thing was taking the theoretical and making it real – being in the field with real world challenges.”

“It was quite something to be climbing through rubble piles and getting a feel for how unstable incident sites can be.

“Old silos for storing water had been filled with all manner of odds and ends, broken TVs, rubble, various detritus that one would find in a building collapse.

“We were marking up the sites before entry, practicing search

techniques through the piles, including looking on top and within collapsed areas, as well as practicing tricky extraction of the dummies.

“We got a sense for the very real difficulty those in the field would have, and the need to train extensively to get there,” Joel said.





KEY TERMS

There are key terms related to our operational work:

CONTROL AGENCY

During any given event, there may be a number of agencies attending. A control agency is the primary agency responsible for a specific emergency type, and they lead and command the response.

For example, the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) are the control agencies for fire emergencies. VICSES is the control agency for floods, storms, tsunamis, earthquakes and landslides.

SUPPORT AGENCY

When our volunteers take part in an emergency that we are not the control agency for, we are the support agency.

DECLARED OPERATIONS

Significant events that require sustained periods to support a response in either a control or support capacity will be identified as a declared operation.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE (RFA)

An RFA is a request for VICSES to respond to an incident by a member of the public, another agency or an VICSES member.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

As a 95% volunteer-based organisation, we are totally dependent on the continued good will of our members, their employers and our ability to attract and retain volunteers.

Each unit recruits members from the local community ready to serve the community. They are allocated a specific role with clearly outlined duties and undergo a series of specialised training.

Our volunteers join VICSES to help people and save lives. Many volunteers identify that the training and skills they learn, making new friends and being part of a team are significant motivations for the hard work, dedication and demands of the role.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Controller

Provides unit leadership and manages the unit personnel, including recruitment and training and appointing of roles and responsibilities. Also responsible for unit finances, facilities and equipment, and liaising with other organisational bodies including VICSES head office.

Deputy Controller

Supports the Controller, and acts as the Controller in their absence, by managing the operational functions or the administrative functions of the unit.

Unit Officer

Part of the unit management team with a specific role in administration, training, equipment or communications.

Members

Provide planning and preparation for response and recovery to emergencies. Members may also provide unit management duties to manage assets and facilities, provide people and culture support and administration and reporting.

Probationary member

A new member is probationary for a minimum of three months until trained in foundational tasks and approved for ordinary membership.

Junior member

A member aged 15, 16 or 17 years old. They remain a probationary member and may be subject to particular management requirements and restrictions.

TRAINING

We run an extensive training program for volunteers. Many courses are nationally recognised and accredited.

Our range of training includes (but is not exclusive to):

- Introduction to emergency management
- Community education facilitation
- Storm and water damage
- Chainsaw operation
- Crew leader training and unit management
- Road rescue
- Maps and navigation
- Land search and urban search and rescue
- Alpine search and survival
- Boat coxswain and crewperson
- Emergency vehicle training
- Four wheel drive and light truck
- First aid
- General rescue
- Hazardous materials
- Roof safety
- Vertical rescue.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

To learn more about volunteering with VICSES visit ses.vic.gov.au/volunteer.



Volunteers
come from all
walks of life,
with diverse
backgrounds,
interests
and skills.



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

A resilient community is better prepared for an emergency, educated about risks and aware of what to do and who to turn to for help before, during and after an emergency event.

Our people support communities to better understand the who, what, when and how for emergency events under our three pillars of capacity, collaboration and connections:

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement at VICSES seeks to build an understanding and acceptance of natural hazard risks within the community. It involves collaborating with the community in preparing for emergencies, ultimately improving and strengthening their resilience through education, awareness and warning notifications.

In order to achieve this goal, VICSES volunteers and staff support communities through the provision of accurate, useful and reliable information in the form of resources, requests for assistance or in delivering community information evenings and through state and local media.

Our volunteer units visit community groups from schools to businesses and local council events. It provides an opportunity to show people what we do and the equipment and resources we use to respond before, during and after an emergency. We also share information about emergency types, and how communities and individuals can prepare.

EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS

We run regular campaigns that educate the community about getting ready in case of an emergency. Our campaigns include FloodSafe and StormSafe to educate and empower people in the event of a flood or storm. We also run a volunteer awareness day called Wear Orange Wednesday.

We support Driver Reviver, which is a national campaign with one objective: to reduce road collisions by alleviating driver fatigue. VICSES volunteers and Lions Club members operate Driver Reviver sites around Victoria on holiday weekends and peak traffic days, offering motorists a free cuppa and a safe place to stop and refresh.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

VICSES develops and distributes valuable resources such as the home emergency plan, which includes all the information you need to create an emergency plan for your household.

Every home and business should have a basic emergency kit that contains all the important things you may need during an emergency situation. Make sure you check your kit often and replace items that are out of date or broken.

We provide emergency planning guides for storms, floods, tsunamis and earthquakes, along with flood guides for at risk communities. Plus we support councils with advice, information, education and training in relation to emergency management arrangements.

WARNINGS AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

We utilise VicEmergency app, website (emergency.vic.gov.au) and hotline (1800 226 226) to distribute flood, storm, landslide, tsunami and earthquake warnings and emergency information in Victoria.

During some emergencies we may alert communities by sounding a local siren, or by sending an SMS to mobile phones or a voice message to landlines.

We also liaise with the Bureau of Meteorology, who issue warnings for severe weather and flood, to share information related to weather events and hazards.

We use our social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) and our website (ses.vic.gov.au) to keep the community informed.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

VICSES produces and updates a number of resources including:

- Website and online tools
- Social media
- Brochures and handouts
- Local flood guides and plans
- Information and advice in other languages
- State and regional Emergency Response Plans.

Junior program ranks highly

The popularity of and positive feedback from school visits encouraged Colac VICSES Unit Deputy Controller, Steve Tevelein, to kick-start an idea he had considered for a long time – creating a junior VICSES program.

Steve visited Year 10 students at Trinity College, presenting an awareness session about the VICSES and what it's like to be a part of the Colac Unit.

"At that age kids are looking for a new challenge," said Steve. He also encouraged the kids about the additional benefits of getting involved in the VICSES. "They could benefit from learning general life skills that may help them in the near future with getting a job after leaving school."

Junior member Riley Hayes said he joined the VICSES because he wanted to try something new. "I'm finding the challenges a bit difficult but there is always someone to ask 'hey does this look right?'"

Colac Unit now have six junior members, and in May 2017 one of those members will join the senior ranks.



“Our unit is very much our ‘orange family’ – we have fantastic members of different abilities, skills and experiences which we can draw on from each other.”

Anita McGown
Moe Unit Deputy Controller



Community education pays off

Fun. Entertaining. Hands-on. This is the key to effective community education, according to Anita McGown, Moe Unit Deputy Controller.

"Our unit regularly attends schools, community events and briefing sessions. It's very important as it instills information into the minds of those most vulnerable in our community – children and the elderly.

"Community events are important because they give us a presence, exposure as a unit and give the public an opportunity to talk with us and ask questions. I also love the events that our unit and members organise, as it is such a wonderful opportunity to showcase us as volunteers," Anita said.

At one school visit the children set up a Z-rig system (an arrangement of lines and pulleys used in rescue situations), attached a basket and pulled up one of the children.

"The children were very impressed as to how it worked! They also dressed up in mini orange VICSES uniforms and had their photos taken in the truck.

"This was hit with the kids and a memorable visit for us," she said.

Similarly, at a kindergarten visit the children were left in "fits of laughter" and giving high-fives to Paddy, the VICSES mascot platypus.

"At the kindergarten, we showed the children some equipment we had in the truck and asked them what each item was.

"We explained what we used it for and how it worked. Then a cone was placed on the head of one of our volunteers and we asked the children 'is this where it goes?' They all yelled 'no!' and were in fits of laughter.

"We also had a couple of children tape off an area with the VICSES tape and explained to them what it was for and not to enter the area if it is taped off.

"Paddy was there too and the children loved and really engaged with him. They also had a photo taken and played games with him, which was a hit. They really enjoyed this part of the visit.

"We wanted to ensure the children had a basic understanding of who we are and what we

do. We always wear orange so that people can readily identify who we are and that they can always contact the VICSES as an agency to help," Anita said.

The Moe Unit also runs briefing sessions in different towns, informing people of flood and storm

warnings, and things to look out for like trampolines blowing away. And all of the Unit's hard work pays off.

"Our community is very appreciative of us as volunteers, and it makes us feel as members very humble, and a sense of pride of belonging to such a great unit. Our unit is very much our 'orange family' – we have fantastic members of different abilities, skills and experiences which we can draw on from each other.

"Recognition is also fantastic in the form of donations we receive and the feedback we regularly receive is always very positive," Anita said.

"It makes us feel as members very humble, and a sense of pride of belonging to such a great unit."



FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIPS

We rely heavily on financial and in-kind support from a range of sources, including government, businesses and individuals.

We are particularly grateful to the ongoing support of the entire Victorian community who contribute to our ability to provide an effective service by giving at sausage sizzles and community events, school drives and highway collections.

Thank you to the many small businesses who contribute their support, especially in rural and non-metropolitan areas.

In addition, VICSES volunteer units also receive funding from the Victorian State Government for the volunteer unit municipal subsidy, the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Grants Program and the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Grants Program.

OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Our sponsors and partners provide important funds that support our road rescue activities, campaigns such as Driver Reviver, provision of equipment such as a rescue truck, support for community engagement campaigns and volunteer units.



Thanks to our major sponsor AAMI, who supports our volunteer units by providing funding for emergency equipment and community engagement programs.





Making inter-agency friendships

In 2016, our Wangaratta Unit teamed up with the Oxley Flats Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade to fill 150 sandbags for Painters Island Caravan Park, which was forecast to flood the next day.

Carina Heppell, Wangaratta Unit member, said the unit took opportunities to build relationships with other agencies.

"Networking with other agencies always has benefits — you meet new people, can see things from a different perspective and sometimes they can see things that may be able to be done differently or better," Carina said.

The unit supplies sandbags to the local CFA brigades so that residents have the option to collect them, which can be quicker and easier than having to ring the VICSES to deliver them.

Carina said a highlight from that day with Oxley Flats was seeing just how much fun you could have while being professional and doing the task at hand.

"Filling sandbags doesn't always have to be a drag, it can be fun too. It was great to be able to work with some of our CFA friends — it's great to make new friends through other agencies.

"A good connection with emergency agencies means easier connections and contacts in the future and in times of an emergency."



In 2015-16 VICSES managed a total budget of

\$54.8 million

and net assets of

\$114.6 million

Victoria State Emergency Service

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**FLOOD STORM
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