



VICSES

AN INTRODUCTION



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





The Victoria State Emergency Service value proposition

TO OUR PEOPLE

The Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) celebrates an inclusive and diverse workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve and is committed to leading better public safety outcomes. Our strong investment in organisational Values is a key driver in empowering and motivating our volunteers and staff (Our People) in a work environment that acknowledges, respects, and values the diversity, abilities and contributions of all. The wellbeing, health and safety of Our People is paramount, and we are committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for members to volunteer and work for.

TO COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT

Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES, making up 95% of Our People, who serve the Victorian community as an unpaid workforce 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of year. VICSES has a long and proud history of serving Victoria with a simple Vision: **Safer Communities – Together**. As a significant contributor and leader in emergency management, our strength is Our People and their highly skilled and extensive capabilities and networks. VICSES provides significant economic value to the State through a specialist volunteer workforce that provides emergency assistance to thousands of Victorians every year.

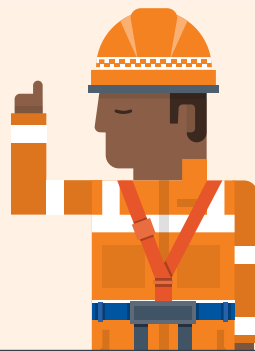
TO EMPLOYERS

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

TO PARTNERS

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

VICSES is a
5,000+
strong volunteer-based
organisation



24
HOURS A DAY

7
DAYS A WEEK
365
DAYS A YEAR

Forward



VICSES has served Victorian communities since 1950, and plays an integral role as part of our state's emergency service sector. Our volunteers are the backbone of our organisation, serving the community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

We have a strong value proposition to Our People, community, government, employers, and our partners. We pride ourselves on being a values-driven organisation of choice for our volunteers and staff, who are located right across the state. VICSES has the highest level of unprompted brand awareness out of any Victorian emergency service agency, which we are extremely proud of and continue to work to uphold.

VICSES is unique, in that we provide specialist support across multiple services. We are the control agency for flood, storm, earthquake, landslide, and tsunami, and also provided the largest road crash rescue network in Australia. In addition to these services, our highly skilled volunteers are also trained to support our partner agencies across search and rescue (land, water, steep angle and alpine), crime scene support, fire and ambulance support, and much more.

This broad scope means that we are responsible for maintaining highly specialised services, training, equipment, and vehicles across the widest range of legislative responsibilities out of any emergency service agency in Victoria. However, this also presents a number of challenges.

With more frequent extreme weather events, population growth, financial constraints, and continued emergency management reform and compliance, VICSES is experiencing increased demand for the services that we provide, and is reliant on the continued contributions of volunteerism.

As we continue to evolve to meet these increasing demands across our communities, the emergency management sector and government, continued investment in VICSES is vital to ensure the retention of our volunteers and our high standard service delivery.

This publication provides an introduction to VICSES, and aims to highlight our strengths and expertise, while also outlining the challenges that we face now, and into the future. It demonstrates our investment in Our People and the volunteer experience, our services and capabilities, our brand, and our Vision of creating Safer Communities – *Together*.

Greg Leach
VICSES Chief Executive Officer

About us

VICSES is a volunteer-based organisation, striving to be a progressive and agile leader in emergency preparedness and response. Our strength is in our people, capabilities and strategic partnerships, leading to increased community safety.

Our volunteers are significant contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Victoria. With nearly 5,000 passionate, dedicated, and engaged volunteers, and a footprint covering the entire state, our support extends to even the most remote communities.

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

Operating since 1950, VICSES is a key leader in emergency management. VICSES provides assistance to all

areas of Victoria via 150 units, and permanently staffed and strategically placed offices across the state, led by the Executive Management team and corporate business support staff located at the Victorian Head Office in Southbank, Melbourne.

The VICSES Authority Board is constituted under the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act 2005*, and is accountable to the Minister for Emergency Services. The Board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister for Emergency Services.

OUR VISION

Safer Communities – *Together.*

OUR MISSION

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

OUR HISTORY

VICSES has a rich historical past. Established as a volunteer-based Civil Defence Organisation that could be activated quickly in the event of war, VICSES has been involved in most major emergency responses in Victoria since we began in 1950.

By 1972, approximately 100 voluntary Civil Defence units had been established in municipalities across Victoria. That same year, Parliament passed the *State Emergency Services and Civil Defence Act* which formally legislated the role of the Victoria Civil Defence Organisation.

In 1973, the first Civil Defence Organisation headquarters was established at 31 Queens Road, Melbourne, and in 1975 the Victoria Civil Defence Organisation was renamed the Victoria State Emergency Service to conform with other states.

In 1979, the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services was created. Its branches included Victoria Police, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Country Fire Authority and VICSES.

In 1981, the *Victoria State Emergency Service Act* was passed. This act formally recognised VICSES as a general emergency management agency and on 1 November 2005, VICSES was established as an independent Statutory Authority.

In 2024, VICSES will celebrate 50 years together as an emergency service agency.

OUR TIMELINE

1950

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

1972



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

1981



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

1979

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

1975

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



2005

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

VICSES TODAY

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

**VICSES Strategic Plan
2023-2027**

2015



2015 marked the 40th anniversary of VICSES. This was a time to reflect and celebrate our achievements, challenges, and evolution from a Civil Defence Organisation to the organisation we are today.

OUR VALUES



We pride ourselves on our credibility

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

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



We are part of our community

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

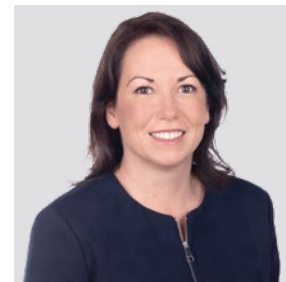
We collaborate with our communities and partners, sharing knowledge and expertise.

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

OUR BRAND

VICSES is well respected across the emergency management sector and recognised for our leadership and dedication in supporting the state’s response to emergencies across all communities.

Our research indicates that VICSES enjoys the highest level of unprompted awareness compared to all other emergency services organisations within the Victorian community and well above most other sector organisations, making VICSES a well-recognised and trusted brand.



“As always, our VICSES volunteers and staff have been at the coalface of the flood emergency and ongoing severe weather events, and the community spirit and strength shown by so many of you continues to shine through – so too does a lot of warmth and humour. The dedication shown by VICSES volunteers and staff in response to the ongoing flood event is deeply appreciated by not only me and the government, but the many families, businesses and communities that have relied on VICSES services, expertise, and support during this difficult time.”

**Jaelyn Symes, Minister for
Emergency Services**



Safety drives our decisions

We empower our people to work within their capability to ensure we don't compromise the safety of our people and the community.

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



Focused and adaptable

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

We recognise and respect the diversity of our capability.

We channel our resources to achieve results.



Together we are VICSES

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

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





OUR STRATEGY

In July 2023, VICSES launched our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. This four-year strategy sets ambitious goals for our capability, systems, and culture, and our leadership within the emergency management sector.

Strategy Statement

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

The strategy outlines the following outcomes, priorities, and key measures to help us achieve the plan in line with our VICSES Operating Model (see pages 26-27).

Outcome 1

We have actively shaped our service delivery to meet the changing needs of our operating environment.

Outcome 2

We have better connected communities, enhancing their preparedness for emergency weather events.

Outcome 3

We have a culture that enables safe, highly skilled and diverse volunteers and staff supported by effective systems.

Outcome 4

We have strengthened and influenced integral partnerships across community, business, government and the emergency management sector.



OUR PARTNERS

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



As part of our current partnership agreement, AAMI supports VICSES led community awareness and resilience initiatives such as 15 to Float, to reduce the risk on our roads during floods, and create safer communities – together.

Over the 20 years of the partnership, some key highlights have included:

- Annual joint launch events for the AAMI Equipment Handovers across the state.
- 20,197 pieces of equipment distributed as part of the AAMI Equipment Program.
- Launch and delivery of campaigns featuring AAMI including 15 to Float, Bag it, block it, lift it and leave, Safer Communities, our flood and storm preparation campaigns, Neighbour Day, and the Driver Reviver program.
- Volunteer recruitment campaigns, including 'We wear your support', which was promoted across social media and included a large mural in the Melbourne CBD.
- Events for community engagement and volunteer development, both internally and with other agencies.



Our People

Our volunteers are the backbone of VICSES, making up 95% of our total membership and serving the Victorian community for more than 40 years.

Today, we comprise more than 4,800 volunteers and over 220 employees, all crucial to the success of VICSES and our Vision to make Safer Communities - Together.

VICSES is proud to celebrate an inclusive and supportive culture across the entire organisation. Our People reflect the diversity of our communities, throughout both metropolitan and regional locations across the state.

With our diverse workforce we are reflective of the communities we serve in leading better public safety outcomes. Our strong investment in organisational Values is a key driver in empowering and motivating Our People in a workplace that acknowledges, respects, and values the diversity, abilities, and contributions of all.

The wellbeing, health, and safety of Our People is paramount to VICSES, and we work in partnership with some of Australia's most respected health and wellness providers to ensure that our organisation is a safe and healthy environment for people to work and volunteer for.

As the demand for our services and the complexity of emergencies continues to increase, we are committed to ensuring that Our People are capable, competent, and supported to learn and develop so they can keep pace with new knowledge, best practice, and the physical and psychological requirements of their roles.

Figure 1: Member breakdown: Volunteers and staff

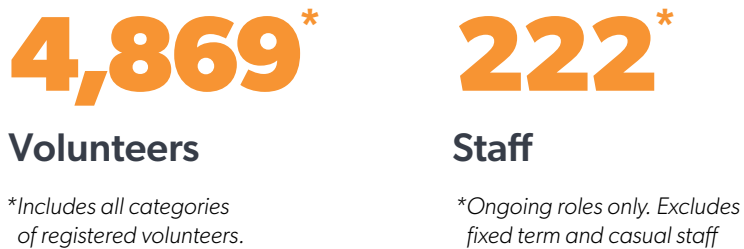


Figure 2: Statewide all member gender breakdown



Note: As at 30 June 2023

Volunteer activity undertaken in VICSES is very different compared with other formalised organised volunteer bodies, such as charity or community groups. Our volunteers spend significant time on training (including specialised training), prevention and preparation programs, as well as actual response operations.

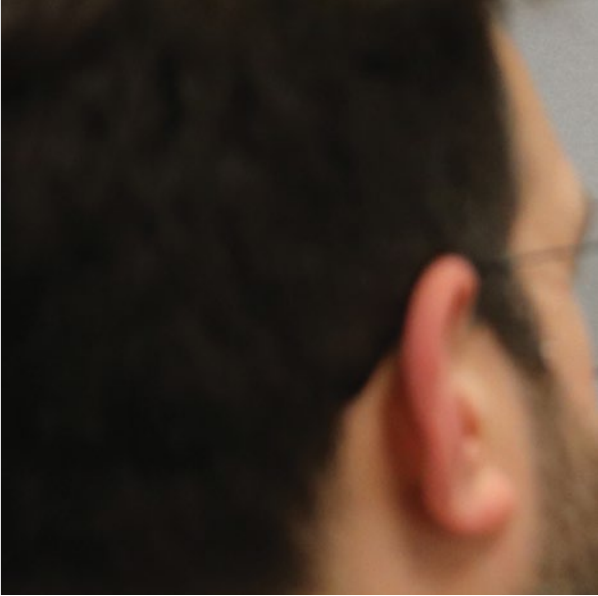
Each of our volunteers receives formally recognised and nationally accredited training as part of their role,

ranging from first aid, general rescue, chainsaw operations, community education, media training and much more. As a RTO we are committed to the development of Our People; to fostering open communication and clear role and training pathways that encourage and motivate others in continuous learning to assist in building both personal and organisational capability and responsiveness.



“Our People are at the heart of our organisation.”

2023–2027
VICSES STRATEGIC PLAN



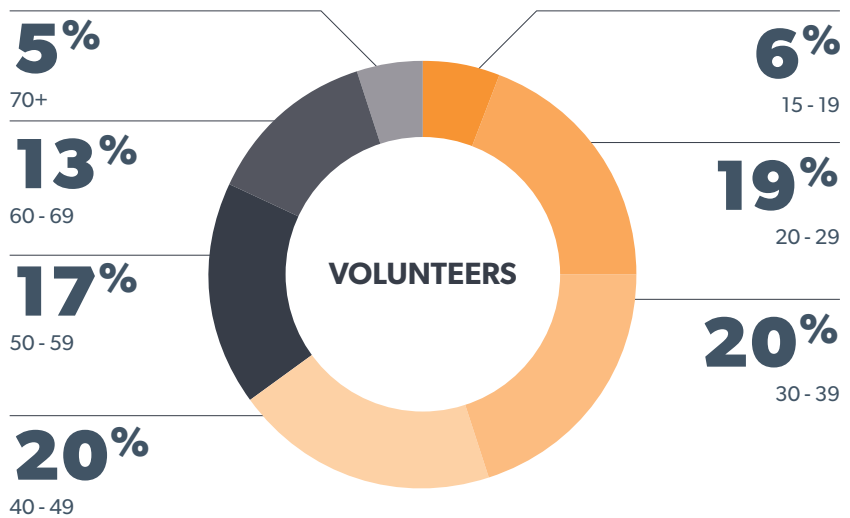
OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers perform a range of diverse roles. From engaging directly with communities on how best to prepare for emergencies, to providing on-the-ground support when emergencies occur; responding to natural disasters such as flood, storm, earthquake, tsunami, and landslide, providing road rescue services, supporting other agencies, or undertaking unit activities relating to finance, community engagement, incident management, and more.

Our volunteers are spread geographically across the State, with 61% of our volunteers based in regional and rural areas across two regions. The metropolitan Melbourne area has the highest number of volunteers across three emergency management boundaries, with approximately 1,900 volunteers, or 39% of our VICSES volunteer workforce.

We are extremely proud of our diversity; 34% of VICSES volunteers are women, of which 27% are in our Unit Leadership Teams. In metropolitan and regional locations across the state, our volunteers reflect the diversity of their local communities. Our age profile consists of 57% of volunteers being between 30 – 59 years, 18% of volunteers being aged 60+ years, and a youth profile of 25% being between 15-29 years.

Figure 3: Volunteer age breakdown





OUR STAFF

Our regional and Victorian Head Office employees across Victoria provide a crucial role in connecting and supporting our volunteers, while building relationships with sector agencies and key stakeholders.

These connections ensure that our service delivery is more effective, and that we are better able to plan, manage, and respond to emergency incidents in collaboration with our networks.

Staff are based at the Victorian Head Office in Southbank, and regional offices located in Bairnsdale, Benalla, Bendigo, Geelong, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura, Moe, Mulgrave, Sunshine West, Swan Hill, Warrnambool, Wendouree, and Wodonga provide business support and assistance to volunteers.

Regional offices have been strategically located as part of the VICES Operating Model Review, to improve engagement and accessibility between volunteers and staff. Unit Support Team staff that are based across each of these office locations provide units with access to equipment, training, and other support services. Each office supports a broad range of initiatives such as, but not limited to training, finance, information services, communications, work health and safety, and people development and management.

Figure 4: Region breakdown - current members

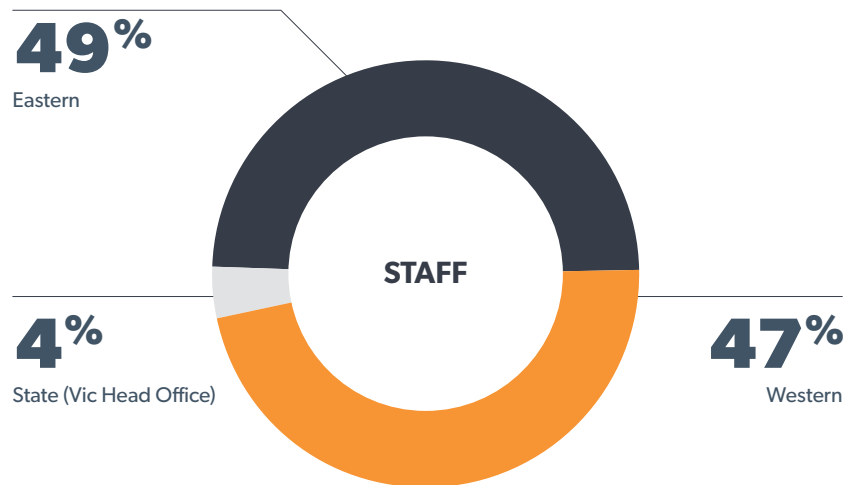
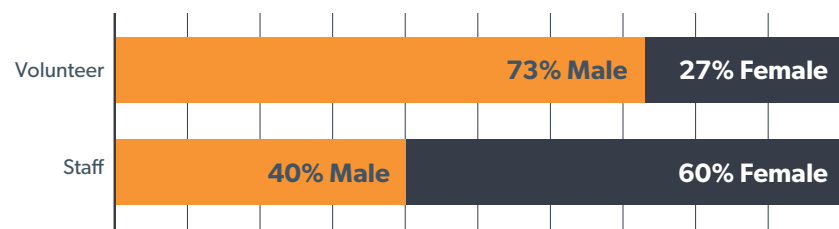


Figure 5: All member leadership



Note: All data current as at 30 June 2023

VOLUNTEERING AT VICSES

VICSES offers one of the broadest ranges of volunteering roles across the Victorian emergency management sector.

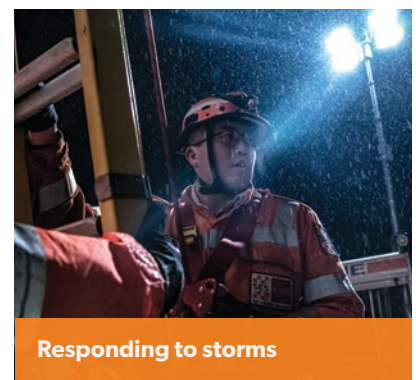
In addition to our generalist roles such as flood and storm response and community engagement, a number of specialist roles are also available based on specific hazard response needs across the breadth of Victoria, including road crash rescue, swift water rescue, alpine rescue, and more.

Volunteering at VICSES requires an individual's personal motivation, commitment, and a willingness to put time and effort over many hours, and at any time of the day or night. To volunteer for VICSES applicants must submit an expression of interest prior to proceeding to a selection and screening process. This approach

ensures new applicants understand the role they are seeking to volunteer for, and can meet the time commitments required for training and performing all volunteer duties.

Upon selection, new members receive nationally recognised and competency-based training and support to ensure

Figure 6: Volunteer roles at VICSES



they are skilled and capable to perform their role. This begins with fundamentals training which is typically spread over six sessions and provides essential safety skills, rescue organisation and planning knowledge, understanding of communications equipment, and more. This training must be completed prior to any new member attending any requests for assistance or use of specialist equipment.

Modern volunteerism is changing; interest in performing unpaid volunteer work in the community is in decline and people are volunteering for less time than in the past. In Australia, the rate of volunteering across all volunteer sectors has decreased, particularly due to impacts from COVID-19. Even so, volunteers within our emergency services sector provide the most hours annually, with approximately 67% of emergency service volunteers contributing 50 hours or more a year. With the increasing frequency of natural disasters, a ready supply of skilled emergency volunteers is critical for maintaining current levels of support to communities before, during, and after emergencies.

VICSES is also facing population growth that far exceeds our capacity to meet expectations, and creates growing demand for multi-specialist services. Due to ongoing funding constraints, VICSES unit facilities, volunteer, and staff numbers remain relatively unchanged in meeting this increased growth and demand.

As a volunteer organisation, the retention and attraction of new members is vital for VICSES' ongoing sustainability to deliver safe and timely services. In an increasingly time poor community, we know that the key to attraction and retention of members at VICSES is delivering a sense of belonging to a team, the feeling of doing something worthwhile, and recognising the valuable contributions that our volunteers bring to the Victorian community. The average length of volunteer service at VICSES is currently 8.58 years (6.84 years for women and 9.47 years for men).

VICSES further acknowledges that the nature of emergency services means volunteers can face a complex range of mental health and wellbeing risks. VICSES is committed to promoting work practices, procedures and initiatives that support member wellbeing, health and safety, and a positive environment to work and volunteer for.

Figure 7: VICSES volunteer service tenure rates



HOW WE CONSULT AT VICSES

VICSES formally consults with volunteers, staff, the broader emergency management sector, and key stakeholders on a range of sector-wide matters, organisational processes, and project activities each year.

These work programs are undertaken across a number of consultative forums involving both unit leadership, volunteers, state/regional committees and seminars, taskforces and working groups, and State operations and local unit cluster meetings.

These consultative forums benefit the VICSES community through communicating ideas, sharing two-way feedback, practical member advice and knowledge on organisational activities, and participating in learning and skills development.

A recent survey of VICSES volunteers and staff that was conducted to help VICSES continue to improve communications, and ensure the information and news distributed to volunteers and staff is relevant, timely and delivered in the best way possible, found that:

- 68% of volunteers and 73% of staff either strongly agreed or agreed that they receive the necessary information to effectively perform their role within VICSES.
 - Only 5% of volunteers and 4% of staff strongly disagreed to this statement.
- 82% of volunteers and 81% of staff found VICSES issued communications easy to read and understand.
 - Only 18% of volunteers and 19% of staff disagreed.
- 94% of volunteers and 100% of staff found the content of VICSES emails relevant.
 - Only 6% of volunteers found emails not relevant at all.

WELLBEING, HEALTH, AND SAFETY OF OUR PEOPLE

The wellbeing, health, and safety of our members is paramount to everything that we do, and underpins our Values as an organisation.

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all members.

VICSES has a number of initiatives available to all members to support the wellbeing, health, and safety. This includes:

- Launch of Safety Drives Our Decisions Roadmap, to build on and enhance VICSES' strong history of safety. Strategic priorities of the roadmap include:
 - Develop safety culture: We will further develop a safe, inclusive, progressive culture that represents the diversity of our communities.
 - Develop safety leadership capability: We will embed practices to attract and develop the right people in the right roles.
 - Control critical safety risk: We will maintain and strengthen a work environment that ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of our people.
 - Improve safety systems: We will focus on improving our systems to enhance our peoples' experience.
- Confidential 24/7 Peer Support services and counselling through our Employee Assistance Program.
- Our 'Be Heard' program, which provides a streamlined process for members to receive confidential support and advice, as well as clear avenues and support to lodge concerns or complaints.
- Launch of the Physical Fitness for Role Program - a nationally agreed approach across all SES agencies to understand the minimum level of fitness that is required by members to safely undertake operational activities.
- Programs including AV SMART 2.0 and The Working Mind First Responder, designed to check in on member wellbeing and mental health as part of our emergency service sector.
- Healthwatch visits to units across the state to provide nutrition, movement, and mindfulness advice and to support the overall health of our volunteers.
- 'You said we did' initiative, to share safety issues that have been raised by members and the actions that have been taken.

“VICSES celebrates an inclusive and diverse workforce that is committed to leading better public safety outcomes.”

**2023 - 2027
VICSES STRATEGIC
PLAN**



Our services to the community

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

Our volunteers carry out the broadest suite of emergency response activities of any emergency service organisation that covers all of the State.

We are unique in that we provide multiple specialist services – leading response for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake and landslide throughout Victoria, and providing the largest road crash rescue network in Australia.

We also provide support for other incident response activities including:

- Road, rail, industrial and aircraft (RAIR) – vehicle extrication.
- Fire support.
- Search and rescue - Alpine Rescue, Vertical Rescue (steep and high angle incidents), and missing or injured persons.
- Structure – industrial incidents and Urban Search and Rescue, including building damage or collapse.
- Land – missing persons, evidence search, crime scene protection, lighting (crime scene, vehicle accident area), and lighting points during traffic management.
- Land Based Swift Water Rescue.
- Lakes/ Rivers/ Caves – missing persons, evidence search, marine rescue.
- Marine/Offshore Rescue (VICSES Inverloch Unit only).

VICSES also provides significant contributions and expertise to national and state governing bodies, including but not limited to committee membership and specialist advice to Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC), Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and the Victorian Road Safety Network.



FLOOD

As the control agency for flood in Victoria, VICSES engages with flood-prone communities to help them achieve a better awareness of their local flood risks, and provides advice on how to prepare for and respond to floods. This is a shared responsibility between the community, VICSES, and key floodplain and weather specialists and services.

About 11.5% of Victoria's land mass is prone to a 1% probability flood, which can have significant community disruption and result in damage to property, businesses, and essential infrastructure. Approximately 200,000 properties in metropolitan Melbourne alone are estimated to be at risk of flooding (with at least a 1% chance per year). The annual average damage caused by flooding in Melbourne's Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Regions is estimated to be at \$735.5 million.

Given this level of risk, and in addition to reoccurring weather patterns such as La Niña and significant Victorian flood events such as those most recently in 2022, VICSES has directed significant resources into capacity and capability building to respond to flood emergencies.

However, with more frequent weather events, population growth, growing diversity of our communities, increased regulatory compliance and continued sector reform, VICSES is experiencing growing complexity and demand for the services we provide, leading to increased pressure on our operating model during large-scale flood events.

These increased demands and expectations have implications on the experience of our volunteers, and their ability to deliver services safely and effectively for the communities we serve. To respond to future flood emergencies and realise community and government expectations of VICSES, we require strong investment from government and floodplain services.



8,368

Flood incidents*

(87,603 hours)

*2022-2023 Financial Year

These works can only be achieved through strong collaborative partnerships with the Bureau of Meteorology at the national level, and with our state partners Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Melbourne Water, catchment management authorities and flood technical specialists, together with communities, local government, business and other agencies.

STORM

As the control agency for storm in Victoria, VICSES responds to an average of around 20,000 storm-related incidents and requests for assistance from the community across the State each year, which equates to approximately 80% of all requests for assistance. This includes responding to trees down and building damage.

Recent events such as the severe storms and floods in June 2021 saw our busiest operational period in the history of our organisation, with a total of 10,288 requests for assistance, and some VICSES units receiving a years' worth of requests for assistance in just 48 hours. Severe weather events like this highlight the dependency on our skilled volunteers to support impacted communities in times of need.



17,053

Storm incidents*

(75,853 hours)

EARTHQUAKE

Minor earthquakes are relatively common in eastern parts of Victoria, and the threat of a major earthquake is real. In September 2021, an earthquake measuring 5.9 was recorded near Mansfield, Victoria, causing minor damage and felt reports throughout the state and interstate. Large-scale earthquakes in countries such as Japan and New Zealand demonstrate the potential devastating consequences to communities.

LANDSLIDE

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

TSUNAMI

The risk of a large tsunami in Victoria as a result of earthquake or disturbance, may be lower than many parts of the world, but the potential consequences remain extreme. Our volunteers are prepared to respond.

ROAD CRASH RESCUE

VICSES plays a significant role in the state’s road safety, responding to an average of between 1,300 - 1,400 road crash rescues each year.

VICSES provides the largest road rescue network in Australia, with 104 accredited road crash rescue provider units (Principal Provider) across Victoria, and 22 Rescue Support Units (Rescue Support Provider). This is one of the highest service delivery ratios for road crash rescue globally – equating to 73% of our service base across our statewide footprint.

VICSES provides the State with two levels of capability:

As a Principal Provider, VICSES undertakes extensive training in extrication techniques and maintains a large array of specialist rescue equipment and rescue vehicles. VICSES meets the government time benchmark for road rescue at 90% or greater. Accredited Principal Provider locations are strategically located across Victoria.

As a Rescue Support Provider, VICSES has 19 units that undertake the initial scene safety, stabilisation of vehicles, and access to casualties trapped in road crashes where the vehicles remain in the normal orientation until the Principal Provider attends, whereby the incident is handed over. Rescue Support Provider personnel undertake a subset of the Principal Provider training and only carry a limited set of rescue tools to provide initial stabilisation and to gain access to the casualty for a paramedic.

VICSES road crash rescue capability is located in major regional centres and is a critical part of the service in attracting and retaining volunteers, to ensure we can provide significant surge capacity for affected communities across the state relating to flood, storm, fire support, and search and rescue support to Victoria Police.

Retention of these skilled and highly trained road crash rescue volunteers is high, and in many smaller rural communities our volunteers have joined VICSES primarily to contribute to this capability. Volunteer feedback obtained over recent years clearly highlighted

Figure 8: Agency breakdown of Victorian RCR Principal Providers



Figure 9: Agency breakdown of Victorian RCR Support Providers



road crash rescue to be a primary driver of satisfaction, and retention as a VICSES volunteer.

VICSES further contributes to the state’s road safety by collaborating on national standards through its membership, working with the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO), leading the emergency management sector in

training and driving innovation, and in introducing fit-for-purpose equipment for road crash rescue. Other key roles include:

- Our VICSES volunteers, together with Lions Club volunteers operate more than 40 Driver Reviver sites across Victoria on long weekends and peak traffic days, offering motorists a safe

place to stop and refresh to reduce fatalities and injuries on our roads. In 2022, the national operations coordination of Driver Reviver transitioned to VICSES.

- Partnering with the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to assist with enhancing road crash rescue practices.
- Partnering with VicRoads on Fit2Drive – an experiential learning program delivered to high school aged students where new drivers learn about the impacts of distractions and not concentrating.
- Partnering with Latrobe University with the Regional Road Trauma Hub.
- Participating in research with Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC).



1,516

Road Crash Rescue incidents*

(12,051 hours)

*2022-2023 Financial Year





COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

As skilled and committed volunteers and staff 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 preparedness and decisions before and during and after emergency events.

Community resilience is featured as one of our main key outcomes within the 2023 – 2027 VICSES Strategic Plan, with attributed priorities and key measures (left).

On 29 July 2016, the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon James Merlino MP, launched the VICSES Community Resilience Strategy 2016-19; an important enabling element of VICSES' vision of *Safer Communities – Together*.

The strategy marked a significant change in service delivery for VICSES, promoting a shift from the traditional response-based approach to an outcomes-based model that empowers communities to develop awareness, shared responsibility, and self-reliance – before, during and after emergencies.

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

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

Aligning to the broader sector reform for resilience introduced by the Victorian Government since 2012, VICSES viewed the integration of its stance on resilience into core business not so much as a new direction in its service delivery approach, but as a reaffirmation of what VICSES had always done as a community-based volunteer organisation.

VICSES acknowledges that there is no one-size fits-all-approach to community engagement and preparedness. Victorian communities are diverse, speaking more than 260 languages and dialects and following 135 faiths and religions. What works well for one community may not necessarily be meaningful in another, and with such diversity in sector programs and service delivery, execution will vary across the state to meet local community need.



As the first strategy of its kind for any Australian state emergency service at that time, the Strategy sought to provide a three-year road map for the future design and development, delivery, and evaluation of VICSES resilience-based programs and resources.

The focus for VICSES is to develop sustainable and resilient communities which includes enhancing the capability and capacity of Our People through community engagement activities in ways that are meaningful to them.

The 2019-2022 Community Resilience Strategy Renewal (Strategy Renewal) outlined strategic objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to ensure communities are better prepared to take ownership of their priorities on their journey towards being resilient. Community Engagement Facilitator (CEF) courses were conducted across the state to strengthen the skills and knowledge of VICSES volunteers to plan, conduct, and evaluate community engagement activities, with a focus on disaster risk reduction in a bid to create 'Safer Communities - Together'.

The CEF training program was heavily restricted as a result of complying with VICSES COVIDSafe Directions over the

life of the Strategy Renewal and resulted in significant consequences for VICSES to continue our resilience programs. Our members were unable to undertake face-to-face community engagement activities for an extended period during the life of the Strategy Renewal, which in turn, created a disruption to the broader implementation of engagement programs that commenced during the life of the initial strategy.

Through innovation and a 'thinking outside the box' mentality, VICSES countered the changes of our ability to interact at a community level by actively seeking alternative ways to engage with communities to encourage key flood and preparedness messaging. The key to this change was the use of digital and online engagement which was received well by Our People.

In line with VICSES' Strategic Plan, we are committed to enhancing community preparedness through targeted engagement programs based on risk and research, ensuring program delivery is collaborative and community centred. Furthermore, the design of future policies and resources will reflect the diversity of Our People, reinforcing the need for communities to be resilient in order to withstand future emergency weather events.

Our Service Demand

VICSES is the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake, and landslide within Victoria.

Over the past years, we have seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events due to climate change, which is expected to continue and will exacerbate existing pressure on service demand. The projection for the annual economic cost of flood and storm in 2060 under low or high emissions is over \$49 billion, compared to bushfire at \$2.2 billion.*

2022 saw the third consecutive declared La Niña event for Australia, bringing higher than average rainfall.

October 2022 recorded Victoria’s wettest spring, and wettest month on record, which resulted in the devastating impacts of the 2022 Victorian Flood Event. This was our busiest operational month on record, with 13,689 requests for assistance, which increased over the coming months.

Figure 10: Annual economic costs in 2060 by disaster type under the high and low emissions scenarios, \$billions

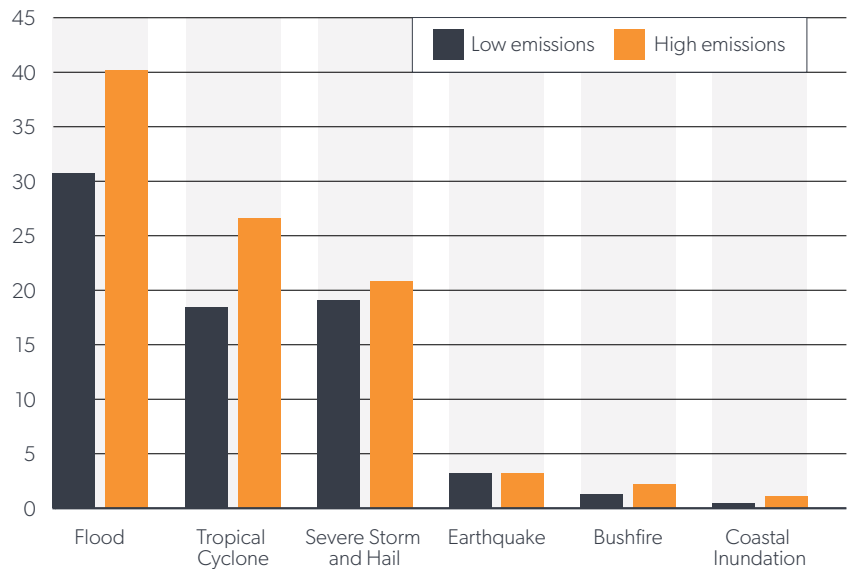
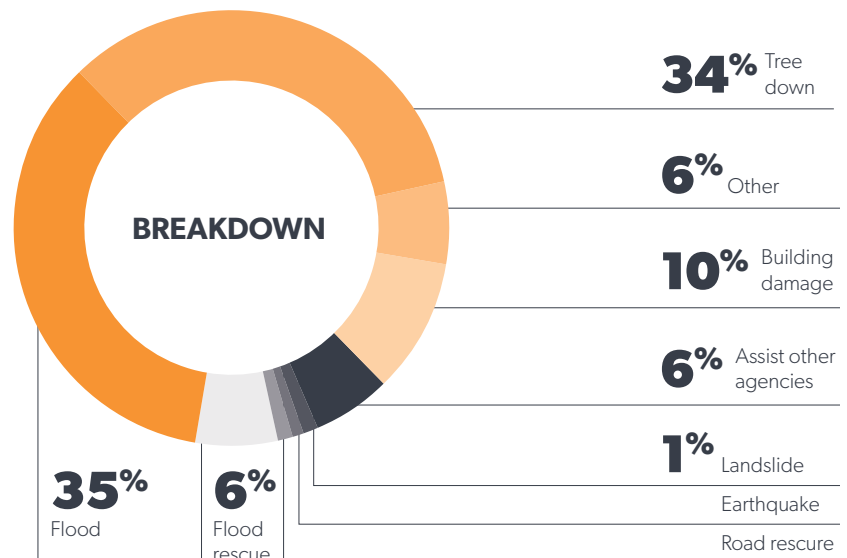
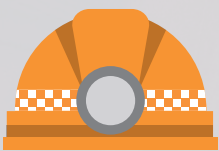


Figure 11: Breakdown of requests for assistance during the 2022 Victorian Floods*



*Source: Update to the economic costs of natural disasters in Australia - Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience & Safer Communities, 2021

*12 Oct - 30 Nov 2022



REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE
DURING THE 2022
VICTORIAN FLOODS*

16,103

Total

*12 Oct - 30 Nov 2022



Along with the demand for VICSES services for our known hazard and projected climate change risks, VICSES also faces growing demand due to other contributing factors, such as:

- Emergency management sector and legislative reform.
- Increased regulatory compliance.
- International and national agenda to building resilience in communities.
- Increased demand to support other agencies.
- Resources required contributing to multi-agency incident management.

A key outcome of the 2023 – 2027 VICSES Strategic Plan is actively shaping our current service delivery to meet the changing needs of our operating environment, including the above factors.

Current analysis of incident trend data for the past five years (by type) indicates a steady total number of incidents per hazard, and some cases a large increase, e.g. flood based events.

Figure 12: Five-year trend of VICSES incident types

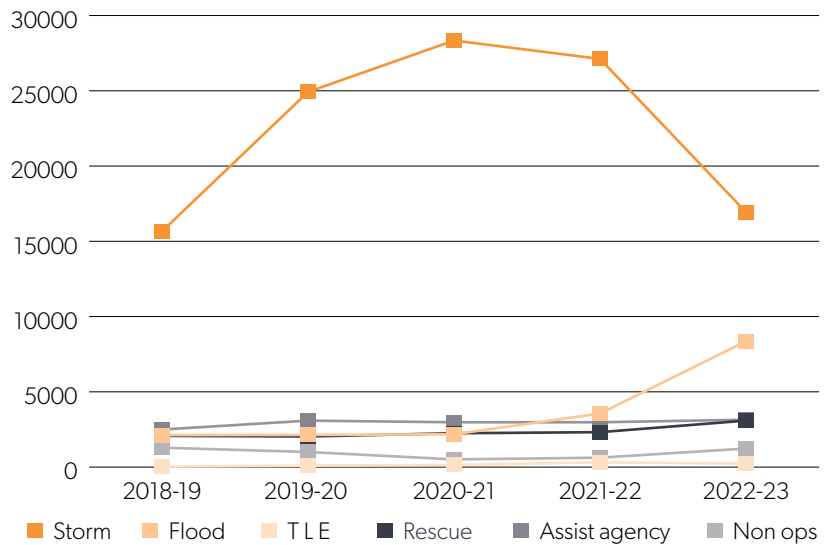


Figure 13: Five year trend of VICSES incidents by type.

Legend: TLE – tsunami, landslide, and earthquake; RAI Rail, aircraft, industrial

Fin Year	Storm	Flood	TLE	Rescue	Assist agency	Non ops	Total
2018-19	15,668	2,125	31	2,073	2,496	1,289	23,682
2019-20	24,927	2,139	97	2,035	3,086	1,004	33,288
2020-21	28,341	2,181	141	2,248	2,978	510	36,399
2021-22	27,115	3,563	316	2,320	2,978	626	36,918
2022-23	16,927	8,362	227	3,089	3,146	1,234	32,985



#WEWORKASONE

VICSES plays a critical key role in supporting the #weworkasone approach across the emergency management sector.

Our invaluable contributions to other emergency service organisations, such as Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Fire Rescue Victoria, Parks Victoria and the Department on Energy, Environment and Climate Action, provide a critical workforce during fire and other emergency incidents.

In recent times, the scope of VICSES time and effort has further grown from the requirement from other emergency management organisations. This level of increased workload has been further exacerbated from additional obligations arising from the emergency management reforms, new control

and coordination obligations, and deployment to other states to assist various operations. VICSES provides the State with key personnel to undertake roles such as the State Response Controller, Regional Control, and incident management functions at Incident Control Centres.

Victoria Police, for example, has an increased demand for VICSES support at crime scenes, for search and rescue, traffic control and lighting, while Ambulance Victoria is increasingly reliant on VICSES for patient carry-outs and mass casualty support. Support for these agencies was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic,

where our volunteer's provided surge capability to support border control, and most notably as drivers for Ambulance vehicles to assist in the transportation of patients.

VICSES also provides a critical role during major fires such as the 2019-20 Victorian Bushfires, contributing extensive skills and experience both on and off the ground, including extra road crash rescue assistance for deployed units, logistics capability, staging area and base camp management, Incident Management Team roles at control centres, deploying Incident Air Monitoring Kits, reloading aircraft, and much more.

Our Operating Model

WE SERVE ALL VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES

VICSES encompasses the length and breadth of Victoria, with a service delivery footprint covering communities in regional, metropolitan, rural, and urban areas.

In October 2022 we implemented a new operating model as part of our Operating Model Review, with key changes including consolidating our six regional structure to two regions (Eastern and Western). This operating model was developed in consultation with our volunteers, staff, and key stakeholders.

Today, we operate from 150 volunteer units and 15 permanently staffed offices, dispersed across two regions. Each of our units and offices are geographically located to best support our communities right across

the state. Our Victorian Head Office and State Logistics Centre (located in metropolitan Melbourne) cover a state wide service delivery footprint, while staff (including Unit Support Teams) in regional offices provide localised support and resources.

Our operating model delivers on the objectives to:

- Have a volunteer focus.
- Cater for day-to-day operational response balanced with a core business focus.

- Provide consistency and a one-VICSES approach.
- Be adaptable to sector wide change.
- Remain aligned to our legislative role.

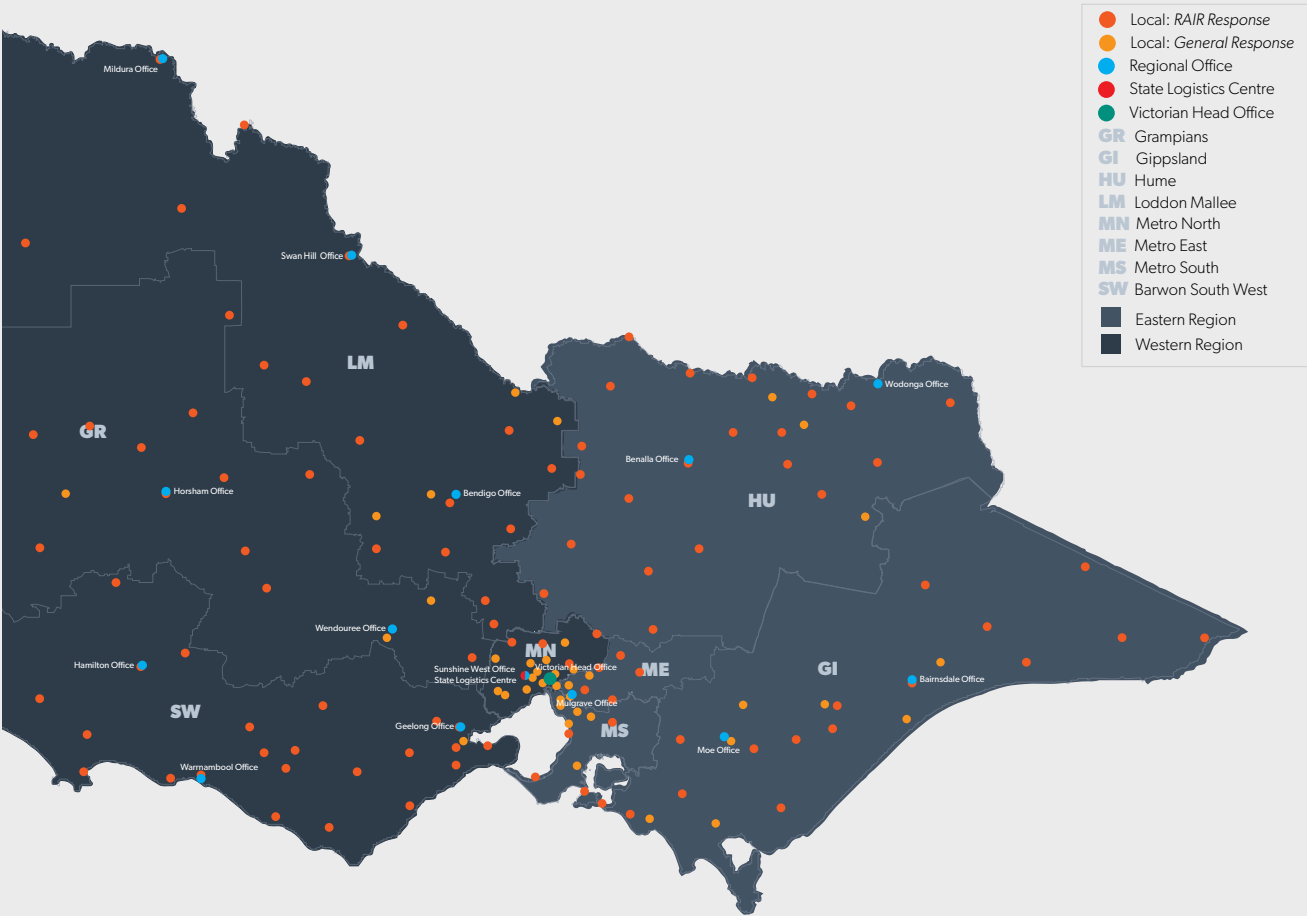
Our office locations include:

- Bairnsdale
- Bendigo
- Benalla
- Geelong
- Horsham
- Hamilton
- Mildura
- Moe
- Mulgrave
- Southbank
- Sunshine West
- Swan Hill
- Warrnambool
- Wendouree
- Wodonga.



*Head office (Southbank), State Fleet Centre (Derrimut), State Logistics Centre (Sunshine).

Figure 14: Map of regions, offices and unit locations



48
Road Crash
Rescue units

5
Offices

2,470
Volunteers

56
Road Crash
Rescue units

8
Offices

2,399
Volunteers



Our Asset Portfolio

As a Statutory Authority, VICSES state-funded assets are predominantly funded by the Victorian State Government.

Other funding sources include the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) grants, which require matched co-contribution from volunteer units. VICSES also receives financial investment from TAC, apportioned to cover VICSES' road rescue obligations, and through sponsorship arrangements with key partners for our community safety programs and awareness campaigns, including our current partnership agreements with DEECA and Melbourne Water. Our Co-Principal Partner AAMI has historically provided funding for unit equipment; however, the partnership has now moved to focus on funding community resilience initiatives and major campaigns and events.

OUR CURRENT FACILITIES

Our facilities play a critical role in shaping our volunteers' experience, our brand, and our service delivery, to keep our communities safe. VICSES is committed to ensuring that our facilities are serviceable and ready for immediate use during an emergency, meeting our strategic priorities, operational requirements, and creating a safe and healthy environment for all members.

Day-to-day operational costs for VICSES unit facilities have historically been funded by the State Government municipal subsidy. Under this arrangement accommodation and volunteer unit facilities were provided by local councils, with approximately 90% of VICSES buildings and 80% of associated land across Victoria owned by councils.

In December 2017, VICSES assumed responsibility for operational and maintenance funding of VICSES units (including unit facility maintenance) under a new MoU between VICSES, the Victorian Government, and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). In return under this arrangement, councils will facilitate long-term leases for VICSES units in exchange for minimal or nominal rent on land owned or managed by local councils, ensuring security of tenure for VICSES units as a high priority. The MoU requires councils to use best endeavours to provide land at nominal rent. However, to-date, this has only been fulfilled by 12 of the 90 council owned sites that are leased to our units, resulting in significant pressure for affected volunteers and uncertainty regarding ongoing service delivery in these council areas.

Where this arrangement with local councils is not enacted or possible, leases of private land for VICSES units is required. VICSES is not funded for the leasing costs of our units located on private land where VICSES is now responsible for paying commercial rentals as a result of the MoU, nor funded to cover the ongoing maintenance costs of units or the one-off costs related to the implementation of the MoU, such as utility meterage, sewage, and more. With continued budgetary restrictions across the sector, this is not a sustainable funding model. Ongoing funding and/or greater collaboration with local councils under the MoU is required to meet these fiscal demands.

OUR NEW BUILDS

VICSES acknowledges the support from the Victorian Government, with over \$143 million allocated to deliver projects as part of the VICSES High Priority Infrastructure Program, ensuring fit-for-purpose facilities for our members to support day-to-day operations and to serve the Victorian community.

All new infrastructure projects are managed through the Community Safety Building Authority (CSBA), with VICSES being responsible for planning and infrastructure design, and CSBA being responsible for project funding, acquisition of land, statutory approvals, procurement, and contract management. At the completion of works it is intended that CSBA will transfer assets to VICSES.

“Not only will our new unit facilities better equip our existing volunteers to perform their role, but will provide additional space for training, and help support the retention of current volunteers and recruitment of new ones.”

- VICSES CEO, Greg Leach

Figure 16: Projects funded as part of the VICSES High Priority Infrastructure program since 2017-18, delivered by CSBA.

Unit	Build type
Aintree (Caroline Springs) Unit	New unit build
Bannockburn Unit	Existing redevelopment
Chelsea Unit	Existing redevelopment
Cobram Unit	Existing redevelopment
Corio Unit	Existing redevelopment
Cranbourne Unit	New unit build
Devon Meadows (Clyde) Unit	New unit build
Emerald Unit	Existing redevelopment
Essendon Unit	Existing redevelopment
Fawkner (Broadmeadows) Unit	Existing redevelopment
Footscray Unit	Existing redevelopment
Heidelberg	Existing redevelopment
Kalkallo (Craigieburn North) Unit	New unit build
Kilmore Unit	Existing redevelopment
Knox Unit	Existing redevelopment
Officer Unit	New unit build
Point Cook Unit	New unit build
Port Fairy Unit	Existing redevelopment
Skye (satellite)	New unit build
Tarneit (Wyndham) Unit	New unit build
Wangaratta Unit	Existing redevelopment
Wonthaggi Unit	Existing redevelopment

OUR FLEET AND EQUIPMENT

VICSES assets play an integral role in delivering our services to the Victorian community. Our units require various critical assets, and are currently funded for one vehicle per each operational unit (143), in addition to five specialist command vehicles and 80 rescue boats. This has been the funding model applied since VICSES’ transition to a Statutory Authority in 2005.

Due to our current funding model, VICSES is only funded to carry out maintenance on state-funded fleet and equipment. Units are provided with an annual subsidy and are responsible for the maintenance and repairs of unit funded fleet and equipment, which are predominantly sourced through grants, donations, and local fundraising. This has resulted in pressure and reliance on units to continue their fundraising efforts to support ongoing costs to maintain ageing vehicles. As a significant number of assets are due for replacement between 2023-26 and beyond, ongoing investment for a centralised critical asset program is vital for VICSES to replace end-of-life assets to ensure that core response capability can be maintained at an efficient cost.

Figure 17: State and Unit Funded Asset Split

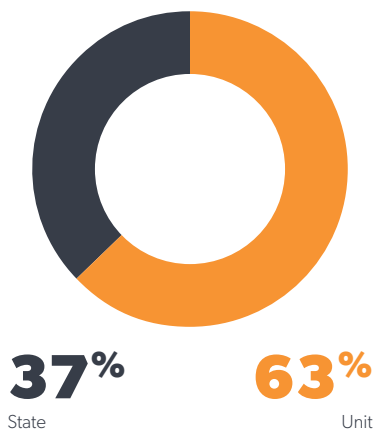


Figure 18: VICSES asset replacement forecast schedule - State

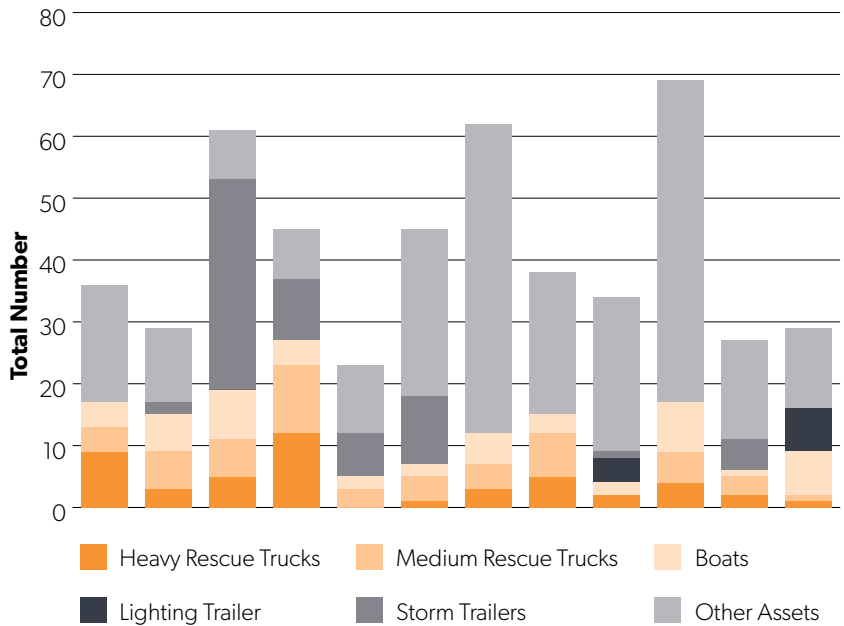
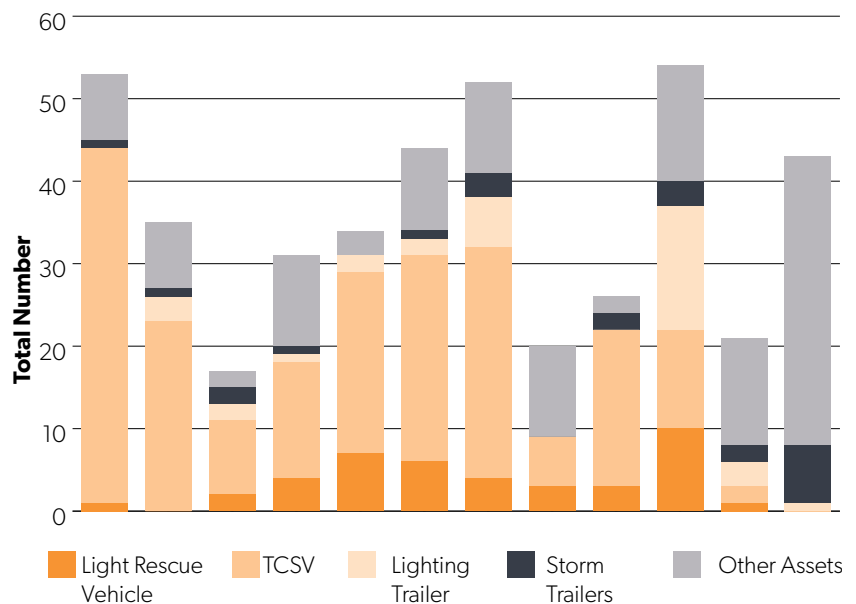


Figure 19: VICSES asset replacement forecast schedule: Units



Glossary

Next generation Heavy Rescue Trucks

In 2023 VICSES developed and implemented a contemporary methodology in the design and procurement of our future rescue trucks. The next generation heavy rescue truck (HRT) is the first truck to be designed using this new methodology, which involves building and testing a prototype before rolling out full production to the rescue truck build panel.

The design process undertook a collaborative approach, involving volunteers, internal subject matter experts, and external design and engineer partners.

This newly adopted contemporary procurement methodology demonstrates our commitment to creating a rescue truck that is fit-for-purpose and safe for use, while strengthening and improving our fleet which will enable our volunteers to better support our communities.

AFAC	Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
ESIA	Emergency Services Infrastructure Authority
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
LHQ	Local headquarters
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MFB	Metropolitan Fire Brigade
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of parliament
PPCE	Personal protective clothing and equipment
RAIR	Road, aircraft, industrial and rail
RCR	Road Crash Rescue
Rescue RAI	Rail, aircraft, industrial
RFA	Requests for assistance
RTO	Registered Training Office
SRC	State Response Controller
TAC	Transport Accident Commission
TLE	Tsunami, landslide and earthquake
VESEP	Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program
VICSES	Victoria State Emergency Service
VUS	Volunteer Unit Subsidy

APPENDIX A:

VICSES units by location

WESTERN REGION



77 units
56 road crash rescue units (72%)

- Ararat Unit (RCR)
- Bacchus Marsh Unit (RCR)
- Ballarat Unit
- Balmoral Unit (RCR)
- Bannockburn Unit (RCR)
- Barwon South West Regional Unit
- Bellarine Unit (RCR)
- Bendigo Unit (RCR)
- Birchip Unit (RCR)
- Brimbank Unit
- Camperdown Unit (RCR)
- Castlemaine Unit (RCR)
- Cobden Unit (RCR)
- Colac Unit (RCR)
- Corio Unit (RCR)
- Craigieburn Unit (RCR)
- Dartmoor Unit (RCR)
- Daylesford Unit
- Dimboola Unit (RCR)
- Dunkeld Unit (RCR)
- Dunmunkle Unit (RCR)
- Dunolly Unit
- Echuca Unit
- Edenhope Unit (RCR)
- Essendon Unit
- Fawkner Unit
- Footscray Unit

- Geelong Unit
- Gisborne Unit (RCR)
- Goroke Unit
- Grampians Regional Unit
- Hamilton Unit (RCR)
- Heathcote Unit (RCR)
- Heidelberg Unit
- Heywood Unit (RCR)
- Hobsons Bay Unit
- Horsham Unit (RCR)
- Kaniva Unit (RCR)
- Kerang Unit (RCR)
- Kyabram Unit
- Lismore Unit (RCR)
- Loddon Mallee Regional Unit
- Lorne Unit (RCR)
- Marong Unit (RCR)
- Maryborough Unit (RCR)
- Melton Unit
- Mildura Unit (RCR)
- Mortlake Unit (RCR)
- Murrayville Unit (RCR)
- Nhill Unit (RCR)
- Nillumbik Unit (RCR)
- North West Metro Regional Unit
- Otway Unit (RCR)
- Ouyen Unit (RCR)

- Port Campbell Unit (RCR)
- Port Fairy Unit (RCR)
- Portland Unit (RCR)
- Robinvale Unit (RCR)
- Rochester Unit (RCR)
- Rushworth Unit (RCR)
- South Barwon Unit (RCR)
- St Arnaud Unit (RCR)
- Stawell Unit (RCR)
- Sunbury Unit (RCR)
- Swan Hill Unit (RCR)
- Terang Unit (RCR)
- Torquay Unit (RCR)
- Warracknabeal Unit (RCR)
- Warrnambool Unit (RCR)
- Wedderburn Unit (RCR)
- Whittlesea Unit
- Winchelsea Unit
- Woodend Unit (RCR)
- Woomelang Unit (RCR)
- Wycheproof Unit (RCR)
- Wyndham Unit
- Wyndham West Unit

Coming Soon

- Aintree Unit
- Point Cook Unit

RCR: Road crash rescue unit

EASTERN REGION



73 units
48 road crash rescue units (65%)

Alexandra Unit (RCR)
 Bairnsdale Unit (RCR)
 Beechworth Unit (RCR)
 Benalla Unit (RCR)
 Bendoc Unit (RCR)
 Bright Unit (RCR)
 Bruthen Unit
 Buchan Unit (RCR)
 Cann River Unit (RCR)
 Chelsea Unit
 Chiltern Unit
 Cobram Unit (RCR)
 Corryong Unit (RCR)
 Eastern Metro Regional Support unit
 Emerald Unit (RCR)
 Erica Unit
 Euroa Unit (RCR)
 Falls Creek Unit
 Foster Unit
 Frankston Unit (RCR)
 Gippsland Regional Unit
 Glen Eira Unit
 Greater Dandenong Unit
 Hastings Unit
 Healesville Unit (RCR)
 Hume Regional Unit

Inverloch Unit
 Kilmore Unit (RCR)
 Kinglake Unit (RCR)
 Knox Unit (RCR)
 Leongatha Unit (RCR)
 Lilydale Unit (RCR)
 Loch Sport Unit
 Maffra Unit
 Mallacoota Unit (RCR)
 Malvern Unit
 Manningham Unit
 Mansfield Unit (RCR)
 Maroondah Unit
 Marysville Unit (RCR)
 Mitta Mitta Unit (RCR)
 Moe Unit (RCR)
 Monash Unit
 Moorabbin Unit
 Morwell Unit (RCR)
 Murchison Unit (RCR)
 Myrtleford Unit (RCR)
 Narre Warren Unit
 Numurkah Unit (RCR)
 Orbost Unit (RCR)
 Pakenham Unit (RCR)
 Phillip Island Unit (RCR)

Port Phillip Unit
 Rosedale Unit (RCR)
 Rutherglen Unit (RCR)
 Sale Unit (RCR)
 San Remo Unit (RCR)
 Seymour Unit (RCR)
 Sorrento Unit (RCR)
 Southern Metro Regional Unit
 Stratford Unit (RCR)
 Tallangatta Unit (RCR)
 Tambo Valley Unit (RCR)
 Tatura Unit (RCR)
 Upper Yarra Unit (RCR)
 Wangaratta Unit (RCR)
 Warragul Unit (RCR)
 Whitehorse Unit
 Wodonga Unit (RCR)
 Wonthaggi Unit (RCR)
 Yackandandah Unit
 Yarram Unit (RCR)
 Yarrawonga Unit (RCR)

Coming soon

Cranbourne Unit
 Officer Unit

Together,
we are VICSES





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