

SUMMER 2017

Community matters

VICSES

EDITION 1



HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES

*A message from the Minister
for Emergency Services*

Carina Heppell
returns from her NSW
research tour

**40
YEARS OF
SERVICE**
Farewell Trevor White

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& Trevor White



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

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) provides a vital service to Victorians, responding to tens of thousands of requests for assistance every year.

VICSES volunteers across the state keep our people, properties, and communities safe – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from road rescue, to tsunamis, as well as storm and flood assistance. The Victorian Government is a proud supporter of VICSES and its dedicated crew of about 5000 volunteers, and will continue to fund the equipment and training needed to help keep people safe during floods, storms and other emergencies. Responding to more than 31,000 incidents and putting in more than 330,000 hours of operational time helping local Victorians is no easy task. Volunteers give their valuable time, expertise, and support in responding to Victorian disasters. That's why since coming to office, the Andrews Labor Government has provided more than \$12 million in grants to VICSES volunteers.

Through the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program we have proudly distributed \$6.34 million in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 and \$5.68 million from the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Grants Program.

We have also allocated \$840,000 to VICSES through the Valuing Volunteers Program, to support the health and wellbeing of volunteers. In the most recent state budget, we invested \$27 million in capital projects for VICSES.

This is the largest ever investment in our vital SES services to date. This \$27 million includes much-needed upgrades to existing VICSES unit headquarters, as well as, in some cases, relocations to more modern facilities that better suit units' needs. We are also funding VICSES so it can establish new units in key growth areas, including Caroline Springs/Plumpton, Clyde, Craigieburn North, Cranbourne, Officer and Point Cook.

In addition to this capital investment, we are spending an extra \$1.8 million each year to help secure long-term leases for VICSES units on council land, in order to give them greater certainty about their future.

I thank all VICSES volunteers for their expertise and their tireless, 24-hour commitment to a safer Victoria, and I wish volunteers and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. All the best for a safe year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

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



Welcome

Hello and welcome to the first issue of Community Matters, VICSES' new quarterly publication.

Community Matters forms part of VICSES' new communications framework designed to provide our volunteers and employees clearer communications. This quarterly publication will deliver you key information and updates across all VICSES business areas, including Wellbeing, Health and Safety, Campaigns and Events, Projects and Operations, in addition to news and updates from each of our regions. This is a publication about you, for you, and we thank you for your contributions and encourage you to keep them coming.

I'd like to begin by extending a huge thank you to our members for the extensive time and effort spent keeping Victorians safe throughout the first weekend of December in which heavy rains and flooding were experienced in many locations across the state. Your efforts responding to such a significant number of incidents in a short time was nothing short of remarkable, and I commend you for your work and for the pride you take in your roles as VICSES members.

In this issue we welcome a special message from Minister for Emergency Services James Merlino, off the back of his announcement in November that 45 VICSES Units will receive VESEP grants equalling \$2.05 million in 2017-2018. This, in addition to funding announced earlier year for major unit developments, demonstrates the strong support we have from our government for the work that we do.

In December we sadly bid farewell and thanks to our Chief Officer Operations Trevor White as he heads off on retirement, and congratulate Tim Wiebusch on his appointment to the role. On page 5 we look back at Trevor's career at VICSES and the CFA and hear from a few of the volunteers he has worked with over the years.

As we approach the festive season, I'd like to sincerely thank you for your dedication and support, and for giving up your time to help keep Victorians safe.

Kind regards,

Stephen Griffin
CEO Victoria State Emergency Service



In the spotlight

Scholarship winner Carina Heppell

Carina Heppell was one of six Victorians chosen to undertake a research project as part of the 2017 Emergency Services Foundation Scholarship Grants program.

Carina boasts an impressive list of achievements and awards in emergency services, and a real passion for Community preparedness, response and recovery. With over 15 years' experience as a VICSES volunteer, she wanted to focus her research on whether people who live in different environments prepare, respond and recover differently to emergencies and why. Carina chose to undertake her research in New South Wales, rather than overseas so that her findings would be relevant and applicable to Australian communities.

She met with numerous communities located in hazard risk zones and those who have experienced recent emergencies in various towns, including Wagga Wagga, Port Stephens, Sydney, and Newcastle. "I believed that if we knew how people from different environments prepared, responded and recovered, that we could benefit greatly not just in our own communities but to help other Emergency Agencies too."

Carina hopes that her research findings will benefit the VICSES as well as other Emergency Service Agencies to understand community attitudes towards different emergency situations, and identify opportunities for collaboration. With this evidence-based data, relevant agencies can identify which Victorian communities are most vulnerable and what we can do to help them be more proactive in emergency situations. This will contribute towards a more resilient and robust Victoria.



I joined the VIC SES to help my community and do something good in this world."



Carina Heppell during her research trip in New South Wales

Q&A

You undertook a great deal of grassroots' research. What kind of things surprised you the most? What did you find was a recurring issue / concern for people?

What surprised me the most was a person's response to a flood emergency. People don't perceive floods like fires; fires you can see and feel, whereas most people just see floods as a lot of water. From research conducted around North East Victoria, I found that people in flood-prone areas were not always prepared. They relied on the SES, their levee banks or their 4WDs.

I also found that places that became isolated during floods were well prepared because they had to be. However these places were not prepared for other emergencies, such as fires.

Why did you choose New South Wales as the base for your research project?

I wanted to keep my research in Australia

and learn from our own first. New South Wales had a keen interest in what I was researching and trying to achieve.

What factors did you find motivated people to prepare for certain emergencies?

The two main factors were life experience and family. Those that had lived through an emergency were the most prepared. They would evacuate if needed to and believed they would recover well as they would know what to do from experience. Family and more importantly, life, to younger generations was more important than property which could be replaced.

What outcomes do you anticipate as a result of your research for Victorian communities?

During my research, I compared places in NSW to those in Victoria that were similar to each other. I would like to be able to share my findings with Victorian

communities in the hope that they benefit from them.

What was the highlight of your trip?

The entire trip was a highlight! I think representing Victoria and the VICSES was a great honour but also the chance to meet other Emergency Service Organisations and see inside their world, especially the NSWSES.

What will you be working on in the New Year?

In January I will be submitting a report of my findings. As I have now moved to Wodonga I will also be transferring my VICSES membership from Wangaratta to Wodonga SES. I am looking forward to seeing how I can help the Wodonga community and can't wait to find a place amongst the awesome volunteers in the Wodonga Unit. ■

Farewell to Trevor White

By Gloria Calescu,
Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

After some 40 years in the emergency management sector, Chief Officer Operations Trevor White will retire in December, taking with him some great memories. As he prepares to close the door on a remarkable career, we take a look at some of his most memorable achievements and thoughts.

Trevor's interest in emergency management sparked when he was still in high school and became a volunteer firefighter in his hometown of Somerville, on the Mornington Peninsula. After 29 years at the CFA, Trevor joined VICSES in 2006 as Chief Officer Operations, where he has made countless contributions. During the 2011 Victorian floods, Trevor took on the role of State Flood Response Controller where he managed flood operations with three Regional Controllers in Bendigo, Ballarat and Moe. This was an enormous task with all members pulling together along with partner agencies to minimise the impact on communities. "It was a difficult period for the community, emergency services, and government agencies. Although the consequences are still being felt in some communities, the lessons learned and subsequent actions to address opportunities for improvement have been a positive step forward," he said.

He attributes much of the success and strength of the VICSES brand to the joint collaborations between VICSES and other Victorian agencies, which now work as one under the guidance of Emergency Management Victoria. But the biggest contributions, he says, comes from the volunteers themselves. The emergency assistance VICSES provides to thousands of Victorians each year could not be achieved without the support of 5,000 volunteers across the state.

"I have the utmost admiration for the professionalism and commitment of these volunteers, and of course the staff, which support volunteers to do what they do," Trevor says. "I think the community really appreciate and respect the dedication of our volunteers and the work they do, including the provision of support to other organisations."



I've made many long-lasting friendships during my time here."



Trevor White outside VICSES Victorian Head Office

So, where to now?

Trevor is looking forward to spending some time with his family and heading off on a trip to explore the backblocks of Australia in his new caravan! He will also continue in his volunteer role as Director on the Royal Humane Society of Australasia Board – an organisation that recognises acts of bravery among the community. We'd like to wish Trevor all the very best in his retirement.

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS:

I've known Trevor for a number of years and know him to be a very honest and down to earth person that you can approach with anything at any time.

His leadership as the Chief Officer Operations and his involvement with many Committees and taskforces shows his dedication to VICSES.

– **Brian McMannis**
ESM.JP, Deputy Controller Admin., Frankston Unit

I first met Trevor when he joined VICSES 12 years ago. From the first encounter it was clear that Trevor was in it for the vols, the service and the community. Trevor has become a friend. He has been an inspiration to me, assisting and suggesting when he felt it was required. Trevor has worked very hard and tirelessly for VICSES and I wish him the very best for his coming lazy days and extra family time.

– **Leanne Klammer**,
Unit Controller, Kinglake Unit

We have always found Trevor to be a very approachable and a compassionate person.

Our unit has lost several members and family members over the years and Trevor has phoned me personally to pass on condolences to me and unit members.

We will miss you Trevor.

– **Jess Wright**,
Maryborough Unit Controller ■



Task Force Foxtrot returning home from New South Wales



CENTRAL

1 Jul – 30 Sept 2017

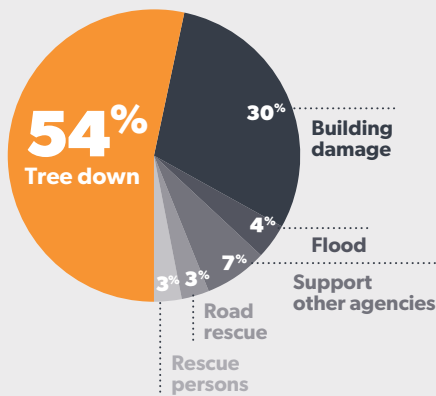


1,232

Volunteers

2,692

Request for assistance



Interview with Brian McMannis ESM JP, VICSES Frankston Unit volunteer

By Priscilla Grimme, Volunteer Support Officer, Central Region

Brian McMannis joined VICSES Frankston Unit in August 1978. He recalls the wet, windy night in 1978 he first encountered VICSES volunteers and how he was impressed by their dedication and selflessness.

“I was driving home late along McClelland Drive after heavy rain,” he said. “VICSES volunteers were out there, warning drivers about flooding further along, and I stopped to have a chat with them.

I realised what a terrific job they were doing and, when I got home, I told my wife about the poor buggers standing out in the rain helping people.” Inspired, Brian visited the Seaford headquarters in a house opposite the present base in McCulloch Ave (now called McMannis Way in honour of Brian’s service to the community). Brian became Controller in 1986. The rest is history.

The early VICSES crew was a creative lot with 25 members and a 1965 Dodge truck and trailer – but it had aspirations and drive. Over eight years the team built a functional and purpose-built headquarters and established a reputation for hard work and professionalism.

Now, with 70 members, they have modern equipment – such as the Jaws of Life – and a fleet of three rescue vehicles, three four-wheel-drives, a mini bus, a lighting platform and storm damage trailers. Storms, car accidents and fires are the mainstays of the service which receives around 1,000 callouts each year.

I remember coming down here after a big storm 10 years ago and we’d had 575 calls for assistance in a 24-hour period,” Brian said.

His most vivid memories include national disasters, such as the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires and those of 2009’s Black Saturday.



After Ash Wednesday I remember hoping we’d never see another disaster like that. And then we had to go through Black Saturday.”

Support from the public is vital. “We were at Kinglake for five days. Luckily, a local lady hired a generator and allowed us to live at her house. But it was a tragic situation.”

More personal tragedies, unfortunately, live with him every day. The most memorable and tragic was the search for 23-year-old Sarah MacDiarmid, who went missing from Kananook station one night in July 1990 and has never been found.

Brian has been a funeral director for the past 20 plus years with Manning’s Funerals, and he praises the company for its support and generosity in his frequent absences. And he credits improvements to road safety – such as car seat belts, airbags, and the enforcement of 0.05 blood alcohol rules as reducing the huge loss of life on our roads since the 1960s.

Brian stood down from the position of Controller in June 2014 where his trusty Deputy Controller Philip Holt took the reins, but has stayed on as a Deputy Controller. “I’ve had a lot of satisfaction helping people go through traumatic times over the years, and the work will never cease.” Brian was awarded the first VICSES Life membership in July 2015, to add to his Emergency Services Medal, Frankston City Council Citizen of the year award, Centenary medal and National Medal. ■



Central Region CEF Workshop



Allan Pease, Key Note Speaker at San Remo

A busy year for Central CEFs

2017 has been a big year for our Community Education Facilitators with not one but three big events to attend.

By Scot Walker, Community Resilience Coordinator, Central Region

On 17 June, we held the Central Region CEF Workshop at Victoria Police Academy. Eighty VICSES Community Education volunteers in addition to staff from CFA, MFB, VICPOL and VICSES, spent the day at the Victorian Police Academy.

The day was packed with presentations including Sanne Van Der Zweep from CEAG; VICSES Central Regional Manager Ray Jasper on our future in Community Education, State Community Education Officer Jacque Quaine on the new role and training pathways; and Media and Communications Manager Matt Gallant previewed our new media campaigns.

This was a great opportunity for volunteers from VICSES and CFA to network within their regions.

Information delivered at each forum was tailored to local requirements and relevant to members in that region. The theme this year was 'Involved, Inclusive and Connected Communities' and topics included best-practice engagement, partnerships and collaboration, and tips for using digital and social media tools.

VICSES Volunteers in Central had the opportunity to attend either the North West event in Bendigo on the weekend in August or the South East Event in September in San Remo.

300 volunteers attended these events with positive feedback from everyone. ■



Victoria Police Academy

Presentations about Public Speaking Strategies and the new Bendigo Bank Tap n Go donation points were popular.

The highlight for most people was the joint presentation from VICPOL, CFA and MFB on cultural diversity and education programs from those agencies, and a tour of the Police Academy was arranged for everyone who attended. Planning has already started for 2018.

In late June, VICSES Chief Officer Operations Trevor White and CFA Chief Officer Steve Warrington announced the joint VICSES-CFA 2017 Regional Community Engagement Forums.

ESVS Grants Program 2017 Central Region

By Priscilla Grimme, Volunteer Support Officer, Central Region

Congratulations to the VICSES Central Region Units who were successful in their applications for Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability (ESVS) Grants in 2017. The ESVS Grants Program was established to ensure emergency management volunteers can continue to deliver their crucial work to keep Victorians safe. During the past 12 months, 33 Central Units have been granted funds for a range of building renovations, equipment, training and vehicles, equalling more than \$3 million.

Items funded include:

- Lighting Trailers
- Operational 4WD's
- Audio Visual equipment
- Kitchen renovations
- Mule stretchers
- Security Upgrades
- Water Rescue manikins
- Generators
- Asphalt works- driveways
- Unit headquarters renovations such as painting and carpet replacement
- Defibrillators
- Sandbag trailers
- Computers and IT equipment and
- Office furniture.

This funding has been vital to all VICSES Units and has taken pressure off our volunteers to fundraise for much needed equipment and renovations.



EAST

1 Jul – 30 Sept 2017

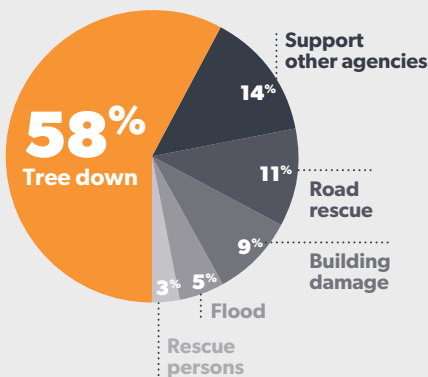


743

Volunteers

404

Request for assistance



SES Gippsland members with Paddy and Camp Quality kids

VICSES brings smiles to Camp Quality kids

VICSES Units across Gippsland joined forces with Camp Quality recently to bring smiles to the faces of 36 children impacted by cancer – through their own diagnosis, or that of someone they love.

By Elizabeth Wharton, Community Resilience Coordinator, Gippsland

VICSES volunteers from Foster, San Remo, Leongatha and Warragul Units congregated in Grantville to create a lively display for kids complete with trucks, a boat, all-terrain vehicles, floodwater safety games, and a search and rescue for missing Teddy and items lost by VICSES mascot, Paddy the Platypus. VICSES volunteer Gel Joseph said, “it was a great way to help make the day brighter for the children. It was lovely to see their happy faces and how they wanted to do everything. Just to bring a smile to their faces was really good,” she said.

Camp Quality spokesperson Justin Maskell said Camp Quality was extremely grateful to have VICSES involved, noting the generosity helps Camp Quality to provide innovative services and programs to help kids and their families impacted by cancer. ■



It was truly amazing. The display looked awesome and the kids in their little orange vests rescuing the teddy bear was the cutest thing I’ve ever seen,” he said.

For more information on Camp Quality head to: www.campquality.org.au

VICSES vehicles go on show for South Cluster Units

By Jennifer Harnden, Regional Officer Training, East Region

The VICSES East Region Readiness Team in conjunction with the Leongatha Unit hosted a “Show and Tell” vehicle night recently in Leongatha for the South Cluster Units.

Forty members from across seven Units within the South Cluster came to look over the fleet and compare vehicles to determine which ones best suit their needs. Members were able to take test-drives and discuss the benefits and disadvantages of light and medium rescue trucks with those who operate them on a regular basis, to help them make informed decisions before applying for a VESEP Grant.

The evening provided a perfect opportunity for the East Region Support Unit (ERSU) to showcase the Field Operations Vehicle and deliver an overview of how the vehicle and ERSU members can support units in the Cluster.

East Region event organisers noted a special thanks to the Leongatha Unit and its Emergency Support Team members for providing catering and support for the evening.

The event was the first of its kind in Victoria and its success has led to adoption by other VICSES Regions with assistance from the Gippsland team. ■



Members removing a patient from the site

East Region participates in Urban Search and Rescue training

By Jennifer Harnden, Regional Officer Training, East Region

VICSES members from across the East Region participated in two Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) courses in September and October 2017, giving them the knowledge and skills needed to perform surface searches for casualties as part of an initial multi-agency response to structural collapse incidents. The training was held at a concrete recycling centre to provide a sense of realism as to the potential hazards and scenes that may be faced in real life.

The site replicated what potential structure and earthquake sites could look like, making training as real as possible without impacting the community. The training included practical activities in using search techniques to locate surface casualties at building collapse incidents; requiring participants to crawl over rubble and maintain secure footing.

Following completion of this training course, crew members can now:

- Prepare for and respond to a structural collapse incident;
- Assess the scene and manage initial response at a structural collapse incident;
- Collect evidence and report on the location and condition of visible casualties, and possible trapped victims;

- Conduct a thorough search for surface or lightly trapped victims; identify, and mark other potential victim locations; and
- Stabilise, release and remove surface or lightly trapped casualties from the structure collapse site.

USAR is a specialised technical rescue capability for the location and rescue of entrapped people following a structure collapse.

In Australia, no single agency has the capability to cope with a major structure collapse incident. The diversity of expertise and equipment required for these events can only be achieved through the development and implementation of an integrated multiagency response capability. ■

USAR typically involves the integrated response of:

- Highly specialised equipment and trained personnel from different disciplines;
- Effective communication systems; and
- An established method of command, control and logistical support.

Depending on the scale and complexity of the event, the response may involve multiagency, national and possibly international participation and cooperation.

East Region is proud to be part of the USAR capability within VICSES and to support our communities in times of need.

East Region receives first Lifetime Membership Award

By Elizabeth Wharton, Community Resilience Coordinator, East Region

Morwell Unit Controller Michael Vanderzalm was recently presented with a Lifetime Membership Award; the first time such an award has been presented to a VICSES member in East Region, Gippsland.

Michael was recognised for his exemplary and dedicated service to the community.

Joining VICSES in 1989, Michael has held many positions during his time for both Rosedale (Controller for two years) and Morwell Units. His passion lies with Road Rescue, and he is one of the most experienced and knowledgeable members in this field for VICSES. He is an assessor within the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO) competition and has been actively involved in Road Crash Rescue competitions throughout Australia and overseas.

Sitting on many local and State committees such as the Gippsland Emergency Services Committee, Michael has obtained an extensive understanding of local issues and emergency management requirements.

Michael's proactive nature and his passion for emergency services and helping people has enabled him to provide leadership and direction at many technical rescues. He has also acted as a mentor to new and experienced rescuers within the Morwell Unit and East Region. These achievements have been highlighted with a National Medal, 25-year Long Service Medal, and now the Lifetime Membership Award.

Michael's commitment to keeping the community safe through strong leadership and working side-by-side with his volunteer colleagues has been invaluable to VICSES. East Region is very proud to acknowledge Michael Vanderzalm's contributions through this Lifetime Membership Award. ■



Michael Vanderzalm with his Lifetime Membership Award



MID WEST

1 Jul – 30 Sept 2017

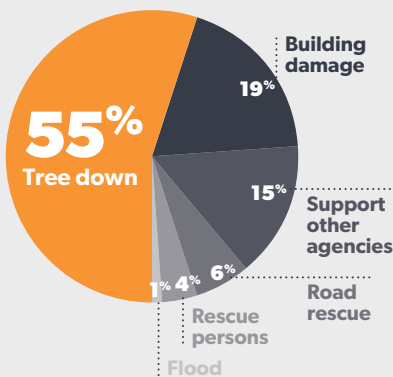


443

Volunteers

235

Request for assistance



Ballarat Unit takes up National Disaster Rescue Challenge

By Melissa Douglas, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region



Seven members from the Ballarat Unit travelled to Hobart, Tasmania in November to participate in the 2017 National Disaster Rescue Challenge.

The team trained for over 18 months in anticipation of the challenge, and was well prepared for the event.”

Team members this year were Gordon Hicks, Trent Oldaker, Drew Holst, Craig West, Elise Ashfield, Chris Orton and Luke Myers.

This is the third time the Ballarat Unit has competed in the challenge. All members have been practicing general rescue skills which include practical ability in addition to leadership, safety and teamwork qualities, which are assessed during the challenge.

The commitment from the team members saw them train for two nights a week, one night more than usual, along with many hours spent on weekends refining their skills. Gordon also said, ‘the team received fantastic support from the region, which went the extra mile to show their support.’

On the morning of the team’s departure from the Mid West Regional Headquarters in Wendouree, Father David provided a blessing to the team, and local and state media interviewed and photographed the members as they departed.

The team competed in a variety of challenges, including sand bagging and pumping, vehicle operations, lifting and lowering from heights, storm damage, anchors and winching and general response.

Team Manager Gordon Hicks is among the members participating for the third time in the challenge and said all members were very experienced.

These challenges demand a high level of expertise and attentiveness from all team members, with time limits and stressful scenarios testing them throughout the challenge. ■



Participants of the 2017 National Disaster Rescue Challenge with Father David before departing for Hobart, Tasmania



Testing skills at 4x4 vehicle training

Left: Members of the Mid West and South West Regions participating in the 12th Annual Nhill 4x4 training weekend. Above: Renee Featherstone of the Hepburn Shire Unit receiving the Stan Douglas Memorial Shield

By Melissa Douglas, Community Resilience Coordinator, Mid West Region

The 12th Annual Nhill Unit 4x4 training weekend was held in late October for members of all Units in the Mid West and South West Regions.

The event saw 32 volunteers use and compare the performance of 14 vehicles in a variety of rough terrains including mud and sand, with the occasional water crossing also being navigated. The vehicles included Nissan Patrols, Mazda BT 50s, Ford Rangers and Holden Colorados.

Members from Nhill, Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Stawell, Horsham, Goroke, Portland, Cobden, Colac and Hepburn Shire Units camped on-site at the Nhill Unit Controller's property which includes a 4x4 track, north of Yanac, near the Big Desert in Western Victoria. Friday night saw a wind storm come through the camp site which tested the General Rescue skills of the members, who were put to work securing tarps and tents. On Saturday night the Candidates were treated to a special dinner, with a local bringing their mobile pizza business.

The members spent Saturday and Sunday driving, winching, navigating, and observing weather and environmental conditions, culminating in a drive on Sunday morning to Red Bluff in the Big Desert.

Weekend organiser, Nhill Unit Controller Des Smith, said, 'the weekend was very valuable and enjoyed by all who attended.'



The trainers and helpers on the weekend put in a great effort to ensure the weekend was a success," be said.

Twelve of the 32 members achieved the 4x4 competency on the weekend, with all other members developing invaluable skills and enjoying the opportunity to get to know members from other Units and regions; creating new friendships and opportunities for them to work together into the future.

Renee Featherstone from the Hepburn Shire Unit received the annual Stan Douglas Memorial Shield Award.

The shield is awarded to the member who shows consistent enthusiasm, addresses safety considerations, demonstrates practicality, shows innovation and excels at engaging with the group with varying techniques. Renee was a deserved recipient of the shield at this year's 4x4 weekend. ■

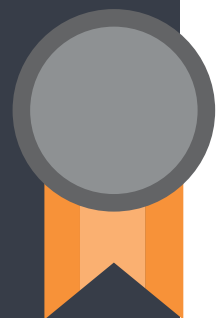
EVENT WRAP UP

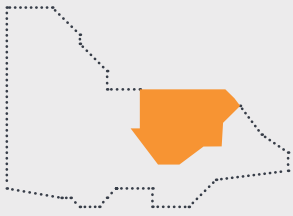
32 volunteers

14 vehicles

12/32

members achieved the 4x4 competency





NORTH

EAST

1 Jul – 30 Sept 2017

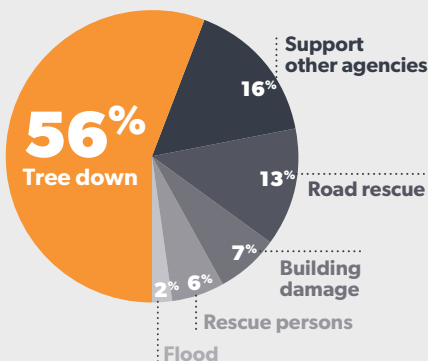


712

Volunteers

333

Request for assistance



Paddy Platypus, Lisa Mackenzie, Captain Koala

Connected communities

By Liz Frazer, Community Resilience Coordinator, North East Region

150 volunteers and staff from VICSES, NSWSES, CFA, DELWP, SSRS and multiple local governments flooded into the Sebel pinnacle Valley Resort at Merrijig in October for the CFA-VICSES North East Community Engagement Forum 2017.

Delegates enjoyed two days of workshops and presentations from subject matter experts in community engagement and emergency management to improve their skills in public speaking, connecting with communities, social media and storytelling.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive – with delegates reporting they found many speakers extremely engaging, and that they were able to take away tips and lessons to help their brigade, unit, or agency make better connections with their communities.

The forum was also a fantastic networking opportunity, and the roar of conversation over meal breaks was a clear indicator of that. ■

Regardless of the agency you are a member of, we can all learn from each other and work together to achieve true community resilience.

For further information, including presentations or to express interest in future forums, contact Community Resilience Coordinators Liz Frazer or Sue Sheldrick at RHO on 03 9256 9650.

Wangaratta members are all hands on deck

By Rob Johnstone, Regional Officer – Training, Liz Frazer, and Community Resilience Coordinator, Keith O’Brien, Assistant Chief Officer (Regional Manager), North East Region

Four Wangaratta Unit members were the first in the state to achieve the Deckhand competency in October; a pilot course forming part of the revised Rescue Boat Training Program.

The Deckhand training develops participants into the entry level Rescue Boat position, before they progress to training to become a Crewperson and Coxswain.

After less than ten hours of training with Rob Johnstone, Regional Officer – Training, and Tracy Harper, Wangaratta Unit Coxswain, most of which was on-water learning practical and safe boat handling skills, the four Wangaratta Deckhands can now accompany Coxswains in low complexity and low risk operational environments.

The Wangaratta Deckhand participants enjoyed the course so much, they took it upon themselves to drag a coxswain out for extra practice before their assessment, and challenged themselves to deal with potential operational issues, like engine failure.

The Deckhand position allows members to get real life experience on the water before deciding to start training for the more complex Crewperson and Coxswain roles.

The Deckhand Training is a self-paced, Unit-delivered course which is now being finalised, taking into consideration feedback from the Pilot. ■

Echuca holds inaugural Murray River Flooding Workshop



By Keith O'Brien, Assistant Chief Officer (Regional Manager), North East Region

A working group comprising Assistant Chief Officer Keith O'Brien (North East Region), Manager Regional Operations Emergency Management Andrew Gill (North West Region) and Region Controller Bernard Kates (NSWSES Murray Region) was formed to plan the first ever event, held in September 2017 at the Echuca Unit.



"The inaugural workshop was specifically designed for key regional and state staff."

Representatives at the two-day event included State and Regional Agency Commanders, Regional Controllers, Incident Controllers, Public Information personnel, Planning personnel, Intelligence and Operations Officers from both states. The workshop, facilitated by Keith O'Brien, explored planning, community engagement and operational responses on both sides of the Murray River and ways to improve interstate cooperation, concluding with a discussion exercise.

The exercise objectives were to explore responses to significant flooding along the Murray river; explore cooperative interstate arrangements in managing Murray River Flooding and identify incident and regional engagement strategies to maximise effective response.

Local, regional and state After Action Reviews (AARs) were held following 2016's flooding events, involving much of western NSW and large parts of Victoria, determining a need for greater cross-border communications between VIC and NSW SES as the control agencies for flooding.

Key proposals made to enhance cross-border collaboration:

Before

- Joint community engagement plans;
- Formalised Regional Flood Plans / Joint SOP for the Murray River;
- Development of Storm Response protocols between NSWSES / VICSES;
- Arrangements for joint IMTs and/or mutual aid for flood and storm events;
- Cross-border radio communication protocols;
- Sharing and documenting capabilities and readiness of local Units;
- Capability building for common competencies: boat training, general rescue, IMT roles for volunteers, PEER support; and
- Evacuation Planning for border communities – particularly for flood events.

During

- Joint media management plan;
- Planned joint information across borders during events;
- Regular teleconferences between VIC and NSW ICCs and REMTs;
- Operation and location of community caches for sandbagging;
- Deployment of SES Incident Agency Commanders/EMLO's to interstate ICC's.

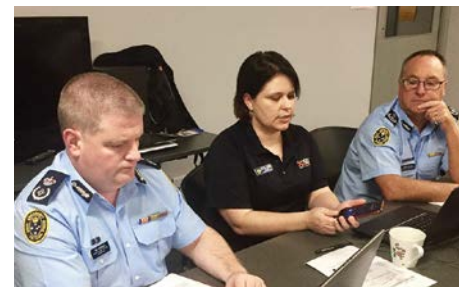
After

- Joint AAR with communities post large events (flood and storm). ■

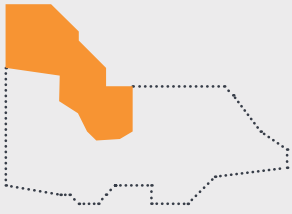
Next steps

The recommendations gained from the workshop will be progressed in both states throughout the next 12 months. Meanwhile, planning is already underway for the second Murray River Flood workshop in 2018 which will include participation by Volunteers and staff from both sides of the Murray River.

A key conclusion from the workshop was that good progress has been made towards ensuring VICSES and NSWSES work effectively together in future Murray River flood events, and in other events in which we find ourselves working in supporting roles for each other. The workshop highlighted many more similarities than differences between the two organisations and the way we do things, and that through effective cooperation and coordination we can reduce the state boundary to a minor irritant rather than a hindrance to our efforts to keep our communities safe. ■



Above, right: DCO Tim Wiebusch, ACO John Parker and NSW Assistant Commissioner Nicole Hogan. Below, right: OM Mark Cattell, OM Neil Payn and NSW Murray Region Controller Bernard Kates.



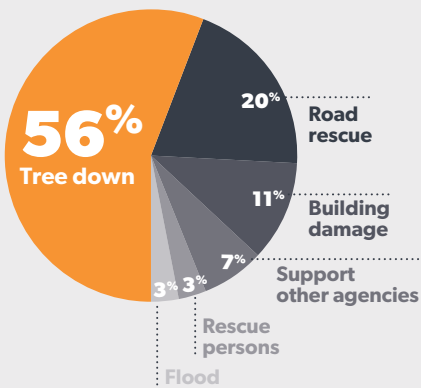
NORTH WEST

1 Jul – 30 Sept 2017



651
Volunteers

330
Request for assistance



Agencies collaborate to deliver Axedale Summer Safety Event



The key to being prepared is knowledge and having a plan,”

By Jemma Nesbit-Sackville, Acting Regional Officer Emergency Management, North West Region

With a fantastic lifestyle and reasonably priced properties all in close proximity to Bendigo, the little town of Axedale is growing fast. But with young families moving in, there are concerns new residents lack understanding of the risk of bushfire and extreme weather.

In light of this, North West Region Support Unit, Bendigo Unit, Axedale CFA and Coast Guard collaborated to deliver the *Are you ready for Summer?* community event in October, thanks to a grant from the City of Greater Bendigo.

More than 120 people attended the event held in Axedale Hall to learn how to prepare an emergency plan and take part in activities around bushfire preparedness, water safety, and coping with the heat.

Convenor of Axedale Our Town – Our Future Inc. Emergency Management, Ian Ralston, joined local ABC radio presenter Fiona Parker to talk about Bushfire preparedness.

“Earlier this year we did a survey and we found that more than 30% of the residents didn’t know what to do in the case of an emergency,” he said.

Attendees also learnt about Australian native animals and their safety, with the chance to hold a python, goanna, possum and a dingo.

CFA provided a free sausage sizzle, and the children enjoyed face-painting and games in the park. The event was a huge success with a great turnout from the small community. ■



Axedale Summer Safety Event

North West Region celebrates 1,050 years of collective service

By Jemma Nisbet Sackville, Acting Regional Officer Emergency Management, North West Region

On Sunday 29 October, the North West Region came together to celebrate a staggering total of 1,050 years of collective service between the recipients at our annual VICSES Long Service Awards and National Medals ceremony.

The awards and medals ceremony is also an opportunity to honour the commitment that volunteers in the North West region demonstrate everyday when they give up their time, leave their families to attend call outs and tirelessly assist their communities while representing VICSES. At this time we also pause to pay respect to the members who are no longer with us, and honour the memories our volunteers and staff hold – Vale. Recipients of North West VICSES Long Service Awards and National Medals:

- Janene Cole Dunolly (30 Years)
- Peter Norris Mildura (30 Years)
- Ross Atkinson Birchchip Unit (30 Years)
- Reginald Ellis Rochester Unit (30 Years)
- Brian Etherton Murrayville (35 Years)
- Donald Collins Woomelang Unit (35 Years)
- Glenn Major Rochester Unit (35 Years)
- Gordon Brown Castlemaine Unit (35 Years)
- Kenneth Stringer Robinvale Unit (35 Years)
- Neville Wyatt Murrayville (35 Years). ■



Kerang Unit and Cohuna CFA collaborate to demonstrate an extraction for local school children

Pyramid Hill Emergency Services Day

By **Gavin Quinn, Community Resilience Coordinator, North West Region**

Kerang Unit and the North West Regional Support Unit were invited to attend the CFA's Pyramid

Hill Emergency Services Day. The event, arranged by CFA and attended by Ambulance Victoria, the local Cert Team, Victoria Police, and Life Saving Victoria, brought together 200 school children from the local area to learn more about the local emergency services, and

hear from local spokespeople on how they have progressed in roles within the Emergency Services. Kerang SES and Cohuna CFA provided an Extraction Demonstration, showing how the services work together to achieve a common goal. ■

Meet Graham Art Exhibition launch

By **Gavin Quinn, Community Resilience Coordinator, North West**

On 20 October the Meet Graham Art Exhibition was launched at the Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery with the presence of the Swan Hill Unit, Swan Hill CFA, Swan Hill Highway Patrol (Victoria Police) and Ambulance Victoria.

As much as we like to think we're invincible, we're not. The human body doesn't have the physiology to absorb the energy when things go wrong in a crash. In fact, the impact forces of just 30km/h are enough to be fatal – such as striking a pedestrian or a side-on collision with a tree.

To survive on our roads, you'd need to look something like him. Graham is the TAC's latest road safety project, highlighting how vulnerable the human body is to the forces involved in transport accidents. The TAC collaborated with leading trauma surgeon Christian Kenfield, crash investigator expert David Logan and world-renowned artist Patricia Piccinini, to produce Graham – a lifelike, interactive sculpture demonstrating human vulnerability.

Graham highlights the changes we need to make to protect ourselves from our own mistakes on the road. At the centre of this system is the belief that human safety is more important than anything else.

When visiting Graham, visitors will have access to the latest immersive augmented reality technology, to look beneath Graham's skin and better understand how his unique features would work to cushion him from serious injury in a crash.

You can meet Graham in person or online at meetgraham.com.au ■



The Meet Graham exhibition ran from 20 October – 26 November and was used by local Victoria Police to do talks with local schools within the Swan Hill region.

Re-launch of Local Flood Guides

By **Gavin Quinn, Community Resilience Coordinator, North West Region**

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

Kerang Unit used the event to display its recently acquired Heavy Rescue Truck, new Ford Ranger Support Vehicle and Rescue Boat to the local Kerang Community. Kerang and District Community Centre helped with the BBQ, donated by Woolworths Kerang. ■

Wayne Gurnett shows off the Kerang Unit's new Heavy Rescue Truck





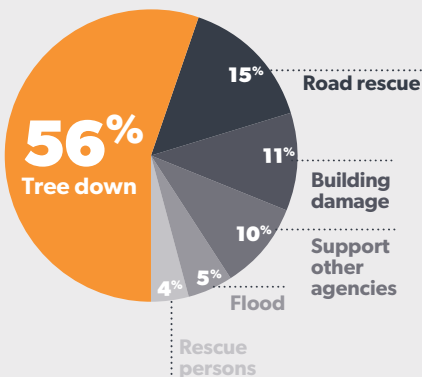
SOUTH WEST

1 Jul – 30 Sept 2017



641
Volunteers

398
Request for assistance



Aireys Inlet land search

By Jake Johnson, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

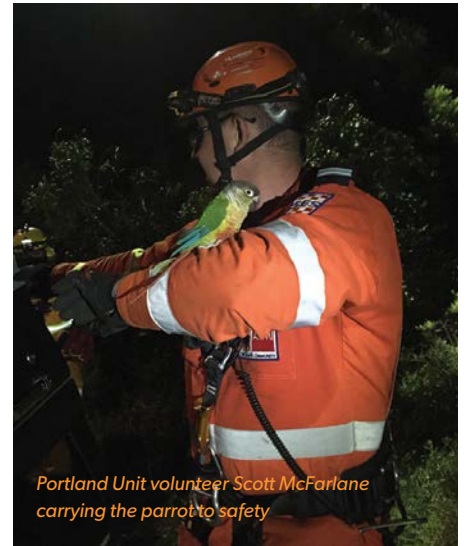
Our dedicated crews performed an outstanding role in the search for a missing person in Aireys Inlet in October. Over 100 personnel were deployed over four days, contributing more than 1,300 hours to the effort. The pictures below show VICSES vehicles out in force during the search.

Crews also manned information tents with Victoria Police in Anglesea and Lorne to spread the word about the search and receive intelligence from the public.

Sadly, sixteen days after the search, remains that washed up on an Anglesea beach have been confirmed to be that of the missing person. ■



VICSES crews at work during the land search at Aireys Inlet



Portland Unit volunteer Scott McFarlane carrying the parrot to safety

Portland crew undertake cliff rescue

By Gloria Calescu, Corporate Communications Officer, VHO

The skills and expertise of many SES members, combined with effective multi-agency cooperation, has saved the life of a Portland man.

CFA and SES were called to an incident last Tuesday afternoon where a car had plunged off a nearby cliff, falling 20-30 metres and trapping the driver, along with three dogs and two parrots, inside the overturned car.

With the help of professional equipment, such as long lengths of rescue rope, an air-bag system, and extensive lighting provided by Hamilton CFA, SES members were able to move the car slightly and free the man before he was air-lifted in a helicopter to a hospital.

The team were well-prepared having undertaken organisational training together to offer the very best services in emergencies and work together.

Scott Mcfarlane, a VICSES volunteer based in the Portland Unit, lifted the parrots to safety and has been caring for them since the incident.

Read more about this difficult rescue on the Hub > General News ■

Emergency
Commissioner Craig
Lapsley and VICSES
members from the
Lismore Unit at the
opening of the Skipton
Sandbagging Facility

Skipton Sandbagging Facility Opening

By Meagan Tanti, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

The Skipton community has enhanced its capability to respond to flooding incidents thanks to a new sandbagging facility installed by VICSES at the Skipton CFA Fire Station.

The facility was the result of a grant application by Lismore VICSES Unit Controller Colin Pickering to Emergency Management Victoria, as part of the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Grants program to invest in equipment and facilities to ensure emergency management volunteers can continue to deliver a high level of service. "The motivation behind our application was the Mount Emu Creek flooding at Skipton in October 2016, in which volunteers and community members had difficulty collecting sandbagging resources from the previous location," he said.

In the event of flooding, sandbagging can be used in conjunction with other preventative measures to block doorways, drains and other openings into a property.

The previous facility's roadside location was on an uneven surface and lacked secure dry storage. This required all equipment to be brought in, stored under tarpaulins and removed after a flooding event.

The uneven surface quickly churned to mud in the wet, which significantly limited access and capacity due to forklifts being unable to operate in the area.

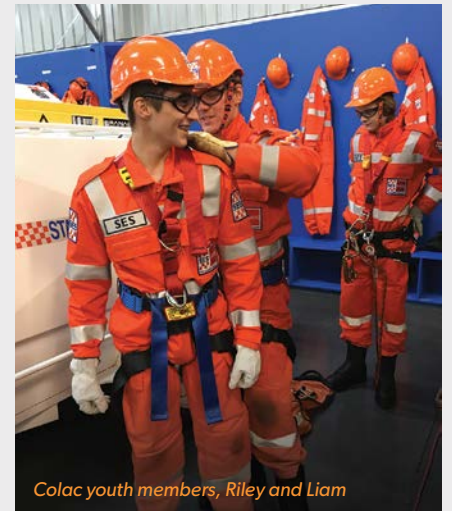
Requiring only the delivery of sand to begin operations, the new hard stand shipping container facility will be stocked with sandbags, sandbag filling devices, shovels and other items to enable a safer, faster response.

"The installation of a permanent, purpose-built sandbagging area with all associated requirements will greatly enhance our operational capability and decrease response times during flooding incidents."

The new facility was launched on Saturday 14 October in an event held together with the CFA.

Mr Pickering paid tribute to Skipton CFA for hosting the community sandbagging facility.

"The CFA has the needs and safety of the community at heart and were very accommodating throughout the whole installation process," he said. ■



Colac youth members, Riley and Liam

Colac Youth Members graduate

By Jake Johnson, Community Resilience Coordinator, South West Region

Colac Unit has been hosting juniors since 2015, and in October they had two members graduate to become fully operational members.

Riley and Liam have been Youth Members for two years and 18 months respectively, attending weekly training on Tuesday nights to build their skills. Controller Steve Tevelein said the Junior Program, "was a great way to get younger members of the community involved and develop their social and technical skills."

"The junior members all demonstrate dedication and commitment to a workplace and the accreditations and skills they achieve gives them a boost when they enter the workforce later in life," he said.

Colac Unit is now planning on delivering recruitment sessions in local schools to attract more junior members. ■

More information on Youth Members can be found on the HUB: Volunteer >What Volunteers Do >Youth Members

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Update on Light Rescue Vehicles review

By David Baker, Deputy Chief Officer Operations – Capability, VHO

The Fleet Working Group (FWG) has conducted a review of Light Rescue Vehicles (LRV) as part of VICSES' rolling program of fleet reviews.

Twenty-two Units that use LRVs responded to a survey to capture utilisation, preferences and perceptions of the LRVs. The survey was also designed to provide qualitative data on response roles, functionality and equipment stowage.

The feedback suggested the following:

- LRVs are highly valued by Units, filling a key capability gap between utilities and medium rescue trucks;
- There is strong support for a storm variant and a dedicated Road Crash Rescue support variant;
- The functionality of the vehicle rather than cost should be the primary consideration; and
- While most equipment is standard, quantities and stowage may alter between units.

Following the review, the Fleet Working Group has resolved to pursue the review of the existing LRV and consideration of future options.

The work will include the application of previous ergonomic assessments; locker layout and design; research and revision of equipment lists; review and improvement of light mast options; impact review of new road rescue arrangements to light rescue configuration; and ultimately to the development of a fleet typology statement for this vital vehicle option.

The FWG will engage a senior volunteer member as a short term project officer to coordinate the work and provide options for its consideration. ■

Operations Update

View the latest Operations Update at [Hub > News > Operations News](#)

New VICSES Regulations

The Victoria State Emergency Service Regulations were updated on 1 October, following consultation by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV).

The Regulations provide for a number of matters to facilitate the effective operations of VICSES.

These include discipline procedures for members, exercise and training requirements, and other miscellaneous matters including criminal record checks and the VICSES insignia.

The updated regulations make a number of improvements to the discipline process for members.

These are changes to:

- Clarify and expand the grounds of misconduct to include bullying and safety breaches
- Require members to seek to resolve alleged misconduct in less formal ways before using the formal discipline process
- Remove the requirement to lay a formal charge of misconduct
- Allow a member to be suspended before a hearing if he or she is likely to engage in further misconduct
- Clarify that a hearing must be as informal as possible
- Expand the sanctions available to give more flexibility in the way misconduct is addressed. ■

To view the regulations, go to [Hub > The Regulations are saved in the Library on the Acts and Regulations page of the Hub.](#)



Seasonal outlook for Victoria

The Bushfire and Natural Hazard Cooperative Research Centre has released an update to its Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook, referred to as Hazard Note 43. Key outtakes for Victoria for the summer season:

Victoria

- The background conditions of dryness and the likelihood of above average maximum temperatures this summer places Victoria in a vulnerable position.
- Rainfall since May has been below average in many areas. A longer-term history of dryness in critical areas and a backdrop of warming temperatures and more frequent weather extremes continue to create above normal fire potential, especially where there is existing dryness.
- However, some factors have the potential to moderate risk of fire in some areas, including a good base of soil moisture in western Victoria, soaked gullies along the southern side of the Great Dividing Range and mixed signals for rain over summer. ■

Go to <https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/hazardnotes/43> to read the full report.

Annual Report

The 2016-2017 Annual Report was released in October, recording our second busiest year on record.

View it now on our website at <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/about/publications>

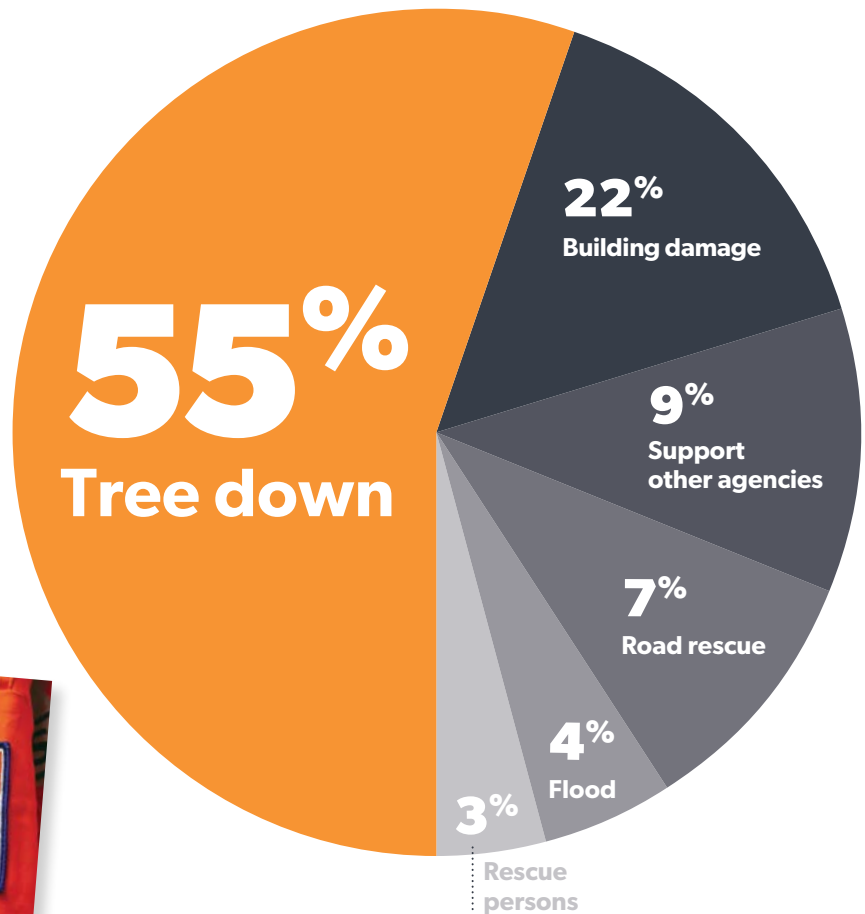


Requests for Assistance 1 Jul - 30 Sept 2017

Total

4,397

Breakdown



PROJECTS - WHAT'S NEW

VICSES committed to child safety

By Craig Gordan, Change Manager, VHO



Recent legislative reforms have changed organisational Child Safe Standards. VICSES's mission is 'Safer communities – together' and ensuring the safety of children in our communities is important.



Mitchell Mercuri and Melanie Lanigan

VICSES is committed to ensuring the safety of children that work at VICSES and live in our community by adopting the seven Victorian Child Safe Standards. This includes ensuring that all VICSES members in leadership roles that work directly with children have valid Working with Children Checks.

An awareness and education campaign will be rolled out at VHO, Regions and all Units and will be supported by posters, information sheets, a briefing by the Unit Controller and a video from the Chief Officer Operations. VICSES's implementation of the new Child Safe Standards will ensure that VICSES is a Child Safe organisation that safeguards vulnerable community members. Importantly, it also protects our organisational reputation and capacity to effectively build community engagement. ■

Further information on VICSES's policy and endorsement of Child Safety standards is available on the Hub at [Hub > My State > People > Child Safety](#)

Training Reimagined

By Craig Gordan, Change Manager, VHO

A transformation is coming to improve the way members access upcoming training opportunities and view their training history. A new online Training Portal is in development to streamline the training processes within VICSES. The portal will provide access to a variety of learning opportunities, including competency-based courses and small learning modules, accessible on any device, along with traditional face-to-face courses, eLearning modules and a blend of both.

The platform will also provide visibility of training history, including competencies, qualifications and achievements. Pilot testing of the platform will take place in the North East Region in the coming months prior to roll out across the state. More information is available on the Hub. ■

Better and safer radio communication

By Darcy McKnight, Project Manager
– Operational Communications, VHO



Operations Officer Josh Gamble shows the new radios to Volunteers at the Moe Unit

The Operational Communications Enhancement Project (OCEP) will replace the primary radio communications system in use at VICSES, with rollout of the new radios scheduled to commence in May 2018. The radios need to be replaced to maintain interoperability with other government emergency services agencies (and because they are at or near end of life).

In August 2017, Operational Communications Technical Officers led hands-on workshops at 12 regional units to give volunteers the opportunity to handle the new radios, and to state their preferences regarding the look and feel (i.e., the “programmable” features, such as display settings). Visited sites include Knox, Bendigo, Sunshine, Stawell, Ballarat, Benalla, Ouyen, Terang, Yackandandah, Moe, Torquay,

and Bairnsdale. You can view the feedback on the project page on the Hub.

Technical Officers are currently visiting every Unit to conduct Site Surveys, during which they will gather information needed to design the installation for that Unit and thereby promote a smooth transition. Another set of workshops will be conducted in early December 2017 to gather volunteer feedback regarding training on the new radios, including training format and topics. To sign up for a workshop where you can voice your opinion, contact the project team via email at ocep@ses.vic.gov.au. ■

For more information, see our project page on the Hub, under My State > Projects > Current Projects > Operational Communications Enhancement Project

EM-Share now live

By Jackson Bell, Operations Manager, VHO

EM-Share supersedes the Observation Share Centre, and is an online resource that complements the Victorian emergency management sector lessons management life cycle.

It allows community, business, industry and emergency management agency personnel to share observations and files from operational and non-operational activities, view insights and lessons, track how their contribution adds to the continuous improvement of the sector, and collaborate with others about learning.

What are the advantages of EM-Share?

- Members from community, business, industry and emergency management agencies will be able to contribute lessons to the system;
- All users will be able to view and analyse all insights and lessons;
- If users login using their EM-COP email and password they are able to track how their observations/files are being utilised;
- Agencies will be able to view, actively analyse, and track outcomes from their own data;
- The State Review Team will be able to effectively analyse and track state-wide and multiagency lessons, changes and improvements;

- All users will be able to access a central location for all resources, communication, products and information relating to lessons management.

EM-Share provides greater transparency on how files and observations are being analysed and used to inform continuous improvement.

How can I access EM-Share?

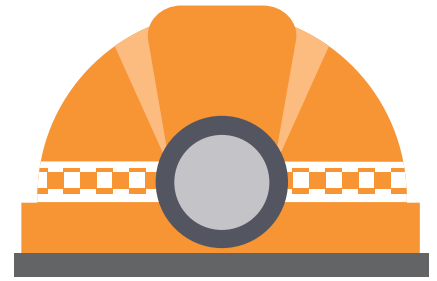
You can access EM-Share in two ways: the EM-Share button on the EM-COP Desktop; or via this link: share.em.vic.gov.au

You can access as a guest or by logging in using your EM-COP email and password. For more information about EM-Share, lessons management or the observation, insight to lesson process, check out the EMV website: www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/reviews-and-lessons-management

If you have any questions, please contact your VICSES State Review Team agency representative, Operations Manager Jackson Bell or email emshare@emv.vic.gov.au.



WELLBEING, HEALTH & SAFETY



New laws to protect police & emergency workers in Victoria



Members of VICSES and Victoria Police at Federation Square

Tough new laws are now in place in Victoria to further protect police and emergency workers from offenders who endanger their lives. Offenders who use motor vehicles to put police and emergency services workers at risk of harm will now face up to 20 years behind bars under tough new laws introduced by the Andrews Labor Government. The legislation creates three new offences:

- Damaging an emergency service vehicle (5 years maximum imprisonment);
- Intentionally exposing an emergency worker, custodial officer or a youth justice worker to risk by driving (20 years maximum imprisonment);

- Recklessly exposing an emergency worker, a custodial officer or a youth justice worker to risk by driving (10 years maximum imprisonment).

Minister for Police Lisa Neville introduced the Bill into Parliament in November and said the strong laws would send a clear message that endangering the lives of police and other emergency workers will not be tolerated. ■

For more information go to: www.premier.vic.gov.au

Safer Units and offices

Making sure members can safely attend to the community's needs is critical. To help make sure our members can remain injury free and available for any emergency it is important to ensure your unit and office is safe and free from hazards.

To do this we ask units to do a Work Place Inspection every six months. To help you identify and make safe any hazards that may cause injury or incident. You can enter the information directly into Safegate, or download the VICSES app called 'PocketAudit' from iTunes, which links directly to SafeGate.

Quick reference guides are available on the HUB: at Hub > My State > Safety > Forms and Resources. Alternatively, call the WHS department or send an email to health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au for an easy to use guide. ■

New six week program

Anyone who takes part in a Healthwatch session is also eligible to participate in our new six week program. Designed specifically for VICSES members, this program is intended to provide motivation and support whilst guiding participant through a series of nutrition, movement and mindfulness challenges.

Each participant gets a special starter pack and is taken through the program via a series of weekly emails and videos. Our qualified nutritionists will provide you with personalised feedback to help you get on track. One-on-one support is also available if required. ■

Next 6 week challenge kicks off on 5 February 2018.

2017 / 2018



What's coming up 2018?

Our Health and Wellbeing team will be out and about running Healthwatch sessions all over Victoria in 2018 so make sure your Unit doesn't miss out. Email health&safety@ses.vic.gov.au to book a Healthwatch visit and let us know which topic interests your Unit or office.



Workplace inspections

July – Oct 2017

34

July – Oct 2016

25



Injuries

July – Oct 2017

25

July – Oct 2016

42



Wellbeing initiatives (Total participants)

July – Oct 2017

1,514

July – Oct 2017

887

Tips to support heart health

Did you know that over 30% of adult Australians suffer from high blood pressure, one of the major contributing factors to cardiovascular disease?

The good news is that in most cases blood pressure can be influenced by factors within our control such as nutrition, exercise and weight management. Even small changes to your daily routine can yield positive health benefits. Here are a few tips to get you started:

1. Get your blood pressure checked regularly – there are often no symptoms associated with high blood pressure so regular check-ups provide vital information.
2. Reduce salt – Australians consume up to 10 times more salt than they need with 80% of this salt found in processed foods. Main offenders are sauces, spreads and condiments, potato chips, cheese, pizza, and processed meat and meat products, including sausages, meat pies, sausage rolls and chicken nuggets. Always check the label and choose lower sodium options (120mg sodium per 100gm).
3. Increase your intake of fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grains – these foods contain fibre and essential vitamins and minerals, not just for our circulatory system but overall health in general. Over 90% of adult Australians do not eat enough fruit and vegetables to support their health, so learn to love your vegetables and start adding them into your day.

In particular, research has shown the nitrates in beetroot can be effective in reducing high blood pressure.

4. Move more – the VICSES Step it Up challenge put the focus on being more active and many of us found we could find the time to move more. Making time for exercise can be hard but try and incorporate it into your daily routine and aim for 30 minutes every day – it doesn't have to be all at the same time. Daily exercise helps to manage stress and weight – both of which can be major contributing factors to high blood pressure.
5. Watch your fluids – what we drink is important. Always look to water as the main source of hydration; our bodies are approximately 70% water so it makes sense. Alcohol and caffeine can both contribute to high blood pressure, so limit intake as much as possible. Many soft drinks contain salt and a high amount of sugar so removing these from your diet is good for your blood gravity and your health in general.

Our Healthwatch assessors have many strategies and ideas on how these tips can be incorporated into your day to day life. Next time you have a Healthwatch visit at your unit make sure you pick their brains and make the most of their expertise. ■

DID YOU KNOW, OVER

30%

of Australian adults suffer from high blood pressure? One of the major contributing factors to cardiovascular disease.

KEY SAFETY FOCUSES FOR 2018:

1. Procurement
2. Contractor management
3. Fatigue management

Healthwatch

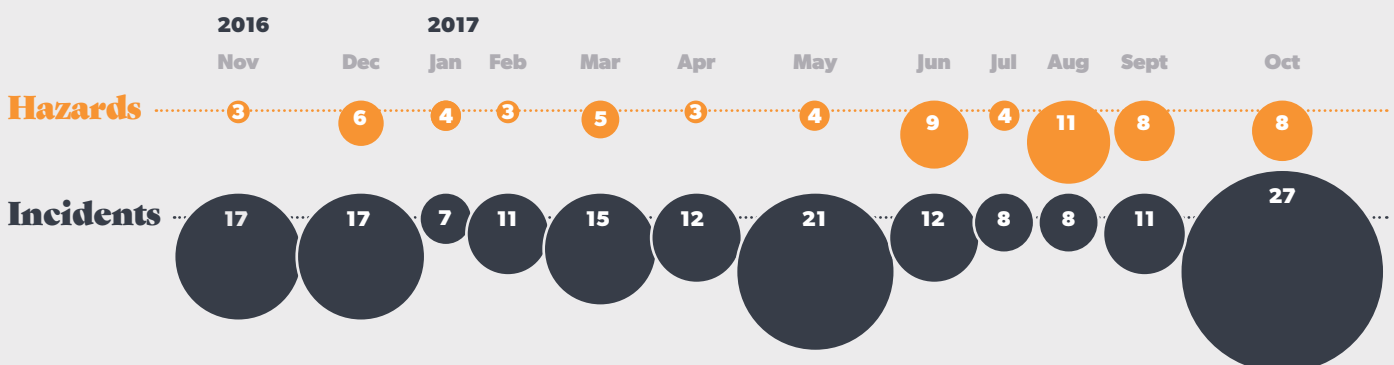
Earlier this year we ran a survey to learn more about the health and wellbeing goals, roadblocks and interests of our VICSES community. Based on your feedback, we have reviewed our Healthwatch program and made some improvements, including four new sessions on topics that matter to you. Designed to be informative and interactive, these sessions cover:

- Back and joint care;
- Functional movement;
- Nutrition for energy; and
- Sleep and mindfulness.

Our health checks also include blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol. ■



Sorrento Unit participating in a Healthwatch session on 'Functional Movement'



CAMPAIGNS & EVENTS

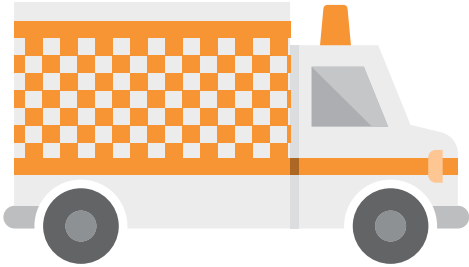
AAMI renews partnership with VICSES and provides much-needed equipment

The annual AAMI equipment handover events were held at Regional offices throughout the state during November.

AAMI has provided VICSES with more than 1,700 pieces of equipment this year, ranging from chainsaws and road rescue equipment to flashing traffic beacons. This equipment is vital for VICSES to carry out its work, safeguarding communities against the threat of flood, storm, landslide, earthquake and tsunami.

In further positive news for VICSES, AAMI has also committed to a further three years as Principal Community Partner, joining us in our vision of creating “safer communities – together”.

We thank AAMI for its 15 years of valued support, and financial contributions of more than \$7 million to VICSES community engagement, education and resilience programs, along with funding for essential equipment to VICSES units across the state. ■



WE THANK AAMI FOR

15 YEARS
OF VALUED SUPPORT &
\$7 MILLION
IN CONTRIBUTIONS



VICSES staff and volunteers from the Central region at the AAMI handover event on Monday 20 November.



Gerry Sheridan and Brendan Corcoran, 2015 games

2018 Emergency Service Games

Each year the Victoria Police and Emergency Service (VP&ES) Games take place. The games invite personnel from all emergency response agencies to participate in a range of events. 2018 will also see the 17th Australasian Police and Emergency Services (AP&ES) Games, to be held in Mandurah, Western Australia in October 2018.



Victoria Police & Emergency Service Games

Dates: 16 March – 25 March 2018
Registration: Open 4 December 2017
Cost: \$10 entry + approx. \$12 per event

With the VP&ES games being held in March 2018 it is a prime opportunity for VICSES personnel to be involved in what is shaping up to be another great year.

Over 3000+ competitors register for the 41 sports on offer each year and VICSES saw 110+ sign up in 2017.

For more information check out the official 2018 VP&ES website



Australasian Police & Emergency Service Games

Dates: 28 October – 3 November 2018
Registration: Open now
Cost: Entry fee \$70 (\$49 early bird registration until January 2018) plus pay per event

The countdown is on for the AP&ES games being held in Mandurah, WA in October. VICSES will be sending a team to the games and all members that meet the eligibility criteria welcome to attend. Sign up now and receive a discount on the registration fee. There's plenty of information on the website to help you plan your visit to WA including accommodation, travel and general visiting advice. ■

For more information go to www.apandesgames.com.au

2017 / 2018



Now is the time to start planning for both the VP&ES and AP&ES.

Further information regarding both the State and Australasian games can be found on the Hub at Hub > My State > Emergency Games or by contacting the VICSES coordinator on the details below. Details will also be released on the VICSES Volunteer Facebook page as they become available.

Agency Contact:
 Gerry Sheridan, Operations Officer, VHO

E: emergencyservicegames@ses.vic.gov.au
P: 0417 131 463

New Seasonal Events Calendar available on the Hub!

A new Seasonal Events Calendar is available on the Hub to provide visibility of events and other important dates.

View it at Hub > Events



2018 Bunnings Emergency Services Volunteers BBQ

By Susan Davie, Manager Community Connections, VHO

Bunnings warehouses across Victoria will help raise funds for local volunteer emergency services on Saturday 20 January 2018 at its annual Aussie Day Weekend Fundraiser BBQ.

Please mark Saturday 20 January 2018 in your calendar and head to your local Bunnings to support this fun event. This is a great fundraising event for emergency service volunteers and an opportunity for VICSES to share important community safety messages at some of the locations. A big thank you to Bunnings for supporting the great work of VICSES and our volunteers. ■

For more information, head to: bunnings.com.au/about-us/in-or-community



Bunnings employees and volunteers from VICSES Dandenong Unit

MEDIA

In October, the Media and Communication team successfully implemented a new social media strategy, with a focus on increasing the presence of VICSES online, through engaging posts that reflect the organisation's values and key messages.

This resulted in increased engagement from the social community across our channels. The VICSES Facebook account was the stand out, recording a 72% increase in impressions and a 79% increase in engagements (likes, comments and shares) compared to the month of September. ■

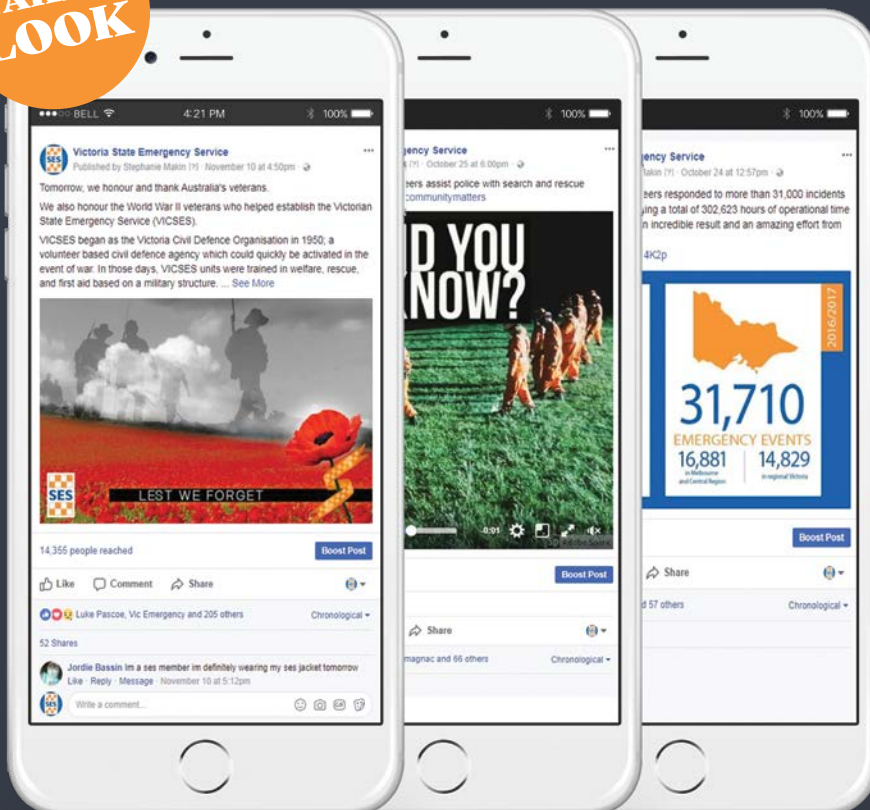
A new Media and Communications Board Report is now available on the Hub, providing a snapshot of VICSES' performance across external channels for each month.

The report includes analytics data relating to VICSES' web traffic, social media engagement metrics and coverage across traditional and broadcast media. ■

[View the report at Hub > My State > Media and Communications](#)

TAKE A LOOK

Some of VICSES' social media posts from last few months:



Top headlines:



September

- Wet weather lashes region, Warrnambool Standard
- Landslide warning goes out to alpine region snow visitors, Wangaratta Chronicle
- Rescue in the Grampians, The Wimmera Mail-Times
- Sale men trapped in car in snow for three days, Gippsland Times & Maffra Spectator
- SES region says thanks to stalwarts, Border Mail

October

- SES unit faces crisis, Cobram Courier
- SES FREE TRAPPED DRIVER AFTER CRASH, Warrnambool Standard
- Police air-wing, SES assist with rescue, Warrnambool Standard
- WALKER STRETCHERED DOWN OFF MOUNTAIN, Border Mail
- Save our SES unit, Hume Leader
- Northcote SES Unit to get new \$3m home base in Heidelberg West, Herald Sun

November

- Pledge to find SES a new home, Northcote Leader
- Stawell SES crew always at the ready, The Wimmera Mail-Times
- SES puts call out for volunteers, Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Weekly
- Echuca SES is official, Riverine Herald
- SES develops junior volunteers, Colac Herald
- SES closer to a new home, Border Mail
- Sandbagging facility launched, Ballarat Courier
- Missing bushwalker found after 24 hours, Warragul & Drouin Gazette

IT UPDATE

Information on NBN migration now available on the Hub

As the NBN increases its footprint it is important for Units to prepare for the changes.



Information Services has been working directly with various Telco vendors and the NBN to create an information pack to assist Units with the transition process to the NBN. The basic process is outlined below:

- Unit and VICSES IS receives notification from NBN and Telstra that the site will be cutover to the NBN (6 months prior to cutover date);
- VICSES IS will contact the Unit with request to provide a list of numbers that they wish to keep, and a Unit contact (see NBN Cutover E-mail for details);
- NBN contacts the Unit directly to arrange a date to install hardware up to the premise
- (in the form of a box on the outside of the building);
- Orders are lodged with Telstra for the phone lines and State-provided data connection (3 months prior to cutover date);
- NBN will attend on site to complete hardware install inside the building; and
- Telstra will contact the Unit directly to arrange cutover of the data service and phone lines (this, on occasion, can be more than one visit) over to NBN. ■

You can find a detailed NBN Information pack (including information around costings, FAQ and process) on the HUB at Hub > My State > Information Services > NBN

The VICSES Password Reset Tool

The VICSES Password Reset Tool enables members to reset their forgotten passwords without Information Services intervention.

By answering a series of questions, setup at the time of enrolment in the system, members can now securely verify their identities themselves and reset their passwords when required. To date over 1,800 members have enrolled in the password reset tool, helping to reduce password-related service desk calls, and free up employees and Information Services to focus on more pressing tasks.



VICSES Password Reset Tool mobile browser support brings self-service capabilities to members' mobile devices. All members can now use their smartphones or tablets, running on any mobile platform, to reset their passwords. ■

To enroll please visit: <https://selfservice.ses.vic.gov.au/showLogin.cc>

Network Security Program Project

The VICSES Board has prioritised business continuity and data security as an important focus, which includes aligning any activities with the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) mitigation strategies. In 2016/17 a review of the VICSES network and its security capabilities was commissioned to identify strategies to ensure business continuity and data protection.

From the review, an implementation plan has been developed outlining the key activities needed to address a number of business objectives in the ICT Strategy 2014-18 as well as the Australian Signals Directorate's mitigation strategies for targeted cyber intrusions. These include:

- A brand new security framework, comprising of security controls and policies for all members;
- Single Sign-on for applications;
- Wi-Fi and mobility, including enhanced security, ease of access and coverage;
- Enhanced firewalls and email security;
- Decommissioning of legacy and at-risk infrastructure;
- Enhanced network monitoring and response; and
- Cyber-security education sessions and workshops.

Over the next few months, the project team will be gathering information and making the above changes aimed at enhancing our network and system security to further protect users against next-generation cyber security threats. ■



Can you see yourself in orange?

Become a volunteer

To learn about our units or to register your interest in becoming a volunteer with us, find your nearest VICSES unit and submit an enquiry form online.